

# ASSEMBLY, No. 3369

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 25, 2020

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman GORDON M. JOHNSON**

**District 37 (Bergen)**

**Assemblyman STERLEY S. STANLEY**

**District 18 (Middlesex)**

**Assemblyman ROBERT J. KARABINCHAK**

**District 18 (Middlesex)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Assemblywoman Vainieri Huttle, Assemblyman Benson and  
Assemblywoman Jimenez**

**SYNOPSIS**

Establishes Commission on Asian Heritage in DOE.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/17/2021)**

1 AN ACT establishing the Commission on Asian Heritage and  
2 supplementing chapter 4 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
5 of New Jersey:

6

7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

8 a. The 2010 United States Census estimated that there were  
9 approximately 17.3 million Asian Americans residing in the United  
10 States, or roughly 5.6 percent of the nation's population, with the  
11 largest subgroups being Chinese Americans, Filipino Americans,  
12 Indian Americans, Vietnamese Americans, Korean Americans, and  
13 Japanese Americans.

14 b. According to the census, almost three-quarters of all Asian  
15 Americans live in just 10 states (California, New York, Texas, New  
16 Jersey, Hawaii, Illinois, Washington, Florida, Virginia, and  
17 Pennsylvania). In fact, only two states, Hawaii and California, had a  
18 higher percentage of Asian Americans in their total populations  
19 than New Jersey.

20 c. By 2016, in its estimate of the nation's population, the  
21 census bureau estimated that the population of Asian Americans  
22 had grown to approximately 21 million.

23 d. New Jersey is home to a significant number of people of  
24 Asian descent. According to the most recent American Community  
25 Survey, the Asian population of New Jersey is 9.4 percent of the  
26 total population of the State, significantly higher than the national  
27 percentage.

28 e. The histories of our nation and our State have been  
29 significantly enriched by the heritage of people of Asian descent.  
30 Our nation and our State have benefitted substantially from the  
31 influences and contributions of these men, women, and children and  
32 their culture, history, and heritage.

33 f. It is desirable to educate our citizens about the positive  
34 aspects of the culture, music, art, language, history, and people of  
35 Asian heritage.

36 g. It is the policy of the State of New Jersey that the culture,  
37 history, and heritage of people of Asian descent are a proper  
38 concern for all people, particularly students enrolled in the schools  
39 of the State.

40 h. It is appropriate and desirable that programs, workshops,  
41 institutes, seminars, and other teacher-training activities for the  
42 study of the culture, history, and heritage of people of Asian  
43 descent be conducted at the high schools and institutions of higher  
44 education in this State.

45 i. It is fitting and proper to establish a permanent State-level  
46 commission to survey, design, encourage, and promote the  
47 implementation of Asian cultural and educational programs in this  
48 State, with responsibility for the coordination of events that will

1 provide appropriate awareness and memorialization of the culture,  
2 history, heritage, and language of people of Asian descent on a  
3 regular basis throughout the State.

4  
5 2. a. The Commission on Asian Heritage is created and  
6 established in the Executive Branch of the State Government. For  
7 the purposes of complying with the provisions of Article V, Section  
8 IV, paragraph 1 of the New Jersey Constitution, the commission is  
9 allocated within the Department of Education, but notwithstanding  
10 this allocation, the commission shall be independent of any  
11 supervision or control by the department or any board or officer  
12 thereof.

13 The commission shall consist of 21 members, including the  
14 Commissioner of Education, ex officio, or a designee, the chair of  
15 the executive board of the Presidents' Council, ex officio, or a  
16 designee, and 19 public members.

17 Public members shall be appointed as follows: five public  
18 members shall be appointed by the President of the Senate, at least  
19 one of whom shall have a Masters' degree in an area of Asian  
20 studies or culture; five public members shall be appointed by the  
21 Speaker of the General Assembly, at least one of whom shall have a  
22 Masters' degree in an area of Asian studies or culture; and nine  
23 public members shall be appointed by the Governor, no less than  
24 four of whom shall at the time of their appointment have at least a  
25 Masters' degree in an area of Asian studies or culture. The public  
26 members shall be residents of the State who have served  
27 prominently as spokespersons for, or as leaders of, organizations in  
28 the Asian heritage community which serve members of religious,  
29 ethnic, national heritage, or social groups or who are experienced in  
30 the field of Asian heritage education. To the greatest extent  
31 practicable, they shall be chosen with due regard to provide the  
32 commission with broad regional representation and ethnic diversity.  
33 At least one-half of the public members shall be of Asian descent.

34 b. Each public member of the commission shall serve for a  
35 term of three years, except that of the initial members appointed:  
36 one member appointed by the President of the Senate, one member  
37 appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, and two  
38 members appointed by the Governor shall serve for terms of one  
39 year; two members appointed by the President of the Senate, two  
40 members appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, and  
41 three members appointed by the Governor shall serve for terms of  
42 two years; and two members appointed by the President of the  
43 Senate, two members appointed by the Speaker of the General  
44 Assembly, and four members appointed by the Governor shall serve  
45 for terms of three years. Public members shall be eligible for  
46 reappointment and shall serve until their successors are appointed  
47 and qualified. The term of the successor of any incumbent shall be  
48 calculated from the expiration of the term of that incumbent. A

1 vacancy occurring other than by expiration of term shall be filled in  
2 the same manner as the original appointment, but for the unexpired  
3 term only.

4 c. The members of the commission shall serve without  
5 compensation, but shall be entitled to reimbursement for all  
6 necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

7 d. The commission annually shall elect a chairperson from  
8 among its members. It shall meet upon the call of the chair or of a  
9 majority of the commission members. The presence of a majority  
10 of the authorized membership of the commission shall be required  
11 for the conduct of official business.

12 e. The commission shall appoint an executive director, who  
13 shall serve at its pleasure and shall be a person qualified by training  
14 and experience to perform the duties of the office.

15

16 3. The commission shall have the following responsibilities  
17 and duties:

18 a. To provide, based upon the collective knowledge and  
19 experience of its members, assistance and advice to the public and  
20 nonpublic schools of this State with respect to the implementation  
21 of cultural and educational programs concerning people of Asian  
22 descent;

23 b. To meet with county and local school officials and other  
24 interested public and private organizations, for the purpose of  
25 assisting with the planning, coordination, or modification of courses  
26 of study dealing with issues, matters and subjects concerning or  
27 relating to the culture, history, and heritage of people of Asian  
28 descent;

29 c. To survey and catalog the extent and breadth of Asian  
30 heritage cultural awareness and educational programs presently  
31 being incorporated into the curricula and taught in the school  
32 systems of this State; to inventory those Asian heritage exhibits and  
33 resources which may be incorporated into courses of study at  
34 various locations throughout the State and, upon request, to assist  
35 the Department of Education and other educational agencies in the  
36 development and implementation of Asian heritage cultural  
37 awareness and educational programs. In furtherance of this  
38 responsibility, the commission shall be authorized to contact and  
39 cooperate with existing Asian heritage public or private nonprofit  
40 resource organizations and may act as a liaison concerning issues  
41 and topics involving and relating to the culture, history, and  
42 heritage of Asians to members of the United States Senate and  
43 House of Representatives, and the New Jersey Senate and General  
44 Assembly;

45 d. To compile a roster of individual volunteers who are willing  
46 to share their knowledge and experience in classrooms, seminars,  
47 and workshops on subjects concerning and relating to the culture,  
48 history, and heritage of people of Asian descent. These volunteers

1 may be scholars, clergymen, community relations professionals, and  
2 other persons who, by virtue of their experience, training, or  
3 interest, have acquired personal or academic knowledge of the  
4 culture, history, and heritage of Asians and who are willing to share  
5 that knowledge with students and teachers;

6 e. To coordinate events observing the culture, history, and  
7 heritage of people of Asian descent and to seek volunteers who are  
8 willing and able to participate in commemorative events that will  
9 enhance student awareness of the significance of the culture,  
10 history, and heritage of Asians;

11 f. To prepare reports for the Governor and the Legislature  
12 regarding its findings and recommendations to facilitate the  
13 inclusion of Asian heritage studies and special programs  
14 memorializing the culture, history, and heritage of Asians in the  
15 educational system of this State; and

16 g. To develop, in consultation with the Department of  
17 Education, curriculum guidelines for the teaching of subjects and  
18 topics concerning and relating to the culture, history, and heritage  
19 of people of Asian descent. To the greatest extent practicable, each  
20 board of education shall incorporate those guidelines as part of the  
21 curriculum for its district's elementary and secondary school  
22 students.

23

24 4. a. The commission is authorized to call upon any  
25 department, office, division, or agency of the State, or of any  
26 county, municipality, or school district of the State, to supply such  
27 data, program reports and other information, personnel, and  
28 assistance as it deems necessary to discharge its responsibilities  
29 under this act.

30 b. These departments, offices, divisions, and agencies shall, to  
31 the extent possible, and not inconsistent with any other law of this  
32 State, cooperate with the commission and shall furnish it with such  
33 information, personnel, and assistance as may be necessary or  
34 helpful to accomplish the purposes of this act.

35

36 5. This act shall take effect immediately.

37

38

39

#### STATEMENT

40

41 This bill establishes the Commission on Asian Heritage within  
42 the Department of Education. Notwithstanding its allocation, the  
43 commission is independent of any supervision or control by the  
44 department. The purpose of the commission is to survey, design,  
45 encourage, and promote the implementation of Asian cultural and  
46 educational programs in this State.

47

Under the bill, the commission will:

- 1       • provide assistance and advice to the public and nonpublic  
2       schools of the State with respect to the implementation of  
3       cultural and educational programs concerning people of  
4       Asian descent;
- 5       • meet with county and local school officials and other  
6       interested public and private organizations for the purpose of  
7       assisting with the planning, coordination, or modification of  
8       courses of study dealing with issues, matters, and subjects  
9       concerning or relating to the culture, history, and heritage of  
10      people of Asian descent;
- 11      • survey and catalog the extent and breadth of Asian heritage  
12      cultural awareness and educational programs presently being  
13      incorporated into the curricula and taught in the school  
14      systems of the State;
- 15      • compile a roster of individual volunteers who are willing to  
16      share their knowledge and experience in classrooms,  
17      seminars, and workshops on subjects concerning and relating  
18      to the culture, history, and heritage of people of Asian  
19      descent; and
- 20      • coordinate events observing the culture, history, and heritage  
21      of people of Asian descent and seek volunteers who are  
22      willing and able to participate in commemorative events that  
23      will enhance student awareness of the significance of the  
24      culture, history, and heritage of Asians.

25      The commission will consist of 21 members, including the  
26      Commissioner of Education and the chair of the executive board of  
27      the Presidents' Council, ex officio, or their designees, and 19 public  
28      members, including: five members appointed by the President of the  
29      Senate, at least one of whom has a Masters' degree in an area of  
30      Asian studies or culture; five members appointed by the Speaker of  
31      the General Assembly, at least one of whom has a Masters' degree  
32      in an area of Asian studies or culture; and nine members appointed  
33      by the Governor, no less than four of whom have, at the time of  
34      their appointment, at least a Masters' degree in an area of Asian  
35      studies or culture. The public members are required to be residents  
36      of the State who have served prominently as spokespersons for, or  
37      as leaders of, organizations in the Asian heritage community which  
38      serve members of religious, ethnic, national heritage, or social  
39      groups or who are experienced in the field of Asian heritage  
40      education. At least one-half of the public members must be of  
41      Asian descent.