Asian Americans in Washington State: Closing Their Hidden Achievement Gaps

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Presented to the Governor’s Interagency Council on Health Disparities, February 5, 2009
Demographics: Who are Asian Americans?

- **Diverse:** 24 ethnic groups in U.S. Census.
- 4.4% of U.S. and 6.6% (Asian alone) and 8% (Asian alone and Others- mixed race) in WA (2007).
- Among states, WA is the 5th largest in percentage and 7th largest in number of Asian Americans (429,406 in 2007).
- **5 largest groups in WA:** Chinese, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Koreans, and Asian Indians
- Largely **foreign-born:** 69% U. S.; 67% WA.
Washington’s Asian Americans: Economic and Linguistic Challenges and Disparities

- **Poverty**
  - All Asian 13%, State average 11%
    - Hmong 46%, Indonesians 26%, Cambodians 25%

- **Limited English Language Proficiency**
  - All Asian 40%, Latinos 37%
    - Vietnamese 66%, Hmong 62%

- **Educational Attainment (Bachelor's Degree or Higher) Disparities**
  - All Asian 36.8%, State average 27.7%
    - Laotians 5.0%, Cambodians 6.6%, Hmong 10.7%

*Source: U.S. Census, 2000*
Asian Americans Students in WA Public Schools

- K-12 enrollment: 8% of State’s student population (80,000+).

- 20 school districts around Seattle Puget Sound and Clark county; Seattle School District, the largest 12%.

- Speak more than 100 languages and dialects; Vietnamese, Korean, Chinese-Cantonese, Tagalog, Khmer (Cambodian), etc.

- 40% of As Am students speak a language other than English.

- 31% of them receive a FRPL.
Asian American Students in Seattle Schools

- **Not living with both parents**
  - All Asian - 28%
    - SE Asians 46%, Vietnamese 35%, Filipino 31%

- **High school dropout rate**
  - All Asian - 8%
    - Southeast and Other Asian students 14%

- **Free/Reduced Lunch Program**
  - All Asian - 47%
    - Vietnamese 68%, Other Southeast Asians 60%
Research Findings on Asian American Students: Hidden Achievement Gaps

- **English Language Learning (ELL) Students**: Underserved and undersupported; low achievement rates; stigmatized

- **Filipino and Southeast Asian Americans**: Low achievement rates, inhospitable school climate, peer antagonism, being left out of classroom and curriculum, mental health issues, dropouts, pushouts, kickouts

- **Math and Science Challenges**: Many AA students are doing poorly here

- **Early Learning**: Increase access to ensure academic progress, especially for the most disadvantaged Asian American ethnic groups

- **College Access and Enrollment**: Ethnic group participation varies widely in 2 and 4 yr institutions; tracking; lack of information
Asian American Students by ELL, FRPL, Gender: 10th Grade WASL Performance

Source: 2007/08 OSPI WASL Data
Asian American ELL Students At Risk

- Underserved and Under-supported
  - 40% of all AA students in WA are Non Native English Speakers (33,022).
  - But only 35% of them are in TBIP (11,676).

- Academic Challenges
  - ELL Classes – Lower than Mainstream Grade Level
  - Math and Science – Double burden (language + content)
  - Less prepared for WASL – Mainstream Standards

- ELL Stigma
  - “Dummies”; “Treat me like a child”; “Speak with accent”
## Filipino and SE Asian American Students At Risk

**10th Grade WASL Performance Seattle Public Schools, 2007–2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>84.4%</td>
<td>70.1%</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Indian</td>
<td>84.2%</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>77.2%</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>89.8%</td>
<td>78.7%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>83.0%</td>
<td>56.1%</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>78.1%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2007 District Report, Seattle Public Schools
Filipino and Southeast As Am Students at Risk: “Feeling Like No One Cares”

- **Unsupportive School Climate:**
  a) Model Minority Stereotyping
  b) Pedagogy and Curriculum Issues – “being left out”
  c) Peer Group Antagonism -bullying and racial violence
  d) Mental Health Issues – depression, suicide
  e) Dropout/Push out/Kick outs – Gang involvement

- **Family Issues:**
  a) Pressure on youth to succeed
  b) Unavailable; Unable to advise/support
  c) Lack of information about U.S. schools/culture
RECOMMENDATIONS - Best Practices: Supporting As Am Students at Risk

- Adopt a Data Collection, Research, and Evaluation Plan.
- Create a Seamless Pipeline Pre-K Through Higher Education.
- Broaden and Enhance School Measurements and Accountability.
- Foster Culturally Responsive Approaches and Practices.
- Address Teacher Quality and Effectiveness.
- Engage Asian American Families in Schools.
- Strengthen School-Community Partnerships.
Lessons for Addressing Health Disparities

- High poverty rates of specific Asian American ethnic groups, especially Southeast Asian groups, contribute to health disparities.
- Limited English proficiency is a barrier to accessing health care.
- Asian American small business owners often lack health insurance for selves and children.
- Pressures on Asian American students to succeed contributes to mental health issues.
- Immigrant households are in need of linguistic and cultural translators in negotiating U.S. health care.