

## **Japanese Tamago Stop Asian Hate Project RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DC SCHOOLS**

As students and consumers of Japanese/Asian culture, we feel it is important to step up and take a stand against AAPI hate. Compared to other places in the US (such as DC's suburbs, New York City, and the West Coast), Asian Americans are not a large community in DC (4.6%) or in DC public schools (2%). That's why we believe it's especially important for allies to the Asian American community to be active and vocal in DC.

### **After much discussion, we concluded that EDUCATION IS KEY.**

If bullies understand the history of Asian Americans and know the realities of these communities, then they will be less likely to act out in negative ways. Contextualization is important. If people are exposed to Asian and Asian American people and culture, we think they might not be so hateful. We believe education is an important first step for anyone wishing to be allies for the AAPI communities in this difficult time.

That's why our first step as Japanese Tamago is to begin a process of self-education, with plans for ongoing educational programs for ourselves and other interested persons, using webinars, podcasts, and social media.

### **Here are our recommendations for DC schools:**

#### **Improve the curriculum PK-12**

We have reviewed the current social studies standards to identify places where Asia and Asian Americans are taught or could be taught. Here are our recommendations for better ways to teach about Asia and Asian Americans in DC schools.

- We want to see Asia and Asian Americans included from the earliest grades. We believe showing films and reading books with Asian and Asian American representation at young ages will help dispel or prevent stereotypes.
- We recommend social studies classes, especially in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade (World Geography and Cultures), include more information on different ethnic groups, cultures, religion, and mythology to increase our knowledge beyond Western culture, religion, and mythology.
- We want the curriculum to move beyond the current focus on wars, governments, and political leaders. We don't want to only learn about the negative aspects of history, such as wars.
- We want to learn about places for their own sake and not just as reflections of US history.
- We want to learn about connections and comparisons between people, cultures, and nations – not just as separate units of study.
- We want students to expand their understanding of Asia beyond “Chinese Dynasties and Japan” to be more inclusive of South, Southeast, and Western Asian history and current events.
- We can also learn about Asia, Asian culture, and Asian Americans in other subject areas, such as English Language Arts, Humanities, World Languages, and so on.
- Reading books about the Asian American experience, as well as watching and discussing films with more accurate representations, are also valuable educational strategies.
- The goals should not only be to increase knowledge and understanding, but also to build empathy and connections.

**In addition, we recommend the following:**

**Field trips**

Students always enjoy field trips. They should be able to visit Asian/Asian American landmarks, businesses, galleries, neighborhoods (like Chinatown), etc, even beyond the borders of DC.

**Afterschool culture clubs**

We believe that students should have more afterschool opportunities to learn about different cultures, including Asian cultures. Students and educators should create culture clubs where world cultures can be explored and appreciated, even for those parts of the world not represented within the school's own student population (in other words, learning about Asian cultures is not just for Asian American students). These culture clubs would also be able to learn about current issues within different communities, such as the surge in anti-Asian hate. Student clubs like this can take the lead in implementing some of the other ideas presented here.

**Culture fairs/events – opportunities to hear AAPI voices**

We're not only thinking of displays or demonstrations of Asian culture, but with Asian and Asian American speakers sharing their voices and experiences, defying stereotypical media portrayals, with discussions and other opportunities to interact with students and others. These events could take place at schools, as well as in other community settings.

**Exchanges with nearby schools in the DMV with Asian and Asian American students**

These student exchanges would be very beneficial in increasing understanding and challenging stereotypes. We should start with students at young ages.

**Hire more Asian and Asian American teachers**

DC schools should hire not just native-born Asian (Chinese) teachers for language classrooms, but more Asian Americans for any purpose.

**Better anti-bullying or anti-racism training for counselors and students**

Students are Impressionable, and often will follow others, even when the best decisions aren't being made. A number of students in our group feel that anti-bullying advice to students is quite insufficient at present. Parents also have a role in discouraging bullying or hate against the AAPI community and others. Parents need to talk to their children. Parents can sometimes be the problem, and in that case, they need to also receive trainings.

**Monitor current events at school**

Students should have an opportunity to learn about, discuss, and reflect on current issues and news at school. This can be done within advisories, and in other creative ways.

**Do a better job with AAPI Heritage Month**

Many of us noted that the official email from DCPS on AAPIH Month just came out at the end of May. Even though we believe learning about Asia and Asian Americans should take place all year long, we think May is an opportunity to do much more, especially at a time of crisis like the present. Among other ideas, students could be encouraged to donate to identified organizations that are providing support to the AAPI community.