

Date of Hearing: April 12, 2023

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Al Muratsuchi, Chair
AB 1354 (Mike Fong) – As Amended April 3, 2023

SUBJECT: Pupil instruction: Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders

SUMMARY: Requires the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) to consider providing for inclusion of, in its recommended history-social science curriculum framework, related evaluation criteria, and accompanying instructional materials, instruction on the contributions of, and discrimination perpetrated against, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, when the history-social science curriculum framework is next revised. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires the IQC, when the history-social science curriculum framework is next revised, on or after January 1, 2024, to consider providing for the inclusion, in that curriculum framework, evaluation criteria, and accompanying instructional materials including both of the following:
 - a) The historical, social, economic, and political contributions of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders in the United States; and
 - b) Examples of racism, discrimination, and violence perpetrated against Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, including, but not limited to, hate crimes committed during the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Requires that, when the State Board of Education (SBE) revises and adopts the curriculum framework for history-social science on or after January 1, 2017, it consider providing for the inclusion, in that curriculum framework, evaluation criteria, and accompanying instructional materials, of instruction on the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the contributions of Chinese Americans to the establishment of the transcontinental railroad. (Education Code (EC) 51226.3)
- 2) States the intent of the Legislature to provide accurate instructional materials to schools on the internment in the United States of persons of Japanese origin and its impact on Japanese American citizens, the Armenian genocide, and the World War II internment, relocation, and restriction in the United States of persons of Italian origin and its impact on the Italian American community. (EC 52740)
- 3) Establishes the California Civil Liberties Public Education Act, for the purpose of sponsoring public educational activities and the development of educational materials to ensure that the events surrounding the exclusion, forced removal, and internment of citizens and permanent residents of Japanese ancestry will be remembered, and so that the causes and circumstances of this and similar events may be illuminated and understood. (EC 13000)
- 4) Requires students, commencing with students graduating in the 2029–30 school year, to complete a one-semester course in ethnic studies, as specified. (EC 51225.3)

- 5) Requires local educational agencies (LEAs) and charter schools with pupils in grades 9 to 12, commencing with the 2025–26 school year, to offer at least a one-semester course in ethnic studies. (EC 51225.3)
- 6) Requires the CDE, in collaboration with, and subject to the approval of, the executive director of the SBE, by specified dates in 2022, enter into contracts with a county office of education (COE) or a consortium of COEs for the purposes of developing separate model curricula related to the Vietnamese American refugee experience, Cambodian Genocide, and Hmong history and cultural studies. Requires that the designated COE or consortia of COEs to work with the California History-Social Science Project and Teaching California to ensure that the curriculum is accessible and compatible with its platform. (EC 33540.2, 33540.4, 33540.6)
- 7) Designates October 25 of each year as Larry Itliong Day, encourages public schools to conduct exercises remembering the life of Larry Itliong, recognizing his accomplishments, and familiarizing pupils with the contributions he made to this state. (EC 37222.18)

FISCAL EFFECT:

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill. The author states, “Xenophobia is at an all-time high. The COVID-19 pandemic has spurred blame against people of Chinese descent and has resulted in verbal and physical attacks against people of all Asian descent. Education of our youth is key to preventing recurrence of sentiments that Asians are foreigners and do not belong in the United States. AB 1354 will update our curriculum frameworks to include a more comprehensive perspective of the contributions of Asian American and Pacific Islanders in the United States and the harm caused to this community due to anti-Asian sentiments throughout history.”

Asian American history and contributions in Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. The Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, adopted by the SBE in 2021, contains several model lessons in Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies. Each lesson identifies themes, disciplinary areas, ethnic studies values and principles alignment, and content standards alignment (primarily in history-social science and English language arts). The lessons also identify connections to the History-Social Science Curriculum Framework adopted by the SBE in 2016, and in some cases the curriculum frameworks in English Language Arts/English Language Development (adopted in 2014) and Visual and Performing Arts (adopted in 2020). Model lessons in Asian American studies are titled:

- Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and the Model Minority Myth
- Cambodian Americans - Deportation Breaking Families Apart
- Chinese Railroad Workers
- Little Manila, Filipino Laborers, and the United Farm Workers (UFW)
- Hmong Americans - Community, Struggle, Voice
- Indian Americans: Creating Community and Establishing an Identity in California
- The Japanese American Incarceration Experience Through Poetry and Spoken Word - A Focus on Literary Analysis and Historical Significance
- Korean American Experiences and Interethnic Relations
- The Immigrant Experience of Lao Americans

- Historical and Contemporary Experiences of Pacific Islanders in the United States
- South Asian Americans in the United States
- Vietnamese American Experiences - The Journey of Refugees

Asian American history and contributions in History-Social Science Curriculum Framework.

The history and contributions of Asian Americans appear in many places in the History-Social Science Curriculum Framework adopted by the SBE in 2016. For example, the 4th grade chapter, entitled, *California: A Changing State*, explores the questions:

- Why did different groups of immigrants decide to move to California?
- What were their experiences like when they settled in California?
- How did the region become a state, and how did the state grow?

The following excerpts from the 4th grade chapter specifically discuss Asian American history and contributions:

- “Students analyze the contributions of Chinese and Japanese laborers in the building of early California’s mining, agricultural, and industrial economies and consider the impact of various anti-Asian exclusion movements. Hostilities toward the large Chinese labor force in California grew during the 1870s, leading to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and future laws to segregate Asian Americans and regulate and further restrict Asian immigration. The Gentlemen’s Agreement in 1907, singling out Japanese immigrants, further limited Asian admissions to the United States.”
- “Students examine the various ways that Asian Americans resisted segregation and exclusion while struggling to build a home and identity for themselves in California. In explaining a charged and sensitive topic like exclusion, teachers should emphasize the importance of perspective and historical context. Using multiple primary sources in which students investigate questions of historical significance can engage students and deepen their understanding of a difficult and complex issue. Historical fiction, such as Laurence Yep’s *Dragon Gate*, may also be utilized. To help guide their investigation, students may consider the following questions: Why did people migrate? Why did some migrants face opposition and prejudice?”
- “Students explore the relationship between California’s economic and population growth in the twentieth century and its geographic location and environmental factors. They determine the push-and-pull factors for California’s dramatic population increase in recent times such as the state’s location in the Pacific Basin, the 1965 Immigration Act, which brought a new wave of Asian immigrants from Korea, India, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, in addition to traditional Asian groups of Chinese, Japanese, and Filipinos, the 1980 Refugee Act, the reputation of social and cultural freedom in the cities of San Francisco and Los Angeles, and the state’s historical ability to absorb new laborers in its diversified economy. Students examine California’s growing trade with nations of the Pacific Basin and analyze how California’s port cities, economic development, and cultural life benefit from this trade. They learn about the contributions of immigrants to California from across the country and globe, such as Dalip Singh Saund, an Indian Sikh immigrant from the Punjab region of South Asia who, in 1957, became the first Asian American to serve in the United States Congress...”

Hate crimes against AAPIs during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a 2021 report by the California School Boards Association, *AAPI Students in Focus: Experiences During the COVID-19 Pandemic*:

The impact of the pandemic on AAPI communities combined with a rise in hate and discrimination has had a direct effect on the willingness of families and their students to return to in-person instruction. Large proportions of Asian American families across the United States and California are choosing to keep their students in distance learning, even as more districts return to in-person instruction.

As of February 2021, the Institute of Education Sciences estimates that only 15 percent of fourth-grade Asian American students were receiving in-person learning, the lowest percentage of any demographic group in the United States. This is as compared to over 50 percent of white students, 32 percent of Hispanic students, and 28 percent of African American students. Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students participate in in-person instruction at a slightly higher rate of 26 percent. While the state does not track in-person participation by race/ethnicity, early data suggests that California appears to follow the national trend of AAPI families hesitant to send their students back to in-person instruction. Many school districts across the state have surveyed students' families to gauge interest in different types of instruction, such as in-person, digital-only, or a hybrid schedule. In the Sacramento City Unified School District, 53 percent of all respondents chose in-person learning instead of distance learning. However, only about a third of Asian American households indicated that they planned to send their students back to school this year, which is the lowest of any racial/ethnic group.

Arguments in support. Stop AAPI Hate writes, "It is essential to educate young people to address the root causes of anti-AAPI hate, such as dismantling the 'perpetual foreigner' stereotype that portrays Asians and Asian Americans as forever outsiders who don't belong in the United States. Providing accurate and comprehensive AAPI representation in educational resources and media will create a more inclusive atmosphere for students, reaffirm the importance of AAPIs in society, and challenge harmful stereotypes."

Related legislation. ACR 18 (Mike Fong) of the 2023-24 Session urges all schools to ensure that Asian American history and contributions are included in their curriculum, alongside those of other communities of color.

SB 1363 (Nielsen) of the 2021-22 Session would have encouraged schools to adopt a course of study related to AAPI history for grades 1 to 6 and 7 to 12, within the social sciences area. This bill was held in the Assembly Education Committee.

AB 2684 (Chau), Chapter 648, Statutes of 2016, requires that, when the SBE revises and adopts the curriculum framework for history-social science on or after January 1, 2017, the SBE consider providing for the inclusion, in that curriculum framework, evaluation criteria, and accompanying instructional materials, of instruction on the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the contributions of Chinese Americans to the establishment of the transcontinental railroad.

SB 895 (Nguyen), Chapter 686, Statutes of 2018, requires the IQC to develop a model curriculum on the Vietnamese American refugee experience, a model curriculum on the Cambodian genocide, and a model curriculum on Hmong history and culture.

AB 167 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 252, Statutes of 2021, requires the CDE to, no later than March 1, 2022 enter into contracts with a COE or a consortium thereof for the purposes of developing model curricula related to the Vietnamese American refugee experience, the Cambodian genocide, and Hmong history and culture by September 1, 2024.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

AAPI Equity Alliance

API Equality-la

Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs Association Community Education Foundation

Asian Youth Center

California Association for Bilingual Education

Center for Asian Americans in Action

Center for The Pacific Asian Family

Chinese for Affirmative Action

Little Tokyo Service Center

National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse

South Asian Network

Stop AAPI Hate

Thai Community Development Center

Torrance Unified School District

Opposition

None on file

Analysis Prepared by: Tanya Lieberman / ED. / (916) 319-2087