

Who are South Asian American students?
Students who identify as South Asian and American.

South Asia means *Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka.*

They may speak one or more of hundreds of languages (or may not).

They may be *Hindu, Sikh, Jain, Muslim, Buddhist, Christian, another religion, or non-religious.*

They may be U.S. citizens, one of many generations of Americans, or first generation. They may identify with their South Asian heritage, or may identify as primarily (or even solely) as American. They may be brown, white, black, or any other color, and may identify as a race you do not expect. They are diverse, and each South Asian American student is unique.

In K-12 schools,

Many South Asian American students feel their teachers unfairly hold them to the model minority stereotype (aka model minority *myth*).

Many teachers even admit they believe the model minority myth and assume South Asian American students need *less help* than others.

...the model minority concept is *false*, and can cause harm
...especially to those who are furthest from the stereotype, need the most support, or have needs that go overlooked.

A 2016 survey of South Asian Americans' K-12 experiences found:

- Nearly 80% felt that their teachers *believed* the model minority myth
 - Nearly 70% of participants reported their teachers thought they needed *less help* than peers of other groups, and consequently felt their own needs went *overlooked* by teachers
 - Nearly 40% of participants reported their overall experience of school was not ideal
 - Nearly 60% of participants said peers they felt less connected to school than their peers from other cultural groups, and sometimes attributed this to not feeling understood by teachers
 - Some reported that their *teachers* made ignorant comments to them, and in some cases, that their teachers made blatantly *racist* comments to them about their backgrounds
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“But I’m already culturally proficient!”

A 2016 survey of teachers finds over 70% of teachers say they’re *already comfortable* supporting South Asian American students.

Nearly 60% admit they *believe* the model minority myth.
Do you believe the myth?

Nearly 90% admit improving their proficiency would *improve* their teaching.
Could your teaching improve?

Teachers: Please don’t overestimate your cultural proficiency.

Commit to improving your proficiency, and seeing each student as an individual.
