

WHOLESTORY EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

Talking Points for Community Partners

CORE TALKING POINTS

- Building our future and a greater understanding of each other begins with giving our children an education that includes America's whole story, where we teach the uncensored truth to prepare them for both school and life. Anything less fails our children. They deserve to learn about and from all communities, to understand our shared history, and to break down stereotypes to realize that we often have more in common than we are different.
- If we are to move forward as a country, we need a society that respects diverse cultural backgrounds and fosters equitable opportunities for all who call this nation their home.
- Asian Americans, Black Americans, Indigenous people, Latino/Latinx Americans, and allied historically marginalized groups in the U.S. should be able to learn about important events in the classroom about important events and individuals from all communities. Anything less deprives our students of a full understanding of how our communities grew and arrived at our current moment.
- Education can open minds, but limiting education leads to limited minds and opportunities. It is past time for us to learn America's history in a way that is inclusive of the impact Asian Americans have had in building our country, from constructing the transcontinental railroad, to mobilizing the farm labor movement, to defining what citizenship looks like in the U.S.
- Asian Americans are embedded in the fabric of America; our contributions, our cultures, and our struggles have played a critical role in shaping the U.S. we know today. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has become clearer that the lack of visibility and understanding of Asian American history directly translates into perpetual foreigner stereotypes, xenophobia, and other forms of anti-Asian hate and violence.



Photo from PBS documentary "Asian Americans"

ANTICIPATED QUESTIONS

Why has this become a battleground issue?

Our nation has struggled to have honest conversations about race, racism, white supremacy, and the systems that create a racial divide in this country. Change is difficult and often prompts backlash. As we work to dismantle inequitable power structures and systems that disadvantage people of color, those who benefit from the existing systems will object out of fear that their opportunities and liberties will be taken away. Real teaching about race and discrimination in our institutions is necessary to understand how these systems shape our current society and how we can break down these barriers so that everyone has a full understanding of America's true history.

Do you agree with parents who say something is missing from our current education curriculum/textbooks?

As we recognize the significance of being represented in entertainment media, our children need to see themselves in the material taught in schools. We can't truly understand how to come together or bring unity to our nation without having important discussions about race and equity, including the systemic oppression that marginalized communities have experienced throughout history.

Should Critical Race Theory be taught in K-12 schools?

What we need in our schools is a comprehensive teaching of history that includes an honest re-telling of the Asian American, Black American, Indigenous, and Latino/Latinx experience, rather than the censored and sanitized version some people want to teach our kids. The next generation of leaders of our society deserve to be taught comprehensive civics education that accurately portrays our American history so we can make truly informed decisions on how to move forward.

What would you say to the parents who say their children are feeling blamed for the actions of white people in the past?

In order for us to move forward, we must reckon with our past. By teaching our full history, we give each other the opportunity to not only understand the inequitable systems that we have been born into, but also challenge ourselves to be better than our past. Parents of color have always had to reconcile the past by having challenging conversations with their children about how our history has impacted our present, and still do to this day. All families should have these conversations so we can move into a space where our children, regardless of their background, are able to understand that the past does not dictate the future and that change is possible.

What do you say to those who don't see a need to change the teaching in our education system because we have grown as a society and communities of color are doing better than in the past?

The reality is that our communities are continuing to face modern manifestations of age-old issues. We have not achieved true equity, yet. Our current education curriculum is not inclusive of America's whole history. When our textbooks reflect the historical events and accomplishments of communities of color, we will grow into a society that fosters equitable opportunities and helps build a stronger future for all who call this nation their home.