

Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Educators Network
Virtual Meeting – Monday, November 1, 2021

Moderator and Panelists Bios



Erica Misako Boas, Ph.D.

Education Researcher / Community Activist

Dr. Erica Boas is a mother, education researcher, and founding member of the San José Nikkei Resisters (SJNR). Her current work in education focuses on establishing practices for educational improvement and equity, and in her community activism she helps to organize the community toward social justice. Erica received her Ph.D. from the Social and Cultural Studies Program in the Graduate School of Education at the University of California at Berkeley where she also completed a Designated Emphasis in Gender, Women, and Sexuality. She is Affiliated Research Faculty with the San Francisco State University Center for Research and Education on Gender and Sexuality.



Tom Izu

Co-Director, Hidden Histories of San Jose Japantown Project and the immediate past Executive Director, California History Center at De Anza College

Tom Izu is the immediate past Executive Director of the California History Center at De Anza College where for 24 years he directed its work in promoting local, regional and state history, through publications, exhibits, oral history projects and courses, and the operation of a research library and archives. During his tenure with the center, he launched a civil liberties project inspired by the lessons learned from the World War II experience of Japanese Americans. He continues to serve its board as an advisor.

He currently serves on the Advisory Board of the Japanese American Museum of San Jose, helping to lead various grant funded projects with a special focus on public programming that connects the community's experience with other communities of color, especially in regards to cultural and civil liberties concerns. One such project for which he is a co-director is an augmented reality community art project, "The Hidden Histories of San Jose Japantown." It explores the stories of the Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino American communities and their overlapping histories and connections in the making of modern day Japantown.



Van Le

Board President, East Side Union High School District

As a refugee who worked hard to overcome many barriers, Van Le dedicates her life to serving her community, especially immigrants and refugees' families. She actively serves as a board member of many organizations that support immigrants, homeless students, and women suffering from domestic abuse. In addition, she has served as a board of trustee for East Side Union High School District since 2010 and was selected as Board president in 2015 and 2021. She works diligently with all stakeholders to support the district's vision of creating equitable school communities that welcome and support students as who they are.



Gurinder Pal Singh

Vice President, Sikh Gurdwara San Jose, California

Gurinder Pal Singh's focus is religious education of young children; to instill in them the Sikh Values of compassion, truthfulness, hard work and gratitude for the Almighty. He participates in interfaith meetings and conferences on Sikhism. He is also working with other organizations to raise funds for scholarships for poor students in India.

He holds a Ph.D degree in Physics and has worked as scientist/engineer at Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai, India; Max Planck institute in Stuttgart, Germany; IBM, Hitachi and Western Digital in Silicon valley of USA. He retired as a principal engineer from Western Digital in 2013. His current technical interests are in area of energy storage, in particular Lithium-Ion batteries.