COMMUNITY DATA SPOTLIGHT
COALITION FOR ASIAN AMERICAN FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

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TOPICS K-12, Disability, English Language Learners

ABOUT

The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF) serves Asian American communities across the state of New York. Their member organizations offer a range of social services, including youth programs, senior care, domestic violence survivor support, English classes for immigrants and small business training. The coalition advocates for equity and opportunity for Asian Americans in education, health and data disaggregation.

DATA NEEDS

CACF and its member organizations have identified an acute need for detailed ethnicity data in K-12 schools. The administrative data from the New York City Department of Education, New York State Education Department and National Center for Education Statistics do not disaggregate by ethnicity. For example, data is available on the number of Asian students who are English Language Learners (ELLs) but data on languages spoken at home is inadequate. The language data does not include all ethnicities or all languages spoken in communities that school districts serve. As a result, families often cannot identify the specific language or dialect spoken at home, instead selecting the "next closest" language option or not identifying their language at all.

Without this precise linguistic data, schools are unable to make data-driven decisions on how to meet the needs of the students and families they serve. Cultural relevance is critical to working effectively with families to support the educational needs of their children. Schools may be unable to differentiate between Indian and Indo-Caribbean students, or between Chinese and Uyghur students. Differences in language and culture are critically important in supporting students' needs. This data also is crucial for students with disabilities, whose rights are protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans With Disabilities Act. A successful partnership between schools and families to support students with disabilities must be grounded in an understanding of the family's culture and language support needs.

One CACF member organization, South Asian Youth Action (SAYA)[1], serves the South Asian and Indo-Caribbean populations in Queens and Brooklyn. The work of SAYA is informed by community knowledge and visits, and the organization emphasizes the need for disaggregated data. Drawing on experiences of CACF members in working with Richmond Hill High School, the organization discerned the importance of distinguishing between Asian Indian and Indo-Caribbean students and

Since 2004, CACF's Asian American Student Advocacy Project (ASAP) has trained AAPI public school students from across New York City to be advocates for themselves, their communities, and their fellow students. (Photo: Lia Chang)

families. For example, the 2022 American Communities Survey for New York City revealed that Indo-Caribbeans from Guyana have a lower median income and a higher rate of single-parent households compared to Asian Indians. These are important factors in serving students and families, yet Richmond Hill High School does not have disaggregated data on the large South Asian and Indo-Caribbean populations at their school.

To better support the needs of students and families, CACF and its member organizations need K-12 schools to include in their administrative databases detailed ethnicity data on the students and families they serve. Access to such data will enable the community and decision-makers to distinguish differences in educational outcomes, disability status, and English language learner status, and to offer tailored, culturally aligned responses and equitable policies. Disaggregated data by ethnicity must become available at schools, districts and the New York State Education Department.

During the 2024-2025 school year, ASAP Youth Leaders are working on advocacy campaigns focused on mental health, language access, and anti-bullying and harassment. (Photo: CACF)

1 https://www.saya.org

Front cover top photo: *ASAP Youth Leaders pose for a photo after presenting their research to community members in June 2024. (Photo: CACF)*

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