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# Chinese American Citizens Alliance

~ National ~

1044 Stockton Street, San Francisco, California 94108 • Telephone/Fax (415)829-9332

**National Lodge**  
ESTABLISHED 1895

2015-2017

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DATE: February 10, 2017**

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(Gordon J. Lau Elementary, formerly known as the “Oriental School” before 1924)

## ***Alliance Commends SFUSD School Board Repeal of Century Old Segregation Rule***

### ***Policy Mandated Asians Attend Separate School***

San Francisco, CA—February 10, 2017. Chinese American Citizens Alliance—National (C.A.C.A.), based in San Francisco with 7 lodges in California among the 20 across the country, highly commends the San Francisco Unified School District Board’s decision to repeal a 1906 policy mandating Asian American students to attend the “Oriental School” during a time when anti-Asian sentiment was surging in California. SFUSD Commissioners Dr. Emily M. Murase and Stevon Cook are afforded special commendation for co-sponsoring the repeal of the policy to finally rectify this discriminatory oversight—a policy which had



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remained in effect until the unanimous action for removal was taken at January's board meeting.

According to Dr. Murase, though this was a symbolic vote, the action represents the Board's commitment to the education of all children. The measure goes further to include a proposal to create a mural at a historic school to capture the district's "progression from its early anti-Asian history, and a challenge to schools to increase their instructional materials and books on Asian Americans." That remains a challenging goal as former Spring Valley Elementary teacher, Irene Dea Collier, noted that of the 995 titles on the elementary school reading list, only nine are about Asian Americans and 16 are about Asia.

However, coupling this measure's goals and the passage last year of CA AB 2864 introduced by Assemblymember Ed Chau, there is a now an even clearer directive to ensure that students in California, and especially San Francisco, receive instruction regarding the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the contributions made by Chinese Americans in establishing the Transcontinental Railroad.

Chinese American Citizens Alliance applauds all efforts to increase the knowledge and value attained by instructional study and awareness in learning about Asian American history and the contributions of Asian Americans in San Francisco and California. In particular, the challenges faced by Chinese parents in the 1900's to provide equal educational opportunities for their children are highlighted by their courage and conviction to seek judicial relief, many times unsuccessfully, during a time when Chinese had no voice, no vote and little advocacy on their behalf due to the series of Chinese Exclusion Laws and prevailing anti-Asian prejudices.

*(Note: The "Oriental School" was renamed in 1924 after Commodore Robert F. Stockton, who captured California during the Mexican-American War. Subsequently in 1998, the school was again renamed to Gordon J. Lau elementary School, honoring the first Asian American member elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.)*

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Chinese American Citizens Alliance

*The Chinese American Citizens Alliance, established in 1895, is among the oldest civil rights organizations in the United States. Headquartered in San Francisco with chapter/lodges in Albuquerque (NM), Boston (MA), Chicago (IL), Greater New York (NY), Greater San Gabriel Valley (CA), Houston (TX), Las Vegas (NV), Los Angeles (CA), Mississippi, Oakland (CA), Peninsula (CA), Portland (OR), Phoenix (AZ), Salinas (CA), San Antonio (TX), San Francisco (CA), Seattle (WA), Tucson (AZ), and Washington, D.C., the Alliance addresses issues regarding voter education, political participation, racial discrimination and hate crimes, youth leadership training programs and equal employment opportunities for all Chinese Americans.*