

# The Hidden Academic Opportunity Gaps Among Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders:

*What Disaggregated Data Reveals in Washington State*



This report was made possible through generous funding from Educational Testing Service (ETS). Central to the collaboration between the National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education (CARE) and ETS is the effort to promote the collection and dissemination of disaggregated data in order to better understand the variation of educational experiences and outcomes within the highly diverse Asian American and Pacific Islander student population.

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## PREFACE

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) are a remarkably diverse community, comprising 48 different ethnic subgroups that speak over 300 different languages and represent a range of different immigration histories. The AAPI population is also rapidly growing and was the fastest growing racial group in 2012. Among the key civil rights issues AAPI scholars and advocates have pressed for are improvements to data practices in order to represent the heterogeneity in the AAPI community. As AAPI students continue to experience a range of educational outcomes, data practices that aggregate AAPIs into one category continue to be a significant barrier for understanding and responding to their unique and diverse needs.

In 2013, the National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education (CARE) launched *iCount: A Data Quality Movement for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Higher Education*, a collaborative effort with the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (WHIAAPI) and with generous support from ETS and Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (AAPIP). *iCount* aims to raise awareness about and bring attention to the ways in which aggregate data on AAPI students conceal significant disparities in educational experiences and outcomes between AAPI subgroups. Additionally, *iCount* offers models for data reform with the goal of addressing the unmet needs of underserved populations. Finally, *iCount* aims to work collaboratively with the education field to encourage broader reform in institutional practices related to the collection, reporting and use of disaggregated data.

Building on the momentum of the 2013 *iCount* report, the current study highlights an important partnership in the State of Washington. In addition to being one of the fastest-growing and most concentrated AAPI populations in the nation, Washington State has a history of advocating for data reform to better represent the diversity of the AAPI communities in the state, thus making it an important partner to *iCount* and the larger effort for advancing better data practices for AAPI students across the nation.





## INTRODUCTION

Washington is a critical and unique state for the data disaggregation movement as it boasts a committed constituency of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) activists and a history marked by advocacy for data disaggregation. These efforts came to a head in 2008 with the creation of the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC), a state-appointed committee that focuses on strategies for closing the educational opportunity gaps in Washington State. In its year of inception, a mandate to write a report related to the educational disparities of AAPIs was given, spurring the later published reports: *Asian Americans in Washington State: Closing Their Hidden Achievement Gaps* and *Growing Presence, Emerging Voices: Pacific Islanders and Academic Achievement in Washington*. These reports were produced through a collaborative effort between researchers, community members and policy advocates.

The reports highlighted the need for data disaggregation to more accurately represent the academic achievement\* gaps between various AAPI ethnic subgroups in Washington State.<sup>1</sup> These findings were based on analysis of two-tier databases examining multiple variables at both the state and district level; however, because of the lack of disaggregated data, the authors focused primarily on language use in the home (as an indicator for non-English speakers or English Language Learners [ELLs]) and students who received free and reduced lunch (as an indicator for low-income status). These data were supplemented by Seattle Public School data, which was the only dataset that collected disaggregated data. As a result, the reports were able to demonstrate, for example, how Asian American ELL students in the aggregate, Southeast Asian students and Pacific Islander students were experiencing lower levels of academic achievement, in math and high school completion than other AAPI students.

Based on these findings, the EOGOAC made a number of recommendations, including the need for collecting disaggregated data by ethnic subgroup as a key strategy for closing academic opportunity gaps. Building upon these recommendations, elected officials in the state advocated at the legislative level to reform data practices statewide. Community organizations, teachers and other educational stakeholders voiced their needs for disaggregated data to not only represent their unique experiences, but also to examine opportunities for better serving their constituencies. In response to these efforts, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and another state-commissioned organization, the Washington State Education Research & Data Center (ERDC), began collecting disaggregated data in K–12 schools and some public colleges and universities in 2010. These data are now available and are the focus of the current report.

\*Since the previous reports, the state-appointed Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC) has advocated for the use of the term “opportunity gap” as opposed to “achievement gap” to more pointedly demonstrate the structural barriers that exist for individuals; thus, that language has been adopted in this report.

## Purpose of the Report

As an extension to the 2008 reports, and in alignment with the continued efforts of AAPI communities advocating for data disaggregation across Washington State, this report offers a deeper and more nuanced perspective on the educational realities of AAPI students and reinforces the need for disaggregated data to unmask the hidden opportunity gaps of particular AAPI students. Given the continued efforts to make progress at all levels — legislative, institutional and com-

In addition to the many important findings offered in the 2008 Washington reports, several recommendations were made with regard to how practitioners and policymakers could help close the opportunity gaps for AAPIs. Included in these recommendations were the following:

1. Adopt a data collection, research and evaluation plan to assess the reduction of opportunity gaps over time, with an explicit call for the disaggregation of AAPI data.
2. Foster partnerships with AAPI communities and families.
3. Foster culturally responsive approaches and practices (e.g., changing school climate, reconsidering curricula, and recruiting and retaining AAPI teachers and faculty).
4. Create a seamless pipeline from Pre-K to higher education.

These recommendations offer a foundation from which this report builds upon and a measure for examining progress to date.

munity — Washington State is at a critical moment to utilize the findings from this report to advance the data disaggregation movement.

As this report is the first study to utilize the disaggregated data from OSPI and ERDC to analyze disaggregated AAPI ethnic subgroup data in Washington State, several important themes emerged in regard to how it can serve as a tool for advancing data reform efforts:

1. Although some disaggregated data is now collected in the state, this report highlights how data can be *utilized* to examine opportunities for pinpointing academic barriers that particular AAPI subgroups face. The data featured in this report offer several different types of analyses that demonstrate a range of possible applications.
2. Disaggregated data has been collected since 2010; however, the access to and use of the data has been limited. This report offers a starting point from which institutions, community-based organizations and other educational stakeholders can work to apply disaggregated data to their own student populations.
3. As an extension of the 2008 reports and other advocacy efforts in the state, this report can inform efforts by policymakers and institutional leaders to reform how data is collected, reported and disseminated to better address the needs of the AAPI community statewide.

Ultimately, this report aims to demonstrate why and how data disaggregation is a critical tool for closing the academic opportunity gaps through the advancement of equitable educational practices. Given the momentum Washington State has already established to promote better access to and uses of disaggregated data, it is a key moment for ensuring that AAPI students across the state are accurately represented and equitably served.

“Being labeled as just ‘Asian’ or ‘Asian American’ can negatively affect a young person’s view on their culture. It is evident that when we generalize a person [by race], they feel as if their culture, ethnicity or where they come from is less valued. Data disaggregation is important because it matters where students come from, and it matters what their ethnicity, race and cultures are. As a very diverse country, it is crucial that we emphasize the importance of diversity by creating data that includes all the students’ different ethnic groups.”

— *College student in Washington State*

“AAPI struggles are often masked and misconceived. Data disaggregation will give visibility to AAPIs and their needs so they can be addressed — a key for educational advancement.”

— *High school student in Washington State*



## A PROFILE OF ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN WASHINGTON

With one of the fastest growing AAPI populations in the nation, Washington State represents a multitude of cultures, languages and immigration histories.<sup>2</sup> Since the release of the previous reports in 2008, the AAPI community has

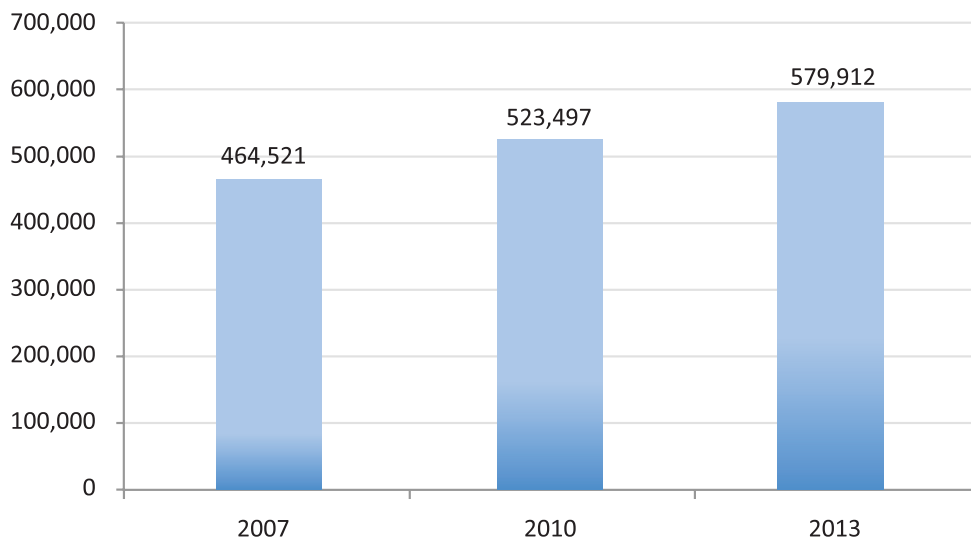
experienced population growth and a changing composition. This section highlights some of the changes that have taken place during the 2008–2013\* time frame.

### Population Growth

The AAPI community has a long and historic presence in Washington State. Their arrival in the 1880s and 1890s and contributions to agriculture as well as the railroad, fishing and merchant industries played a significant role in the economic development of the Pacific Northwest.<sup>3</sup>

The AAPI community continues to be important to Washington State and has steadily increased in size and proportional representation, from 7.2 percent in 2007 to 8.3 percent in 2013 (Figure 1). Currently, in Washington State, AAPIs are the second-largest racial minority group, second only to Latinos/Hispanics.

**Figure 1: AAPI Population Growth in Washington State, 2007–2013**



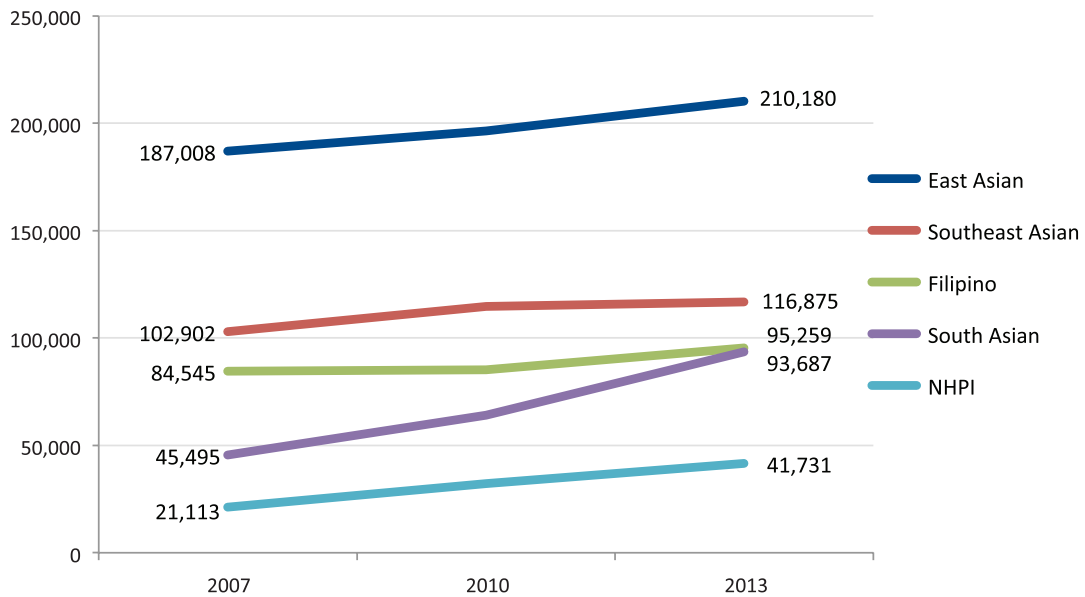
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, 2007, 2010, 2013.

\*To report on population change, 2007 U.S. Census data was utilized to better capture the change that has taken place.

The five largest Asian American groups in Washington are Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean and Asian Indian. Although these groups have grown in size from 2007 to 2013, other ethnic groups have grown at faster rates. For example, the Cambodian population in Washington doubled in size from 2007 to 2010 (Figure 2). South Asians also doubled their population over this

six-year period, greater than any other AAPI subgroup. In 2013, the five largest Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) groups in Washington were Samoan, Guamanian/Chamorro, Native Hawaiian, Tongan and Fijian. NHPIs nearly doubled in size, increasing from 21,113 in 2007 to 41,731 in 2013.

**Figure 2: AAPI Subgroup Population Growth, 2007–2013**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, 2007, 2010, 2013.

## Socioeconomic Characteristics

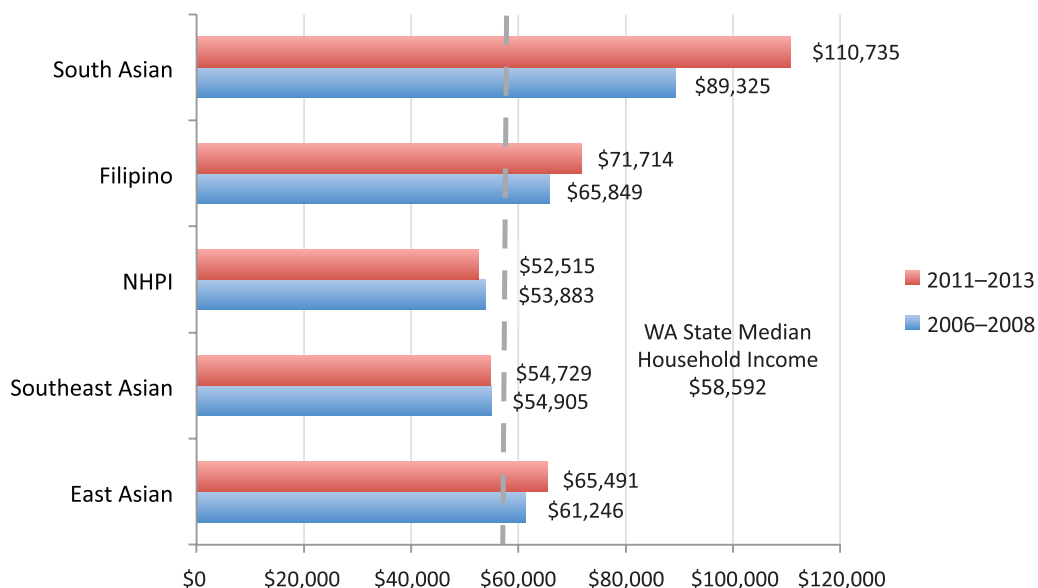
There are important distinctions between AAPI subgroups relative to changes in socioeconomic status since the 2008 reports. First, while some AAPI subgroups — South Asians, East Asians and Filipinos — have a median household income that is above the median household income for all Washington State residents, there are other subgroups (e.g., Pacific Islanders and Southeast Asians) with a median household income below the statewide median (Figure 3). Second, while the median household income for South Asians, East Asians and Filipinos increased between 2008 and 2013, the median household income declined for Pacific Islanders and Southeast Asians. Data that is further disaggregated into specific ethnic subgroups (not in figure) also reveals a particularly significant decline in household income for groups like Cambodians (\$57,016 to \$50,377).

Disaggregated data shows significant fluctuations in poverty rates within ethnic subgroups

from 2008 to 2013. Additionally, Cambodians living in poverty increased from 7.7 percent to 17.9 percent, while the Hmong population decreased from 39.1 percent to 9.4 percent. Similarly, the Chinese population, Washington’s largest AAPI subgroup, increased in poverty from 9.8 percent to 16.0 percent. Furthermore, disaggregating by subgroup reveals a disproportionate number of Burmese (73.4 percent), Samoans (24.1 percent), Indonesians (26.4 percent), Malaysians (19.7 percent), Native Hawaiians (21.1 percent) and Vietnamese (18.9 percent) living in poverty.

These data point to the need for utilizing more granular data to better understand the diverse social circumstances of AAPIs and to explore opportunities for improving their social outcomes. Their socioeconomic characteristics, disaggregated by ethnic subgroups, demonstrate that despite common misconception, some AAPI subgroups live in low socioeconomic households, which have implications for the educational status and attainment discussed in the next section.

**Figure 3: Median Household Income**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 3-Year Estimates, 2006–2008 & 2011–2013.

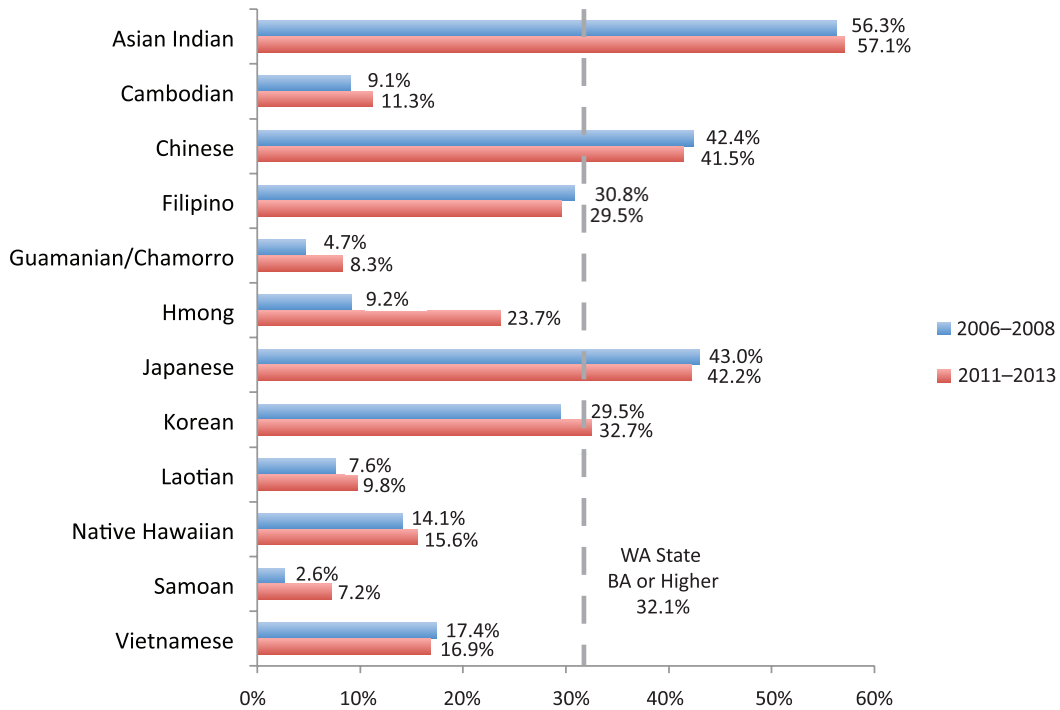
## Educational Attainment

Disaggregated data on educational attainment reveal significant differences between AAPI sub-groups. While Asian Indians, Chinese, Japanese and Koreans had a bachelor's degree attainment rate that exceeded the statewide average in 2013, other groups, including Cambodians, Filipinos, Guamanians/Chamorro, Hmong, Laotians,

Native Hawaiians, Samoans and Vietnamese, had educational attainment rates that fell below the statewide average (Figure 4).

Even among those groups that experienced increases in their degree attainment, their attainment relative to the statewide average is a matter of concern.

**Figure 4: Educational Attainment, Bachelor's Degree or Higher**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 3-Year Estimates, 2006-2008 & 2011-2013.

Over the time span of five years, it is important to note the extent to which some groups have experienced gains, while others continue to struggle to improve their circumstances.



## DISAGGREGATED K–12 DATA (OSPI)

The 2008 reports featured K–12 data, primarily from the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to report the status and progress of AAPIs in the state. In 2004, OSPI separated data for Asian Americans and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPI). Therefore, those two reports were limited to reporting aggregated Asian American and NHPI descriptive and academic data. In 2010, in response to the findings of the 2008 reports, OSPI began collecting disaggregated AAPI data to include 16 Asian American and nine NHPI subgroups, which are featured in this report. These data provide a unique opportunity to examine the differences that can be revealed through the utilization of disaggregated data. This section will highlight data on total enrollment, enrollment in programs (e.g., Free or Reduced Lunch, bilingual education, special education), absences and discipline. For some data points, particular AAPI ethnic subgroups were featured in the figures to demonstrate the difference from the AAPI mean or median and to highlight the disparities that exist across AAPI subgroups.

### Total Enrollment

As of the 2013 academic year, just over one million students were enrolled in K–12 public education in Washington State. In alignment with the state’s population generally, White students made up the greatest proportion of students enrolled (59.0 percent), followed by a growing Latino population at 20.4 percent. Asian Americans were the third largest group of students enrolled (7.2 percent), followed by 4.6 percent Black and 1.6 percent American Indian/Alaska Native students. NHPIs were the smallest population at 0.9 percent. The proportion of Asian Americans has remained relatively stable since the 2008 reports, which reported they made up “nearly 8 percent in 2007.”<sup>4</sup> The three largest Asian American student groups were Chinese, Filipino and Vietnamese at 18.6 percent each, followed by

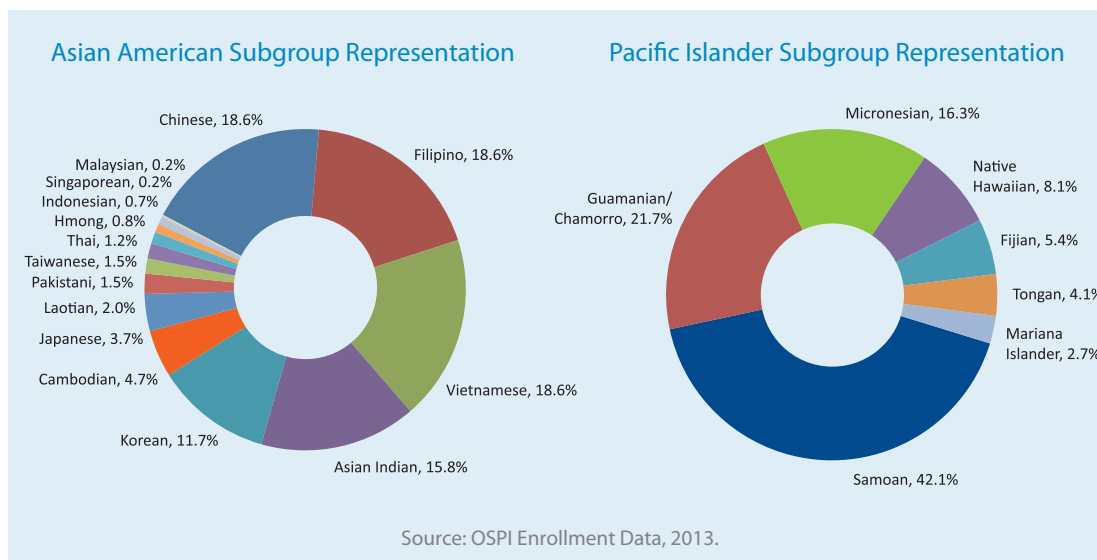
Asian Indians at 15.8 percent (Figure 5). Thus, as discussed in the previous section, Washington State’s AAPI population is not only growing, but also diverse.

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Asian Indians at 15.8 percent (Figure 5). Thus, as discussed in the previous section, Washington State’s AAPI population is not only growing, but also diverse.

The NHPI student population grew to 0.9 percent in 2013, from 0.6 percent in 2007. Despite their seemingly small proportional representation, the NHPI community, like the Asian American community, is impressively heterogeneous, representing a number of ethnic subgroups. In fact, Washington State has the third-largest NHPI population in the nation, following Hawai’i and California.<sup>5</sup> The largest NHPI student population in Washington is Samoan, making up 42.1 percent of the NHPI population. The second largest NHPI subgroup is Guamanian/Chamorro at 21.7 percent.

**Figure 5: Asian American and Pacific Islander Representation in K–12 in Washington State**



## Enrollment in Programs

Disaggregated data on AAPI enrollment in particular programs is valuable for pinpointing students who may be in need of particular attention or services. The Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL) program, for example, indicates the rate of students eligible for the National School Lunch Program, a federally assisted meal program based on federal income poverty guidelines.<sup>6</sup> To be eligible for the FRL program, a student's household income must be at or below 130 percent of the poverty threshold for free lunch, and between 130 and 185 percent for reduced-price lunch.<sup>7</sup> Given its function as the K–12 indicator for low socioeconomic status, which historically has served as a barrier to academic achievement, FRL enrollment is a key data point to examine.<sup>8</sup>

In the 2008 reports, the authors discussed the academic barrier that enrollment in the FRL program presented for some AAPI students. Given the limited nature of their data, the authors determined that 66.7 percent of the school districts

with at least 100 NHPI students had higher rates of FRL enrollment than the state average.<sup>9</sup> The authors also reported that in the Seattle Public School District — the only district that collected disaggregated data at the time — Southeast Asian students were disproportionately more likely to be enrolled in FRL as compared to their AAPI peers.

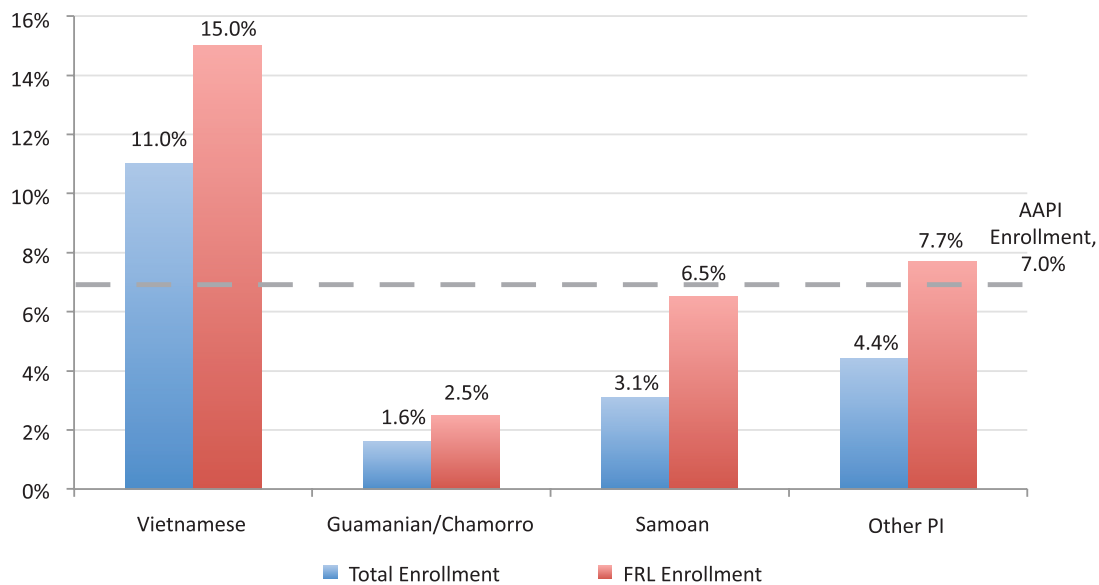
Utilizing newly available disaggregated data, it is now possible to expound on their findings and to more narrowly identify how particular student communities are disproportionately encountering this barrier. In our analysis, AAPI students make up 7.0 percent of the FRL enrollment, in the aggregate, which suggests a lower poverty rate as compared to the general population. However, there are some AAPI ethnic subgroups that are disproportionately represented in FRL enrollment. Vietnamese students, for example, make up 11.0 percent of the AAPI total K–12 enrollment, but 15 percent of FRL enrollment (Figure 6). Similarly, Guamanian/Chamorro and Other Pacific Islander students are

disproportionately enrolled in FRL. For Samoan students, their enrollment in FRL is more than two times their total enrollment rate at 6.5 percent and 3.1 percent, respectively. Given that a correlation between poverty and low academic achievement has been demonstrated by previous scholarship, these data highlights the need for addressing challenges related to poverty and low socioeconomic status for particular subgroups of students who are disproportionately more likely to be facing these academic barriers.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, enrollment in bilingual education for AAPIs is an important factor to examine given that national data indicates that AAPIs speak over

300 different languages as a primary language spoken at home.<sup>11</sup> Aggregate AAPI data indicates that 17.1 percent of AAPI students are enrolled in bilingual education programs. However, disaggregated data highlights more specifically which student groups are enrolled in bilingual education (Figure 7). For example, 23.5 percent of Cambodian, 24.7 percent of Hmong, 25.4 percent of Laotian and 30.5 percent of Vietnamese students were represented in bilingual education. Most astonishingly, 51.8 percent of Micronesian students were enrolled in bilingual education, which is three times the AAPI aggregate enrollment. Disaggregated data reveals valuable information regarding where AAPI students, by ethnic

**Figure 6: Proportional Representation of Ethnic Subgroups in Total Enrollment and Free or Reduced Lunch Utilization among AAPIs in Washington State, 2013**



Source: OSPI FRL Enrollment Data, 2013.

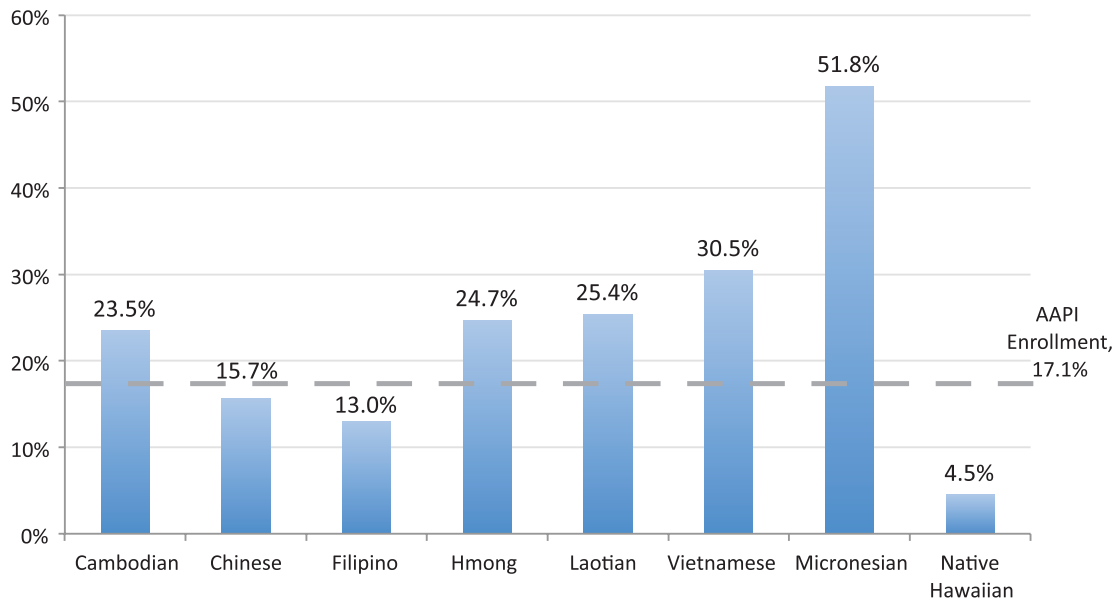
**Samoan students are enrolled in the Free or Reduced Lunch program at more than two times their total enrollment rate.**

subgroup, are placed and what specific support they might need in their academic experiences. For these students, consideration of language programs, curricula or hiring bilingual educators may be factors to be considered to appropriately address their unique linguistic circumstance.

Placement in special education programs also varies significantly across AAPI subgroups. Nationally, AAPIs make up only 4.2 percent (ages 3–5 years) and 4.8 percent (ages 6–21 years) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) programs, or placement in special education, as compared to the national rate of 5.7

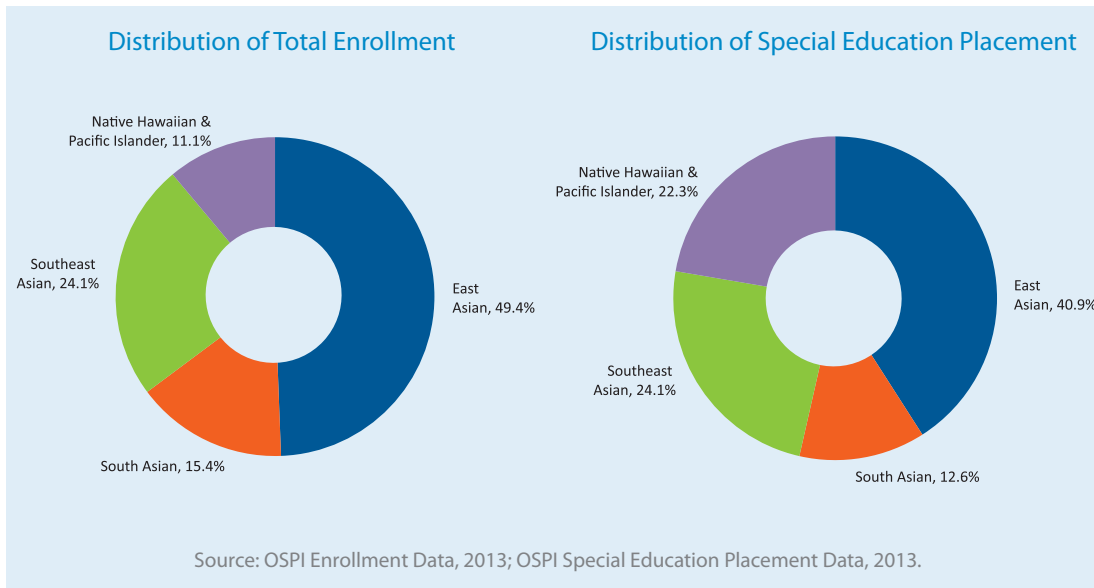
percent and 9.0 percent, respectively.<sup>12</sup> In Washington State, as of the 2008 reports, 7.0 percent of Asian Americans and 8.0 percent of NHPs were placed in special education in K–12, as compared to the overall 12.0 percent across all racial groups. The aggregate data previously reported, however, did not allow for pinpointing which AAPI subgroups were disproportionately more likely than their peers to be in special education. Disaggregated data demonstrates that placement in special education is particularly high for NHPs, who are two times more likely to be enrolled in special education proportional to their total enrollment (Figure 8).

**Figure 7: AAPIs by Ethnic Groups Enrolled in Bilingual Education in Washington State, 2013**



Source: OSPI Bilingual Education Enrollment Data, 2013.

**Figure 8:** Proportional Representation of AAPIs by Regional Groups in Total Enrollment and Special Education Placement, Washington State, 2013



“If young students in the AAPI community are not recognized, then they will feel like what they do doesn’t matter and kind of fade into the distance.”

— College student in Washington State

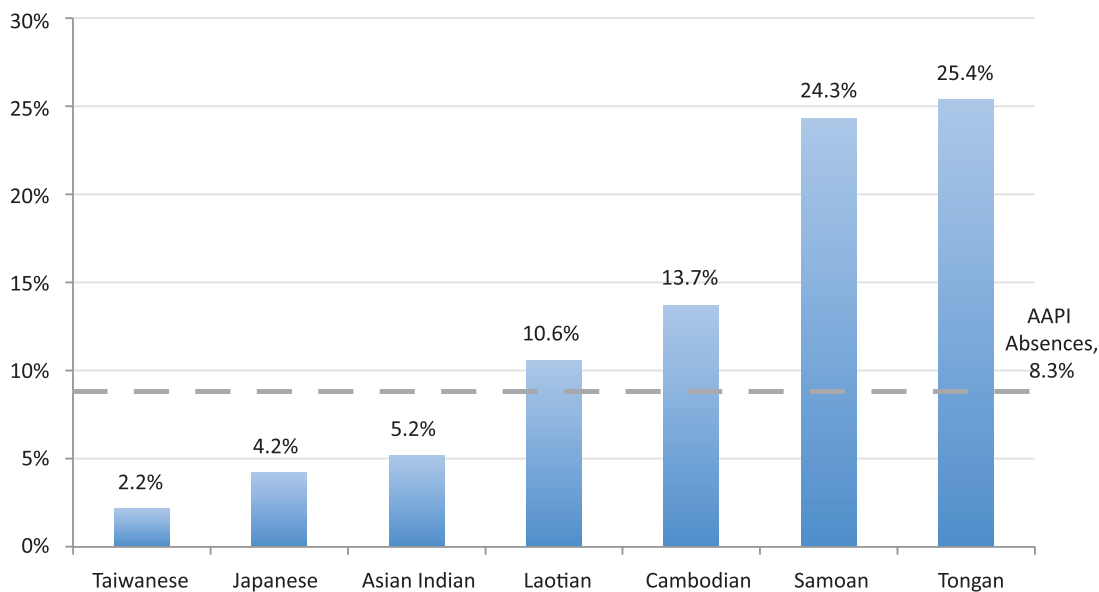
## Absences & Discipline

Although student absences were not included in the 2008 reports, that data is reported here, as studies have found that student absences are linked to academic achievement. Specifically, truancy results in greater risks for not doing well academically, dropping out or being pushed out, substance abuse, and living in poverty later in life.<sup>13</sup> In alignment with those findings, studies done in the state of Washington have revealed that school factors contribute to poor academic achievement of students of color.<sup>14</sup> Our analysis finds that AAPIs in the aggregate are the least

likely racial group to have unexcused absences (five or more) at 8.3 percent, as compared to the statewide average of 11.5 percent.

A closer examination of disaggregated data reveals that AAPI subgroups vary widely in regard to their attendance patterns. Tongans and Samoans, for example, are much more likely to miss five or more days of class, unexcused (25.4 percent and 24.3 percent, respectively), which far exceeds the AAPI average for unexcused absences (8.3 percent) (Figure 9). Comparatively between AAPI subgroups, it is also notable that Tongan students are 10 times as likely as Taiwanese students to

**Figure 9: Five or More Unexcused School Absences by AAPI Subgroups in Washington State, 2013**



Source: OSPI Unexcused Absence Data, 2013.

have absences. These data offer the opportunity to explore the ways in which schools and districts can be instrumental to improving attendance rates. Given that a number of school-related factors can influence unexcused absences — including unsafe schools, poor school climate and poor relations with teachers, among other factors — schools can play a key role in mitigating these influences on truancy.<sup>15</sup>

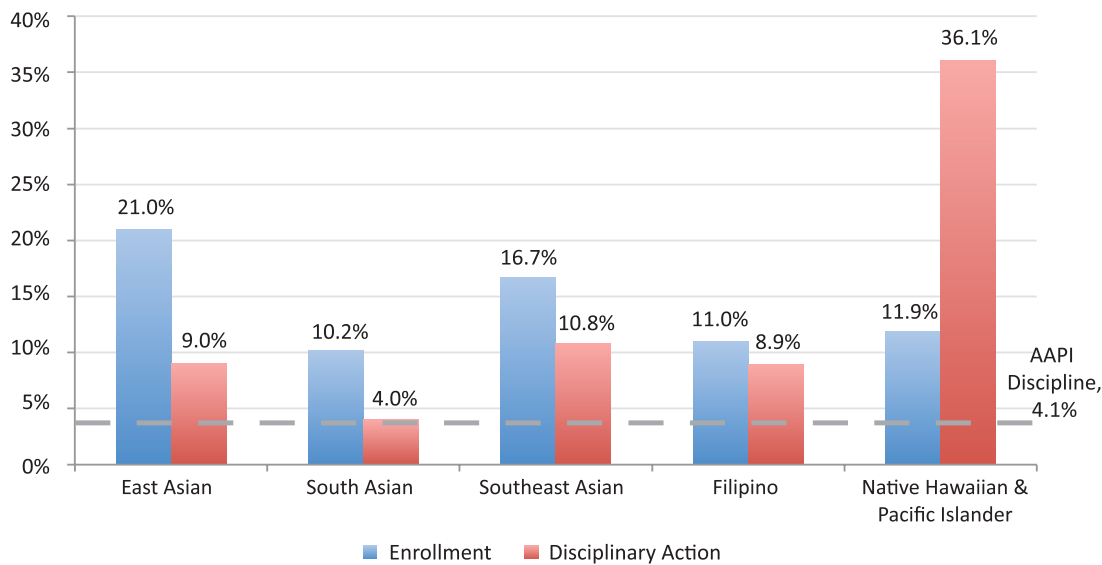
School disciplinary action is another important factor to examine in regard to student success.

The racial disproportionality in school discipline, especially for Black and Latino students, has been well researched.<sup>16</sup> In large part, studies that have examined school discipline by race have found Black and Latino students are disproportionately more likely to be targeted for suspension and expulsion than White and Asian students.<sup>17</sup> When Asian American students are included in these studies, they have been depicted as the least likely to be disciplined and, often times, Pacific Islanders have been left out of these studies all together.<sup>18</sup>

In the 2008 analysis, discipline included short- and long-term suspensions in Seattle Public Schools. As the only district that collected disaggregated data, the authors were able to report on the high rates of suspension among Southeast Asians and Filipinos, as well as Samoans. In alignment with those findings, AAPI students across the state today continue to experience a wide spectrum in regard to discipline. In the recent OSPI data, data is collected on the number of students with discipline incidents resulting in short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion. These incidents are classified into eight categories: bullying, tobacco, alcohol, illicit

drug use or possession, fighting without major injury, violence without major injury, violence with major injury and possession of a weapon. The fighting and violence variables have been collapsed into one category. These data reveal important findings. Relative to their proportional representation among AAPIs, NHPIs are disproportionately more likely to be disciplined. While NHPIs represent 11.9 percent of all AAPI students in Washington, they made up 51.5 percent of the recorded disciplinary action in 2013 (Figure 10). Given this, NHPI students must be further examined in regard to the differential academic experiences relative to disciplinary action.

**Figure 10: Proportional Disciplinary Action in Washington State, 2013**



Source: OSPI Disciplinary Action Data, 2013.

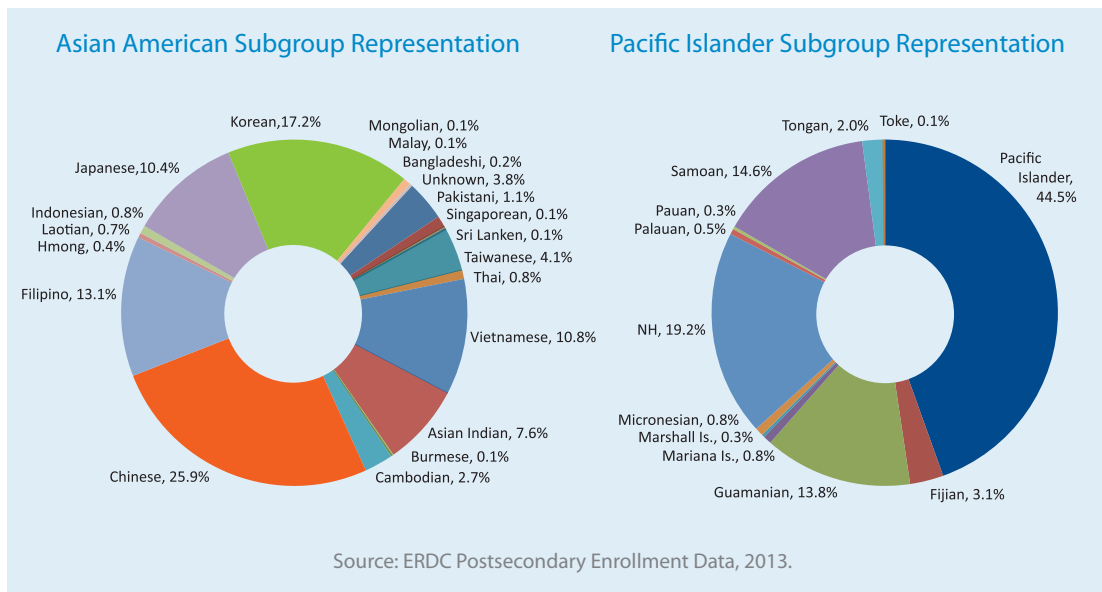




## DISAGGREGATED POSTSECONDARY DATA (ERDC)

In Washington State, 91,398 students were enrolled in one of the six public four-year postsecondary institutions in 2013. As in K–12, the White student population made up the largest proportion at 62.3 percent, followed by Asian American at 14.5 percent and Latino at 8.6 percent. NHPs made up 0.8 percent of the student population. At the time of the 2008 reports, disaggregated postsecondary data was not collected for postsecondary institutions. This section features data from the six four-year postsecondary institutions in Washington State, as the two-year data is not yet available. As Figure 11 demonstrates, the representation of AAPIs in postsecondary education includes a great diversity of ethnic subgroups, as is the case in K–12 education.

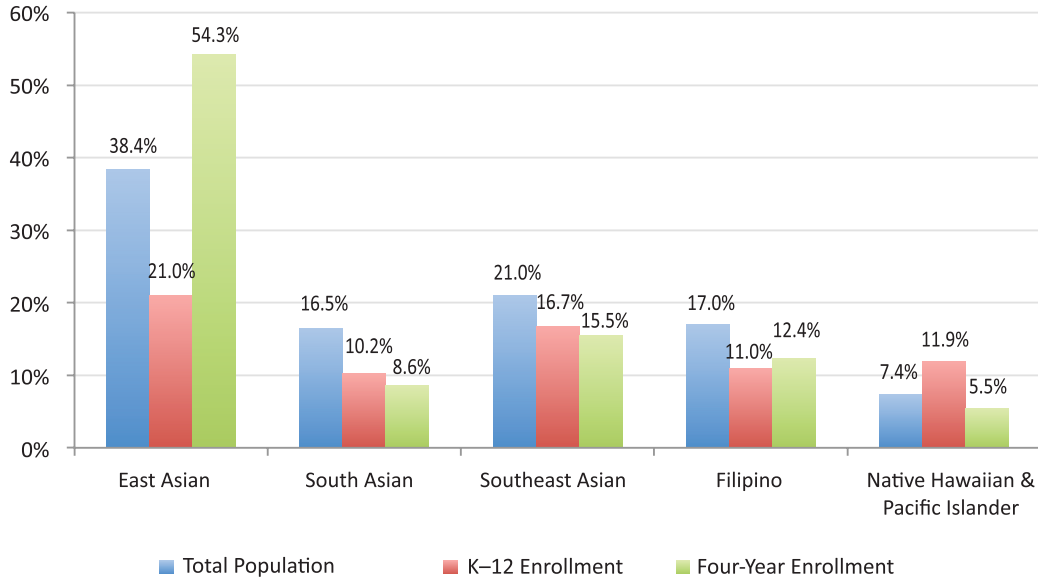
**Figure 11: Asian American and Pacific Islander Representation in Four-Year Postsecondary Public Institutions, Washington State, 2013**



Particular subgroups are disproportionately more likely to enroll in one of the six four-year public institutions in Washington. This can be determined by examining broader AAPI subgroups (Figure 12), which reveal that while East Asians make up 38.4 percent of the state’s AAPI population, they make up 54.3 percent of the four-year college enrollment. Conversely, Southeast Asians make up 21.0 percent of the state’s AAPI population and

16.7 percent of the K–12 enrollment, but only 15.5 percent of the postsecondary enrollment. Similarly, NHPs make up 11.9 percent of K–12 enrollment but only 5.5 percent of postsecondary enrollment in four-year institutions. In regard to reaching a point of parity, these data reveal that there is a large opportunity gap that continues to exist for particular AAPI subgroups.

**Figure 12: Proportional Representation in K–12 and Four-Year Enrollment, Washington State, 2013**

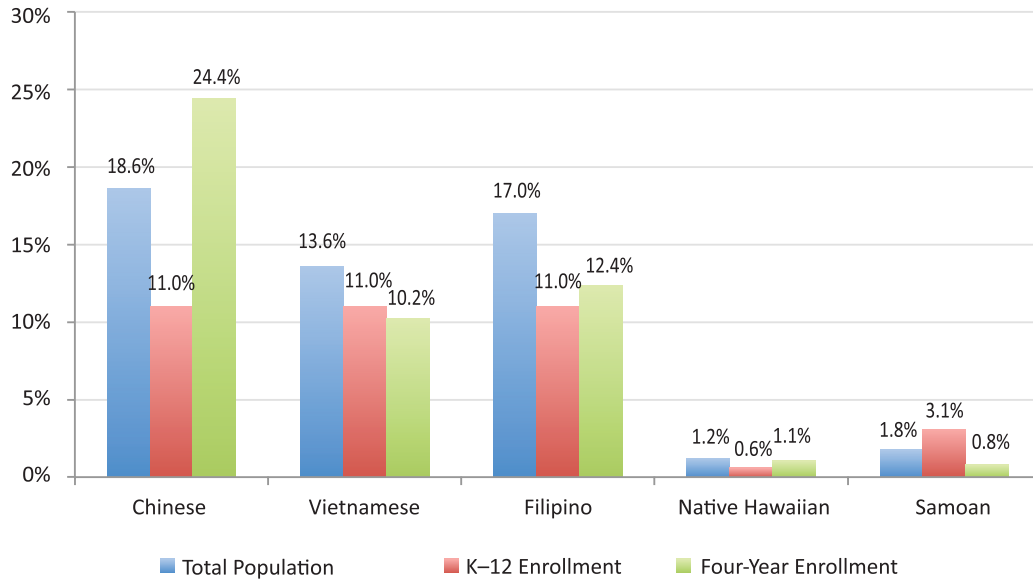


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, 2013; ERDC Postsecondary Enrollment Data, 2013.

This becomes even more apparent when examining data that is further disaggregated into specific subgroups. For example, while Chinese make up 18.6 percent of all AAPIs in Washington, they make up nearly a quarter of the postsecondary enrollment at 24.4 percent (Figure 13). Conversely, while Vietnamese make up 13.6 percent of the AAPI population, one of the five largest AAPI groups, they make up only 10.2 percent of AAPI enrollment in college. Similar to their Vietnamese

peers, Samoan students also experience a lower rate of postsecondary enrollment (0.8 percent) as compared to their proportional representation in the AAPI population in the state (1.76 percent). Disaggregated data allows us to narrowly determine which subgroups are experiencing lesser access to postsecondary education, thus allowing opportunities for mitigating academic barriers facing these particular students and communities.

**Figure 13: Proportional Representation in K–12 and College Enrollment by AAPI Subgroups, Washington State, 2013**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1–Year Estimates, 2013; OSPI K–12 Enrollment Data, 2013; ERDC Postsecondary Enrollment Data, 2013.

The ERDC data brings to surface a few key factors. First, not only does it represent diverse educational experiences of AAPI subgroups in postsecondary education in Washington State, it also narrowly targets which communities and students are experiencing more difficulty accessing postsecondary education. Secondly, although the data shared here is not as extensive

as the data available for the K–12 section, it points out the value of collecting and reporting disaggregated data as it reveals the opportunity gaps that exist across groups. Finally, the ERDC data has been underutilized in Washington State to date; therefore, this report provides a platform for encouraging the use of these more nuanced data to examine student access and outcomes.

“For a long time the Asian Pacific Islander community has been grouped up into one monolithic group. Stereotypes, prejudice and microaggressions are the repercussions that arise with such action. To have representation across the Asian Pacific Islander community would create less of a negative stigma on individuals who are not represented in print culture.”

— *College student in Washington State*



## CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

mask the wide spectrum of AAPI academic experiences and outcomes in Washington State. Disaggregated data unveils what is hidden beneath aggregate data and is helpful for identifying opportunity gaps to which policies, programs, and other resources can target. Being able to more narrowly target resources is critical for addressing the unique barriers and challenges faced by particularly vulnerable AAPI subgroups. Unfortunately, these subgroups are too often overlooked and underserved without a deeper understanding of their unique life circumstances and educational trajectories. It is these particular AAPI subgroups who will benefit the most from the newly available data in Washington State.

A number of important recommendations for practitioners and policymakers emerged from this study:

- Although some disaggregated data is now being collected, there is a need for more consistent data, which can be resolved by better guidance and rulemaking at the state level. It is important for K–12 schools and districts, for example, to be collecting data that can be merged across schools and districts. This is particularly important when it comes to identifying which ethnic subgroups are included in surveys.
- Similar challenges exist within different sectors of public higher education. Community colleges and technical schools should be collecting information similar to that collected by public four-year colleges and universities. To this point, it is important for K–12 data to align with postsecondary data and for data between postsecondary sectors to be more aligned in order to track students within the context of the academic pipeline.
- In addition to changes to the collection of information, it is also important for data to be more

What the results of this report reveal is the extent to which data on AAPIs reported in the aggregate

accessible to communities. Although disaggregated data has been collected since 2010, this is the first publication that has reported it. Access to these data is particularly important for community and advocacy groups that work with underrepresented and underserved AAPI communities.

- Data should also be utilized to better inform the work of institutional leaders and practitioners. Disaggregated data can help target interventions and support services for students who are facing particular academic barriers and challenges. It is also critical for informing teacher training, curricula, and culturally responsive programs and services.

“Disaggregating data would not only have immediate change on paper, but also be a start to much more broad and subtle changes in our everyday society, which would, in turn, allow the youth in each ethnic culture to have pride in themselves and being a part of their unique culture.”

— *College student in Washington State*



# TECHNICAL APPENDIX

Data in this report were drawn from multiple sources:

## *U.S. Census Data*

Our primary source for statewide demographic information was from the U.S. Census Bureau. To capture changes in Washington's AAPI population, we relied on data from the 2007, 2010 and 2013 American Community Survey (ACS), 1-Year Estimates. In order to better understand and compare AAPI demographic conditions, we utilized two variables (Median Household Income and Educational Attainment) from two different iterations of the American Community Survey's 3-Year Estimates, 2006–2008 and 2011–2013.

## *Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) Data*

Data obtained through OSPI included K–12 student-level data for all students enrolled in a public school in any of the Washington State school districts in 2013. These data were sorted by both racial group (Asian American, broadly) and by ethnicity (ethnic subgroup). Aggregate numbers of enrollment, including programmatic enrollment (Free or Reduced Lunch, bilingual education and special education) were descriptively analyzed by race and/or ethnicity. Means or medians were determined through such analysis and offered as benchmarks for comparison. Additionally, rates of absence and discipline were included in the descriptive analysis, and means or medians were also used as a comparison for these variables. These variables were selected as they were also used in the 2008 reports and offer an opportunity for examining change over time. The only variable that was not featured in the 2008 report is absences, which was included as it was determined relevant to the opportunity gap narrative. In some cases, ethnic subgroups were aggregated into regional groups (see below for details).

## *Education Research and Data Center (ERDC) Data*

ERDC data included four-year postsecondary student-level data for all students enrolled in one of the six public four-year institutions in Washington State in 2013. These data were sorted by both racial group (Asian American, broadly) and by ethnicity (ethnic subgroup), and aggregate numbers of enrollment were descriptively analyzed by race and/or ethnicity. These data were compared against ACS and OSPI data to examine proportionality of higher education enrollment. Data on student enrollment in community and technical colleges (CTCs) were not included as that data is reportedly not as comprehensive as the four-year college student data. Ethnic subgroups were also aggregated into regional groups (see next page for details).

## Regional Groups

Our aggregates of AAPI ethnicities into regional groups included the following ethnic subgroups, which appeared in at least one of the datasets used (ACS, OSPI, ERDC):

Subgroup	Ethnicity
East Asian	Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Mongolian, Singaporean, Taiwanese
Southeast Asian	Burmese, Cambodian, Hmong, Indonesian, Laotian, Malaysian, Thai, Vietnamese
Filipino	Filipino
South Asian	Asian Indian, Bangladeshi, Bhutanese, Nepalese, Pakistani, Sri Lankan
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	Fijian, Guamanian or Chamorro, Mariana Islander, Melanesian, Micronesian, Marshallese, Native Hawaiian, Palauan, Papuan, Samoan, Tongan, Toke



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