



Media Release

For Immediate Release
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Rep. Shankland Celebrates Hmong American and Asian American Education Bill Being Signed into Law by Governor Evers

WAUSAU— Today, during Hmong Heritage Month, Governor Evers signed Assembly Bill 232, bipartisan legislation requiring K-12 public schools to include instruction about Hmong American and Asian American history, into law. After the bill signing ceremony at G. D. Jones Elementary School in Wausau, Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) released the following statement:

“Today was a momentous day in Wisconsin state history. I was honored to stand next to members of our Hmong community and legislators as Governor Evers signed Assembly Bill 232, now 2023 Wisconsin Act 266, into law. For the last 12 years, I have proudly worked with community members, organizations, and legislators to advance this critically important legislation to ensure the history, culture, and heritage of Hmong and Asian Americans are taught in K-12 public schools. As the lead author of the legislation in 2019, I worked across the aisle to ensure our bill earned bipartisan support so we could make progress on moving the bill through the legislative process.

“After securing bipartisan support in 2019 and with the steadfast advocacy of so many community members, momentum around the bill has been continually building. I was especially proud of the work that school boards across the state have done to help us advance our bipartisan bill. Not only did the Stevens Point Area Public School District School Board pass a resolution supporting this bill, but they also voluntarily incorporated Hmong and Asian American studies into their curriculum. Since then, they’ve also started a culturally specific meal program for Hmong students in our high school. I’m so proud of their leadership – they recognize that Wisconsin has the third highest Hmong population in the country, and 6.5% of our students in the Stevens Point Area Public School District are Hmong.

Ann Vang, former Stevens Point Area School District School Board member, said, “I want to thank Freedom Inc for leading the Power Coalition that consists of Hmong American Women's Center, Cia Siab Inc, Power Up EC, and Cap Services that led to the signing of this bill. I also want to thank the Stevens Point Area School District for unanimously passing a resolution to support this bill, introducing the course, Hmong Heritage to students at the high school, and supporting Farmshed with bringing weekly Hmong lunch to SPASH students. The meal program was sponsored in part by Monogram Loves Kids, Community Foundation of Central Wisconsin, and other funders. I cannot express enough gratitude to see my school district taking initiatives in creating a space where students can feel like they belong and see their heritage celebrated.”



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
Katrina Shankland
71st ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Rep. Shankland continued, “This year, nearly 100 community members traveled to the State Capitol to speak in favor of the bill or submit written testimony in support. They shared stories about Hmong and Asian American cultures and communities, highlighting the importance of representing their heritage in our public education curriculum, and leaving a lasting impact on the members of the Assembly and Senate Committees on Education. Their testimony was crucial to getting this bill across the finish line.

“I am grateful for everyone who showed up to support this legislation. I especially want to thank the AAPI Coalition, WUCMAA, Freedom, Inc. and the Power Coalition, and the school boards who helped us build momentum for this bill five years ago, from Stevens Point to La Crosse. I also want to congratulate and thank Rep. Francesca Hong for the coalition-building and leadership that have made this happen.

“It has been one of the greatest honors of my time in the State Assembly to be a part of this coalition of partners who helped get our bill across the finish line. By passing this bill into law, we have demonstrated that even with divided government, it is possible to come together to do good things for the people of Wisconsin. It was extra special to see the kids who celebrated with us today at G. D. Jones Elementary School in Wausau knowing that they will all benefit from our work, and that’s what public service should always be aimed at – ensuring the next generation feels seen, knows that they belong, and has every opportunity to succeed.”



From left to right: Jonathan Moua, Board President of Hmong American Partnership of Fox Valley; Rep. Katrina Shankland; Ann Vang, Sib Pab Director and former Stevens Point Area Public School District School Board Member; Pa Yiar Khang, Board of Directors Member of Hmong American Partnership of Fox Valley celebrate 2023 Wisconsin Act 266 in Wausau today.