

# Continuing Progress and Increasing Opportunities for the AAPI Community

Posted by Arne Duncan on October 28, 2011 at 01:31 PM EDT

Today I had the privilege to address participants at the Symposium on Research and Data on Progress and Opportunities for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs). The symposium was convened by the Center for American Progress and the UCLA Asian American Studies Center to commemorate the two year anniversary of White House Initiative on AAPIs, which I am honored to Co-Chair with Cabinet Secretary Chris Lu. The UCLA Nexis Journal, [“Forging the Future: The Role of New Research, Data, and Policies for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders”](#) is available [here](#).

As co-chair of the Initiative, I have held my Department to high standards to help achieve the President’s call to increase access and participation of AAPIs in federal programs where they may remain underserved.

I’m very proud of the work that the Initiative [has accomplished](#) in two short years. In particular, the Initiative’s has helped to move some important education issues for AAPIs.

For example, the Initiative has promoted and supported the **Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISI) program**— a minority serving institution program. In Fiscal Year 2011, the number of self-certified institutions rose 126% and the number of funded AANAPISIs rose 87%. Since 2010, the Department has awarded more than \$7.5 million to AANAPISIs. And this funding is making a difference. As Professor Robert Teranishi’s brief in the UCLA NEXUS journal shows, AANAPISI-designated campuses are using their funds for academic and student support services, leadership and mentorship opportunities, and research and resource development are having a “measureable impact on the access and success of low-income AAPI college students.”

The Department has a goal to identify and promote three models of disaggregated student data that increase attainment for AAPI students and have the potential for replication. We are looking forward to learning and better understanding what states and school districts are doing around the country.

We know all too often that AAPIs suffer from the model minority myth. And for other AAPI subgroups like Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, they are often not on the radar at all when it comes to targeting students with severe educational challenges. And we find that scenarios like these continue to play themselves out when good data are unavailable, which is why recommendations from researchers and community advocates are so important if we are to make institutional change for our nation’s young people.

We know that relevant and timely data is particularly important. For example, take the issue of bullying. The most recent data show that Asian Americans are more likely than other groups to

be bullied in the classroom and three times more likely to be cyber-bullied once or twice a month. In fact, community groups, like the [Sikh Coalition](#), have released reports that document the rise of harassment of Sikh American students in New York City and the Bay Area. We know every day thousands of young people are bullied across the country. Nearly one-third of all school-aged children are bullied each year – about 13 million students. Students involved in bullying are more likely to face challenges in school, abuse drugs and alcohol, and have physical and mental health issues.

I'm proud to note that the Initiative is hosting a Bullying Prevention Summit tomorrow in New York to raise awareness of bullying and harassment in the AAPI and Muslim American communities, share government resources to prevent harassment, and encourage community members to report incidents.

The President and I will continue to make combating bullying and harassment a priority. I ask that each of you help keep the federal government accountable to the AAPI community. But I also ask that you work with us, as your partner. Together, we can put these issues at the forefront of the national dialogue.

*Arne Duncan is Secretary of the Department of Education and Co-Chair of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.*