



RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT
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Testimony Re: House Bill 5453 Regarding Education – All Students Count Act
Senate Committee on Education
March 1, 2017
Stephanie Geller, Senior Policy Analyst

We would like to voice our support for House Bill 5453, the *All Students Count Act*, which would improve the quality of the data collected and reported on Asian students in Rhode Island.

The Asian population in Rhode Island is fast growing and quite diverse in terms of ethnic origin, language spoken, and educational needs and outcomes. During the 2016-2017 school year, there were 4,546 Asian students enrolled in grades Pre-K through 12 in Rhode Island, making up 3% of the student population. During the 2015-2016 school year, English Learner students in Rhode Island public schools spoke 94 different languages, and three of the ten most commonly spoken languages were Chinese, Khmer/Cambodian, and Laotian.

Having additional detail on the educational experiences, needs, and outcomes of Asian students and how these experiences, needs, and outcomes differ by subgroup would allow decision makers to better address the educational needs of Asian students and develop effective policies to support these students and improve their outcomes. The most recent data on high school graduation rates show that Asian students had the highest four-year graduation rate for the Class of 2016 with 92% of Asian students in Rhode Island graduating within four years, higher than the rate for all students of 85%. Similarly, results for the 2016 *PARCC* show that 49% of Asian third-grade students in Rhode Island met expectations in English Language Arts, the same rate as for White students (49%), and much higher than Black (26%), Hispanic (24%), and Native American (15%) students.

While data in the aggregate suggest that Asian students are performing well, we hear anecdotally that outcomes differ substantially by Asian subgroup, with Asian students from groups that have lived in the United States for longer and have higher incomes doing much better than newer-arrived and lower-income Asian subgroups. This bill would allow us to collect more detailed and better data that would help to target interventions and improve proficiency and outcomes for these subgroups.

There may be some challenges associated with reporting data on small subgroups (e.g., Cambodian, Filipino, Hmong, Laotian, and Vietnamese students) due to the Rhode Island Department of Education's (RIDE's) restrictions on reporting data for groups that are smaller than ten students (to protect the confidentiality and identity of these students); however, we understand that organizations supporting this legislation have discussed these issues with RIDE in the past and that this legislation has been modified to address these concerns.

Now that these issues have been addressed, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would encourage you to pass this bill.