

May 20, 2025 Board Educational Opportunity

Start the PPT here.

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Today, I would like to begin by acknowledging the Native communities in this area. They number over 70,000 strong and are descended from over 380 tribes. We are gathering on the ancestral and occupied lands of the Kalapuyan people (the Yoncalla, the Santiam, and the Tualatin/Yamhill), the Upper Chinookan (the Multnomah, Wapato, and Clackamas), the Molallan people, and more who may call this place home. We pay respect to their elders past, present, and future. We honor their resilience, deep connection to this land, and ongoing contributions to our shared community and culture.

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May is both **Jewish American Heritage Month** and **Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month**—reminding us of the rich histories and enduring contributions of these communities to American society.

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Jewish American Heritage Month – Honoring Contributions & Resilience

Jewish American Heritage Month, established in **2006**, honors **350 years** of Jewish American contributions to science, arts, law, politics, and social justice. Their legacy of resilience and leadership continues to shape our nation.

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AANHPI Heritage Month – A Legacy of Leadership & Resilience

AANHPI Heritage Month, officially designated in **1992**, honors generations of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities who have

shaped American history - a time to honor the rich histories, vibrant cultures, and significant contributions of AANHPI communities throughout the United States.

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In observance of AANHPI month, among many activities and event, this **Saturday, May 24**, from **11 a.m.–5 p.m.**, Portland Chinatown will host the **Return of the Dragon** event, celebrating Chinese heritage with **cultural performances, dragon dances, arts and crafts, and open houses for Chinese family associations.**

You are invited to join this special event.

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While there, I encourage you to visit the **Lan Su Chinese Garden, Portland Chinatown Museum, Japanese American Museum of Oregon, and Oregon Jewish Museum & Center for Holocaust Education** —all within walking distance in Old Town Chinatown.

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In closing, I want to share the latest update on the Chinese Memorial project at Block 14 of the Lone Fir Cemetery. You may remember I first introduced the project to you in December 2022. I shared about a chapter of Oregon history that is little known to many. The southwest corner of Lone Fir Cemetery, labeled “Block 14” on cemetery maps, was used as the Chinese section of the cemetery during the late 1800s and early 1900s.

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With input from community members, Metro is working to design and build a memorial at this site. The project is on track to begin construction in 2026.

You may also recall that last September, I shared with you the Chinese American Citizens Alliance Portland Lodge's ongoing efforts to secure an official apology

from Multnomah County for the historic harm inflicted on the Chinese American community at the Chinese Section of Lone Fir Cemetery.

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Block 14 at Lone Fir Cemetery holds deep cultural and spiritual significance for Portland's Chinese American community. Hundreds of Chinese American graves were desecrated, and nearly 3,000 ancestors were erased from public memory by the County's actions. Honoring ancestors is a core cultural practice, making these harms especially painful.

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Chair Vega Pederson is advancing the County apology and including \$1 million in the proposed budget for the memorial —showing that the government **can acknowledge past injustices and take action toward accountability.**

The Memorial will restore dignity, preserve heritage, and reclaim the untold stories of early Chinese immigrants. It will serve as a place of healing, remembrance, and education—ensuring visibility and inclusion for communities long excluded from our shared history. And help generations to come to learn not to let history repeat itself.

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These moments—from acknowledging **Indigenous communities** to recognizing **heritage months** and honoring **historical injustices**—reinforce how **education** shapes understanding and empathy.

As educators and policymakers, we must ensure our curriculum reflects the **full breadth of history**, empowering future generations to:

 Recognize **patterns of exclusion**

 Challenge **injustices**

 Advocate for **equity and inclusion**

Slide 13:

By **honoring history**, we strengthen our communities, uplift diverse voices, and create a more **just future**.