

WHOLESTORY EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

Message Guidance for Community Partners

Our ability to have honest conversations about our past

is under attack. We believe that it is only through honest, truthful, and inclusive teaching of our history that we can learn America's full story. We must push back against those who seek to undermine our ability to have honest conversations about our history, learn from our past, and build a more inclusive future. [Learn more about these attacks in [Wholestory Education Campaign: At a Glance](#)]

As advocates push for proactive dialogue and a reckoning with racism in this country, including an accurate depiction of American history, opposition at the national, state, and local levels has attempted to dismantle efforts to foster equity and tell the histories of Asian Americans, Black Americans, Indigenous people, Latino/Latinx American communities, and allied historically marginalized groups in our schools.



Photo from PBS documentary "*Asian Americans*"

MESSAGE GUIDANCE OBJECTIVES

- Provide **information** and **talking points** to help address misinformation around teaching history truthfully in our schools and turn the conversation toward embracing diversity and inclusion efforts.
- Encourage conversations about diversity and inclusion as a means to help our children **embrace** the more diverse country in which we live and build a more inclusive future where all children can thrive.
- Seek opportunities to teach the **whole story** of our American history so that it is a full and inclusive account of the events, accomplishments, and stories of Asian Americans, Indigenous people, Black Americans, Latino/Latinx communities, and allied historically marginalized groups.



THEMES

- We must be able to have open, honest, and factual dialogues about teaching truthful history so we can move forward as a nation that values its diversity and rejects racism in all forms.
- We understand that sharing our Asian American history is important so that we can continue to dismantle harmful stereotypes about our communities and reduce the anti-Asian attacks we have seen throughout America's history that have been heightened during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- We need to confront systemic racism and address institutional barriers that disadvantage marginalized communities. We need to understand the full truth of our histories and have honest dialogues in order to do that.
- We cannot allow current backlash to derail the larger dialogue around solutions for reducing racism and fostering diversity and equity in education and in the broader society. Asian Americans have been used as a wedge against other communities of color, but we must reject those attempts and stand in solidarity with our Black, Latino/Latinx, and Indigenous allies to ensure the truthful teaching of our American history.
- The term "Critical Race Theory" has been intentionally misused in these conversations in an attempt to conflate a theory primarily taught in law schools and universities with all discussions involving the dismantling of racism and uplifting diversity, inclusion, and equity for all individuals. In fact, this misinformation campaign is an attempt to distract from what's really at stake: our ability to confront our history honestly to learn from our past and build a more inclusive future. [Learn more in [Wholestory Education Campaign: At a Glance](#)]

RESPONDING TO OPPOSITION

- Characterize the opposition's intentions. For example, they want to block teaching our histories so they can continue to ignore America's past injustices and the actions that created barriers to equity and opportunity for communities of color.
- Do not repeat the opposition's misleading or false statements. Do not try to bust myths by repeating them and then giving facts. People will remember the myth more than the fact.
- Keep the focus on our end goal of our children having the benefit of a diverse, honest, and full education – which is what they need and deserve.



IMPLICATIONS FOR ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

- **Anti-Asian Hate:** Teaching Asian American history in K-12 schools will help address anti-Asian hate at its root: combatting the erasure of Asian Americans in the telling of American history. Our communities have been excluded from news coverage and media representation, leaving Asian Americans exposed to the hate of the ignorant in the schoolyard, in the workplace, or on the street. A distorted notion of who is American can deem us "unworthy" of simply living our lives as Americans, allowing stereotypes to persist, further scapegoating our communities, and perpetuating the dehumanization of Asian Americans.
- **Education Equity:** The attack against honest teaching about our history is the latest iteration of the long history of attacks against diversity and inclusion. These attacks are also trying to ban policies that try to expand access to educational opportunities for all students and create a more level playing field.
 - Attacks against truth threaten our ability to tell our story. A wholestory education allows Asian American stories to be told in our American history.
- **Anti-Racial Profiling:** Despite being a part of the fabric of the U.S. for centuries, Asian Americans are viewed as the "perpetual foreigner" and not American. Many continue to face unjust government targeting and profiling as a result of this racial bias. Inclusive education in our schools and anti-bias trainings in our government will help address racist stereotypes and xenophobia against our communities and break down systemic biases within our institutions.
- **Voting:** Discrimination against Asian Americans throughout history has denied our communities the right to vote for most of our country's existence. An informed and engaged electorate is the best way to protect our communities from tactics that place barriers in our path to the ballot box and ensure that all Americans can exercise their right to vote free from harassment and discrimination. The Asian American electorate has more than doubled in the last 20 years, but if we allow people to push back the strides we have made in gaining language access and other voting rights, our collective power will be diminished and politicians who want to sustain systems of white supremacy will thrive in its place.
- **Census:** When we lack research and disaggregated data on our communities, it becomes even more difficult to advocate for policy and systemic change without "proof" of the problem. Many issues that Asian Americans face today, including access to quality healthcare, expansion of in-language materials, and educational equity, are following in the footsteps of a longer marginalized history of inaccurate research on under-represented populations that render our issues and needs being largely unaddressed or left without adequate resources.

To learn more on how to get involved, visit our [Wholestory Education Campaign webpage](#) or contact us at wholestoryeducation@advancingjustice-aajc.org.