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Authors

Hune, Shirley

Yeo, Jeomja

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Research Article

How Do Pacific Islanders Fare in U.S. Education? :

A Look Inside Washington State Public Schools with a Focus on Samoans

Shirley Hune and Jeomja Yeo

Abstract

This study examines demographic and educational characteristics of Pacific Islander students in Washington State's public schools, with a focus on Samoans. Using statewide and Seattle Public Schools data, it uncovers disparities that hinder high school completion and college attendance. Findings suggest that Pacific Islander students in Washington are at a great disadvantage with lower levels of academic performance and school engagement. Samoans perceive discrimination, an uncaring school climate, and generational conflicts as major obstacles to their educational fulfillment. Disaggregated data for Pacific Islanders and case studies of their ethnic groups using qualitative methods provide a more accurate picture of their educational experiences.

Introduction

Pacific Islander students are understudied in U.S. educational research. One major reason is the practice of lumping them with Asian American students. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are two heterogeneous groups with disparate social, cultural, political, and historical contexts (Espiritu, 1992; Wright & Spickard, 2002). In population size alone in 2007, there were 13,233,287 Asian Americans and 434,675 Pacific Islanders. Hence, whenever their data are combined into one category, Asian Americans predominate and the representation of Pacific Islanders is lost. Treating the two groups as a single community of Asian Pacific Islander Americans hinders an examination of the distinctiveness of Pacific Islander students and their educational experiences. In a similar vein, Pacific Islander

student data in public schools tend to be incorporated with those of Asian Americans. Even if some disaggregated data are available for Pacific Islanders, for the most part, they are incomplete and inadequate. Without the appropriate data, it is difficult to assess the real academic achievement and school experiences of Pacific Islanders (Takeuchi and Hune, 2008).

What is known, however, is a cause for concern. According to recent census and college enrollment data, Pacific Islanders are falling behind in higher education attainment, putting them at a disadvantage in today's workforce. In 2000, 14 percent of Pacific Islanders held a bachelor's degree or higher, which is much lower than that of the total U.S. population (24%). Among Pacific Islander ethnic groups, Samoans and Fijians have lower levels of educational attainment at 11 and 9 percent, respectively, compared with Native Hawaiians (15%) and Chamorros (14%) (U.S. Census, 2001). Being underrepresented in higher education has a close relationship with school experiences, particularly in secondary educational settings. Many Pacific Islander youth encounter academic challenges, social and cultural alienation, and an unwelcoming school climate. Such problems lead to high dropout rates and lower levels of academic engagement for Pacific Islanders in our public schools (UCLA, 2006).

One study of Samoan youth in Hawai'i found they experience cultural and racial biases, being viewed as uneducated and troublemakers by their peers and school personnel. Gender biases also contribute to their social alienation. Samoan males often are seen as being talented only in sports, which restricts their academic goals and ambitions. Samoan females have fewer positive role models and bear a larger part of gendered family duties, resulting in less time for school work (Mayeda et al., 2006).

In addition, studies on Pacific Islanders in the U.S. appear to rely heavily on data from Hawai'i and California. This research gap may relate to the discrepancy of available data elsewhere. Nonetheless, the disparity of data for Pacific Islanders reinforces their invisibility and discourages research interest and practice in other states, making it more difficult to address Pacific Islander educational inequities.

In this study, we identify Pacific Islanders as a meaningful category of educational analysis, and we seek to contribute to research on their educational issues by expanding the geographical terrain of literature on their experiences to Washington State. We

present findings on the characteristics and academic performance of Pacific Islander students, in general, and Samoan students, specifically, and give attention to their educational aspirations and challenges through their own perspectives and voices. As background, we first provide a brief description of Pacific Islander groups in Washington State.

Background: Pacific Islanders in Washington State

Pacific Islander history in the Pacific Northwest dates back to at least the eighteenth century when the region prospered under the fur trade with China and other countries. As the demand for workers increased in the nineteenth century, Pacific Islanders served on whaling ships, assisted missionaries, and labored in many economic enterprises. After World War II, their presence increased significantly as U.S. military activities in the Pacific disrupted local economies and facilitated opportunities for Pacific Islanders to emigrate for education, employment, and family reunification, especially through jobs with the military on the mainland (Janes, 2002; Kopple, 1995; McGrath, 2002; Spickard, 2002).

Today, Washington State is the one of the fastest growing Pacific Islander states in the nation. Its population, past and present, is racially and ethnically diverse, reflecting workforce diversity. The state's economy has branched out from fisheries, agriculture, lumber, mining, and aircraft manufacturing to high tech, bioengineering, cosmopolitan retail, and service sectors, which require more education and training (Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2007). In 2007, Washington with 27,564 Pacific Islanders alone (including Native Hawaiians) ranked third after California (126,345) and Hawai'i (108,583) among all states in numbers of Pacific Islanders. Unlike the nationwide landscape in which Native Hawaiians are the largest ethnic group, at 33 percent of the total Pacific Islander population, Samoans are the largest ethnic group (31%) in Washington State, followed by Chamorros (23%) and Native Hawaiians (13%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007).

In 1999, the Pacific Islander median household income (\$41,656) in Washington was less than the state average (\$45,776). Their poverty rate (16%) was also higher than the statewide rate (11%). Samoans have the lowest median household income (\$39,614) and the highest poverty rate (20%) among all Pacific Islander ethnic groups. Approximately 12 percent of Pacific Island-

ers held a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 28 percent for the state as a whole. By ethnic group, Hawaiians have the largest percentage (16%) of degree holders, with Fijians the lowest (4%), followed by Samoans (7%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001).

While Pacific Islanders in Washington may be less visible than other racial/ethnic groups, they maintain vibrant ethnic communities. One study of Samoans in Seattle has documented lives rich in family, church, and networks. It also suggests that family and community efforts to maintain *fa'a Samoa* (the Samoan way) place great demands on their youth who are making their way in America (McGrath, 2002).

In summary, Pacific Islanders in Washington are a growing presence and diverse in ethnicity, but challenged by a median household income, poverty rate, and educational attainment lower than the general population in the State. Samoan households, in particular, are economically and educationally disadvantaged, and their youth often struggle between the values and practices of Samoan and American ways. These aspects are part of the larger social context in which Pacific Islander students reside and attend school.

Research Questions

- 1) What are the socio-economic, linguistic, and academic characteristics of Pacific Islander students in Washington public schools?
- 2) What are the educational outcomes and challenges facing Samoans in Seattle Public Schools?
- 3) How do Samoan students compare with other Pacific Islander groups in their perceptions of college access and parental involvement in their academic goals?

Methods

We conducted this study in summer and fall of 2008 and adopted a mixed method approach using both quantitative and qualitative data.¹ To answer question 1, we drew from Washington statewide data provided by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and district level data from the Seattle Public Schools District.² For the demographic analyses of Pacific Islander students, we relied on the 2007 OSPI Core Student Record System (CSRS) and identified 6,264 Pacific Islander records to analyze their

student characteristics, including enrollment, primary language, socioeconomic status, and English language proficiency.³ We also used the 2007 Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) data to examine the academic performance of Pacific Islander students across grades and subjects and to make comparisons with other racial/ethnic groups.⁴

To answer question 2, we identified district level data for 257 Samoan students in the largest school district in Washington State, Seattle Public Schools, where Samoan students are prominent. We analyzed Samoan educational experiences, such as daily attendance, suspensions, dropout rates, and WASL academic achievement.⁵ We also gathered qualitative data through a focus group interview with twenty Samoan students in Seattle. The participants were recruited through a Samoan liaison who was working for a local youth and family service center. There were twelve female and eight male interviewees between the ages of 14 and 18. Seventeen were American Samoans and three were Independent Samoans. Half the group had dropped out or been expelled from school. The other half were in high school, but some were falling behind academically. We have included responses from the group interview to incorporate students' perspectives of their educational experiences.⁶

Finally, to answer question 3, we obtained survey data drawn from the University of Washington-Beyond High School (UW-BHS) project. The sample was delimited to 268 Pacific Islander students (118 Samoans, 81 Native Hawaiians, 42 Chamorros and 27 Other Pacific Islanders).⁷ To capture Samoan students' educational trajectory toward higher education, we examined group differences between Samoan and other Pacific Islander students in terms of their perceptions of college access and parental educational involvement.

By combining these data, we seek to fill a gap in educational research with findings of Pacific Islander demographic distinctiveness, school experiences, academic challenges, and perceptions of educational opportunities in Washington State. In addition, we seek to give voice to Pacific Islander students, particularly Samoans, as they reflect upon their schooling and academic goals.

Findings

In this study, we found that Pacific Islander students in Washington State public schools are academically disadvantaged in many ways. They struggle to meet reading and writing stan-

dards, and most are failing high school math. Many feel stigmatized by being in Free/Reduced Price Lunch programs. Samoan students in Seattle Public Schools are especially at-risk as demonstrated by data on dropouts, suspensions and test scores. Our sample of UW-BHS survey respondents shows various perceptions of college access and parental involvement in their higher educational attainment.

Pacific Islander Student Characteristics in Washington State Public Schools: Socioeconomic, Linguistic, and Academic Challenges

The presence of Pacific Islander students is increasing within the state's K-12 public school population. From 2005 to 2008, their numbers more than tripled, from 2,288 (0.2%) of the state's student population to 7,055 (0.7%). Pacific Islander students tend to attend school districts that are racially diverse and economically challenged.⁸

More than half (56%) of Pacific Islander students in Washington are participating in a Free/Reduced Price Lunch program, a much higher rate than the state average (36%). Compared with the state's overall student population, a larger percentage of Pacific Islanders are also receiving the 21st Century grant (2% and 7%, respectively), an academic enrichment program provided by various agencies during non-school hours for students in high poverty areas and low-performing schools. These high rates of participation in a Free/Reduced Price Lunch program and a federally funded academic support program indicate that many Pacific Islander students come from low-income families and attend low-performing schools.

Pacific Islander students are predominantly English speakers, but they have a higher rate (12%) of English Language Learners (ELL) enrolled in the Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program (TBIP) than that of the state student population (8%). Other than English, Samoan is the most spoken language among Pacific Islanders.

Table 1 summarizes the performance of Pacific Islanders in meeting statewide standards, as measured by WASL tests. Pacific Islanders are underperforming across tested grade levels and subject areas. They are consistently behind both White and Asian American students; at times, the gap is significant. For example, in 7th grade reading, 57 percent of Pacific Islanders met the standard, compared with 76 percent of Asian American and 74 percent of White students.

Although Pacific Islander students close the gap in reading and writing as they move from 7th to 10th grade, they grapple with meeting math standards. More than two-thirds of Pacific Islander high school students are failing in math, whereas more than half of White and Asian American students meet the math standard.

Table 1. WASL Performance of All Students, Whites, Asians, and Pacific Islanders in Washington State, 2007

Grade/Race	4th All	W	A	PI	7th All	W	A	PI	10th All	W	A	PI
Reading, %	77	81	83	74	69	74	76	57	79	83	84	74
Writing, %	60	64	74	60	68	72	78	63	83	86	87	80
Math, %	58	65	68	48	55	61	66	41	48	54	58	30

Source: OSPI WASL, 2007. W=White, A=Asian, PI=Pacific Islanders

Samoa Students in Seattle Public Schools

Table 2 provides data on Samoan students in Seattle Public Schools. There were 257 Samoan students enrolled in 2008. Compared with all students, they are more likely to live in single- or no-parent households. Almost half are not living with both parents, the largest percentage being middle school students. Nearly three quarters are receiving Free/Reduced Price Lunch, an indicator of low family income.

Table 2. Samoan Student Characteristics in Seattle Public Schools, 2008

	Enrollment	Not Living With Both Parents				Receiving Free or Reduced Price Lunch			
		All Grades	K-5	6-8	9-12	All Grades	K-5	6-8	9-12
All	45,572	36%	30%	39%	44%	39%	39%	42%	37%
Samoan	257	47%	44%	54%	46%	73%	75%	77%	69%

Source: Seattle Public Schools, 2008

As Table 3 indicates, Samoans in Seattle Public Schools are not well engaged in their schools. In 2008, one in four Samoan high school students were absent daily and nearly one out of eight received short-term suspensions. These rates are much higher than those of the overall student group and may link to their high drop-out rate. One in five Samoan high school students dropped out in 2008.

Samoans also have lower percentages in every tested subject and are significantly underperforming compared with students overall (Table 3). They face challenges passing the WASL reading and writing tests to graduate high school. In this area, one in three Samoan high school students is at great risk of failing to graduate.

Table 3. School Performance of Samoan High School Students, 2008

	Daily Attendance	Short-Term Suspensions	Long-term Suspensions	Drop-outs	% Met WASL Standards		
					Reading	Writing	Math
All	85%	9%	2%	9%	80%	85%	50%
Samoan	75%	13%	5%	20%	62%	65%	5%

*A suspension is a removal from a single subject, class period, or full schedule of classes for a definite period of time. Washington Administrative Code 392-400-205. "Short-term suspension" shall mean a suspension for any portion of a calendar day up to and not exceeding ten consecutive school days. "Long-term suspension" shall mean a suspension, which exceeds a short-term suspension.

Source: Seattle Public Schools, 2008

In math, 95 percent of Samoan high school students are failing (Table 3). Math and science WASL are not mandatory tests to pass for high school graduation. Nonetheless, if students fail to pass the tenth grade math WASL test, they must earn two math credits after tenth grade to obtain a high school diploma. Two additional years of math study are an additional challenge that can limit, delay, or deny Samoans from completing high school and further academic pursuits.

Our focus group interview provided insightful data on what Samoan students perceive as obstacles. As major problems, interviewees spoke of racial discrimination, negative peer influence, intergenerational conflicts over their familial roles, and

the pressures of fulfilling Samoan ways with living in the U.S. When asked about the challenges that distract them from school work, Samoan interviewees responded:

Principal, teachers, staff, and students judge us before they get to know us. We are looked upon as bullies.

Sometimes our friends are bad influences.

Parents do not understand how hard it is to balance our traditional culture with American influence. They are too traditional.

We cannot talk to our parents like other kids can.

Parents expect us to go to school (do well) and come home and clean (the house), watch our siblings, and they wonder why we are doing poor in school.

Our parents put us down verbally and discipline us physically.

Considering that some interviewees had dropped out of or been expelled from school and others were academically struggling, these responses appear to be reminiscent of experiences that had already affected their academic performance.

Samoan interviewees offered suggestions for enhancing Pacific Islander academic success. They thought highly of after-school programs and Pacific Islander club activities, with dance practices and performances at different schools. They also emphasized the importance of cultural sensitivity. For example, they wanted teachers to encourage Pacific Islander students to learn more about their own culture, such as language, dance, and history, and to incorporate classroom activities relevant to Pacific Islander culture. When teachers reflect upon Pacific Islander ways of learning, doing, and thinking, others could then learn about and appreciate Pacific Islanders and their heritage, the interviewees pointed out.

Samoan Student Perceptions of College Access and Parental Support

Through the analysis of survey data from the University of Washington-Beyond High School project, we found that Samoan students lag behind in opportunities for higher education. Table 4 illustrates differences among Pacific Islander ethnic groups in their

perceptions of college access and parental support. We compared Samoans with other Pacific Islander groups in eight categories: college aspiration and expectation, four-year college plans and attendance, perception of education as a means of social mobility, and three items regarding parental educational involvement (checking homework, limiting activities on school nights, discussing going to college).

Table 4. Perceptions of College Access and Parental Support: Samoan and Other Pacific Islander Students

	Samoan (n=118)	Native Hawaiian (n=81)	Chamorro (n=42)
Aspiring to BA/BS	66%	77%	63%
Expecting a BA/BS	49%	64%	51%
With 4-yr College Plans	46%	47%	42%
Attended a 4-yr College	27%	35%	32%
Education as Social Mobility	72%	64%	57%
Parental Involvement			
<i>Checking Homework</i>	67%	48%	49%
<i>Limiting School Nights</i>	68%	41%	63%
<i>Discussing Going to College</i>	85%	85%	76%

Source: University of Washington—Beyond High School project data.

More than three-quarters of Native Hawaiians, two-thirds of Samoans, and almost two-thirds of Chamorros in our sample hope to earn a four-year college degree. These high rates of aspiration indicate that many Pacific Islander students have a strong interest in higher education. Yet, far fewer expected to fulfill this goal. Of all groups, Samoan students show the largest gap (17%) between anticipating and expecting to earn a four-year college degree (Table 4). This disparity suggests they may be anticipating some obstacles in their pathway.

Similar percentages of Samoan and other Pacific Islander students, ranging from 42 percent to 47 percent, had plans to attend college. However, in comparing their college planning and attendance, all three Pacific Islander groups show more than 10 percent gaps, with Samoans demonstrating the widest gap (19%). Here again, Samoans reveal difficulties as the most disadvantaged among Pacific Islander groups with a smaller percentage actually enrolling in college.

Despite low rates of college attendance, our survey respondents recognize that education is an important means for social mobility. As shown in Table 4, nearly three-quarters of Samoan students responded that “education” was the key factor for social mobility, such as getting a desired job, which is the highest rate of responses among Pacific Islander groups.

Table 4 provides Pacific Islander students’ perceptions on parental involvement in their education. Compared with other Pacific Islander groups, Samoan students report relatively higher levels of parental engagement measured by three categories: homework checking, school activity monitoring, and college discussion. Eighty five percent of Samoan students, along with the same rate of Native Hawaiians, report that their parents do discuss going to college with them. More than two-thirds of Samoan students report that their parents check their homework on a regular basis and monitor their social activities such as limiting any school night events.

In summary, by using a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative data, we provide multiple points to document that Pacific Islanders are a group with academic disadvantages and need to be treated as a distinct category by educators if their educational needs and barriers are to be adequately met. Disaggregated data that separates Pacific Islanders from Asian Americans enables us to better identify their outcomes and experiences. Moreover, disaggregated data of Pacific Islanders by ethnic group reveals disparities across their groups that require separate attention. The perspectives and voices of Samoans and other Pacific Islander students shed light on the challenges they face in navigating school and home.

Discussion and Conclusion

As today’s U.S. public schools become more culturally and linguistically diverse, there is an urgent need to explore the

distinctiveness of different racial/ethnic student groups. As Pacific Islander students are among the least studied groups in educational research, little has been known about their particular school experiences and challenges in achieving their educational goals. In this study, we sought to address a void in the available literature on Pacific Islander students by focusing on Samoan students. It is our hope that this study provides an opportunity to extend our understanding of the distinctive characteristics of Pacific Islander learners in our schools, particularly Samoan students.

Samoans and Pacific Islanders in Washington State are underprivileged in educational opportunities. Samoan students in Seattle Public Schools, in particular, seem to face more economic and social challenges, which are reflected in their high rates of participation in the Free/Reduced Price Lunch program and single- or no-parent households. Most importantly, schools are failing to educate and support Pacific Islander students.

In terms of academic performance, many Pacific Islander students in Washington do not meet state academic standards in reading, writing, and math. They demonstrate relatively lower rates of meeting standards compared to White and Asian American peers. In particular, Samoan students in Seattle show significant academic challenges with disturbing school outcomes. Many are at risk of failing to meet high school graduation requirements due to their poor performance in the state standards tests, WASL. A significant number of Samoans experience suspensions and drop out. These educational outcomes are serious barriers to their educational and economic advancement.

The disengagement from schooling that Samoan youth experience is found not only in statewide quantitative data, but also in their own voices. Navigating between Samoan and American cultures, Samoan youth in our study confront numerous difficulties. In schools, they frequently experience racial discrimination from peers and school personnel, and are stereotyped as bullies or misfits. At home, they bear considerable responsibilities associated with familial duties, such as taking care of younger siblings, doing house chores, and helping to arrange and attend family events. These challenges interrupt their academic performance in schools and impede their pursuit of higher education.

Despite these academic disadvantages, Pacific Islanders, particularly Samoans, show high aspirations of going to college, rec-

ognizing its importance in their future economic well-being. They perceive their parents as having a strong interest in their education and as being engaged in their educational goals. However, their college expectation and attendance are the lowest among Pacific Islander groups. We speculate that Samoan parental interests in their children's education may not turn into substantive support that helps students with gaining academic proficiency and accessing information regarding college education. This is, we surmise, because of limited knowledge of content taught in school and unfamiliarity with mainstream practices, such as PTA meetings, and how to choose a college and obtain financial aid.

While the study was limited to Washington State and to specific data sets, our findings on Pacific Islander students echo conclusions in research elsewhere and present new data. The study revealed that Pacific Islanders have distinctive demographic and educational characteristics that educators must understand and act upon if their achievement gaps are to be closed. To do so, we emphasize the need for data that disaggregates for Pacific Islanders and their ethnic subgroups. In addition, we call for case studies of specific Pacific Islander groups using qualitative methods to enrich educational findings.

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Notes

1. The authors examined K-12 school data on Pacific Islander youth as part of a larger project funded by the Washington State Legislature to close the achievement gap for racial/ethnic groups in the public schools. Sponsored by the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs (CAPAA), a study of Asian American and Pacific Islander students was conducted over a short period (August through November, 2008) and submitted as two separate reports to the State Legislature on December 30, 2008. Shirley Hune served as Principal Investigator. Jeomja Yeo was a lead member of the research team and conducted most of the student data analyses. The authors are grateful to the State Legislature, CAPAA, its Executive Director Ellen Abellera and assistant Phillip Sit; the Pacific Islander Advisory Committee; and the College of Education, University of Washington Seattle for their support. We also thank the other research team members, Third

Andresen, Seunghye Hong, Julie Kang, Mavae 'Aho Redmond, and especially David Takeuchi. Copies of the two reports: Shirley Hune and David T. Takeuchi, *Asian Americans in Washington State: Closing Their Hidden Achievement Gaps* (December 2008) and David T. Takeuchi and Shirley Hune, *Growing Presence, Emerging Voices; Pacific Islanders & Academic Achievement in Washington* (December, 2008) are available at: www.capaa.wa.gov. This study draws from the report on Pacific Islander students and builds upon it with additional research literature and data analyses.

2. In 2004, OSPI began separating the enrollment data for Pacific Islander and Asian American students, but we suspect an undercounting for Pacific Islanders. Some districts are not reporting separate Pacific Islander data to the State and continue to include Pacific Islanders with Asian Americans. Seattle Public Schools, on the other hand, did not report their Pacific Islanders to the State, but kept their own data report on Samoans. Also, some districts fail to include very small numbers (generally under 10) of Pacific Islanders, reportedly for confidentiality. Nonetheless, the OSPI provides the most comprehensive and systematic statewide student data for our study.
3. CSRS generates data for federal and state reporting requirements. Each month, OSPI collects data from school districts through CSRS. Although the data include required elements that must be reported for every student in all monthly submissions (e.g., name, birth date, race/ethnicity, primary language, gender), many elements are conditional and optional, being dependent on other elements or the district's discretion. There were 74 data elements in the 2006-07 school year with 37 required, 15 conditional, 5 optional, and 17 placeholder (temporary) data elements. For details, see <http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/DataReports.aspx>.
4. WASL is a statewide tool designed to measure student academic performance. It was given as the state's primary assessment from spring 1997 to summer 2009. It has since been replaced by the Measurements of Student Progress (MSP) for grades 3-8 and the High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE). For our study, it tested students in four subject areas at different grade levels: reading (grades 3-8 and 10), writing (grades 4, 7, and 10), math (grades 3-8 and 10), and science (grades 5, 8, and 10). It provides individual scores, levels, and pass/fail grades in meeting standards for every subject tested in each grade. For details, see <http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/WASL/default.aspx>.
5. Seattle Public Schools annually report district wide demographic information on students classified by several characteristics descriptive of student population and educational outcomes for students. The data contain the number and percent of students in five major ethnic groups defined by the Office for Civil Rights: American Indian, Asian, African American, Chicano/Latino and White. In most

cases the data are broken down further into 19 major ethnic groups used by the City of Seattle. Samoans are one ethnic group under the category of Asian. The annual report is available at <http://www.seattleschools.org/area/asiso/test/smallsischoolist.xml>.

6. The focus group interview was conducted in November, 2008 at a Seattle youth and family service center. The semi-structured questions centered on school experiences, particularly challenges to their academic success. Examples of questions include: (1) What are positive or negative experiences in your school life? (2) What do you think might help you improve your academic performance?
7. The University of Washington-Beyond High School project is a study of more than 9,600 students from diverse racial/ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds in Washington State public and private high schools. The project seeks to describe and explain differences in student transition from high school to college by race and ethnicity, socioeconomic origins, family structure, and other characteristics. It is based on student surveys conducted in their senior year of high school and a follow-up one year later. Three baseline surveys were conducted in 2000, 2002, and 2003. We thank Professor Charles Hirschman for granting us access to the database from which we delineated specifics on Pacific Islander students and parents. For details, see: <https://depts.washington.edu/uwbhs/project.shtml>.
8. For Pacific Islander enrollment and school district information, we accessed *Research/Reports*, an online database that provides Washington State Report Card and data files regarding student demographics and school information for the past decade. We drew on 2009 data files from Washington State Report Card to identify school districts with the most Pacific Islander students in 2008-09 school year. The two-year comparison of Pacific Islander enrollment (October headcount) between 2005 and 2008 was based on Total Enrollment Gender and Ethnicity data. For more information, see: <http://www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/default.aspx#download>.

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SHIRLEY HUNE is Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Washington Seattle. Previously, she served as Senior Associate Dean in the Graduate Division at the University of California Los Angeles, where she was also a Professor of Urban Planning and a faculty affiliate of Asian American Studies.

JEOMJA YEO is a Ph. D. candidate in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Washington Seattle. Her research interests are immigration, race, ethnicity, and urban and suburban school policies and practices. Currently, she is working on her dissertation on first generation Filipino American students' school adaptation and identity formation.