2024 Policy Platform

Education

AA and NHPI students and families may find it challenging to access high-quality K-12 and higher education due to intersecting issues of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and immigration. These barriers include disparities in educational outcomes, lack of available culturally competent and linguistically appropriate outreach to families and caregivers, and insufficient programming and direct support for students.

Many Cambodian, Vietnamese, Hmong, Laotian, and Pacific Islander Americans have lower levels of educational attainment in comparison with other AA and NHPI groups. As such communities are often low-income and experience increased rates of poverty, financial barriers prevent these students from enrolling, attending, and completing postsecondary education.

AA and NHPIs need properly resourced schools. The following are just a few of the many policy solutions that we believe will advance educational opportunities for our students.

NHPI Spotlight: Engage with Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Communities for Relevant Support

- Authorize $50 million in funding to implement the Native Hawaiian Education Program (NHEP) as authorized under the Native Hawaiian Education Act (NHEA).

- Allocate increased funding for language preservation in separate programs:
  - (1) $14 million to Native American language immersion schools, as authorized under ESSA;
  - (2) $15 million to Native American Language Immersion Programs (20 U.S.C. 7453); and
  - (3) $17.5 million to the Esther Martinez Immersion (EMI) program and its language immersion and restoration grant funds.
- Increase funding for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, which funds the Native Hawaiian Career and Technical Education Program (NHCTEP).
- Request language to enable the Department of Education to provide grant funding aligned with improving educational outcomes for Native Hawaiians, as required under part B of Title VI of the ESEA.
- Direct the Department to work with the Native Hawaiian Education Council, in accordance with section 6204 of the ESEA.
- Increase funding for Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs).
- Disaggregate NHPI data within the AA and NHPI populations – both in the K-12 system, as well as the higher education system.

Support Equitable Access to Education, Including Affirmative Action

- Support diversity, inclusion, and equity efforts in higher education – including equitable admissions policies and an inclusive campus climate. Such efforts are beneficial to all students in a diverse society, especially students in AA and NHPI subgroups who face barriers to higher education.
- Ensure that educational institutions diligently comply with anti-discrimination laws, including those that prohibit limiting opportunities for people on the basis of race or ethnicity.
- Increase schools' capacity to address the intersectional needs of students who have experienced multiple types of discrimination, including gender- and race-based discrimination.
- Reimagine admissions requirements, policies, and procedures to reduce barriers.
- Support holistic admissions processes to ensure equity in access to educational opportunities.

Support the Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions Program

- Increase funding for AANAPISIs to $100 million annually, under the Higher Education Act Title III and Title V, Parts A, and F.
- Remove the multiple designation limitation for Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), which will increase access to federal funding opportunities for colleges and universities that serve multiple underserved student communities.
- Allocate $30 million toward Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions (ANNH), an increase from $24 million in FY 2023.

Improve Access to Higher Education: Minority Outreach Programs

- Increase funding of programs like the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) and Federal TRIO Programs, which are crucial to helping assist disadvantaged and underrepresented students. Increased funding of these programs is a necessary component to expanding opportunities.
- Increase support for indigenous and NHPI culturally specific programming, especially by calling for indigenous and NHPI research and funding in U.S. Department of Education (USED) projects.

Support Undocumented Students' Access to Higher Education

- Create a pathway to citizenship for all students and remove barriers to attending college and working legally in the United States.
- Restore states' authority to provide higher education benefits to all students.
- Require higher education institutions that accept federal funds to offer enrollment opportunities to undocumented students.
- Implementation education assistance and ensure access to other programs for COFA citizens.

Build and Preserve Schools' Capacity to Serve AA and NHPI Students

- Leverage review of Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) and Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) to ensure local and state resources target AA & NHPI students specifically, especially in low-income school districts and communities. In several school districts, disaggregating data on student achievement is part of data collection for comprehensive school improvement.

- Work with State Education Agencies (SEAs) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to improve data collection and reporting; ensure ethnic subgroups are adequately represented in the data and targeted resources are provided to students who need it.

Support English Learner Students

- Require SEAs to identify AA and NHPI languages of significance, and provide incentives for states to develop and use native language assessments for EL populations. SEAs should determine mandated use of assessments based on population triggers at the district or county level.
- Fully fund Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and Higher Education Act (HEA) programs, which are designed to meet the needs of minority, disadvantaged, and AA and NHPI students, with a particular focus on programs serving English Learner (EL) students.
- Require schools to support at-risk students, including EL students, in order to ensure that they are not illegally discharged or pushed out during school improvement processes.

Improve Teacher Preparation and Diversity in the Teaching Profession

- Ensure a pipeline of qualified, dedicated educators through comprehensive educator preparation programs for both certified and non-certified educators.
- Expand the teacher pipeline by strengthening and scaling up “grow your own” apprenticeship grant programs such as ESSA Title II, The America Rescue Plan, or through the U.S. Department of Labor. Ensure that programs focus on identifying promising teacher candidates from local communities and school systems, and provide candidates with tuition reimbursement, time, and the materials they need throughout their teacher education.
- Utilize Title II of the Higher Education Grant entitled Teacher Quality Partnership Grants to create teacher residency programs that integrate full-time, full-year clinical experience with coursework prior to being employed as the teacher-of-record. Studies have found that residency programs have helped recruit teachers for hard-to-staff schools, diversify the teacher candidate pool, and increase retention rates of teachers.
- Offset the costs of teacher preparation and student teaching by providing more programs like TEACH grants, Teacher Loan Forgiveness, and Public Service Loan Forgiveness grants for individuals who want to become educators, especially aspiring educators of color.

- Continue or establish comprehensive induction and mentoring programs that include new educator orientation at the beginning of the year, mentoring by qualified and trained mentors for at least the first two years of work, support teams that meet routinely in addition to formal mentoring programs, courses, and workshops for beginning educators from the school district central office on relevant topics, continuous training for mentors throughout their coaching career, and training for principals on how to support early-career educators and mentors.
- Require educator training to be rooted in culturally responsive pedagogies centered on AA & NHPI communities. Trainings should also include ethnic studies and offer micro-credentials for ethnic studies.
- Provide resources in Title II of the Higher Education Act and Title II of ESEA for pre-service and in-service teacher education and professional development programs so that the linguistic, cultural, and other needs of AA and NHPI students can be more adequately addressed.
- Under Title II of ESEA, require LEAs to provide all teachers (regardless of subject area), administrators, and staff that work directly with EL students with professional development, so that they may better understand the diverse needs of EL and other different language learners.
- Under Title II of the Higher Education Act, promote and support recruitment and professional development of a diverse multicultural and multilingual teacher workforce that reflects and represents student demographics.

Create Safe Environments for All Students

- Develop clear guidance and resources for public schools and federally-funded education institutions to accommodate religious attire, such as the Sikh turban or Muslim hijab, in extracurricular activities or events sponsored by public funding.
- Support H.R. 6202/S.3214, the Counseling Not Criminalization Act of 2023, which would reallocate funding from school resource officers and school hardening policies to increasing school counselors, mental health professionals, and other support staff to address school climate and student mental health.
- Reject policies that arm educators and school staff, and that criminalize students. For example, excess surveillance often unfairly targets and harms students of color due to prevailing patterns of racial bias and undermines efforts to create a school climate that is inclusive and conducive to learning. NHPI students have been overpoliced and disproportionately affected by exclusionary discipline.

- All school staff should get continual professional development on how to talk about racism, and racial equity, and have discussions on how to create systemic equity which affirmatively and continually supports and ensures fair treatment of all people, which is needed to supplant systems of racism.
- School systems should partner with families and community partners so all stakeholders- educators, families, community partners, and school board – are working together in solidarity to create a safe environment for all students.
- Collect disaggregated data for AA & NHPI students to reveal the disproportionate impact of school safety, school climate measures, and rates of discipline on these groups of students. For example, ensure that national surveys from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) disaggregate AA & NHPI students using the American Community Survey categories.
- Strengthen the capacity of schools to address student safety in intersectional ways, such as harassment and violence based on race and ethnicity, combined with sex, gender, identity, or religion, or national origin.

Strengthen the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights

- Allocate additional funding for the U.S. Department of Justice and Department of Education for anti-bullying initiatives, including programs specifically opposing the bullying of religious youth.
- As part of data collection and reporting from the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), require the OCR to disaggregate AA and NHPI data by U.S. Census - American Community Survey categories.
- Encourage OCR to partner with community-based organizations on outreach and education to the AA and NHPI community, in order to build greater awareness of OCR's work and their capability to offer assistance in different languages.

Protect Immigrant Access to K-12 Public Education

- Enforce the *Plyler v. Doe* ruling to preserve undocumented students' right to access public education.
- Enforce the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (1974), which prevents public schools from providing any outside agency, including DHS, with any information from a student's school file that would expose his or her immigration status without first receiving permission from the parents.
- Oppose state legislation that attempts to dismantle access to K-12 education for undocumented students or creates a chilling effect on student enrollment.

Include AA and NHPI History in Curriculum

- Encourage and support the inclusion of AA and NHPI history, cultures, and languages in school curricula at all levels.
- Include more literature by AA and NHPI authors in humanities classes.
- Require educational institutions to build relationships with AA and NHPI stakeholders, community leaders, organizations, and families
- Ensure that educators and practitioners are able to review and weigh in on the implementation and curricular training for AA & NHPI history or ethnic studies.

Student Loan Debt Relief

- Support legislation such as H.R. 4986, the Student Loan Interest Elimination Act, which would provide loan forgiveness for all eligible borrowers with additional support for Pell Grant recipients.

Investing in Early Childhood Education for AA and NHPI Communities

- Increase funding for all early care and education programs, including Head Start.
- Ensure equitable access and non-discrimination in early care and education programs.
- Commit to providing culturally and linguistically responsive education for all children, especially for children from families that speak languages other than English.

Inclusive Data for AA & NHPI Populations in K-12 and Higher Education

- Disaggregate AA and NHPI data in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965.
- Continue efforts from the Federal Student Aid to disaggregate FAFSA by AA and NHPI ethnicities and reporting systems such as the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).
- Support policies like H.R. 6086/S.3152, the All Students Count Act of 2023 (ASCA), that would require the Department of Education to disaggregate ESSA subgroups and enact accountability requirements to include more AA and NHPI ethnicities.