

CSBA ANNUAL
EDUCATION CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW 2007



California School Boards Association Annual Conference and Tradeshow

The Silent Issues of Asian Pacific Islander Students: Mental Health and Social Well-being

**Valerie Davis and Dr. Tony Vang
Board Members
Fresno Unified School District**



Fresno USD API Students

- 261 Pacific Islander
- 330 Filipino
- 11,161 Asian (15% of total enrollment)
 - Most school districts with large API student populations are mainly comprised of a combination of Japanese, Chinese, Korean, or Vietnamese.
 - Most of Fresno's Asian population is *Hmong*



English Learners

Most Asians in Fresno are English Learners

- Hmong: 4,972 EL; 2,020 FEP
- Khmer: 622 EL; 448 FEP
- Lao: 524 EL; 448 FEP

-
- Japanese: 4 EL; 6 FEP
 - Chinese: 39 EL; 40 FEP
 - Vietnamese: 70 EL; 81 FEP

FEP =Fluent English Proficient



FUSD AYP Results

- **Asian: 26.6 % proficient in English/Language Arts and 43.3% in math**
- **Filipino: 57.7% proficient in ELA and 63.2% in math**
- **Pacific Islander: 50.4% proficient in ELA and 55.6% in math**



The Hmong Population

- **Hmong first arrived in the US in 1975.**
- **Most are located in Montana, Minnesota and California.**
- **About 30,000 in the Central Valley**



The Hmong Population

- **Hmong is an “farm” based culture and had difficulty adjusting to life in the U.S.**
 - **Economic – could not afford to buy land**
 - **Social – fishing, hunting now required license**
 - **Cultural – animist beliefs**
 - **Cultural – Male role as absolute decision maker is undermined by U.S. law and contemporary customs regarding women.**
 - **Educational – language and literacy**



Educational Outcomes for Hmong

Negatives

- Low academic performance
- High truancy
- High drop out and suspension rates
- Low college attendance
- Parents feelings of powerlessness

Positives

- Hmong seniors spend more time on homework than non-Hmong
- Support and high expectations from parents (but primarily for males)
- Educational systems has made it possible to go from pre-literate childhood to doctoral degree

CSBA ANNUAL
EDUCATION CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW 2007



AB 78

**The California Legislature acts
to address the needs of the
Hmong population**



Addressing Academic Needs

Fresno USD Takes Action:

- **School Board Supports
AB 78**
- **Develops Hmong Curriculum
Resources for grades 2 – 11**
- **Professional development
for teachers**



Addressing Academic Needs

Fresno USD Takes Action:

- **Develops Resource Support**
 - H-SS Website
 - Hmong Voices Website
 - District adopted textbook
- **Sponsors campus culture events**
 - Hmong dancers
 - Academic programs – speakers, town hall meetings, partnership with CSUF, PFU



Addressing Academic Needs

Fresno USD Takes Action:

- **Newcomer Programs**
- **Academy for New Americans**
- **6 Hmong Administrators**
- **100 Hmong teachers**



Addressing Social and Emotional Needs

Fresno USD Takes Action:

- **Department of Prevention and Intervention**
 - District-wide framework to identify and intervene early in the mental health needs of students
 - Framework: Positive Behavioral Support (PBS)
 - A 3-tier approach



Addressing Social and Emotional Needs

Fresno USD Takes Action:

- **Department of Prevention and Intervention**
 - Tier 1: Prevention as intervention
 - Tier 2: referral for specialized services
 - Tier 3: referral for more intensive services



Addressing Social and Emotional Needs

Fresno USD Takes Action:

- **Department of Prevention and Intervention**
- ***Restoring the Learning Environment Program***
 - **Special program to assist Southeast Asian students, funded through a federal grant**
 - **3 Hmong Consultants in the Restoring the Learning Environment Program**



Addressing Social and Emotional Needs

Fresno USD Takes Action:

- **3 Hmong Cultural Consultants housed at high schools but respond to all age groups, district-wide**
 - **Original role: Address crisis in Southeast Asian students by assisting the District Crisis Response Team**
 - **Evolving preventive role**
 - **Outreach – seek out students at risk**
 - **Follow up services – facilitate support and social activities**



Addressing Social and Emotional Needs

Fresno USD Takes Action:

- **Department of Prevention and Intervention**
 - **Mental health issues addressed through RLE in 2006-2007:**
 - Family conflicts
 - Acculturation
 - Grief
 - Dating and relationships
 - Depression
 - Sexual identity
 - Substance abuse
 - Gang/violence prevention
 - Psychosis



Partnerships with the Community

Fresno Center for New Americans (FCNA)

Partners:

- **Fresno Unified School District**
- **Community Family Engagement Network**
- **SEA Educational Conference Committee**



Partnerships with the Community

Fresno Center for New Americans (FCNA)

Goals:

- Improve educational achievement of Fresno County's Southeast Asian (SEA) students (Hmong, Lao, Khmer, and Vietnamese)
- Promote opportunities through family engagement and community empowerment
- Serve as a model for other districts with high SEA populations.



Partnerships with the Community

Fresno Center for New Americans (FCNA)

First Steps:

- Fresno USD to provide data to help educate Southeast Asian parents about the academic performance of their children
- Equip them with the knowledge necessary to be able to guide, support, and monitor their children's education.



Want More Information?

- **Fresno USD website:**
www.fresno.k12.ca.us
- **Hmong Voices:**
www.fresno.k12.ca.us/titleiii/hmong/login.php.