The U.S. Department of Education currently requires that states and school districts aggregate data for all Asian students regardless of their ethnicity under the aggregated category of “Asian.” However, the “Asian” race category comprises more than 48 ethnicities including:

- American Indian
- Bangladeshi
- Cambodian
- Chinese
- Filipino
- Hmong
- Japanese
- Korean
- Laotian
- Pakistani
- Thai
- Vietnamese

This reporting guideline masks the educational inequalities that exist for Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) groups, particularly those from Southeast Asian American (SEAA) backgrounds. For example:

- 34.3% of Laotian, 38.5% of Cambodian, and 39.6% of Hmong adults do not have a high school diploma or equivalent (Data: U.S. Census Bureau 2010).

- 65.8% of Cambodian, 66.5% of Laotian, 63.2% of Hmong, and 51.1% of Vietnamese Americans have not attended college (Data: American Community Survey 2006-2008).

- By examining Asian American and Pacific Islander student achievement using disaggregated data, a statewide California study found significant achievement gaps between White Americans and their AAPI peers. According to the study, White Americans significantly outperform nine AAPI ethnic groups including Vietnamese Americans, Cambodian Americans, and Lao Americans. In math, seven AAPI ethnic groups scored at significantly lower levels than White Americans, including Cambodian Americans and Lao Americans.

Because federal funding is distributed to schools and school districts to close achievement gaps, lack of disaggregated data denies many SEAA students access and resources to the quality education they need to succeed and reach their full potential.

- More data on education achievement, high school drop outs, truancy, and suspension is needed to reveal K-12 challenges so that schools and school districts can provide support services earlier in order to prevent low rates of educational attainment.
What are some local solutions?

- Replicate policies of school districts that already collect and report on disaggregated data. Seattle Public Schools currently collects and reports data on the following Asian American subgroups: Asian, Cambodian, East Indian, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Other Southeast Asian, and Other Asian.  

- Community-based organizations (CBOs) and research institutions should partner with school districts to analyze data that is collected by some school districts, but not reported out. In a 2011 Request for Information by the U.S. Department of Education, 41 school districts responded that they do collect data of Asian American sub-groups, but do not publically report out on this data. For example, both Sacramento City Unified and Milpitas Unified School District collect data of Asian American sub-groups, but do not publically report out on this data. Many of these school districts stated that they do not report out this data because it is not federally mandated to report on Asian sub-categories. However, school districts were willing to partner with other organizations who would like to request use of this data for research projects that would help them better serve their students.

What are some federal solutions?

- Revise the U.S. Department of Education’s guidance on maintaining, collecting, and reporting racial and ethnic data to include collection and reporting of data on Asian American ethnic groups. In revising this guidance, the Department of Education can utilize ethnicity categories from the American Community Survey and U.S. Census Bureau 2010 form that have been developed through rigorous research to allow for more accurate population counts. The Department of Health and Human Services also uses the same race and ethnicity categories from the American Community Survey and Census 2010 form for its final standards on data collection on race, ethnicity, sex, primary language, and disability status as required by Section 4302 of the Affordable Care Act. We believe that the major ethnicities and their write-in examples from the Census Bureau should be given separate ethnicity categories, and should be a baseline for schools, school districts, and state education agencies. These ethnicities include:
  - Asian Indian
  - Chinese
  - Filipino
  - Japanese
  - Korean
  - Vietnamese
  - Native Hawaiian
  - Guamanian or Chamorro
  - Samoan
  - Fijian
  - Tongan
  - Hmong
  - Laotian
  - Thai
  - Pakistani
  - Cambodian

Lack of College Attendance Across Southeast Asian American Communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laotian Americans</td>
<td>66.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodian Americans</td>
<td>65.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hmong Americans</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese Americans who have not attended college</td>
<td>51.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Data: American Community Survey, 2006-2008)