



# NAAPAE Newsletter

National Association for Asian and Pacific American Education

December 1988

## ESL Classes Impacted by Amnesty Applicants

The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act is now entering its second phase, in which applicants for permanent residency are required to develop basic citizenship skills. These include a minimum standard of English language proficiency and some knowledge of U.S. history and government.

Applicants have two and a half years following the application date to meet this requirement. Since the amnesty period lasted from January 1987 until May 1988, agencies providing the required educational services will be heavily impacted over the next couple of years.

The Act requires applicants to show evidence that they are pursuing a minimum of 40 hours of instruction that will help them meet the requirements or risk deportation.

California, Texas, Illinois, New York, and Florida will be the states most affected by the amnesty. As many as two and a half million people have applied for the amnesty program, most of them adults. The state departments of education of all these states have declared that not enough resources — teachers, facilities or funds — are available to serve the amnesty applicants in addition to all other persons interested in learning English and citizenship skills.

Given the sudden upsurge in permanent residency applications submitted as part of the amnesty program, immigrants and refugee adults in these five states may find it even more difficult than ever to find space in the already limited adult ESL and citizenship classes in the years to come.

## *Editor's End*

First of all, let me extend to all of you my best wishes for a happy holiday season. Speaking of holidays — we are coming to the end of a very eventful year in terms of NAAPAE concerns, and are readying ourselves for an even more eventful 1989.

To begin with, the change of administration in Washington will most likely bring about a change in the direction of the country's educational policy. Lauro Cavazos, the new Secretary of Education, has his own agenda which will guide the educational priorities for the upcoming year.

In addition, this year the U.S. Congress is expected to institute a new and different educational accountability program for the federal government, and we are likely to be faced with the restructuring of various educational programs. Finally, we will soon have to contend with the impact of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act on adult education and with the effects of the various "official English" laws — all of which have recently made headlines in the educational literature.

Over the past year Asian and Pacific American Education has been the beneficiary of increased attention from mainstream educational publications. A good example is the November special issue of *Phi Delta Kappan* on the immigration effects on education. The issue included two articles on Asian American education — one by noted education writer Diane Divoky and one by NAAPAE member Esther Lee Yao. Divoky's article is well-rounded and balanced, although Yao's piece probes even more in depth on the issues raised by Divoky. Taken together,

er, these two articles give a relatively comprehensive overview of modern-day Asian American education issues, and thus represent a significant step forward toward the breaking of Asian stereotypes in the general press. (True, there has been sporadic coverage of Asian education in various U.S. publications, but the focus has been on education in Asia, not in America.)

In addition, the increased awareness of Asian American concerns in the larger educational community was also demonstrated by the inclusion of an Asian American subset in the National Assessment of Educational Progress study.

At the same time, however, NAAPAE need not forget that the organization is concerned with Pacific Islander education as well, both here and in the Pacific. Congress is currently considering legislation that would grant Native Hawaiians "nationhood" status, similar to that of the various American Indian groups. Once granted such status, Native Hawaiians will probably face internal struggles as they focus on designing a wide range of policies — including educational policies — for their nation. If called upon, NAAPAE should stand ready to aid in this cause.

In closing, I hope that all of us involved with NAAPAE will continue focusing on how to best define our approach, develop a unique and effective organizational identity, and act as an effective force in the educational world. The issues and opportunities are waiting for NAAPAE to seize upon.

And by the way — have a happy lunar new year, too!

## Education News

### Cavezos to Stay as Education Secretary

George Bush, ending several weeks of speculation, announced that he would retain Lauro Cavezos as secretary of education.

Cavezos, who has replaced the controversial William Bennett since September, states that he believes in bilingual education, although he also supports Bennett's idea of funding methods other than transitional bilingual education.

Cavezos has indicated that he would like to focus on minority and disadvantaged students. Themes that President-elect Bush says he wants Cavezos to pursue include greater rewards for excellent teachers, magnet schools, alternative certification routes, and educational vouchers.

### Grant Deadlines Raise Questions

Reagan Administration officials in the Education Department have tried to push the application deadline for bilingual education programs back by two months. Under threat from Senator Paul Simon that he would hold up the confirmation of Lauro Cavezas as Secretary of Education, Education Department officials agreed to set the application deadline at November 1, 1988 — still one month earlier than the original deadline.

Bilingual education proponents claim that the earlier application date allows Reagan appointees in the Education Department to fund English-only methods for bilingual education at the expense of native language methods before these officials are replaced by the Bush appointees. The Reagan administration people, however, claim that they were only trying to respond to Congress' complaint that the Education Department was too slow in awarding grants.

Reviews for bilingual education

grants started the week before Thanksgiving.

### Official English Wins in Three States

After emotional campaigns, voters in Florida, Colorado and Arizona passed initiatives declaring English the official language of their states. The November 8 election brings to 17 the number of states with similar laws. Official English bills are currently before legislatures of 28 states, and have been defeated by the legislatures of three others.

The other 14 states are: Arkansas, California, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. The measures passed with large majorities in Florida and Colorado, but won by just 1 to 2 percent in Arizona.

Supporters of these laws have indicated that they will now push for changes in bilingual education programs and for the adoption of an official English amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

### Asians the Largest Group in St. Paul Public Schols

Nearly 15 percent of the public school students in St. Paul, Minnesota are Asian, which makes them the largest minority group in that city. These students are primarily Hmong, with the rest being comprised of Lao, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, and Pacific Islanders.

St. Paul public schools has thus become one of the largest urban school systems in the country in which Asians are the largest minority group.

### NAEP Study on Asian Students Stresses Importance of English Proficiency

In a study based on 1985-86 data on language minority students, researchers from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) have concluded that Asian and Hispanic students' academic success depends on their English language competence, but that a non-English home environment has little or no consistent relationship to school achievement.

The study, based on a national representative sample of Asian and Hispanic students in grades 3, 7, and 11, found that in math Asian students significantly outperformed all other groups except Cubans. In reading Asian students narrowly outperformed white students and significantly outscored all other groups.

NAEP researchers also determined that Asian students seldom use their native language outside of their homes; report doing more homework than students in any other group; tend to enroll in academic tracks; and believe that effort is a critical factor in educational success.

Differences in background and school characteristics were not correlated to differences in academic performance between Asians and other groups.

Chester Finn, former Assistant Secretary of Education for research and improvement, stated that while the study does not prescribe the best method for teaching English, it does show that English fluency ought to be the main educational goal for limited English proficient students concerned with academic achievement. On the other hand, James Lyons, counsel to the National Association for Bilingual Education, warned that English language fluency alone is insufficient, and that learning other subjects is equally important.

## Regional Report: New England

### Racial Problems on the Rise

by Fred Dow

Asian American social issues have always posed important questions for the development of school curriculum as well as school and community organization. Recent events in New England communities, however, have brought to the forefront critical issues of educational equality and the need to improve racial tolerance and multicultural awareness. As the Asian American population has grown dramatically in many communities, so have racial tensions.

In Quincy, Massachusetts, for example, white students have verbally and physically abused Asian Americans. The hostilities resulted in an outbreak of violence directed at the Asian American community as a whole. Local Asian American educational organizations are now advocating the implementation of educational reform in the areas of staff training and school curriculum.

In another incident Asian American college students were spat upon and verbally abused by a group of white students as they rode a bus to a university-sponsored function last October. University resident assistants sat idly by while racial slurs such as "Chinks, Gooks and Sang, we all live in a yellow submarine," were flying around. Asian American students and faculty on campus have organized and are demanding more services, such as Asian American studies and training for university personnel on issues of racism.

Finally, Harvard University is being investigated by the U.S. Department of Education for alleged bias in its admission policies for Asian Americans.

All these developments indicate that NAAPAE is needed in the New England area. By networking, APA educators can effectively develop the professional education that can help avert such crises. A membership campaign is being planned, and current members are urged to address these issues of critical importance to APA education in New England.

## NAAPAE NEWS

- The NAAPAE Executive Council held its meeting on October 15, 1988 at the Oakland Airport Hilton in Oakland, California.

- Foremost on the agenda was planning for the **11th Annual NAAPAE Conference**, to be held in Rockville, Maryland on April 27-29, 1989. The theme of the conference will be *Excellence and Empowerment through Active Participation*. For more information about this event, please call Jeannette Kwok, conference co-chair, at (703) 425-0896.

- NAAPAE Executive Council elections will be held in the very near future. All nominations have already been received, and ballots will be mailed out shortly to all NAAPAE members.

- Louise Wong has been appointed NAAPAE Regional

Representative for Region II (NY, NJ, PR and VI). Ms. Wang will replace outgoing Representative Euphine Cheung. Her phone number is (212) 998-5484.

- Hawaii members are interested in starting a NAAPAE chapter/affiliate, and the Executive Council has offered its backing for this proposal.

- The locations for the 1990 - 1992 NAAPAE Conferences have been decided as follows:

1990 — San Francisco, California  
1991 — Boston, Massachusetts  
1992 — Portland, Oregon

- **People News:** Susie Oh has been appointed assistant principal with the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). Terry Menudiado has become Asian Advisor for LAUSD.

## OTHER NEWS

- The change in the Washington administration has created a large number of vacancies throughout the federal government — both in Washington and in the states. In view of this fact, NAAPAE is campaigning to have as many APAs appointed to these positions as possible. If you would like to be considered for a position please

contact your local NAAPAE Regional Representative.

- Immigrant parents in Lowell, Massachusetts, have filed a class action suit against local schools, claiming the schools are not implementing appropriate educational programs. The suit is pending.

### Conference of the Association for Asian American Studies (AAAS) — Call for Papers

NAAPAE will cosponsor the Sixth National Conference of the AAAS — *Comparative and Global Perspectives of the Asian Diaspora* — to be held June 1-3, 1989 at Hunter College in New York City. Participants in all disciplines of the social sciences, humanities, creative and performing arts, communications and media, law, and education are invited to participate in this

event, as well as to submit proposals for papers, panels and workshops.

The conference will examine Asian settlers' interaction with existing cultures around the world, and the resulting economic, social and political contributions they have made.

For more information, please call Professor Shirley Hune at Hunter College, (212) 772-4736.

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## Conferences and Institutes

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### Southeast Asian Studies Summer Institute (SEASSI)

The Center for Southeast Asian and Philippine Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa is co-sponsoring an intensive language study program with 14 other universities in the U.S. and Canada. SEASSI will be held for ten weeks, June 5 through August 15, 1989, on the campus of the University of Hawaii. The institute is open to all qualified students, and classes are expected to be offered in Burmese, Khmer, Ilokano, Thai, Javanese, Vietnamese, Hmong, Tagalog, Cebuano, Lao, and Indonesian. A number of fellowships — including Foreign Language and Area Study Fellowships (FLAS) and Luce and SEASSI Fellowships — will be offered to qualified students. The deadlines are January 15, 1989 for FLAS and March 1, 1989 for the others.

Scholars and students of Southeast Asia are also invited to participate in

the SEASSI Conference, to be held July 28-30 at the University of Hawaii. For more information, please contact SEASSI at the University of Hawaii — Manoa, at (808) 322-3611.

### NAVAE Conference — Call for Papers

The National Association for Vietnamese American Education (NAVAE) will hold its Tenth Annual National Conference on Indochinese Education and Human Services on March 16-18, 1989 in Chicago, Illinois. The conference will review the issues and progress of Indochinese Americans in the U.S., and is expected to attract more than 300 participants.

Proposals for workshops and panels are being accepted until January 15, 1989. For more information, please contact Khamchong Luangprasert, NAVA E President, at (714) 558-5729, or Ngoan Le, Conference Chair, at (312) 728-3700.

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