

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation Ensuring AAPI-Inclusive Curriculum is Taught in New Jersey Schools

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TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today signed legislation (S4021/A6100 and S3764/A3369) that will ensure that the contributions, history, and heritage of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) are included in the New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Social Studies for students in kindergarten through Grade 12. S4021 will create an AAPI curriculum requirement for schools and S3764 will establish the Commission for Asian American Heritage within the Department of Education.

“The members of our Asian American/Pacific Islander community have contributed so much to our state and nation,” **said Governor Murphy**. “By teaching students about the history and heritage of our AAPI community, we can ensure that the diversity of our state is reflected in our curriculum and create a more tolerant and knowledgeable future for New Jersey. I am proud to sign these bills into law.”

“By incorporating instruction on the history and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, New Jersey schools can provide a curriculum that reflects the diversity of our state,” **said Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan, Acting Commissioner of Education**. “In addition, the establishment of the Commission on Asian American Heritage will serve as an invaluable resource to enhance classroom instruction throughout the state.”

“Though Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders continue to make significant and positive contributions to our state, they remain misunderstood and are often targeted for race-based violence and bigotry,” **said Senator Vin Gopal**. “With these new laws, and implementation of learning standards that do more to highlight the history and achievements of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, I am confident we will be able to better educate students about Asian American culture and foster greater understanding across the many diverse communities of our state.”

“Members of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community have made countless contributions to our state and country, yet they are made virtually invisible by our history books. This erasure of AAPI history is unacceptable and incredibly harmful for young people who are being robbed of valuable representation that could have a positive impact on their lives,” **said Assembly sponsors Raj Mukherji, Mila Jasey, Britnee Timberlake, and Sterley Stanley in a joint statement regarding S4021/A6100**. “Excluding the rich history of the AAPI community from our schools’ curriculum not only prevents students from gaining a full understanding of our nation’s history, but also opens the door for racial biases that can turn into violence and hatred. One of New Jersey’s best qualities is its diversity, which we should be highlighting in our schools. By expanding the K-12 curriculum to include lessons on the history and contributions of the AAPI community, we can help break down persisting negative stereotypes and show the over 140,000 ([https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://t.e2ma.net/click/vtkibg/nrddit/3npodu_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtbA!aj77Jxqv8xIm_wMoN1K38XeVeXII5ashjFLnPVwhceVTxbM5WMXaHwfz9zvRgxZlFfAfdov7IFw\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://t.e2ma.net/click/vtkibg/nrddit/3npodu_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtbA!aj77Jxqv8xIm_wMoN1K38XeVeXII5ashjFLnPVwhceVTxbM5WMXaHwfz9zvRgxZlFfAfdov7IFw$)) Asian American and Pacific Islander students in our state that their stories and experiences matter.”

“People of Asian descent experienced discrimination long before 2020, but the COVID-19 pandemic clearly exacerbated acts of hatred and bigotry,” **said Assemblyman Gordon Johnson, prime sponsor of S3764**. “Even more frightening is the fact that many incidents go unreported, leaving open the question of just how many people have experienced harassment, or even violence. Hate has no home in New Jersey, and we have a responsibility to teach our children the importance of tolerance and acceptance.”

“The Asian American and Pacific Islander community has enriched every corner of New Jersey’s culture, economy, schools, arts, businesses, and so much more,” **said Assemblyman Sterley Stanley, the first person of South Asian descent from Middlesex County to join the New Jersey General Assembly and sponsor of S3764**. “The programs developed under this bill will reinforce to students that our state’s diversity is our strength.”

“Representation matters. This bill will ensure people of Asian descent are included in our students’ curriculum, potentially bringing in-depth Asian history to some classrooms for the first time,” **said Assemblyman Rob Karabinchak said of S3764**. “There’s never been a more important moment for us to broaden children’s understanding of the world around them and promote inclusivity and respect.”

“The New Jersey Asian American community applauds Governor Murphy and the Legislature for their bold and timely leadership incorporating the Asian American experience as part of our public-school curriculum,” **said Dr. Kani Ilangovan of Make Us Visible NJ**. “All children deserve to know they belong. All children deserve to feel safe. This law will help ensure Asian Americans are represented in our great American story. According to the latest Stop AAPI Hate report, 1 in 3 AAPI parents stated that their child experienced a hate incident in school in this past year. With the rise of anti-Asian violence, education is the best antidote to hate.”

“I am looking forward to having New Jersey schools include Asian American history and contributions in the public-school curriculum. We will be able to feel more visible and safer, and that we are valued in our shared history, in the country we have built and continue to build together. The most important result of these legislations, moving forward, is that it will set the stage for inspiring more younger students to participate and contribute to the movement,” **said Russell Fan, Cofounder of Livingston AAPI Youth Alliance**.

“The Sikh community is excited to see the State of New Jersey leading the country by passing this legislation. According to SALDEF’s National Sikh Survey, 58% of the Sikh community has experienced bullying or harassment and this is a positive step to help reduce that discrimination,” **said Amman Deep Singh Seehra, Vice Chair of SALDEF**. “Students now will start to learn about the contributions of the AAPI community in the United States, which better reflects our true history and showcases the contributions by everyone.”

“These laws exemplify our New Jersey values and we are so grateful to Governor Murphy and the Legislature,” **said Amber Reed and Jeffrey Chang of AAPI Montclair**. “Amidst the tide of anti-Asian hate, we found hope in joining a diverse coalition of parents, advocates, students, and legislators to use the best tool we have to fight hate: education. All children deserve to know they matter, that they belong, and they too are part of our country and state’s history. In our own community we have seen how swiftly the lives and mental health of children can improve when their stories are taught in their classrooms. We will continue to work with our partners to ensure that the promise of these laws is realized and that all New Jersey children grow up with acceptance, belonging, and love.”

Governor Phil Murphy

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