



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING


GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** April 23, 2021

**TO:** Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents  
Public School Academy Directors  
Local Education Agency Principals  
Michigan Pre-K-12 Educators

**FROM:** Michael F. Rice, Ph.D., State Superintendent 

**SUBJECT:** Initiating School and Community Action Against Asian-American  
Discrimination, Bias, and Violence - MEMO #COVID-19-182

It was Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in "Letter from Birmingham City Jail" who once wrote, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." It was that deeply felt sentiment that helped spark rallies and marches across the country and world last spring after the killing of George Floyd.

Among many forms of unacceptable discrimination, ethnic discrimination should never be tolerated, ignored, condoned, or otherwise accepted. It is a stain on our collective humanity.

Fear and misinformation regarding the origins of COVID-19 are among the negative outgrowths of the pandemic. There has been a sharp rise nationally in acts of discrimination and violence targeted at Asian Americans. These horrific incidents are unacceptable, and it is critical that we work together as educators to send the message that discriminatory behavior will not be accepted in our schools and communities.

I share with you the words of German Lutheran pastor Martin Niemöller:  
First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—  
Because I was not a socialist.  
Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—  
Because I was not a trade unionist.  
Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—  
Because I was not a Jew.  
Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.

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As educators and others did in 2017 when Mexican-American students were being targeted with racist language and acts, it is again incumbent on educators and others to speak out on behalf of those who face discrimination or injustice in our state and across our nation. All students must feel safe and supported in their school communities. I call on you to educate and promote conversation with your staff, students, parents, and community members to be sure that this message is shared broadly.

*Current events can create opportunities for deeper discussion with students and staff. The list that follows includes suggested tools and resources to help guide those conversations and support you and your team in your efforts to prevent anti-Asian hate and bullying in your district.*

### **Information and Curricular Resources**

- [Speaking Up Against Racism Around the Coronavirus](#)
  - [How to Respond to Coronavirus Racism](#)
- [Teaching About Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia](#)
- [Challenging Anti-Asian Bias and Acting as an Ally](#)
- [Coronavirus – Countering Biased Responses](#)
- [Anti-Bias Tools and Strategies](#)
- <https://asianamericanedu.org/>

### **Anti-bullying General Resources**

- [Model Code of Student Conduct](#) (2019)
- [Model Anti-Bullying Policy](#) (2020)
- [Ok2Say](#): Submit at tip 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.  
Call: 855-565-2729 (8-555-OK2SAY)  
Text: 652729 (OK2SAY)  
Email: [OK2SAY@mi.gov](mailto:OK2SAY@mi.gov)
- [Michigan Model for Health](#)™  
A nationally recognized, comprehensive, evidence-based, pre-K through grade 12 curriculum built around skills-based instruction.

Social emotional health is the cornerstone of the curriculum that includes respecting self and others, healthy friendships, managing anger and strong feelings, respecting differences and supporting others, conflict resolution skills, interpersonal communication skills, empathy, bullying and the role of bystanders, and laws concerning bullying and harassment.

This curriculum and associated training for school staff is distributed through a network of regional school health coordinators, [The Michigan School Health Coordinators Association \(MiSHCA\)](#). There are 24 regions covering the state that serve as the hubs for delivering evidence-based programs.

- [Michigan State Police "See Something, Say Something" Campaign](#)
- [StopBullying.gov](#) National resource site for bullying prevention.

**Resources Suggested by Partners in the Michigan Department of Civil Rights and the Michigan Asian Pacific American Advisory Committee**

- [Filing a Complaint with the MI Dept. of Civil Rights](#) (information available in multiple languages)
- [APIA Vote MI](#)

cc: Michigan Education Alliance  
Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Directors