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Introduction Date	5/13/2020
Enactment Number	20-0578
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# Memo

**To** Board of Education

**From** Aimee Eng, School Board Director, District 2  
Lailan Huen, Program Manager, Asian Pacific Islander Student Achievement Program

**Board Meeting Date** May 13, 2020

**Subject** A Resolution Recognizing May 2020 as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, Condemning Acts of anti-Asian Violence related to COVID-19, and Reaffirming our District’s Commitment to Ethnic Studies

**Action** Approval

**Background and Discussion**

Each May, the district celebrates Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month by participating in activities and projects embracing the experiences of our diverse Asian American and Pacific Islander students. This resolution, co-sponsored by Director Hinton Hodge and Director Torres, goes a step further than recognizing the ceremonial month by acknowledging critical and timely needs within the API community that have emerged during our current global pandemic.

In her April 7 “Connecting with Kyla”, Superintendent Johnson-Trammell addressed the recent increase in racial discrimination and hate crimes against Asian Americans and shared resources for students, educators, and family members. This resolution further builds on our district’s commitment as a Sanctuary District and ensuring that we are educating our students about the diverse histories and experiences that Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders represent.

**Fiscal Impact** No fiscal impact.

**RESOLUTION  
OF THE  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
OF THE  
OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Resolution No. 1920-0228**

**Recognizing May 2020 as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, Condemning Acts of Anti-Asian Violence Related to COVID-19 and Reaffirming District's Commitment to Ethnic Studies**

**WHEREAS**, Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month provides an opportunity annually to celebrate the significant contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to the history of the United States, the State of California, and the Oakland Unified School District; and

**WHEREAS**, the month of May was selected for Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month because the first Japanese immigrants arrived in the United States on May 7, 1843, and the first transcontinental railroad was completed on May 10, 1869, with substantial contributions from Chinese immigrants; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the Bureau of the Census, the Asian-American population grew faster than any other racial or ethnic group over the last decade, surging nearly 72 percent between 2000 and 2015; and

**WHEREAS**, the Asian American and Pacific Islander community represents a diverse cross-section of histories and lived experiences and is comprised of more than 45 distinct ethnicities and more than 100 language dialects in the United States; in Oakland Unified, Asian American and Pacific Islander students speak over 47 different languages and dialects, and represent diverse ethnicities including: Asian Indian, Bangladeshi, Bhutanese, Burmese, Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Hmong, Indonesian, Iu-Mien, Guamanian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Malaysian, Mongolian, Nepalese, Native Hawaiian, Vietnamese, Pakistani, Samoan, Sri Lankan, Thai, Tongan, Karen, Karenni, Kachin, Chin, Tibetan, other Pacific Islander, and the populations of Southwest Asia - Afghan, Yemeni, Syrian, Iraqi, Palestinian, Algerian, Jordanian, Emirati, and Egyptian; and

**WHEREAS**, Asian American and Pacific Islander students represent 16 percent of Oakland Unified School District's student population, around 6,000 students, and Asian American and Pacific Islander students serve and participate in various capacities and leadership roles across the district including student-run clubs at all comprehensive high schools, participation in Student Body leadership, All-City Council, Parent Student Advisory Council, athletics, and other academic, civic engagement and extracurricular activities; and

**WHEREAS**, approximately 20 percent, or 950 staff members of Asian American and Pacific Islander descent work at Oakland Unified School District and strengthen our district every day through their service and leadership at all levels of the school system; and

**WHEREAS**, despite many civic, political, cultural contributions locally and nationally and our histories being inextricably tied to the fabric of the United States for over 150 years, Asian American and Pacific Islanders have long been characterized as the “perpetual foreigner” and “outsider” in the United States for generations, dating back to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 which barred most legal immigration from Asia for over 80 years until major immigration reform occurred in 1965; and

**WHEREAS**, since the December 2019 outbreak of the COVID-19 virus in Wuhan, China, Asian American and Pacific Islander communities are suffering increased acts of discrimination, hate crimes, and microaggressions’ due to fears of the virus; and

**WHEREAS**, in March 18, 2020, during a White House press conference, President Trump referred to the COVID-19 virus as the “Chinese Virus” which further exacerbated the rate of incidents fueled by anti-Asian sentiment; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 19, 2020, [STOP AAPI HATE](#) was launched as a reporting center to document incidents and attacks towards Asian American and Pacific Islanders during the global pandemic; in just four weeks, 1,500 reports of coronavirus discrimination from Asian Americans across the country were documented, with 58% of all reports coming from California and New York, despite its’ diverse populations;

**WHEREAS**, a recent statewide [needs assessment](#) conducted by the California Partnership for the Future of Learning identifies mental health support, belonging, and relationships as a top concern, citing that Asian Pacific Islander students and families are reporting harm from COVID-related racism and xenophobic; the publication includes a quote by an Oakland student raising racism towards Asian Pacific Islanders as a “big concern” in addition to food, jobs, money, and education; and

**WHEREAS**, local efforts, such as the district’s Asian Pacific Islander Student Achievement (APISA) program, are working to lift up the needs of our district’s diverse Asian American and Pacific Islander student population and develop responses and targeted programs to address these concerns working with teachers, staff, and students as part of our district’s ongoing commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion; and

**WHEREAS**, standard curricula and adopted textbooks often lack authentic representation of our diverse Asian American and Pacific Islander communities in Oakland and students often report not learning much about their own histories in class; the lack of API studies and cultural learning can lead to stereotypes, discrimination, misinformation and racial violence as seen in the COVID-19 scapegoating incidents across the country; and

**WHEREAS**, Oakland Unified School District is committed to upholding our values and reaffirming our commitment to meeting the needs of our diverse student population through our Board Policy on Ethnic Studies (BP 6143.7), Board Policy on Equity (BP 5032), and ensuring more accurate representations of our Asian American and Pacific Islander student populations including, but not limited to collecting and disaggregating demographic data by ethnic group as outlined in Resolution No. 1516-0261.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Oakland Unified Board of Education recognizes May 2020 as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month and celebrates the diverse experiences and contributions of its Asian American and Pacific Islander students and employees; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board of Education denounces xenophobia and anti-Asian sentiment of all forms and condemns acts of violence or hate of any kind in response to COVID-19; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that as a "Sanctuary District" the Board of Education is committed to protecting the mental health and wellbeing of our students and ensuring that Asian American and Pacific Islander students feel safe and welcome in our district and at our schools; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Oakland Unified School District remains committed to our goals for Ethnic Studies and furthering the education of Asian American, Pacific Islander, and Arab American Studies in our curricula so that all students can celebrate and learn about diverse Asian American and Pacific Islander heritage, contributions, and community issues.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the Governing Board of Oakland Unified School District on this 13<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2020.

Passed by the following vote:

PREFERENTIAL AYE: None

PREFERENTIAL NOE: None

PREFERENTIAL ABSTENTION: None

PREFERENTIAL RECUSE: None

AYES: Aimee Eng, Jumoke Hinton Hodge, Gary Yee, Roseann Torres, James Harris, Vice President Shanthi Gonzales and President Jody London

NOES: None

ABSTAINED: None

RECUSE: None

ABSENT: Student Directors Mica Smith-Dahl and Denilson Garibo

**CERTIFICATION**

We hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of a Resolution passed at a Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of the Oakland Unified School District, held on May 13, 2020.

**Legislative File Info.**

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**OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**



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Jody London  
President, Board of Education



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Kyla Johnson-Trammell  
Superintendent and Secretary, Board of Education