



# AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT DATA REPORT

September 2024

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## INTRODUCTION

Montana statute 20-9-330, MCA, appropriates \$200 per American Indian child, totaling over \$3 million dollars per year, to provide funding to school districts for the purpose of closing the educational achievement gap that exists between American Indian students and non-American Indian students. According to 20-9-330 (2) (a), MCA, funds are to be determined by using the number of American Indian students enrolled in the district based on the count of regularly enrolled students on the first Monday in October of the prior school year as reported to the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) and deposited into the district's general fund.

Important note on the Race/Ethnicity Data in the American Indian Achievement Gap Report

The underlying legislation authorizing the American Indian Achievement Gap Report, is intended to support all American Indian students in Montana, including those who may identify with more than one race/ethnicity. The OPI follows a two-part race/ethnicity and multiracial population methodology for all state and federally required reports except for the American Indian Achievement Gap Report; therefore, students who otherwise are identified as "multi-racial" in other published data and reports are identified and accounted for as American Indian Students in this report if one of the races they identify with is American Indian.

### Explanation of Data

The data in this report provides information on the academic, social emotional, and career-and-college readiness of Montana American Indian students, compared to their peers in Montana. The data used in this report comes from the statewide assessments given in the 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022, and 2023 school years.

- SBAC – The Smarter Balanced assessment serves as the Math and English Language Arts(ELA) assessments for Grades 3-8.
- ACT – The ACT is used as the statewide assessment for Grade 11 for English and Math.
- Cohort Dropout Rate – High School Dropout rates are calculated by taking the number of students who dropped out in four years or less, divided by the total number of students in their anticipated graduation year.
- Cohort Graduation Rate – Graduation rates are calculated by taking the number of students who graduate (1) in four years or less with a regular high school diploma, or (2) a State-defined alternate high school diploma for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, divided by the number of students in their expected graduation year.

## HIGHLIGHTS

While a gap in the achievement levels of American Indian students exists when compared to non-American Indian students, there are many areas of improvement within the academic data.

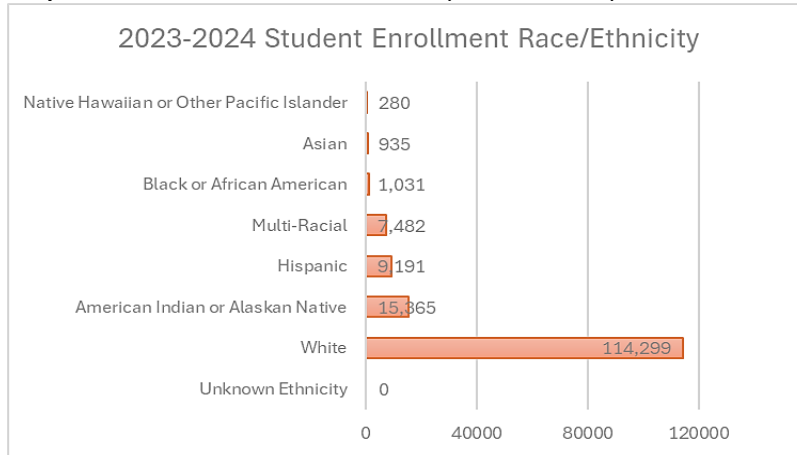
- Reading proficiency for high school students grew by 5% points between 2022 and 2023 and has surpassed pre-pandemic levels reaching 21% in 2023 as compared to 18% in 2019. Advanced reading proficiency in American Indian high school students doubled in the last year rising from 3% in 2022 to 6% in 2023. All students in grades 3-8, American Indian and non-American Indian, experienced an increase in reading proficiency between 2022 and 2023.
- High school math proficiency for American Indian students increased between 2022 and 2023 and has reached pre-pandemic levels of proficiency. In 2018, non-American Indian high school students had a proficiency rate in math that was 26 percentage points higher than American Indian high school students. In 2023, that difference is now 20 percentage points, showing a 6% decrease in the gap in math proficiency between American Indian and non-American Indian high school students.
- ACT science proficiency for American Indian high school students increased from 8% in 2021 to 18% in 2023.
- The average four-year cohort graduation rate for American Indian students in 2023 was 67.5% which is higher than the national graduation threshold minimum goal of 67%. Overall, dropout rates fell for American Indian students between 2022 and 2023. American Indian students on reservations are the only population showing a decrease in dropout rate over the last six years.
- College and Career Readiness: The number of American Indian students receiving dual enrollment credit increased from 240 students in 2018/2019 to 364 students in 2023/2024. The number of students

attending community colleges, two-year colleges, and four-year colleges increased between 2018 and 2023.

- American Indian students continue to have lower rates of attendance compared to non- American Indian students.
- Data indicates a disparity of American Indian students being disciplined in school for all discipline categories.
- American Indian students reported an increase in safety concerns at school and/or enroute to school in 2023

## STUDENT POPULATION DATA

**Graph 1:** Student Enrollment Numbers by Race/Ethnicity in the 2023/2024 School Year



**Graph 1** shows the total enrollment numbers by race/ethnicity for the 2023/2024 school year. In 2023, there were 15,365 American Indian/Alaska Native students.

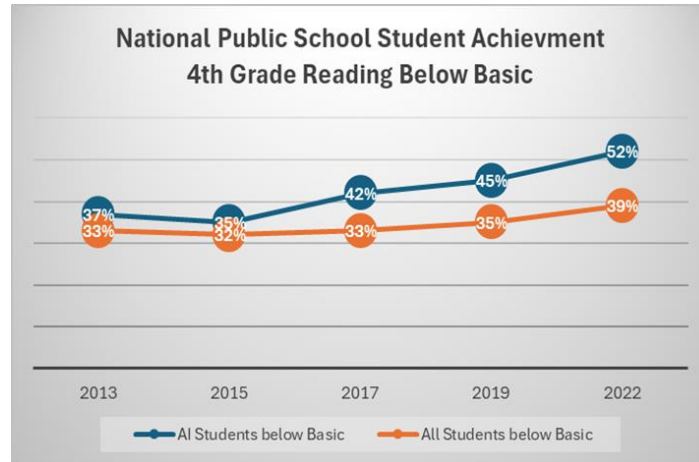
**Table 1.** Total Enrollment Number and American Indian Enrollment Numbers and Percentage by School Year

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Total Number of American Indian Students	16091	16128	15900	15752	15637	15365
Percentage of American Indian Students	11%	11%	11%	11%	10%	10%
Total Number of Students	147785	149181	145632	149198	150573	148585

## National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP)

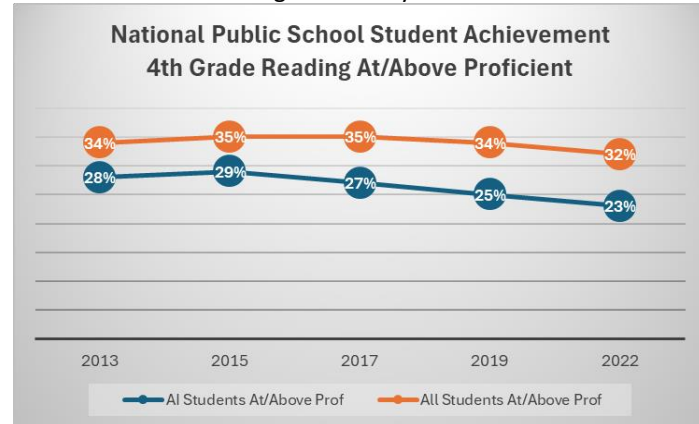
The National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) is a congressionally mandated program that is overseen and administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), within the U.S. Department of Education and the Institute of Education Sciences. Also known as The Nation's Report Card, NAEP has provided meaningful results to improve education policy and practice since 1969. Results are available for the nation, states, and 27 urban districts. The National Assessment Governing Board, an independent body appointed by the Secretary of Education, sets NAEP policy.

**Graph 2:** National Public School 4th Grade Below Basic Reading Proficiency for American Indian and All Students by School Year



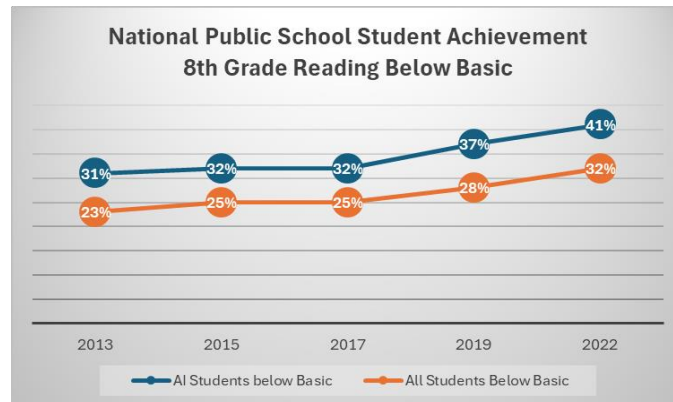
**Graph 2** shows the NAEP national trends for both 4th grade American Indian (AI) students and all 4th grade students in public schools that score “Below Basic” in Reading. In 2022, 4th grade American Indian students scored “Below Basic” in Reading at a rate of 52% compared to 39% of All Students.

**Graph 3.** National Public School 4th Grade Reading Proficiency for American Indian and All Students by School Year



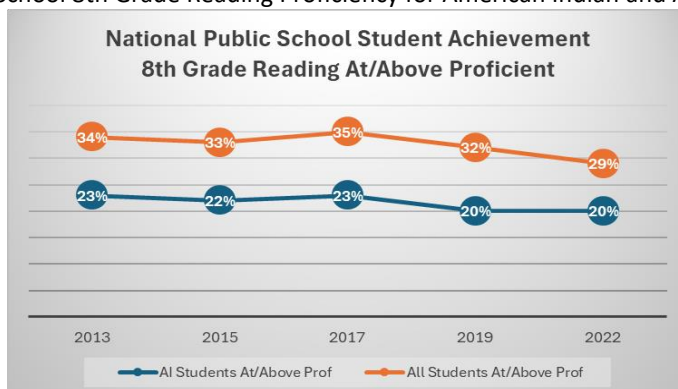
**Graph 3** shows the NAEP national trends for both 4th Grade American Indian (AI) students and all students in public schools that score “At or Above Proficient” in Reading. In 2022, 4th grade American Indian students scored “At or Above Proficient” in Reading at a rate of 23% compared to 32% of All Students.

**Graph 4.** National Public School 8th Grade Below Basic Reading Proficiency for American Indian and All Students by School Year



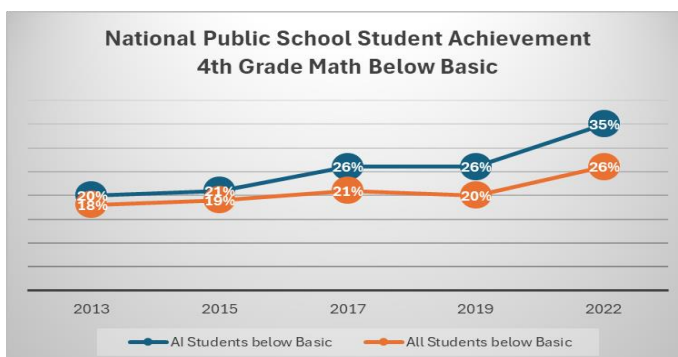
**Graph 4** shows the NAEP national trends for both 4th grade American Indian (AI) students and all 8th grade students in public schools that score “Below Basic” in Reading. In 2022, 8th grade American Indian students scored “Below Basic” in Reading at a rate of 41% compared to 32% of All Students.

**Graph 5.** National Public School 8th Grade Reading Proficiency for American Indian and All Students by School Year



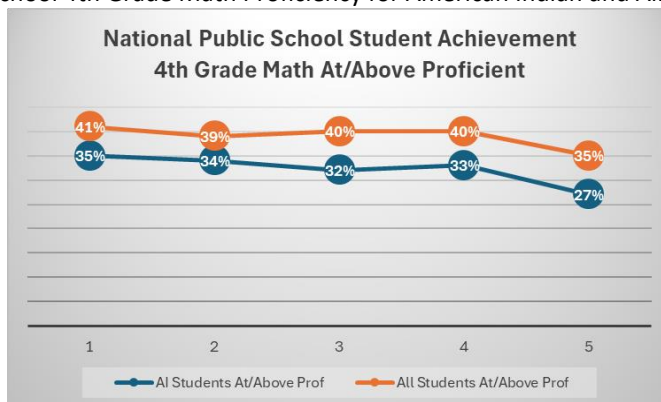
**Graph 5** shows the NAEP national trends for both 8th Grade American Indian (AI) students and all students in public schools that score “At or Above Proficient” in Reading. In 2022, 8th grade American Indian students scored “At or Above Proficient” in Reading at a rate of 20% compared to 29% of All Students.

**Graph 6.** National Public School 4th Grade Below Basic Math Proficiency for American Indian and All Students by School Year



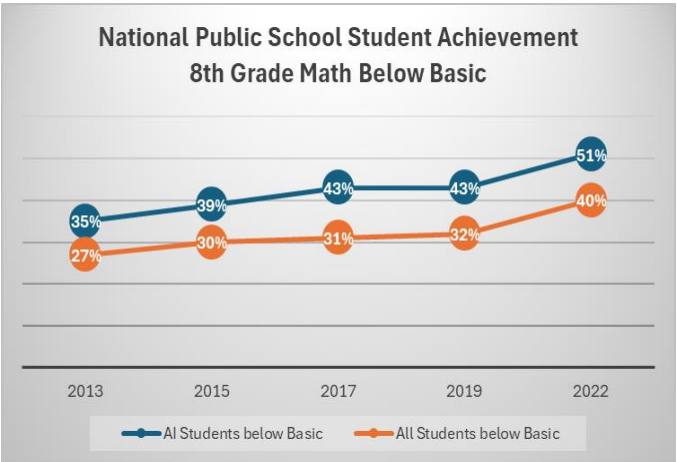
**Graph 6** shows the NAEP national trends for both 4th grade American Indian (AI) students and all 4th grade students in public schools that score “Below Basic” in Mathematics. In 2022, 4th grade American Indian students scored “Below Basic” in math at a rate of 35% compared to 26% of All Students.

**Graph 7.** National Public School 4th Grade Math Proficiency for American Indian and All Students by School Year



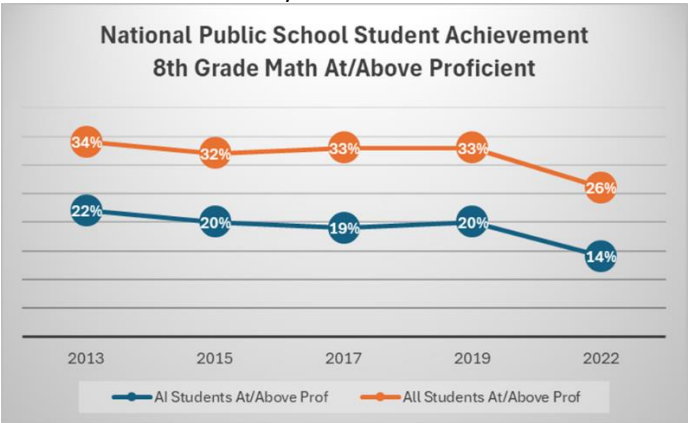
**Graph 7** shows the NAEP national trends for both 4th Grade American Indian (AI) students and all students in public schools that score “At of Above Proficient” in Mathematics. In 2022, 4th grade American Indian students scored “At or Above Proficient” in math at a rate of 27% compared to 35% of All Students.

**Graph 8.** National Public School 8th Grade Below Basic Math Proficiency for American Indian and All Students by School Year



**Graph 8** shows the NAEP national trends for both 8th grade American Indian (AI) students and all 8th grade students in public schools that score “Below Basic” in Mathematics. In 2022, 8th grade American Indian students scored “Below Basic” in math at a rate of 51% compared to 40% of All Students.

**Graph 9.** National Public School 8th Math Proficiency for American Indian and All Students by School Year

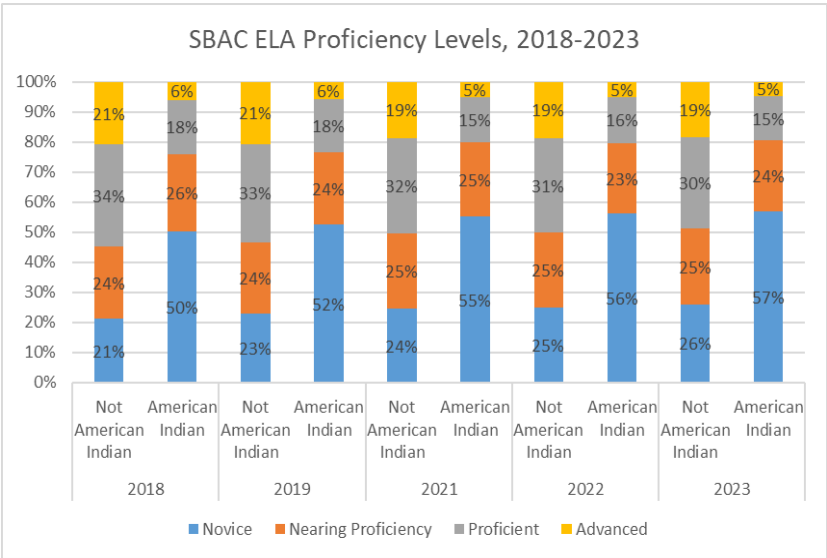


**Graph 9** shows the NAEP national trends for both 8th Grade American Indian (AI) students and all students in public schools that score “At of Above Proficient” in Mathematics. In 2022, 8th grade American Indian students scored “At or Above Proficient” in math at a rate of 14% compared to 26% of All Students.

SMARTER BALANCED ASSESSMENT

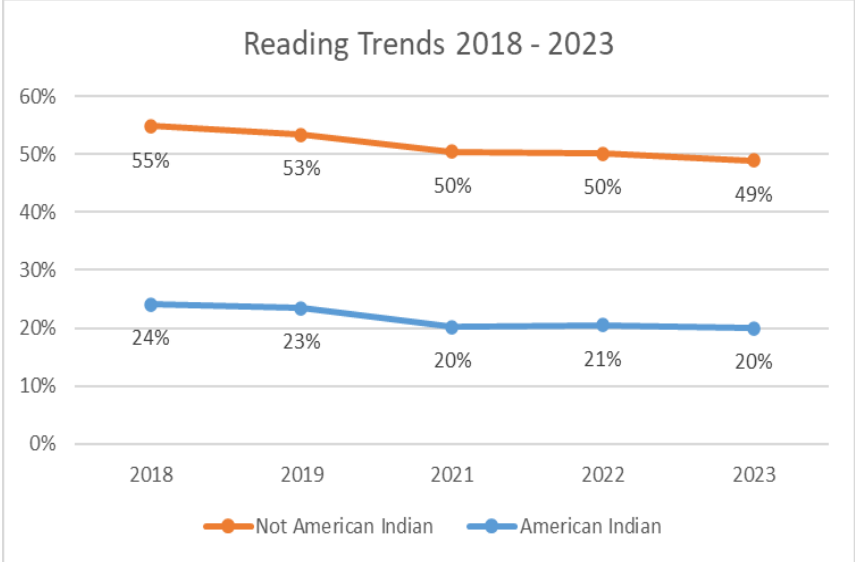
Smarter Balanced– Reading Proficiency

Graph 10. English Language Arts Proficiency Levels for American Indian and non-American Indian Students for Years 2018-2023



Graph 10 shows the percentages of students scoring in each proficiency level for the Smarter Balance ELA assessment. This data is broken out by years 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022, and 2023. The comparison of American Indian and non-American Indian student ELA achievement data displays a gap with 20% of American Indian students scoring at a proficient level compared to 49% of non-American Indian students. Likewise, the average percentage of students falling in the novice category from 2018-2023 for American Indian students is 54%, as compared to non-American Indian students who show an average novice rate of 23.8% during that same time frame. The percentage of American Indian students testing at the novice level has been increasing over the past 5 years and ELA proficiency has not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels.

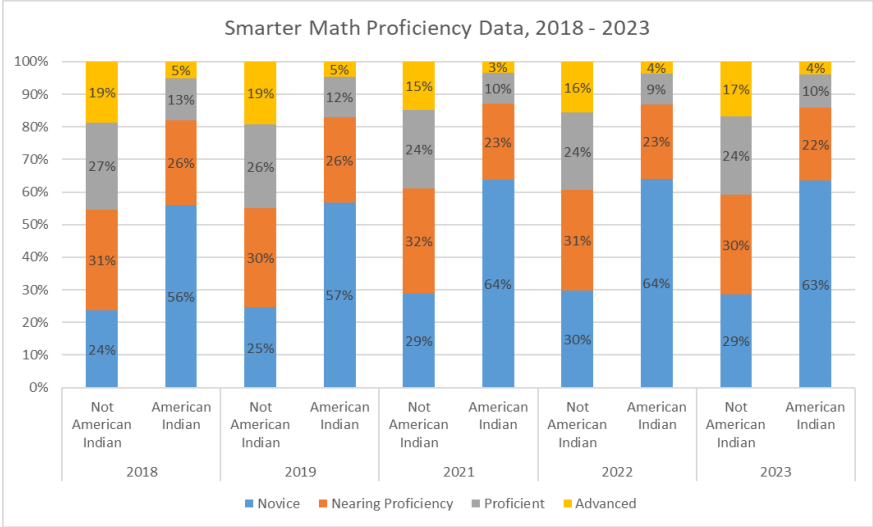
Graph 11. Reading Proficiency Rates for American Indian and non- American Indian Students for Years 2018-2023



Graph 11 illustrates the percentages of students considered proficient in reading between 2018 and 2023. The proficiency gap between American Indian and non-Indian students fell by two percentage points in the time frame displayed. In 2018, the rate of non-American Indian students considered proficient was 31 percentage points higher than that of non-American Indian students; in 2023 this difference between non-American Indian and American Indian students was 29 percentage points.

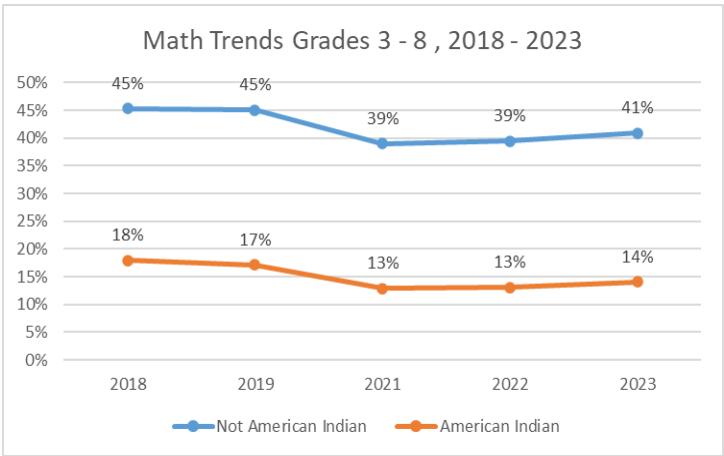
Smarter Balanced Math Assessment

Graph 12. Math Proficiency for American Indian and non-American Indian Students for Years 2018-2023



Graph 12 shows the percentages of students scoring in each proficiency level for the Smarter Balance Math assessment. This data is broken out by years 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022, and 2023. Twenty-nine percent of non-American Indian students were considered novice in 2023, as compared to 63% of American Indian students. The average percentage of novice students between 2018-2023 is 27.7% for non-American Indian students and 60.8% for American Indian students.

Graph 13. Math Proficiency Rates for American Indian and non-American Indian Students in Grades 3-8 for Years 2018-2023



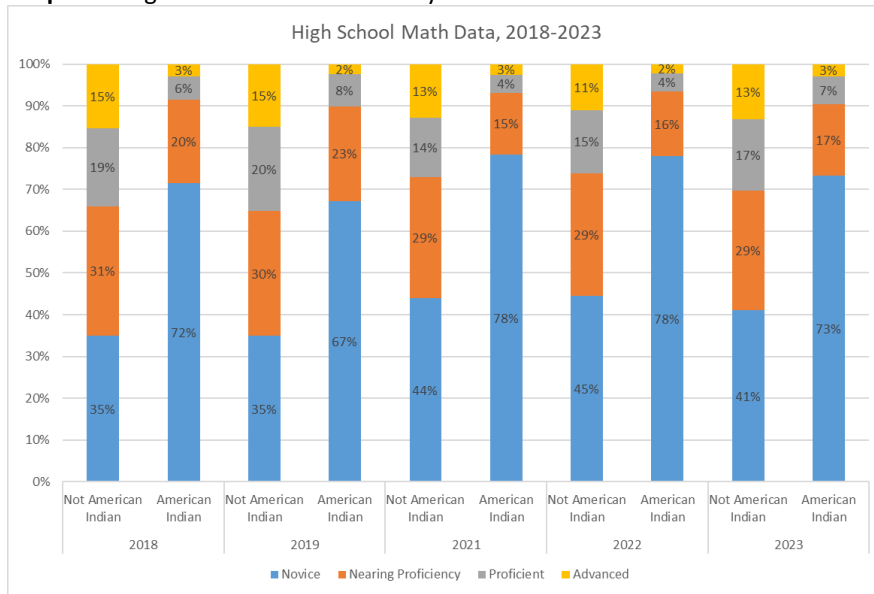
Graph 13 illustrates the percentages of students considered proficient. The gap in proficiency is more evident between non-American Indian and American Indian students. In the year 2023 the non-American Indian population percentage of proficiency is 41%. American students scored 14% in 2023. Since 2018 the average for American Indian students scoring proficient or advanced is 15%. The Non-American Indian student average for the same time period was 41.8%.



## ACT ASSESSMENTS

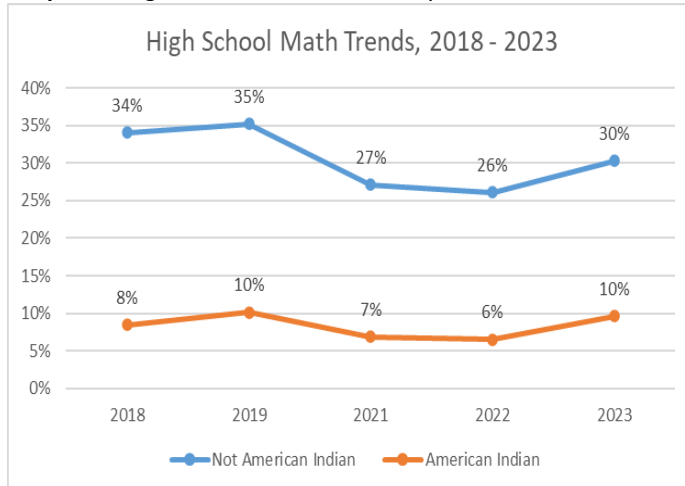
### ACT Math Assessment

**Graph 14.** High School Math Proficiency for American Indian and non-American Indian Students in Years 2018-2023



**Graph 14** illustrates the percentages of high school students considered proficient in math for the years 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022 and 2023. In 2023, 10% of American Indian students were proficient while 30% of non-American Indian students were proficient. In 2023, the percentage of American Indian students scoring in the novice category was down by 5 percentage points, as compared to 2022 with 73% of American Indian students scoring as novice compared to 78% the year prior. The average percentage of students scoring as novice in math between 2018 and 2023 is 40% for non-American Indian students, and 73.6% for American Indian students.

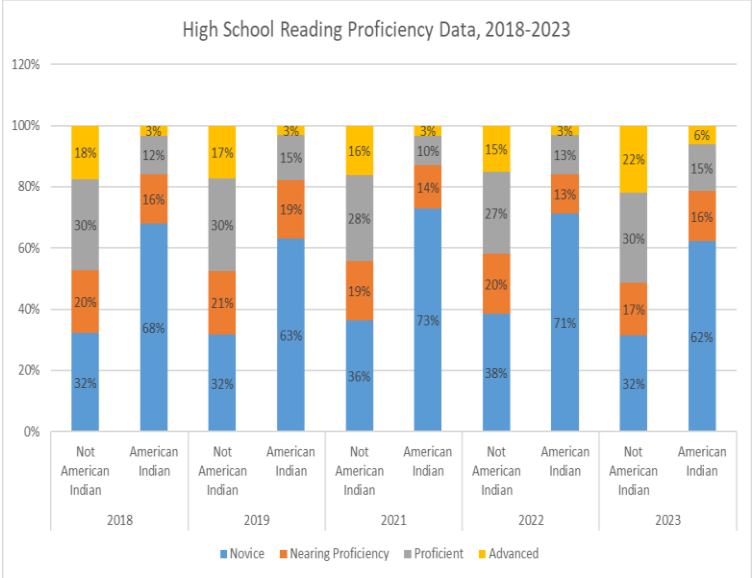
**Graph 15.** High School Math Proficiency for American Indian and non-American Indian Students in Years 2018-2023



**Graph 15** indicates a 4% improvement in American Indian students scoring proficient or advanced in math between 2022 and 2023. Non-American Indian students scoring proficient or advanced also made a 4% gain. In 2023, non-American Indian students scored at a proficient rate that was 20 percentage points higher than non-American Indian students; this is an improvement as the difference in 2018 was 26 percentage points, meaning the gap between American Indian and non-American Indian students has decreased by 6%.

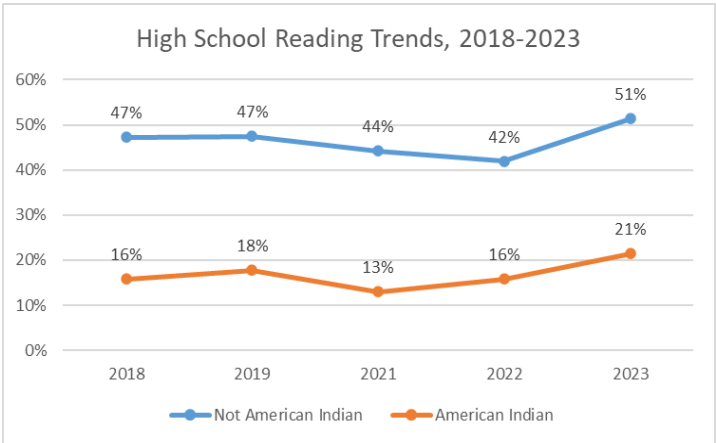
ACT Reading Assessment

Graph 16. High School Reading Proficiency for American Indian and non-Indian Students in Years 2018-2023



Graph 16 shows the percentages of high school students scoring in each proficiency level for the ACT Reading Assessment. This data is broken out by years 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022 and 2023. Fifty-two percent of non-American Indian students were deemed proficient in reading in 2023 while 21% of American Indian students scored in the proficient category that same year. The percentage of American Indian students scoring at the novice level decreased from 71% in 2022 to 62% in 2023, which is six percentage points lower than the pre-pandemic novice percentage of 68% in 2018. By comparison, the percentage of novice non-American Indian students in 2018 was 32%, which is equal to the percentage of non-American Indian students falling in the novice category in 2023.

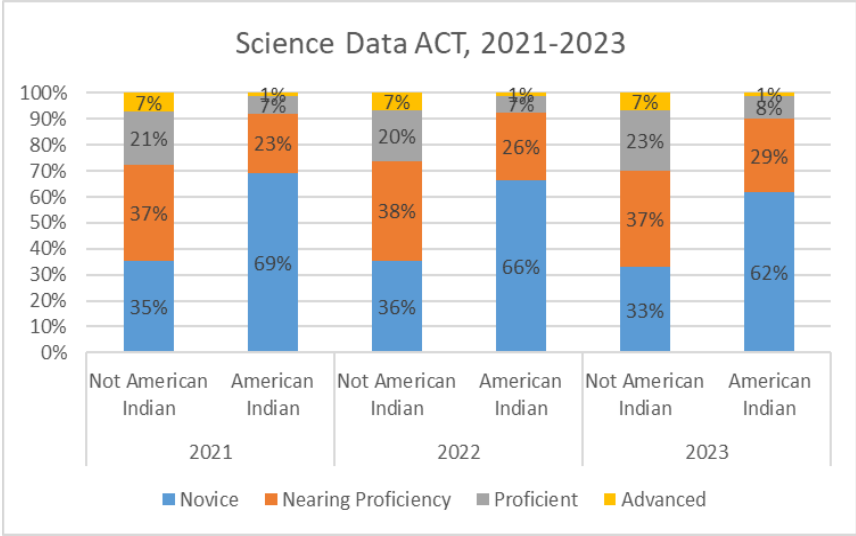
Graph 17. High School Reading Proficiency for American Indian and non-American Indian Students in Years 2018-2023



Graph 17 illustrates the percentages of high school students considered proficient in reading for the years 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022, and 2023. Both American Indian and non-American Indian students show an increase in reading proficiency between 2018 and 2023, with a noticeable rise between 2022 and 2023. Both American Indian and non-American Indian students are displaying reading proficiency rates that surpass pre-pandemic proficiency numbers. As of 2023, non-American Indian students are testing proficiently at a rate 30 percentage points higher than American Indian students; this is a decrease of 1 percentage point when compared to 2018.

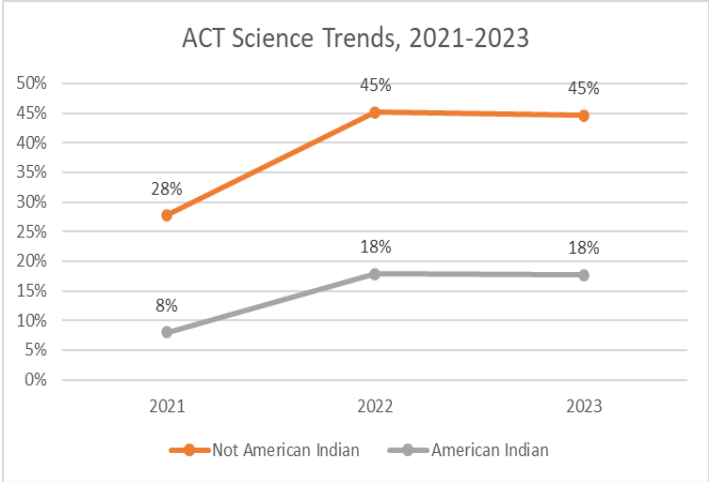
ACT Science Assessment

Graph 18. Science Proficiency for American Indian and non-American Indian Students in Years 2021-2023



Graph 18 illustrates the percentages of high school students considered proficient in science for the years 2021, 2022 and 2023. The number of American Indian students scoring in the novice category has decreased from 69% in 2021 to 62% in 2023, a decrease of 7 percentage points. The number of non-American Indian students scoring as novice also fell between 2021 and 2023 from 35% to 33%.

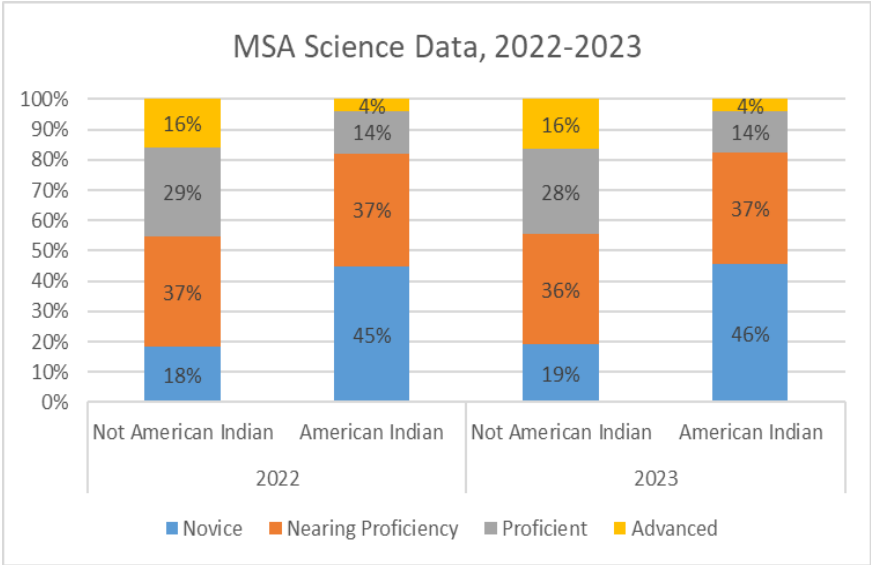
Graph 19. Science Proficiency for American Indian and non-American Indian Students in Years 2021-2023



Graph 19 shows the number of high school students scoring proficient in science in the years 2021, 2022, and 2023. The number of American Indian students scoring proficient in science increased by 10 percentage points between 2021 and 2023. The number of non-American Indian students proficient in science also increased between 2021 and 2023. In 2023, 18% of American Indian students were proficient in science as compared to 45% of non-American Indian students.

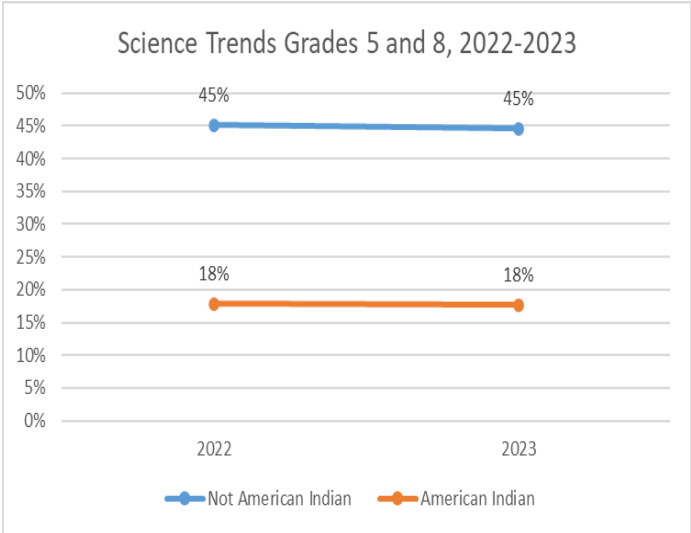
MSA SCIENCE

**Graph 20.** High School Science Proficiency for American Indian and non-American Indian Students in years 2022 and 2023



**Graph 20** illustrates the percentages of students considered proficient in science for the years 2022 and 2023. There has been very little difference between the percentages of students scoring in each category from 2022 to 2023. In 2023, 46% of American Indian students scored as novices compared to 19% of non-American Indian students.

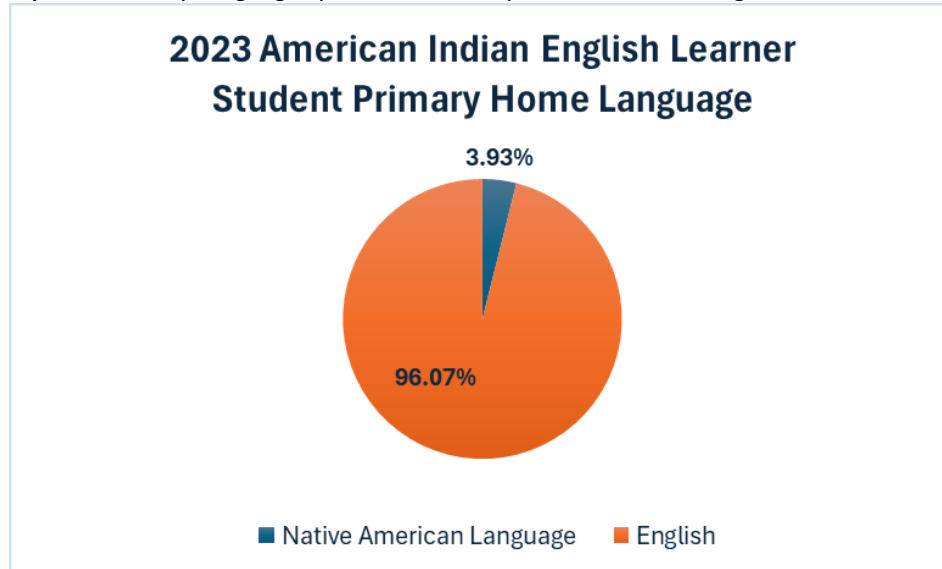
**Graph 21.** Science Proficiency for American Indian and non-American Indian Students in Years 2022 and 2023



**Graph 21** shows the number of students scoring as proficient in science in 2022 and 2023. There has been no change in the number of students scoring as proficient, with 18% of American Indian students scoring proficient in 2022 and 2023 and 45% of non-American Indian students scoring proficient during the same years.

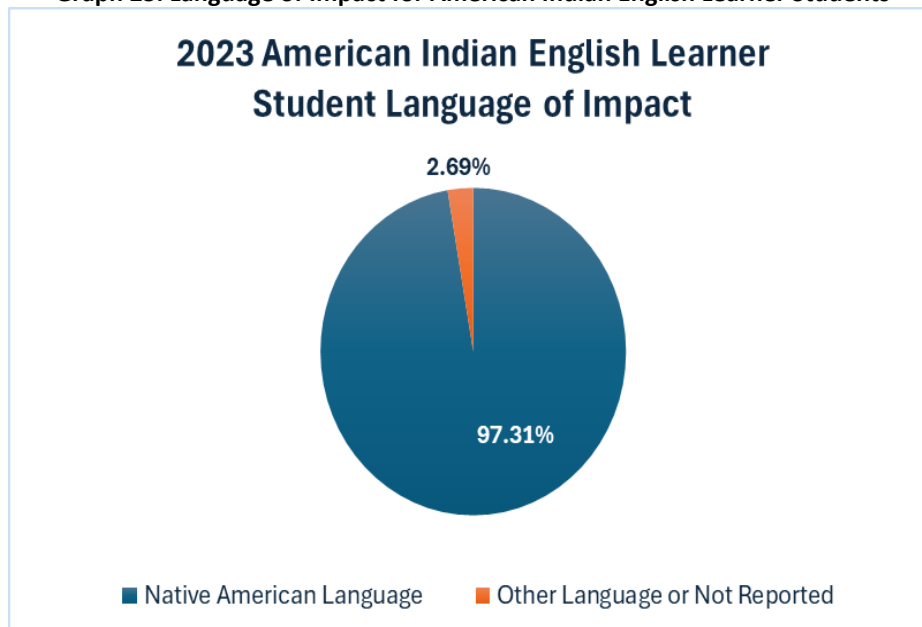
## ENGLISH LEARNER

**Graph 22.** Primary Language Spoken at Home by American Indian English Learner Students



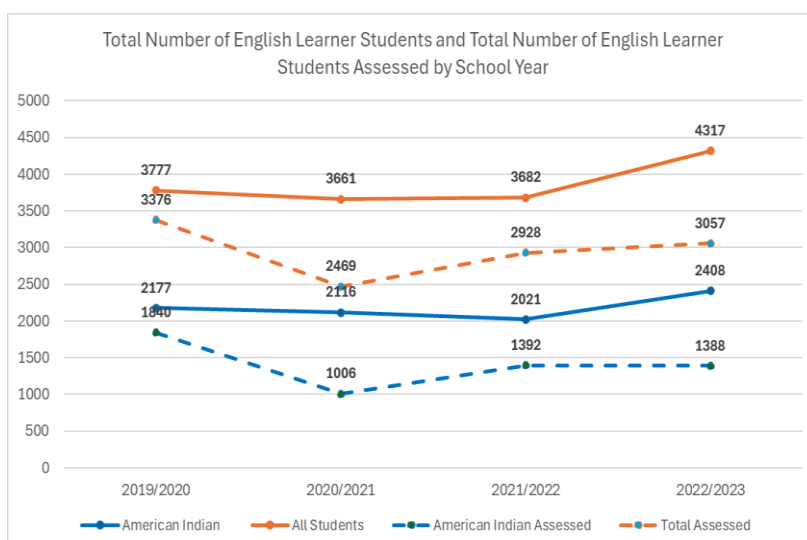
**Graph 22** shows the languages spoken at home by American Indian English Learner students. In 2023, just over 96% of American Indian English Learner students spoke primarily English at home.

**Graph 23.** Language of Impact for American Indian English Learner Students



**Graph 23** shows the language of impact for American Indian English Learner Students in 2023. The *language of impact* is defined as any language other than English that influences a student's English language development. In 2023, the language of impact for nearly all (97.31%) American Indian English Learner students as a Native language.

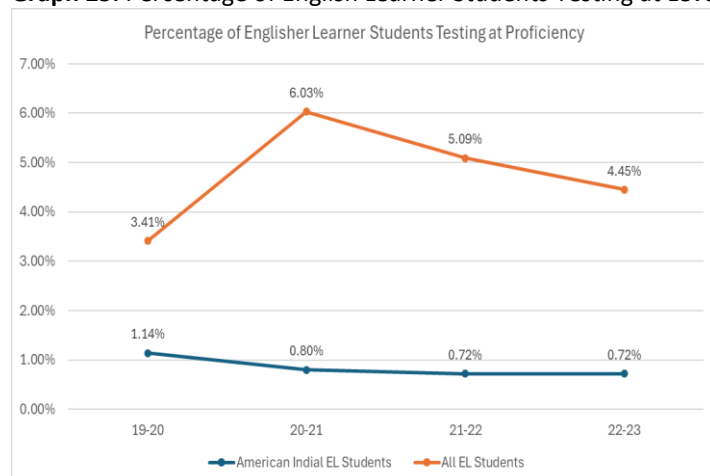
**Graph 24.** Total of English Learner Students and Total Number of English Learner Students Assessed by School Year



**Graph 24** shows the total number of English Learner students in the state and the total number of American Indian English Learner students for four school years. The number of English Learner students who were assessed during each school year is also presented on the graph. The total number of American Indian English Learners increased from 2,177 in 2019/2020 to 2,408 in 2022/2023. Conversely, the number of American Indian English Learner students who were assessed decreased from 1,840 in 2019/2020 to 1,388 in 2022/2023. During the 2022/2023 school year, 58% of American Indian English Learner students were assessed compared to 71% of all English Learner students that same year. This disparity is repeated in other school years with the greatest disproportionality happening in the 2020/2021 school year:

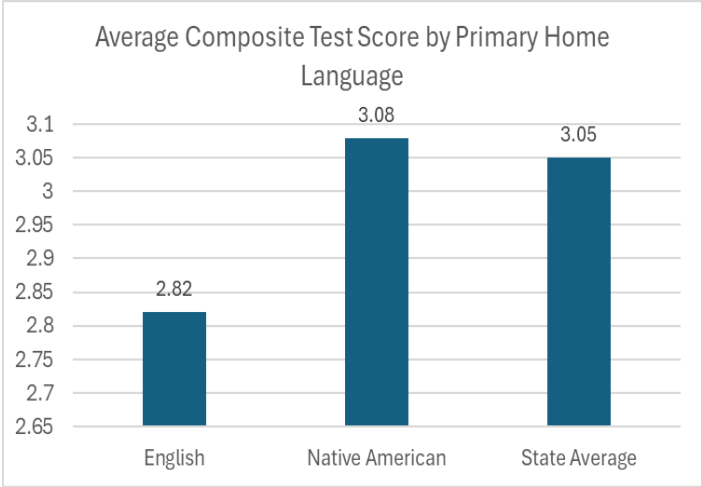
- 2021/2022: 80% of all English Learner students assessed vs. 69% of American Indian English Learner students
- 2020/2021: 67% of all English Learner students assessed vs. 48% of American Indian English Learner students
- 2019/2020: 89% of all English Learner students assessed vs. 85% of American Indian English Learner students

**Graph 25.** Percentage of English Learner Students Testing at Levels of Proficiency



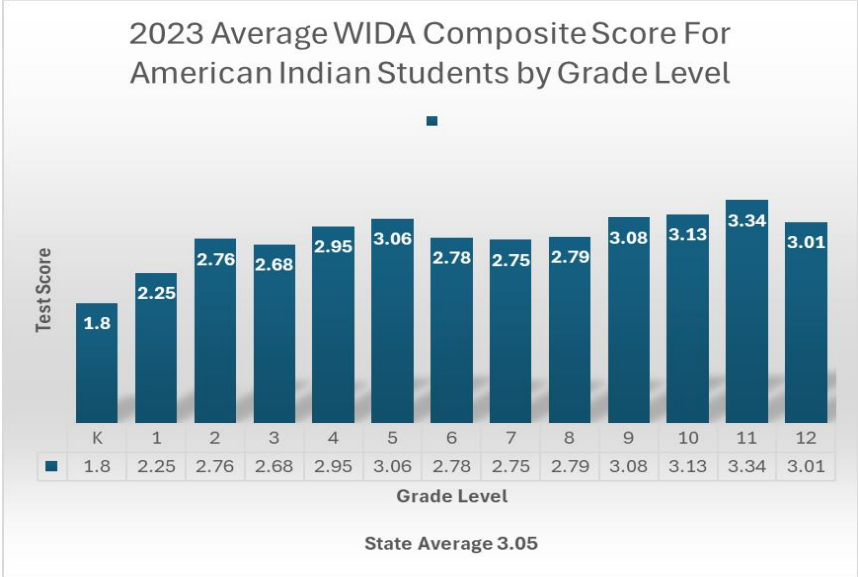
**Graph 25** shows the percentage of English Learner students testing proficient for four different school years. In 2023, 4.45% of all Montana English Learner students were proficient compared to less than 1% (0.72%) of American Indian English Learner students.

**Graph 26.** Average Composite Test Score by Primary Home Language



**Graph 26** shows the average composite test score by an English Learner students’ primary home language, including English and Native American languages, along with the state average. In 2023, English Learner students who primarily spoke a Native American language at home had a higher composite test score (3.08) than English Learner students who primarily spoke English at home (2.82).

**Graph 27.** 2023 Average WIDA Composite Score for American Indian Students by Grade Level

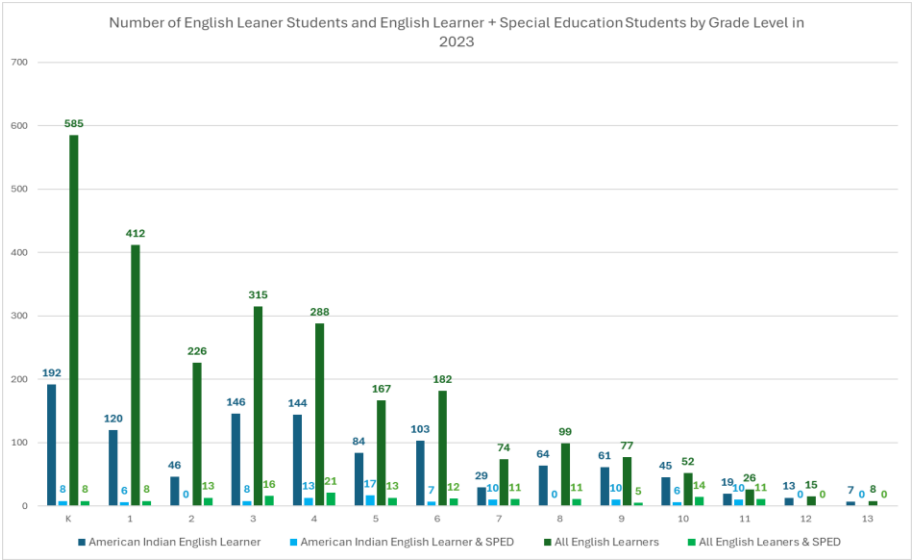


**Graph 27** shows the average WIDA Composite score for American Indian English Learner students by Grade Level in 2023. The WIDA is a suite of large-scale English language proficiency tests for K–12 students. The scale below shows the six-point proficiency scale to interpret composite scores with level 3 being considered a developmental stage of the English language.

**WIDA Proficiency Scale:**



**Graph 28.** Number of English Learner Students and Number of English Learner Students Who Are Also in Special Education by Grade Level



**Graph 28** shows the number of American Indian English Learner students and the number of American Indian English Learner students who are also in special education (SPED) by grade level in 2023. The same numbers for the entire student population is also shown. In many grade levels, the percentage of American Indian students who are English Learners and also identified as SPED is greater than the percentage of the student population as a whole. For example, in Kindergarten, 4% of American Indian English Learner students were identified as SPED while only 1% of Kindergarten students as a whole were identified as both English Learners and SPED.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION**

The rate of American Indian students in Special Education is disproportionately higher than the overall racial/ethnic composition of Montana's schools. In 2023, OPI data indicated that there were 3,601 American Indian students receiving Special Education services. In 2024, 2,855 American Indian students received Special Education Services.

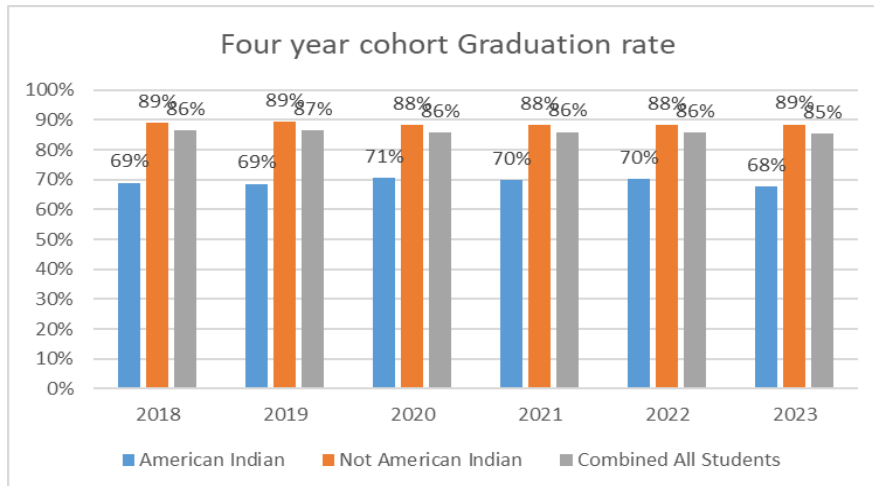
**Table 2.** American Indian SPED Enrollment

State-wide Special Education Students	2023	2024
American Indian	3,601	2,855
Not American Indian	16,659	13,119



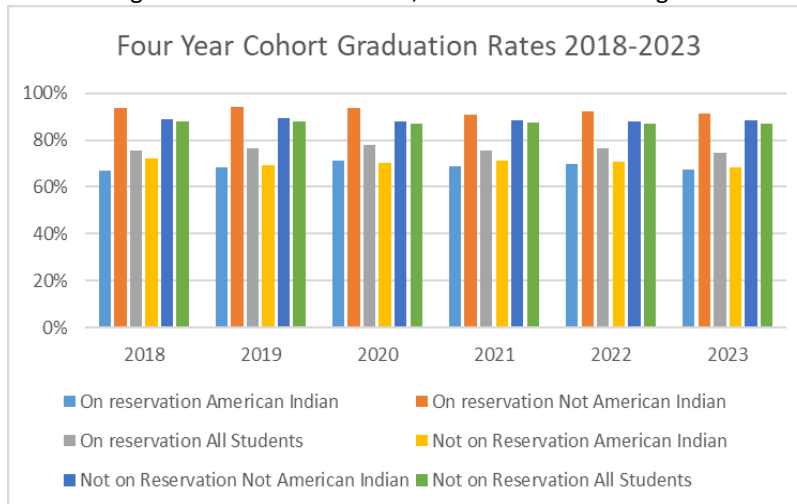
## GRADUATION

**Graph 29.** Four-year Cohort Graduation Rate for American Indian, non-American Indian, and All Students in Years 2018-2023



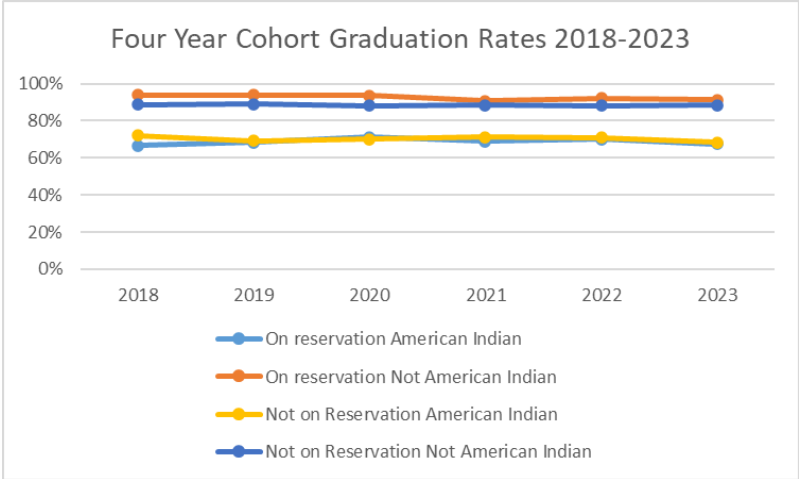
**Graph 29** illustrates the percentages of students who graduated in 4 years for the years 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023. The 4-year graduation rate of American Indian students has fallen since 2020, with 71% of American Indian students graduating in 2020 compared to 68% of American Indian students in 2023. By contrast, the number of non-American Indian students has remained nearly consistent between 2018 and 2023 at 88% or 89% of students graduating in four years.

**Graph 30.** Four-year Cohort Graduation Rate for American Indian Living On and Off Reservations, non-American Indian Living On and Off Reservations, and All Students Living On and Off Reservations in Years 2018-2023



**Graph 30** illustrates the graduation rates for six student groups for the years 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023. For all years represented, the student group with the highest four-year graduation rate are students on a reservation and non-American Indian. This is followed by non-American Indian students not on a reservation for years 2018-2023. For all years except 2020, American Indian students living on a reservation had the lowest four-year graduation rate followed by American Indian students not on a reservation; in 2020, American Indian students not on a reservation had a graduation rate slightly lower than American Indian students on a reservation.

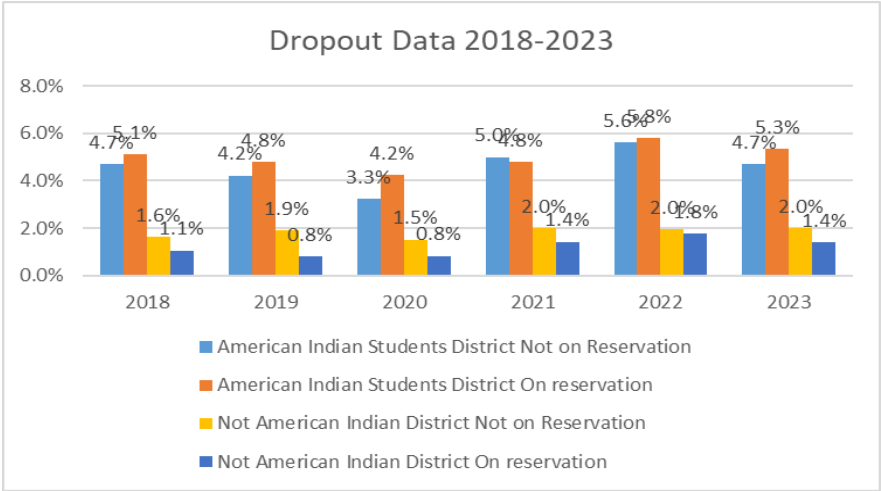
**Graph 31.** Four-year Cohort Graduation Rates for American Indian Students Living On and Off Reservations and non-American Indian Students Living On and Off Reservations for Years 2018-2023



**Graph 31** shows the graduation rates for four student groups for the years 2018 to 2023. Over the last 5 years, the graduation rates for all student groups has stayed relatively the same though a slight decrease in graduation was present for American Indian students on and off reservations between 2022 and 2023.

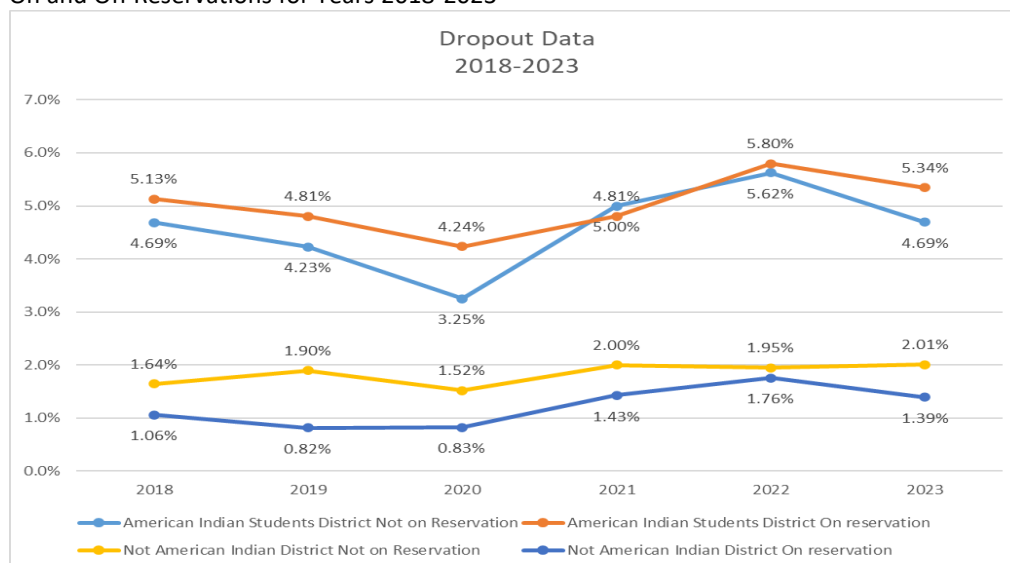
**DROPOUT RATES**

**Graph 32.** Dropout Rates for American Indian Students Living On and Off Reservations and non-American Indian Students Living On and Off Reservations for Years 2018-2023



**Graph 32** displays the group out rate for four student groups for years 2018- 2023. In all years except for 2021, American Indian students on a reservation show the highest rate of drop out, followed by American Indian students not on a reservation. In 2021, American Indian students on a reservation displayed the highest dropout rate. Overall, the rate of dropout for all student groups in 2023 is similar to the dropout rates in 2018.

**Graph 33.** for American Indian Students Living On and Off Reservations and non-American Indian Students Living On and Off Reservations for Years 2018-2023



**Graph 33** displays the dropout rate for four student groups for years 2018- 2023. Between 2022 and 2023, the dropout rate for American Indian students not on a reservation fell from 5.62% to 4.69%. Likewise, the dropout rate for American Indian students on a reservation fell from 5.8% in 2022 to 5.34% in 2023.

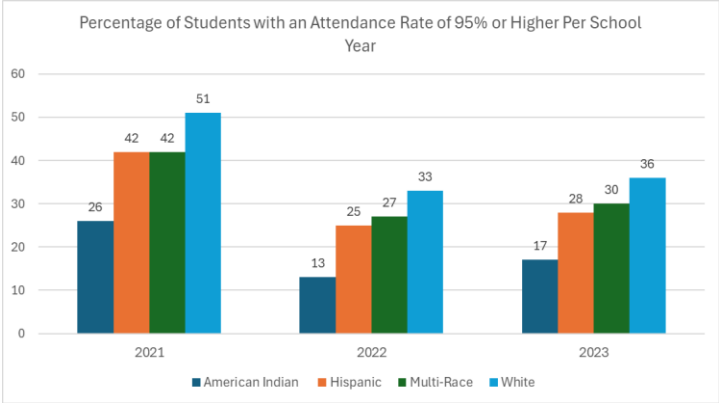
## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

**Table 3.** Percentage of Students with an Attendance Rate of 95% or Higher Per School Year

Race/Ethnicity	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
American Indian	26%	13%	17%
Hispanic	42%	25%	28%
Multi-Race	42%	27%	30%
White	51%	33%	36%
Total of All Students	47%	30%	33%

**Table 3** shows the percentage of students attending 95% or more days of school per school year by race/ethnicity. The graph below shows the same data for four racial/ethnic groups. All racial/ethnic groups saw a drop in attendance from 2020/2021 to 2021/2022 and then a slight increase from 2021/2022 to 2022/2023. For all years shown, American Indian students had the lowest rate of students attending school 95% or more days of a year.

**Graph 34.** Percentage of Students with an Attendance Rate of 95% or Higher Per School Year



**Graph 34** shows the percentage of students attending 95% of school days or more for three schools years by four racial/ethnic groups. For all three years show, American Indian students had the lowest attendance rate at 26% in 2021, 13% in 2022, and 17% in 2023.

**SCHOOL DISCIPLINE: SUSPENSION, EXPULSION, SCHOOL-RELATED ARRESTS AND REFERRALS TO LAW ENFORCEMENT**

School discipline can strongly influence school attendance and participation.

**Table 4.** 2023/2024 School Discipline Data: Suspension and Expulsions Percentage and Number (%(N))

Race/Ethnicity	Total student population %	In-School Suspensions	Out of School Suspensions w/o services	Expulsions w/ Services	Expulsions w/o Services
American Indian	10%	<b>19%</b> (1388)	<b>28%</b> (1794)	<b>20%</b> (2)	<b>18%</b> (7)
Hispanic	6%	<b>7%</b> (545)	6% (415)	<b>10%</b> (1)	<b>13%</b> (5)
Multi-Race	5%	<b>7%</b> (503)	<b>7%</b> (464)	<b>10%</b> (1)	<b>10%</b> (4)
White	77%	65% (4870)	57% (3650)	60% (6)	58% (23)

+This includes Asian, Black, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

\*Bold numbers indicate over representation of a racial/ethnic group in a discipline category (the percentage of discipline occurrences is greater than the total population percentage)

**Table 4** shows the breakdown of percentage of suspensions (in-school and out of school without services) and expulsions (with and without services) by racial/ethnic group for the 2023/2024 school year. The school discipline data shows an overrepresentation of American Indian students in all of the school discipline categories. The greatest rate of overrepresentation is seen in out-of-school suspensions (OSS) without services where American Indian students made up 10% of the total student population but 28% of the OSS without services.

## In- School Suspension

**Table 5.** The Percentage and Number of Students Receiving In-School Suspension by Racial/Ethnic Group Per School Year

Race/Ethnicity	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
American Indian	24% (1224)	17% (577)	18% (1096)	29% (2375)	19% (1388)
Hispanic	7% (338)	7% (251)	8% (479)	6% (514)	7% (545)
Multi-Race	4% (224)	5% (175)	6% (374)	5% (444)	7% (503)
White	63% (3196)	69% (2345)	67% (4122)	58% (4833)	65% (4870)
<b>Total for All Students</b>	<b>5062</b>	<b>3398</b>	<b>6182</b>	<b>8288</b>	<b>7443</b>

## Out of School Suspension Without Services

**Table 6.** Percentage and number of Students Receiving Out of School Suspension by School Year (%(N))

Race/Ethnicity	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
American Indian	35% (1349)	21% (568)	30% (1631)	30% (2083)	28% (1794)
Hispanic	6% (245)	6% (176)	7% (357)	7% (475)	6% (415)
Multi-Race	5% (177)	7% (195)	5% (282)	6% (434)	7% (464)
White	53% (2079)	64% (1783)	57% (3063)	56% (3920)	57% (3650)
<b>Total for All Students</b>	<b>3902</b>	<b>2770</b>	<b>5411</b>	<b>7004</b>	<b>6413</b>

## Expulsion Without Services

**Table 7.** Percentage and Number of Students Receiving Out of School Suspension by School Year (%(N))

Race/Ethnicity	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
American Indian	63% (12)	29% (5)	31% (11)	25% (13)	33% (13)
Hispanic	16% (3)	6% (1)	6% (2)	10% (5)	13% (5)
Multi-Race	0	6% (1)	6% (2)	2% (1)	2% (1)
White	21% (4)	53% (9)	57% (20)	63% (33)	58% (23)
<b>Total of All Students</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>40</b>

## School-Related Arrests

**Table 8.** Percentage and Number of Students Receiving Out of School Suspension by School Year (%(N))

Race/Ethnicity	2015/2016	2017/2018	2020/2021
American Indian	44% (143)	37% (77)	17% (17)

Hispanic	3% (11)	1% (1)	2% (2)
Multi-Race	1% (4)	4% (9)	2% (2)
White	50% (164)	57% (117)	77% (77)
All other racial/ethnic groups+	2%	1% (3)	2% (2)

(Source: U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights)

**Table 8** shows the number and rate of school-related arrests for three separate school years by racial/ethnic group. According to data collected by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, American Indians made up 44% of all school-related arrests during the 2015/2016 school year. This percentage fell to 37% in 2017/2018 and to 17% in 2020/2021. The number of school-related arrests for American Indian students fell from 143 in the 2015/2016 school year to 17 in the 2020/2021 school year. However, in all years shown, American Indians make high a disproportionately high rate of students being arrested at school.

## Referrals to Law Enforcement

**Table 9.** Percentage and Number of Students Referred to Law Enforcement by School Year (%(N))

Race/Ethnicity	2015/2016	2017/2018	2020/2021
American Indian	29% (326)	25% (224)	20% (122)
Hispanic	4% (47)	5% (47)	4% (27)
Multi-Race	3% (35)	4% (35)	3% (21)
White	60% (675)	64% (578)	71% (437)
All other racial/ethnic groups+	4% (38)	2% (28)	2% (12)

(Source: U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights)

**Table 9** shows the number and rate of referral to law enforcement for three separate school years by racial/ethnic group. According to data collected by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, American Indians made up 29% of all student referrals to law enforcement during the 2015/2016 school year. The rate and number of referrals to law enforcement decreased in the 2017/2018 and 2020/2021 school years. However, in all years shown, American Indians make high a disproportionately high rate of students being referred to law enforcement.

## YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY (YRBS) DATA

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) serves as a surveillance and reporting system for adolescent risk behaviors, developed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to help monitor the prevalence of behaviors that influence health. Since 1991, the YRBS has been administered every other year to high school students (and select middle school students). Not every high school student participates in the survey.

### SCHOOL SAFETY:

#### Did Not Go to School Because of a Safety Concern

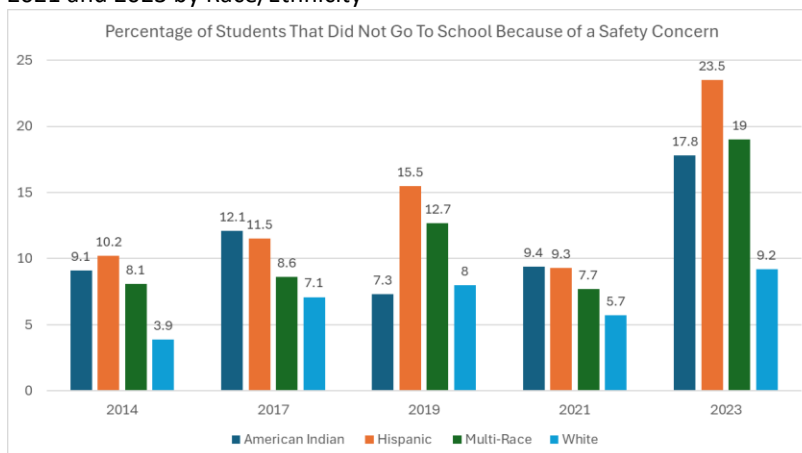
Question: *During the past 30 days, did you not attend school because you felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school.*

**Table 11.** Percentage of Students Not Going to School Because of a Safety Concern for Years 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021 and 2023 by Race/Ethnicity

Student Race/Ethnicity	2015	2017	2019	2021	2023
American Indian	9.1%	12.1%	7.3%	9.4%	17.8%
Hispanic	10.2%	11.5%	15.5%	9.3%	23.5%
Multi-Race	8.1%	8.6%	12.7%	7.7%	19%
White	3.9%	7.1%	8%	5.7%	9.2%
<b>Total of All Students</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>9.3%</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	<b>11.9%</b>

**Table 11** shows the responses from students during the year 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021, and 2023 by race/ethnicity. The graph below shows the same data for four racial/ethnic groups. A noticeable increase in the percentage of students not attending school due to safety concerns is observed in 2023 with rates nearly doubling for American Indian students, rising from 9.4% in 2021 to 17.8% in 2023. Likewise, the average for all students reporting missing school due to feeling unsafe increased from 6.6% in 2021 to 11.9% in 2023.

**Graph 36.** Percentage of Students Not Going to School Because of a Safety Concern for Years 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021 and 2023 by Race/Ethnicity



## Bullied on School Property

Question: *During the past 12 months, have you ever been bullied on school property?*

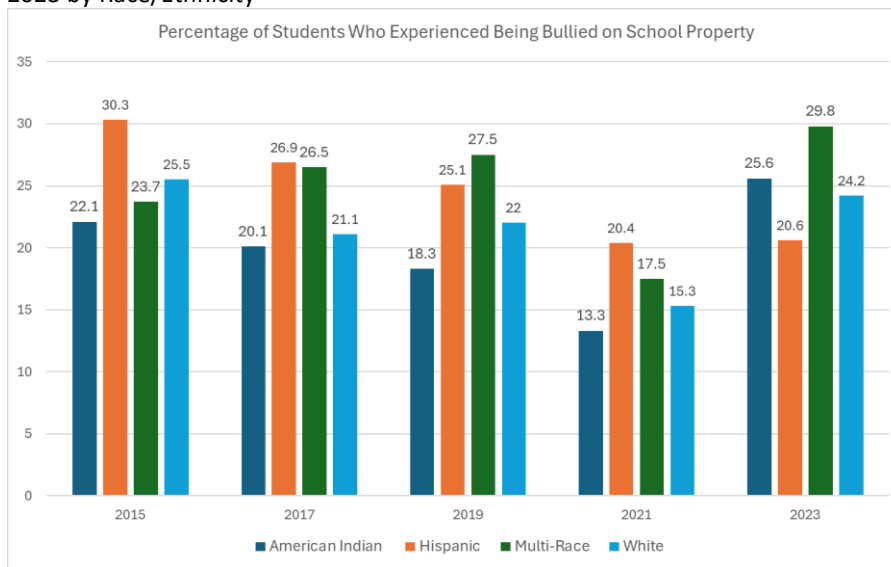
**Table 13.** Percentage of Students Experiencing Bullying on School Property for Years 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021 and 2023 by Race/Ethnicity

Student Race/Ethnicity	2015	2017	2019	2021	2023
American Indian	22.1%	20.1%	18.3%	13.3%	25.6%
Hispanic	30.3%	26.9%	25.1%	20.4%	20.6%
Multi-Race	23.7%	26.5%	27.5%	17.5%	29.8%

White	25.5%	21.1%	22%	15.3%	24.2%
<b>Total of All Students</b>	<b>25.3%</b>	<b>21.6%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>15.6%</b>	<b>25.3%</b>

**Table 13** shows the responses from students during the year 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021, and 2023 by race/ethnicity. The graph below shows the same data for four racial/ethnic groups. Between 2015 and 2021, the percentage of American Indian students being bullied on school property was on a downward trend; unfortunately, the percentage increased from 13.3% in 2021 to over a quarter of American Indian students (25.6%) in 2023.

**Graph 38.** Percentage of Students Experiencing Bullying on School Property for Years 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021 and 2023 by Race/Ethnicity



## Treated Unfairly Because of Race or Ethnicity

Question: *During your lifetime, have you been treated badly or unfairly in school because of your race or ethnicity?*

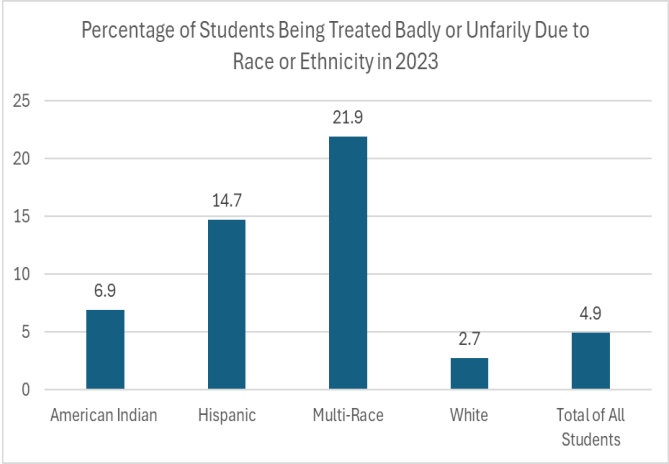
**Table 14.** Percentage of Students Being Treated Badly or Unfairly Due to Their Race or Ethnicity in 2023

Student Race/Ethnicity	2023
American Indian	6.9%
Hispanic	14.7%
Multi-Race	21.9%
White	2.7%
<b>Total of All Students</b>	<b>4.9%</b>

**Table 14** the responses from students during the year 2023, which was the first year this question was asked in the Montana YRBS. The graph below shows the same data for four racial/ethnic groups. In, 2023, nearly 7% of American Indian students reported being treated badly or unfairly at school due to their race or ethnicity.



**Graph 39.** Percentage of Students Being Treated Badly or Unfairly Due to Their Race or Ethnicity in 2023



**MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE**

**Sadness and Hopelessness**

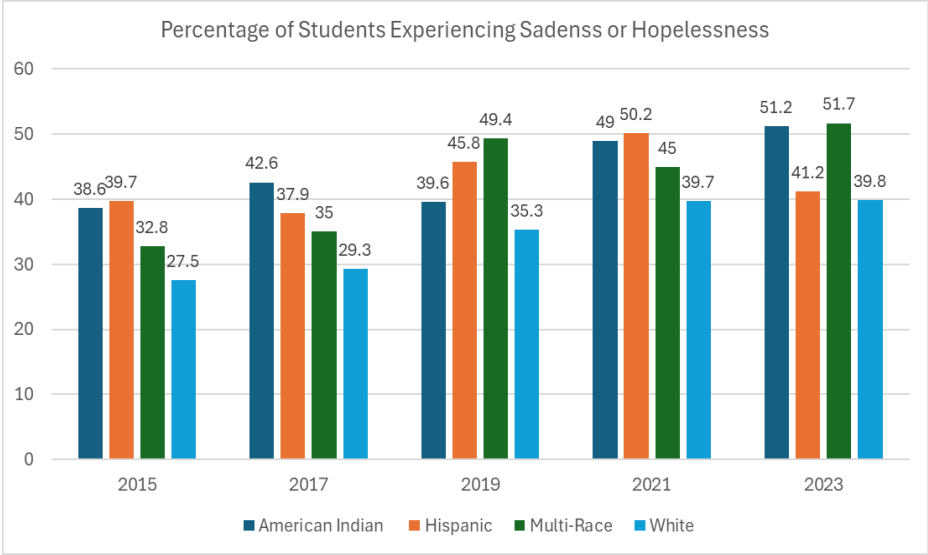
Question: *During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more that you stopped doing some usual activities?*

**Table 15.** Percentage of Students Experiencing Sadness or Hopelessness Years 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021 and 2023 by Race/Ethnicity

Student Race/Ethnicity	2015	2017	2019	2021	2023
American Indian	38.6%	42.6%	39.6%	49%	51.2%
Hispanic	39.7%	37.9%	45.8%	50.2%	41.2%
Multi-Race	32.8%	35%	49.4%	45%	51.7%
White	27.5%	29.3%	35.3%	39.7%	39.8%
Total of All Students	29.3%	31%	36.7%	41.1%	42.8%

**Table 15** shows the responses from students during the year 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021, and 2023 by race/ethnicity. The graph below shows the same data for four racial/ethnic groups. American Indian students reported the highest rate of persistent sadness/hopelessness in 2017 and reported the second highest rate in 2015, 2021, and 2023. In 2023, over half (51.2%) of Montana American Indian students reported persistent feelings of sadness/hopelessness.

**Graph 40.** Percentage of Students Experiencing Sadness or Hopelessness Years 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021 and 2023 by Race/Ethnicity



**Attempted Suicide**

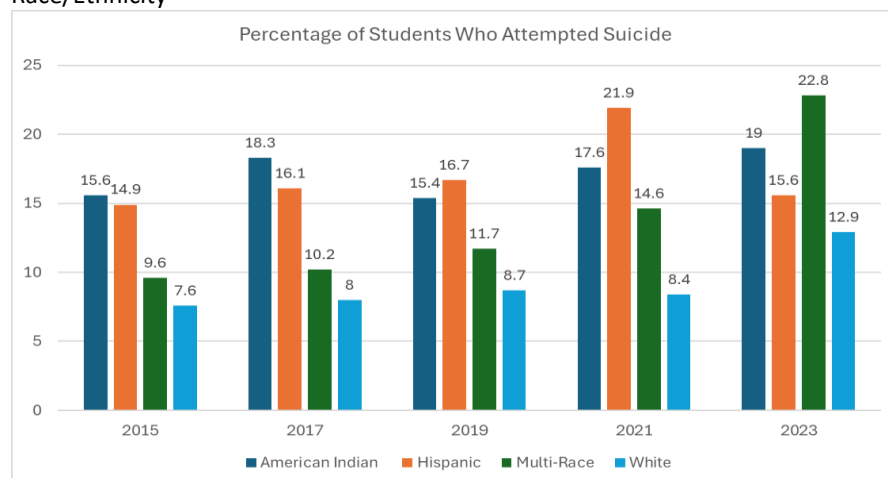
Question: *During the past 12 months, did you attempt suicide?*

**Table 16.** Percentage of Students Who Attempted Suicide for Years 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021 and 2023 by Race/Ethnicity

Student Race/Ethnicity	2015	2017	2019	2021	2023
American Indian	15.6%	18.3%	15.4%	17.6%	19%
Hispanic	14.9%	16.1%	16.7%	21.9%	15.6%
Multi-Race	9.6%	10.2%	11.7%	14.6%	22.8%
White	7.6%	8%	8.7%	8.4%	12.9%
Total of All Students	8.9%	9.5%	10%	10.2%	15.1%

**Table 16** shows the responses from students during the year 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021, and 2023 by race/ethnicity. The graph below shows the same data for four racial/ethnic groups. On average, between 2015 and 2023, 17% of American Indian students attempted suicide and were either the highest or second highest racial/ethnic group to attempt suicide in the years shown.

**Graph 41.** Percentage of Students Who Attempted Suicide for Years 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021 and 2023 by Race/Ethnicity



## COLLEGE READINESS AND ENROLLMENT

MUS Early College Enrollment Annual number of high school students (age 19 or younger) enrolled in at least one college class. Term counts do not sum up to year counts because if a student takes a course in more than one term they are only counted once in the year counts while they may show up in multiple terms. Dual credit classes are taught in the high school and students are granted both high school and college credit for the class. Dual Credit classes are a subset of dual enrollment.

### Dual Credit System Totals for American Indian (AI) Students in Montana for the past six years (trend data):

- **2018/19** 240 students
- **2019/20** 365 students
- **2020/21** 239 students
- **2021/22** 259 students
- **2022/23** 349 students
- **2023/24** 364 students

The highest enrollment for American Indian students who take dual credits is trending up year by year with the lowest years since 2018/19 being during the Covid Pandemic. The highest numbers of AI dual enrollment students are enrolled at City College in Billings followed by Missoula, Flathead and Great Falls. The lowest enrollments are at Dawson and Western. These differences are likely due to proximity to Montana reservations and urban American Indian centers and the demographic of AI students residing there.

(Montana University System Early College Enrollment Dashboard)

[www.mus.edu/data/dashboards/dual-enrollment](http://www.mus.edu/data/dashboards/dual-enrollment)

The number of American Indian students who transfer to the MUS after high school completion for the past six years (trend data) broken down by two-year and community colleges and four-year institutions:

**Table 21.**

Data Year	#Students Community Colleges	#Students 2 Year Colleges	#Students 4 Year Institutions
2018/19	113	460	1698
2019/20	133	524	1655
2020/21	101	448	1768

2021/22	114	477	1912
2022/23	123	434	1923
2023/24	127	551	1953

(Montana University System American Indian Student Success Dashboard)  
[www.edu/data/AmInd/AI-EnrollmentDashboard](http://www.edu/data/AmInd/AI-EnrollmentDashboard)

**American Indian Students Who Enter the MUS and Complete Degrees and/or Certificates for the past five years (trend data):**

**Table 22.**

Data Year	Certificate	Associate	Bachelors	Masters	Doctorate
2018/19	30	77	194	58	12
2019/20	24	64	230	54	3
2020/21	14	75	209	43	5
2021/22	35	87	222	59	7
2022/23	34	79	226	57	8

(Montana University System American Indian Student Success Dashboard)  
[www.edu/data/AmInd/AI-EnrollmentDashboard](http://www.edu/data/AmInd/AI-EnrollmentDashboard)

## **NEXT STEPS IN SUPPORTING MONTANA INDIAN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

OPI's Tribal Student Achievement and Relations (TSAR) unit, in consultation with Montana's tribal councils and Knowledge Keepers, Montana Indian students and caregivers, has developed the following outcomes to guide the work of supporting academic achievement in Montana's Indian students:

1. All American Indian students feel safe and supported in school, enabling learning to occur
2. Barriers to American Indian student learning are identified and addressed to enable students to maximize their learning potential
3. American Indian students at-risk for dropping out are identified and provided timely supports
4. American Indian students can bring their whole selves into Montana K-12 classrooms to learn and develop skills
5. The self-esteem of American Indian students is strengthened within the Montana K-12 public school system

This report was prepared by:

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