

NAPAWF

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum

PLATFORM PAPERS

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This collection of Platform Papers describe the six issue areas that form the basis for NAPAWF's work. The Platform Papers are not meant to provide a complete list of issues and concerns in these areas. Nor does the format of this collection assume that the issues discussed can be neatly separated into six areas. Rather, the Platform Papers are intended to be works-in-progress that serve as companions to the organization's grassroots work.

PLATFORM PAPER ON

Educational Access

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ISSUE AREAS

- Data and information on the status and needs of API women and girls
- Access to education
- Relevant curricula, programs, and services for students
- Employment opportunities
- Parental involvement in schools

PROBLEM STATEMENTS

The educational issues and needs of API women and girls are often invisible due to gaps in collecting and analyzing relevant information. Educational status and progress are typically tracked along lines of race or gender, but statistics involving the intersection of race and gender are lacking. Consequently, the basic information needed to assess the particular situations of API women and girls is hidden. In addition, lost within the general category of "Asian and Pacific Islander" are women of specific ethnic classifications, sexual identities, economic classes, and other differing characteristics. Thus, the needs and status of some API women and girls remain hidden even more deeply than others.

Access to appropriate and relevant educational opportunities, including employment in the field of education, must support and reflect the full diversity of API women and girls. Educational institutions, from K-12 to colleges and universities, must adopt curricula, policies and programs that encourage rather than hinder the full participation and success of API women and girls as students and as employees. To these ends, the gathering and analysis of information about the status and needs of API women and girls is imperative.

PLATFORM GOALS

- To increase access to appropriate and relevant educational opportunities, including employment in the field of education, for API women and girls.
- To improve the availability of information necessary to analyze the diverse needs and status of API women and girls.

ISSUE AREA OBJECTIVES

- Increase the number of API women employed and promoted in every field of education and at all levels of education from K-12 through colleges and universities.
- Reform educational programs, services and curricula to address the diverse needs of API students (e. g., bilingual education or support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual students) and to reflect the diversity of their communities and identities (e. g., multicultural and gender sensitive curricula).
- Promote the involvement and leadership of API mothers in school-based and educational activities.
- Promote awareness within and beyond the API community about the issues that affect API girls and women and that hinder their full participation and development in school and in their jobs.

ISSUE AREA STRATEGIES

- Develop a network and strategies to support and advocate for the mentoring, recruitment, hiring, development and promotion of API women at all levels of education.
- Advocate for multicultural curricula and materials that reflect and address the diversity of API women and girls and their issues, including issues of gender, sexuality, culture, difference and power. Link curriculum to the development of effective pedagogical strategies for all students.
- Advocate for effective bilingual education programs that address the needs of diverse API students and their families and that are gender- and culturally-inclusive. Support pedagogical strategies that attend to issues of gender and culture.
- Advocate for culturally sensitive support services for lesbian, gay, and bisexual API students. Support the development and distribution of appropriate educational materials that address issues of sexual diversity in API communities. Eliminate hostile environments that permit harassment and violence against racially and sexually diverse students. Develop strategies for protecting students from such harassment and violence.
- Monitor the effectiveness of educational programs and policies designed to target "underrepresented" groups to ensure responsiveness to the complexities and intersections of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and class. Work with civil rights organizations to identify and confront segregationist educational districting as well as biased achievement "tracking" systems.
- Promote the involvement and leadership of API mothers in a variety of school-based and educational activities. Work with parents, teachers, and other community members to develop strategies for keeping API female students engaged and motivated in their own education. Support informal information networks for the transformation of knowledge "from the ground up."
- Develop strategies for enabling parents to integrate their children's

education with family life.

- Develop workshops and materials to educate non-API teachers, educational administrators, and school board members about:
 - 1. The impact of stereotypes in hiring, promotions, workplace environments, and the development of leadership in educational settings.
 - 2. The problems of "tracking" students based on stereotypical assumptions.
 - 3. Cultural, pedagogical, and curricular issues that affect the success of API girls and women.
- Develop educational workshops and strategies to inform and transform API community attitudes toward the participation of women and girls in a broad range of educational and extracurricular activities and opportunities. Develop strategies for educating parents, students and other community members about the benefits of specific educational programs so that they can make informed choices about opportunities.
- Develop workshops and materials to inform API parents and students about the availability of scholarships, fellowships, grants, and other educational opportunities.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

None listed

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN PROPOSAL

Educational institutions are increasingly linked by Internet technologies; NAPAWF should draw from the growing networking opportunities that are opening up. New networks not only allow for increased communications (local and national) but also for organizing opportunities between educational institutions and various local communities. NAPAWF should seize upon funding and programmatic opportunities that are becoming available as the result of growing interest in this area. The various levels of networks could be used for sharing information, organizing, and strategizing on local and national levels.

The networking opportunities and strategies developed by this initiative would not be limited to the area of Educational Access. NAPAWF in general will need to confront the difficult communications issues related to the attempt to organize nationally. Work done in the area of Educational Access could provide the starting point for developing such communications, information-sharing, and organizing possibilities to be gained from the Internet. Because many members working in educational institutions are probably already linked, beginning stages of such a network could begin immediately.

Objective:

- To develop a network that facilitates both national and local strategizing around issues of educational access for API girls and women.

Strategies:

Research grant opportunities for funding technological initiatives. For example, the National Endowment of the Humanities has a special grants program for funding the use of new technologies. The NEH seems to be

particularly interested in funding initiatives that link institutions of higher education to public schools and local communities. NAPAWF's work in obtaining grants would benefit a network of educators in higher education and public schools, as well as communities that may not have sufficient funds to hook up to the Internet on a large scale. NAPAWF would thus be working to fight the troubling gap between those who can benefit from the new information and communications possibilities and those who cannot.

Investigate local models where such networks are in place. NAPAWF ought to learn from initiatives that work well in linking educational institutions to communities.

Investigate and develop national communications networks using the new technologies. Again, because institutions of higher education are increasingly linked, NAPAWF should build from the resources that are already in place. NAPAWF members interested in Educational Access could develop a listserv (specialized email list), a Website that both provides information and facilitates communications, and a method for connecting to existing organizations working on educational access and affirmative action.

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