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SUBJECT: ASIAN/PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

LINK TO STRATEGIC

BLUEPRINT: INFORMED, ENGAGED, AND EMPOWERED STAKEHOLDERS

Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month is a month to celebrate and pay tribute to the contributions generations of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have made to American history, society and culture. Beginning as a seven-day period of observance designated by Congress, it has evolved into a month celebration of pride and remembrance for the Asian/Pacific American community. A broad term, Asian/Pacific encompasses all of the Asian continent and the Pacific islands of Melanesia (New Guinea, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji and the Solomon Islands), Micronesia (Marianas, Guam, Wake Island, Palau, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Nauru and the Federated States of Micronesia) and Polynesia (New Zealand, Hawaiian Islands, Rotuma, Midway Islands, Samoa, American Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, French Polynesia and Easter Island).

Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month originated in 1978 when Congress passed Public Law 95-419. This law directed the President to issue a proclamation designating the week beginning on May 4, 1979 as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week. On March 28, 1979, President Carter issued Presidential Proclamation 4650, which highlighted the significant role Asian/Pacific Americans have played in American society and their contributions to the sciences, arts, industry, government and commerce. In 1992, Congress permanently designated May of each year as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month. The month of May marks two significant dates for this community; May 7, 1843 marking the date on which the first Japanese immigrants arrived in the United States and May 10, 1869 which marks the completion of the first transcontinental railroad, completed with significant contributions from Chinese immigrants.

Asian/Pacific American Heritage month celebrates their accomplishments and the many ways they have contributed to enriching our nation. Despite a long history of injustice and opportunity limiting laws, such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and Immigration Act of 1924 and the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, Asian/Pacific Americans helped to build, defend and strengthen the nation.

Notably, Asian/Pacific Americans have made lasting contributions to America's wartime efforts in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq. Special recognition is given to the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, an outfit of Japanese-Americans, who fought valiantly in Europe during World War II. Many of these men put their lives on the line for their country while their families were confined to internment camps back in the United States.

Asian/Pacific Americans have helped to develop the economic backbone of the country through their labor and efforts, from the Chinese railroad workers who built the transcontinental railroad to today's Asian software engineers building software and programming to enhance our quality of life. In all areas and walks of life, their traditions, customs and culture have contributed to enriching our community and country. In recognition and appreciation of this community's contribution, this item seeks to endorse May as Asian/Pacific American Heritage month in Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. LAWRENCE S. FELDMAN:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, endorse the month of May as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month in Miami-Dade County Public Schools.