



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

UPDATE: The State of Native Education

2023

Authorizing Legislation: [RCW 28A.300.105](#)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Native Education (ONE) serves under Washington state's Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) as a liaison among school districts, tribal governments, state-tribal education compact schools (STECs), tribal schools, Native communities, parents and guardians of Native children, and other groups and individuals. The primary goal is to help school districts meet the educational needs of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) students. To meet this goal, OSPI will:

- Facilitate the development and implementation of curricula and instructional materials in Native languages, culture and history, and the concept of tribal sovereignty.
- Help districts acquire funding to develop curricula and instructional materials with Native language practitioners and tribal elders.
- Coordinate the implementation of STEC schools.
- Coordinate technical assistance for public schools that serve AI/AN students.
- Implement support services to increase AI/AN teachers and principals, and provide professional development for educational assistants, teachers, and principals who serve AI/AN students.
- Facilitate the instruction of Native language programs in districts.
- Work with relevant agencies and committees to highlight the need for accurate, useful data that is appropriately disaggregated to provide a more accurate picture of AI/AN students.
- Serve on the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Advisory Committee to continue to develop statewide support to expand and promote SEL.
- Provide opportunities for AI/AN Student and Families Listening Sessions.
- Collaborate with partners to develop programs and grant review to ensure equity in efforts including wellness, outdoor learning, and science, technology, and engineering.
- Annually report to the Governor, the Legislature, and the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs (GOIA) on the status of Native education in Washington.
- Continue to collaborate with and provide support to school districts, tribes, and state, regional, and national Native and other organizations.

BACKGROUND

OSPI has supported the education of Native students in Washington since the mid-1960s. In 2011, the Legislature formalized ONE within OSPI ([RCW 28A.300.105](#)). ONE serves as liaison between OSPI and:

- School districts
- State-Tribal Education Compact schools (STECs)
- Tribal governments and schools
- Native communities and parents/guardians of Native children
- Native organizations
- Federal Title VI Indian Education Programs

American Indian/Alaskan Native Student Data

In Washington, Native students fall into **three enrollment categories**; data are included in the table below.

Table 1: 2022–23 Federal Race Roll-Up Categories for American Indian or Alaskan Native K–12 Students in Washington

Native American Race Category	Number of Students
AI/AN – Non-Hispanic	13,747
AI/AN – Hispanic	17,538
AI/AN – Two or more Races	18,035
Total	49,320

Source: Comprehensive Education and Data Research System (CEDARS)

Federal reporting requires a single ethnicity and race for each student, so these categories are simplified:

- American Indian or Alaskan Native – Hispanic students are counted as Hispanic.
- American Indian or Alaskan Native – Two or More Races students are counted as Two or More Races.

Washington state reports only Native students in the category of “Native non-Hispanic” to the Federal Government for reporting purposes. Native students in the categories of “Native Hispanic” and “Native Two or More Races” are not included, resulting in an under-reporting of Washington state’s Native student population in federal reports.

UPDATE STATUS

In response to the impacts of COVID-19, ONE continued to collaborate with the Washington State Native American Education Advisory Committee (WSNAEAC), STEC school leaders, Tribal Leaders Congress on Education, Region 16 Comprehensive Centers (in partnership with Alaska, Oregon, and Washington), and all state Native education organizations to elevate and respond to the needs of the over 49,000 Native students and their families.

Program Highlights

ONE participated in the Tribal Leaders and White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Native Americans and Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities Summit on Indian Education Policy. The purpose of the summit was to unify the federally recognized tribes of the northwest region to engage with state and federal officials to seek solutions that support Native American students.

State-Tribal Education Compact Schools (STECs)

Continuing into the 2022–23 school year, ONE met virtually every two weeks with STEC staff to provide technical support, guidance, educational and financial opportunities, and other supports. ONE hosts meetings to strengthen and sustain collaborations. [Additional details related to STEC schools are available on the OSPI website.](#)

Since Time Immemorial: Tribal Sovereignty in Washington State Curriculum Project

In response to legislative requirements, the subsequent Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Tribal Leaders Congress on Education, the Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA), the Washington State Board of Education (SBE), and OSPI, a model online curriculum for elementary, middle, and high schools was developed. Native American history, culture, and civics were infused into curriculum content and resources used in school districts.

The intent was and continues to be to embed the history surrounding tribal sovereignty and inter-governmental responsibilities into Washington state's classrooms, in collaboration with the tribe nearest the district, so that all citizens understand the unique relationships of tribes and tribal citizens in Washington state. Now, all lesson resources are aligned with state learning standards for social studies, English language arts, environmental and sustainability education, and social-emotional learning. The curriculum has also been translated into Spanish to increase accessibility. [The STI curriculum is available on the OSPI website.](#)

During this reporting period, ONE conducted STI introductory webinars and additional trainings took place through conference workshops and district/school coordinated staff trainings. Where possible, tribal education and/or culture specialists were involved in the planning and teaching of these training courses. Increasingly, districts are developing systemic district-wide plans, in collaboration with tribal partners, to implement the curriculum. ONE also continues to collaborate with the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) and tribal higher education representatives with the implementation of integrating STI into all teacher preparation programs. Many administrative preparation programs are also integrating STI into their courses.

Native Voices Arts Academy Project

The Native Voices Arts Academy project enters its fifth year engaging middle school-aged AI/AN students who qualify for Title 1, Part C Migratory Education. Students and classroom educators from four school districts and one STEC school come together quarterly to learn with Native Artist Teachers engaging in place, story, and arts-based teachings connected with STI. This past year, many educators participated in mentorships with Native Artist Mentor Teachers and local tribal educators to co-design and co-facilitate classroom lessons focusing on language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

This project is a collaboration between schools; local tribes; OSPI's Migrant Education, Arts Education, and ONE staff; and the non-profit organization Arts Impact. Funding for this project is provided through the OSPI Migrant Education Program.

Career Connected Learning Tribal Engagement Specialist

Pursuant to [ESSB 5092](#), Sec. 1501(4)(w), an appropriation was provided for a tribal liaison at OSPI to facilitate access to, and support enrollment in, career connected learning opportunities for tribal students, so that tribal students may receive high school or college credit to the maximum extent possible. The Career Connected Learning Tribal Liaison works collaboratively with the Career Connect Washington coalition as well as Career and Technical Education (CTE) leads to ensure consistent communication and expansion of career-connected and work-based learning opportunities within the state's tribal compact schools, and districts serving tribal youth. Through close partnership and coordination, the Tribal Liaison supports the development and expansion of Career Launch, Career Prep, and Career Explore programs and increases access and outcomes for tribal youth.

ESSER Funded Programs

Using state allocated federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds (ESSER)/American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, ONE continued leading projects to serve Native students, families, and communities. Federal relief funds were used for:

- **Tribal language grants:** Each tribe in Washington is working to preserve, restore, and grow their Tribal language. Funds were used for seed grants to build capacity to implement and expand P–12 Tribal language programs. Twenty-eight grants ranging from \$60,000–\$240,000, for a total of \$2,040,000, were issued. Funds were also used for a temporary ONE position to lead Tribal language program development and professional learning. This position has since become permanent and is funded in collaboration with OSPI Multilingual Education to support, expand, and strengthen Tribal efforts to integrate and grow Tribal language opportunities in Washington's public school districts.
- **American Indian and Alaskan Native (AI/AN) learner identification and data training:** Under-identification and misidentification of AI/AN learners is an ongoing and deep systemic issue in our school systems. Media and written training resources and trainings continue to be developed to raise awareness about the impacts of under-identification of AI/AN students with district personnel and tribal families and to improve registration and reporting processes across the state.

- ***Since Time Immemorial (STI) tribal-developed curriculum:*** Resources developed from this funding are available for tribes supporting the development of Pre-K through 12th grade lesson resources that are tribal specific for the use of educators implementing the STI curriculum. Nine of the 29 federally recognized tribes actively access this support.
- **Native American Educator Cultivation Program:** This ESSER funded capacity-building project was proposed to respond to conditions necessary to develop systemic change to identify, support, recruit, and retain Native American educators. To do this work effectively, a program supervisor was hired to establish connections to identify pathways to increase Native educators, and a data specialist was hired to provide educator data to the program. The program awarded six grants totaling \$470,888 in efforts to continue building capacity across the State and establishing connections with all 29 federally recognized tribes, school districts, educational service districts (ESDs), and community-based organizations. Building relationships has been the foundation of this program and will continue to be cultivated into the future. Monthly community connection sessions are held every month on the second Thursday from 4:30 pm–5:30 pm via Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89136342206>
- **Mitigating effects of intergenerational trauma and strengthening social-emotional learning:** Trainings were developed and delivered on intergenerational and colonial trauma experienced by AI/AN students and families which continue to impact well-being and educational outcomes.
- **Attendance and re-engagement project:** Six STEC schools are participating with this project to provide unique support and services to meet the needs of AI/AN learners and families to connect and re-engage with schools.

District-Tribal Consultation Guidance

In consultation with tribes and the Tribal Leaders Congress on Education (TLC), ONE developed a tribal consultation protocol. The protocols are based upon the 1989 Centennial Accord, which created [Revised Code of Washington \(RCW\) 43.376](#) that describes government-to-government relations. The intention of the protocol is to sustain quality and healthy relations between the state and tribes.

ONE's Tribal Consultation Program Manager continues to collaborate with OSPI Consolidated Program Review staff to support the implementation of ESSA, strengthening tribal consultation processes ensuring fidelity with federal program application and review processes. ONE also continues to collaborate with WSSDA to assess and strengthen government-to-government relationship-building protocols between tribes and school districts throughout the state.

As legislatively directed, ONE's Tribal Consultation partnered with WSSDA to conduct three Tribal Leaders and School Directors Convenings across the state. Convenings were held in Swinomish, Yakima, and Spokane in April and May 2023. A report of the survey results is forthcoming. The Government-to-Government Task Force is planning for next year's events. As part of this collaboration, WSSDA developed [tribal consultation resources](#) for school directors.

Tribal Consultation Training

The purpose of Tribal Consultation is to ensure that tribal governments or representatives **and** state or federal education agencies have meaningful opportunities to provide input, feedback, and recommendations on education policies, programs, and services that impact the success of American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) students. This includes but is not limited to curriculum development, teacher training, student assessment, special education, language, and cultural preservation. Implementation of legislatively mandated training has started and are as follows.

Legislative Updates

Substitute Senate Bill 5252

Beginning September 1, 2024, school board directors, superintendents, and any other school district staff required by ESSA Section 8538 to engage in tribal consultation must take and certify completion of tribal consultation training focusing on: Native Student Identification, Data Sharing, Implementation of tribal history, culture, and government—*Since Time Immemorial*.

The three hour Strengthening Tribal Consultation for School Board Training Curriculum was completed in April 2023. The three areas of curriculum are:

1. Sovereignty, Establishment of Tribes, Tribal Government;
2. Data Sovereignty: Understanding Federal and State American Indian/Alaska Native Identification Policies; and
3. School Board role in enacting Government-to-Government Relationships.

Implementation of in-person training started on May 11, 2023, at Nespelem. Subsequent trainings were held at Tulalip Museum and Yakima Valley Community College with approximately 50 people receiving certification to date. Another training took place in August in Tumwater, with approximately 50 people registered. A training was also held in Forks in September. Hybrid trainings were scheduled through the winter months.

House Bill 1426

The Legislature specified minimum continuing education requirements for administrator and teacher certificate renewals that focus on equity-based school and classroom practice. Completion of government-to-government training for renewal of principal certification effective July 1, 2023. The five-hour Administrator's Government-to-Government Relationships Training Curriculum was completed in January 2023 and vetted in a meeting with the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs and Tribal Leaders Congress. The five areas of curriculum are:

1. Sovereignty, Establishment of Tribes, Tribal Government;
2. Colonization and Intergenerational Trauma;
3. Data Sovereignty: Understanding Federal and State American Indian/Alaska Native Identification Policies;

4. Enacting Government-to-Government Relationships; and
5. Administrator's Role in the Government-to-Government Relationship.

In-person trainings with five subject matter experts presenting started August 8, 2023, at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma. Another hybrid training took place in Central Washington University in Ellensburg. As of August, approximately 300 out of 1,000 administrators have attended the trainings.

A hybrid training was planned for September 25, 2023, and a final training was scheduled in April allowing ample time for certification paperwork to be completed by the June 2024 deadline. Asynchronous modules were expected to be completed by the end of January 2024 to allow for multiple methods of certification completion.

Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5187

Funding of \$525,000 was provided to convene a work group to develop the supports necessary to serve AI/AN students identified as needing additional literacy supports. OSPI has invited ONE to collaborate with literacy leaders within the agency.

Washington State Native American Education Advisory Committee

The [Washington State Native American Education Advisory Committee](#) (WSNAEAC) met with State Superintendent Chris Reykdal. Topics of advisement included the pandemic response and covering things beyond ESSER funding, funding for dual language, Seal of Biliteracy, professional development for Native youth and Tribal languages, dual credit, transportation, meals, and other areas requesting funding.

The WSNAEAC met with ONE nine times to discuss ensuring all AI/AN students have access to online learning if needed, building relationships and strengthening tribal consultation between school districts and local tribes, dedicating resources to mitigate learning loss during the COVID-19 pandemic, strengthening social emotional learning and development, school plans regarding mental health and social emotional development and learning, addressing post-pandemic issues of graduation requirements, and raise awareness of issues regarding Title VI and ESSA schools. Work also continued in the newly revised WSNAEAC sub-committees:

- Bylaws
- Government-to-Government Relations
- Data Policy & Practices
- Social-Emotional Development & Learning
- Early Learning (STI, CTE, Curriculum & Assessment)
- K–12 Education (STI, CTE, Curriculum & Assessment)
- Post Secondary (STI, CTE, Curriculum & Assessment)

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Native Student Graduation, Continuing Education, and Dropout Rates

Four-, five-, six-, and seven-year graduation rate data for all Native students (combined groups: AI/AN-Hispanic, AI/AN-Non-Hispanic, and AI/AN Two or More Races) are included in tables 2–5. To calculate graduation rate, OSPI uses the “adjusted cohort rate” methodology as required by the U.S. Department of Education. A student’s cohort is based on the year they enter 9th grade for the first time. The calculation adjusts for students who transfer into a Washington public high school for the first time and join a cohort. Students are removed from the cohort if they transfer out of public school in Washington. The adjusted cohort method tracks individual students over time and does not rely on estimates. It aligns with the general idea of a graduation rate: The percentage of a group of students who started high school together who graduated in four or more years.

In addition, four-, five-, six-, and seven-year “dropout” data for all Native students (combined groups: AI/AN-Hispanic, AI/AN-Non-Hispanic, and AI/AN Two or More Races) is included in tables 2–5. A student dropout is defined as a student who leaves school for any reason, except death, before completing school with a high school diploma or transferring to another school with a known exit reason. A student is classified as a dropout regardless of when dropping out occurs (i.e., during or between regular school terms). A student who leaves during the year but returns during the reporting period is not considered a dropout.

In the following tables “Dropout” is paired with “Push out.” “Push out” refers to the cumulative effect of systemic exclusionary policies, practices, and procedures that students and their families may experience within school settings. Although not formally defined, “push out” is referenced in the [“From Where the Sun Rises”](#) report (2008, pg. 44, 106). The sole use of the term “dropout” places responsibility upon the individual learner to complete schooling without accountability of systemic unjust and exclusionary policies, practices, and procedures that precede the manifestations of “dropout.”

Table 2: Four-Year Cohort

Year	Graduates	Dropout/ Push out	Continuing	Total Students
2019	4,213	725	739	5,769
2020	4,603	491	739	5,876
2021	4,708	608	854	6,239
2022	3,385	418	432	4,235

Source: Comprehensive Education and Data Research System (CEDARS).

Table 3: Five-Year Cohort

Year	Graduates	Dropout/ Push out	Continuing	Total Students
2019	283	453	278	1,016
2020	329	374	326	1,035
2021	240	336	302	881
2022	200	259	165	624

Source: Comprehensive Education and Data Research System (CEDARS).

Table 4: Six-Year Cohort

Year	Graduates	Dropout/ Push out	Continuing	Total Students
2019	121	233	145	499
2020	125	160	160	445
2021	104	185	169	462
2022	65	118	83	266

Source: Comprehensive Education and Data Research System (CEDARS).

Table 5: Seven-Year Cohort

Year	Graduates	Dropout/ Push out	Continuing	Total Students
2019	100	100	15	215
2020	95	101	18	214
2021	85	118	20	224
2022	59	85	9	153

Source: Comprehensive Education and Data Research System (CEDARS).

Native Student Attendance, 9th Grade On-Track, and Dual Credit Rates

Table 6 shows Native Student Regular Attendance (Greater than 90% Daily Attendance Rate; Combines Excused and Unexcused Absences).

Table 6: Native Student Regular Attendance (Greater than 90% Daily Attendance Rate; Combines Excused and Unexcused Absences)

Year	Regular Attendance	Total Students
2018–19	49,874	69,368
2019–20	55,292	68,028
2020–21	42,197	64,917
2021–22	38,315	68,419
2022–23	25,288	49,320

Source: Comprehensive Education and Data Research System (CEDARS).

Table 7 shows Native Student 9th Grade On-Track Rates. The ESSA definition in Washington defines Ninth Grade On-Track as earning credit for all the courses attempted. It does not include withdrawals. Research indicates that a successful 9th grade year increases the likelihood of on-time graduation.

Table 7: Native Student 9th Grade On-Track Rate (Passing All Classes in 9th Grade)

Year	Ninth Grade On-Track	Total Students
2018–19	3,238	5,923
2019–20	3,624	5,857
2020–21	2,930	5,497
2021–22	3,656	5,887
2022–23	2,277	4,128

Source: Comprehensive Education and Data Research System (CEDARS).

Table 8 shows Native student completion of a dual credit course (programs that allow students to earn credit for their high school diploma and college at the same time). Dual credit courses include Running Start, CTE Dual Credit (formerly Tech Prep), College in the High School, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and Cambridge International. Students can enroll in more than one type of dual credit course.

Table 8: Native Student Dual Credit Completion Rates

Year	Dual Credit Completion	Total Students
2018–19	12,157	23,036
2019–20	12,654	23,343
2020–21	12,267	22,932

Year	Dual Credit Completion	Total Students
2021–22	11,906	23,812
2022–23	9,113	16,831

Source: Comprehensive Education and Data Research System (CEDARS).

Data Collection Challenges

Despite an ongoing effort to improve accurate, useful data collection around American Indian and Alaskan Native students, there continue to be challenges. Federal policy on ethnicity and race data collection and reporting requirements creates three basic categories of Native students within Washington state’s Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS): 1) Native, non-Hispanic; 2) Native, Hispanic; and 3) Two or More Races.

Only students identified as Native non-Hispanic are displayed on the Washington State Report Card when viewing student data related to attendance, graduation, assessments, and others. Native and Hispanic students appear in the “Hispanic” category on these reports, and Native students who are of two or more races are reported as “Two or More Races.”

Individuals accessing student data through the OSPI website may not be aware of this fact and may perceive a much smaller Native student population in state public schools than there actually is. ONE is implementing the ARPA funded AI/AN Learner Identification and Data Training project and working closely with CEDARS and Student Information program staff at OSPI to establish a system to retrieve accurate data for **all** American Indian/Alaskan Native students in Washington’s public schools.

CONCLUSION

The Office of Native Education experienced many successes during this reporting period. The growth of the Office of Native Education and the ability of the office to provide tribes, districts, and regional statewide education partners support in the development and implementation of culturally relevant and responsive supports and programs that center tribal sovereignty is paramount to the success of AI/AN learners in our schools.

The WSNAEAC and their five sub-committees are actively working on a variety of issues relating to Native education including data collection policy and practices, social-emotional learning issues, CTE, transition to and retention of Native students in higher education institutions, assessment issues relating to Native students, needed legislation, and tribal consultation policies. They are a valuable ongoing advisory body to OSPI and to ONE.

Implementation of multiple initiatives passed by state legislators over the past several years is a strong foundation to ensuring success of our AI/AN students, now and for generations yet to come. These initiatives include:

- Supports for tribal-governed STEC schools
- Tribal consultation and government-to-government training for leaders across all levels of our education system
- Tribal language learning
- Requiring all schools implement *Since Time Immemorial* and tribal-developed curriculum in collaboration with tribes nearest the schools and higher education teacher preparation programs
- Cultivation of Native educators
- Tribal-focused career and technical, mastery-based, and dual-credit education pathways
- Providing supports for our AI/AN students to successfully complete high school and prepare for post-secondary education and employment opportunities while retaining their full identity as Native people

Finally, essential legislative support will continue to be determined through the consultations, collaborations, discussions, goal setting, and accountability between tribal leaders, Native families, and our local, regional, and statewide education and legislative leaders.

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