

# A MESSAGE FROM SUPERINTENDENT FORD MORTHEL: ASIAN AMERICAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH



Dear Berkeley Unified community,

May is an exciting month that honors many important communities. This month we are taking time to uplift, center, and celebrate the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities with the full acknowledgement that these communities are richly diverse, have a breadth of histories, lived experiences, needs- and that one month is never enough time to fully honor their contributions.

Beginning in 1990, the U.S. government designated the month of May as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. May was chosen as AAPI month because it marks the arrival of 14 year old Manjiro, considered the first Japanese immigrant in the United States on May 7, 1843, as well as the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869, which was completed due to the back breaking labor of over 20,000 Chinese immigrants.

This May you will see a variety of acronyms in use, such as Asian Pacific Islander (API), Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (AANHPI), Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIDA), or you might come across calls to separate Asian American from Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander because the difference in needs are more and more important to shine a light on. Most months when I write these letters, I name how a month is never enough time to reflect on, teach about, and celebrate how vastly diverse each community truly is. In March of 2021 our school district passed a school board resolution Denouncing Hate Crimes and Bigotry Targeting Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. In this resolution we affirmed how, "the rise of anti-AAPI racism and violence that occurs every day also serves as a reminder of the dire need for Ethnic Studies from k-12th grades, because if we do not develop anti-racist consciousness with and for our youth, White supremacy ideology will persist." All of this nuance around identity and naming is deep, happening in real time, and we as an educational institution acknowledge the limitations of heritage and history months, which is why our district is dedicated to investing in ethnic studies work in all of our schools. We know that our students and families deserve more than a month, more than an assembly; our children deserve curriculums that are truly affirming, nuanced, and inclusive.

Here in Berkeley, we are committed to ho'ohana in order to make our schools welcoming and affirming spaces for all of our students, (Native Hawaiian for purposeful work filled with passion and full intention). And we are committed to ho'ohana in solidarity with all of our communities because together, we are stronger.

In unity,

Enikia Ford Morthel  
Superintendent, Berkeley Unified School District

# THREE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO CELEBRATE ASIAN AMERICAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH

## BUSD FAMILY GUIDE

Compiled by Joemy Ito-Gates, Ethnic Studies TSA in collaboration with BUSD AAPI Members



Amanda Phingbodhipakkiya

## 1. LISTEN

### Listen to the Lived Experiences of AAPI People

- [VIDEO](#) Queer, Muslim, & South Asian
- [VIDEO](#) What Pacific Islanders Want You to Know
- [VIDEO](#) LUNAR: Jewish Enough. Asian Enough.
- [VIDEO](#) What Mixed Race Asians Will Never Tell You
- [ARTICLE](#) On Being Black and Asian American
- [VIDEO](#) Alice Wong: Making Space For More Disabled Asians
- [PODCAST](#) interview of Joemy Ito-Gates, Multiracial Japanese American Ethnic Studies TSA for BUSD
- [ARTICLE](#) 'I'm not allowed to feel those things':

How adoptees experience anti-Asian hate



Portrait of Haunani-Kay Trask by Melanie Cervantes, Bay Area Artist

## 2. LEARN

### Learn About the AAPI Experience & Local AAPI Orgs.

- [VIDEO](#) Are You "AAPI" or "Asian American"? It's Complicated (Why Ethnic Studies Matters)
- [ARTICLE](#) Why It's Time to Retire the Term Asian Pacific Islander
- [ARTICLE](#) These Activists Coined the Term "Asian American" (Emma Gee & Yuji Ichioka were from Berkeley!)
- [ARTICLE](#) 11 Moments from Asian American History That You Should Know
- [ARTICLE](#) How to Talk to Children About Anti-Asian Hate
- [East Bay Asian Youth Center](#)
- [Legacies of the Pacific](#)
- [Stop AAPI Hate](#)
- [Asian Health Services](#)
- [Filipino Advocates for Justice](#)
- [AAPI Women Lead](#)
- [Asian Pacific Islander Queer Women Transgender Community](#)



## 3. LIFT UP

### Lift Up and Celebrate AAPI Cultures With Your Family

- [JOIN](#) our AAPI Heritage Month celebration on May 19th from 5-7:30 PM at the BUSD School Board meeting room
- [ENJOY](#) Proud of Your Eyes Song
- [READ](#) books about and by AAPI people
- [EXPLORE](#) the Asian Art Museum virtually or in person in San Francisco
- [VISIT](#) East Wind Books in Berkeley before they close!
- [CELEBRATE](#) AAPI Month at the Berkeley Public Libraries live in-person events
- [WATCH](#) Asian American Storytopia storytelling videos
- [ATTEND](#) events at the Oakland Asian Cultural Center