

American Indian Education

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The Idaho State Board of Education and its Indian Education Committee have expanded efforts to increase educational opportunities for all American Indian students in Idaho. Our recently adopted Idaho Indian Education Strategic Plan provides direction in developing and measuring outcomes to increase educational attainment through effective teaching and learning environments.

--Don Soltman, President, Idaho State Board of Education

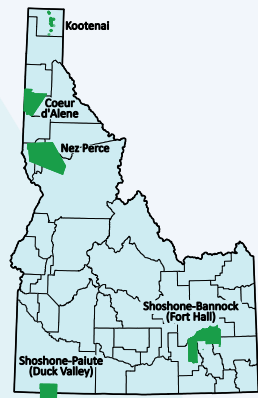
Highlights

This report provides a snapshot of American Indian education in Idaho. Major findings include:

- ◆ Roughly 3,900 American Indian students were enrolled in Idaho's public K-12 system in the 2013-14 school year. They made up 1.3% of the total, slightly lower than ten years before.^a
- ◆ On average, Idaho's K-12 American Indian students score lower than other students on standardized tests. They are also less likely to be college-ready when they graduate from high school, based on SAT and ACT benchmarks.^{b,c,d}
- ◆ Roughly 1,000 American Indian students are enrolled in Idaho's technical programs, colleges, and universities. Their numbers increased during the recession. Since then, their numbers have declined at four-year institutions and held steady at others.^e
- ◆ Among Idaho's American Indian adults age 25 years and older, 22% have at least an Associate's degree, compared to 34% of all adults in that age range.^f

Idaho's tribes, state agencies, and school districts are working to address these educational disparities through strategic planning and a variety of programs, as described in this report.

American Indian Tribes and Reservations



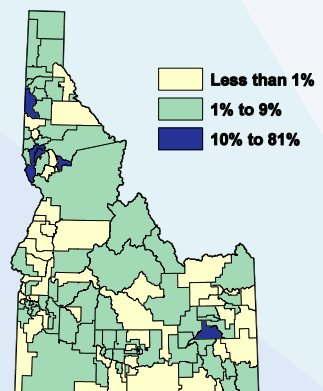
K-12 enrollment

In the 2013-14 school year, Idaho's 3,900 American Indian students made up 1.3% of total K-12 enrollment in Idaho, slightly less than ten years earlier.

- ◆ Districts and charter districts with at least 10% American Indian students included: Chief Tahgee Elementary Academy in Fort Hall (98%); Lapwai (81%); Plummer-Worley Joint (41%); Kamiah Joint (14%); Blackfoot (11%); and Culdesac Joint (10%).
- ◆ Districts with at least 400 American Indian students included: Pocatello (563); Blackfoot (469); and Lapwai (440).^a

In 2012-13, Idaho's two tribal schools—Coeur d'Alene Tribal School (grades K-8) and Shoshone-Bannock Junior/Senior High School (grades 6-12)—served a total of 250 students.^g

American Indian K-12 Enrollment, 2013-14



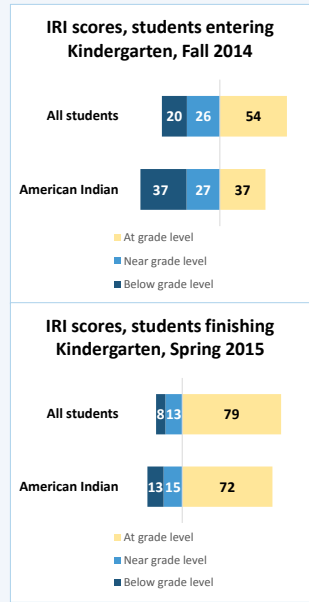
SOURCE: ID Department of Education

K-12 standardized test scores

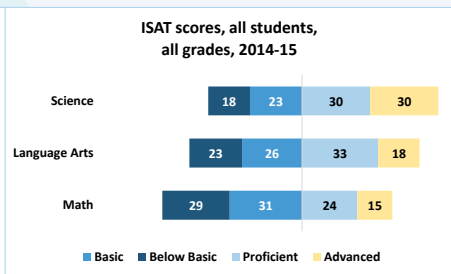
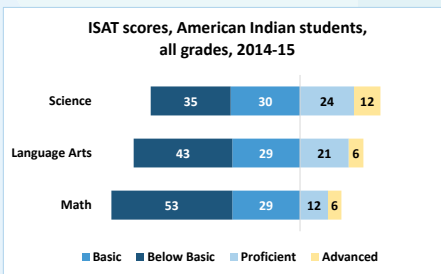
The **Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI)** measures whether students' reading skills are at, near, or below grade level. The test is administered to K-3 students in the fall and spring.

In 2014-15, the percentage of K-3 students with grade-level reading skills increased from fall to spring among both American Indian students and all students. Improvement in scores was greatest among American Indian kindergarteners: in fall 2014, 37% had reading skills at grade level, compared to 72% in the spring. Among all K-3 students, 54% had reading skills at grade level in the fall, compared to 79% in the spring.^b

The **Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT)** measures proficiency in science, language arts, and math in grades 3-10. In 2014-15, American Indian students were less likely to have proficient or advanced scores on all three ISAT tests. The biggest gap was in math scores: 18% of American Indian students scored proficient or advanced, compared to 39% among all students. On average, American Indian students scored best on the science test, with 36% having scores that were proficient or advanced.^c

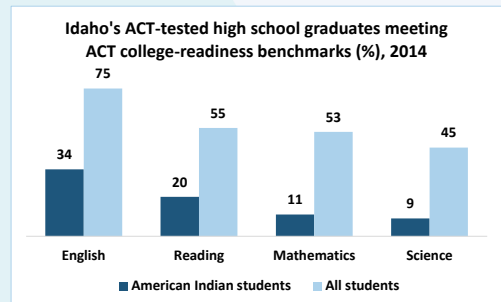


SOURCE: ID Department of Education



SOURCE: ID Department of Education

The **SAT** and **ACT** are college-entrance exams that measure college readiness. For the class of 2014, 26% of all Idaho SAT takers met the College and Career Readiness Benchmark, compared to 10% of American Indian test takers. ACT results from 2014 also indicate Idaho's American Indian students were less likely than students from any other racial or ethnic group to be college-ready, especially in the subjects of math and science.^d



SOURCE: ACT, Inc.

Educational attainment

Idaho's American Indian students are less likely than other students to graduate from high school and somewhat less likely to go on to postsecondary education:

- ◆ The high school graduation rate^h among American Indian students was 56% in 2013-14, compared to 77% for all students.^c
- ◆ 41% of American Indian high school seniors who graduated in 2014 went on to postsecondary education within 16 months of graduation, compared to 50% of all graduating seniors.ⁱ

While Idaho's American Indian adults are about as likely as all Idaho adults to have at least a high school diploma, they are less likely to have education beyond high school. Among Idaho's American Indian adults age 25 and older in 2014:

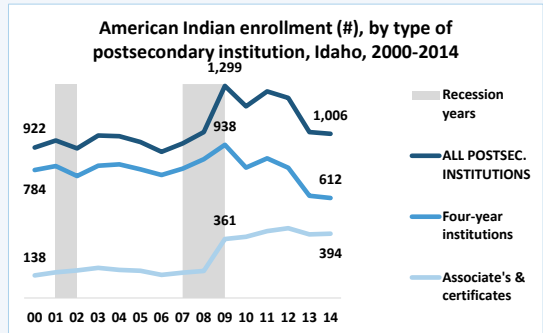
- ◆ 87% had at least a high school diploma, compared to 90% of all adults;
- ◆ 22% had at least an Associate's degree, compared to 34% of all adults; and
- ◆ 14% had a Bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 25% of all adults.^f

Postsecondary enrollment

In fall 2014, there were just over 1,000 self-identified American Indian students enrolled in Idaho's postsecondary institutions, 1% of the total. Their numbers increased during the recession, and since then, have declined at four-year institutions and held steady at others. Schools with the most American Indian students included North Idaho College (179 students), Idaho State University (141), Boise State University (132), University of Idaho (113), College of Western Idaho (109), and Lewis-Clark State College (99).

Among Idaho's postsecondary students, American Indian students are more likely to enroll in:

- ◆ a public institution – 84%, compared to 64% of all students; and
- ◆ a two-year or certificate-granting institution – 39%, compared to 23% of all students.^e



SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics

Tribal programs

Many tribal leaders view education as a lifelong process essential not only to preparing for a career, but also carrying on cultural knowledge, language, and traditions. Tribes offer a variety of programs for early childhood, K-12, higher education, and adult education:^j

- ◆ **Coeur d'Alene Tribe** – The tribe's education department provides services from early childhood through professional degrees. Early childhood programs include Early Head Start, Head Start, and the Imagine the Future Preschool classroom, an Indian Demonstration Program. Students in grades K-12 are supported by the State Tribal Education Partnership (STEP) program. Students are prepared for college and career with an Office of Indian Education Indian Demonstration Program, the Native American Career and Technical Education Program, and the Johnson O'Malley Program. The tribe supports all tribal students earning postsecondary degrees.
- ◆ **Kootenai Tribe** – The tribe values education and encourages high academic achievement for its tribal members. The tribe provides tutors and a homework club for additional support and also offers an incentive program for academic success.
- ◆ **Nez Perce Tribe** – The tribe's education department provides services to tribal members from early childhood through adulthood. Services start with the Early Childhood Development Program (ECDP) and continue in K-12 with the Students for Success and State Tribal Education Partnership (STEP) programs. Adult education, higher education and vocational rehabilitation programs serve both teenagers and adults. In addition, many tribal departments and entities incorporate Nez Perce language, culture, and career readiness into their education and training.
- ◆ **Shoshone-Bannock Tribes** – The Chief Tahgee Elementary Academy is a charter school that provides cultural enrichment and language immersion for K-6 students. Education programs include a Tribal Youth Education Program (Title VII, Johnson O'Malley, afterschool and summer reading programs, etc.); a Vocational Rehabilitation Program (case management and training for disabled and other American Indian adults); and Education, Employment and Training (higher education scholarships, adult education, job training and assistance, etc.). Many tribal departments also provide education and training related to cultural resources.
- ◆ **Shoshone-Paiute Tribes** – The Duck Valley Indian Reservation is in a very rural and isolated area, so going to college can be a challenge for students. To help students succeed, the tribe provides financial aid and scholarships for higher education and adult vocational training. The local public school and the high school counselor team up with BSU's TRIO Upward Bound Program to help high school seniors apply for scholarships and financial aid and navigate postsecondary systems. The tribe also partners with Great Basin College to offer GED classes at the tribe's Education Center.

Conversations with college students

To gain insight into American Indian students' path to college and college experience, we conducted a focus group with nine students at the University of Idaho in Moscow on March 2, 2016. We also conducted five one-on-one interviews with students at Idaho State University in Pocatello on April 14, 2016.^k Like all college students, those with whom we spoke differed from each other in important ways. For example, they differed in terms of financial need, how far they were from home, and whether they were the first in their family to attend postsecondary education. The single commonality was that they were all American Indians from tribes in or close to Idaho.

In this section, we report on our conversations with students but with an important caveat: we did not select our students randomly. Instead, all 14 were identified through the Native American student centers on campus. Because the respondents were not selected randomly, our observations cannot be generalized to the experiences of all American Indian students in Idaho. Instead, the focus group and interviews should be viewed as exploratory, with the potential to suggest themes that merit more in-depth and systematic research.

Deciding to go to college

Parents, and particularly mothers, played a key role in encouraging these students to attend college. Also important were high school programs designed to prepare students for life after high school. Several students benefited greatly from programs including TRiO, HOIST, and Bridge Idaho Upward Bound. The programs helped in big ways, like broadening students' expectations of what they could accomplish, and in more mundane and pragmatic ways, like how to schedule classes and navigate a college campus.

Some students talked about overcoming barriers to attending college, including counselors and teachers who didn't believe the students could or would go on to college; a lack of exposure to a college-going culture; and teachers who didn't understand Indian culture.

College experience

Some of the challenges facing students with whom we spoke are typical of many college students, regardless of race or ethnicity. For example, several expressed concern about being able to stay focused and avoid distractions. And the "money thing," as one student called it, is a struggle that threatens her ability to finish her degree. Few if any of our respondents would be able to attend college without scholarships and grants, most from federal sources and tribes. Several expressed enormous reluctance to take out loans.

Other barriers are specific to students who are not part of the majority population on campus. Specifically, the lack of cultural understanding looms large on the minds of some American Indian students. "Others think our ways are strange. Some students think we live in teepees," said one student. Better communication would help dispel myths and stereotypes of American Indians and bridge cultures on campus.

Almost universally, the students talked about the value of on-campus Native American student centers. "This is the only place I can go where I know I'll see familiar faces, people I can trust," said one. "It's like your own family away from home," said another. "We can be ourselves here."

Plans for after college

Like many college students, most of the American Indians with whom we spoke have ambitious career plans and a great sense of what is possible: biomechanical engineering, nursing, tribal law, technical theater, graphic design, and natural resource management, to name a few. Other students haven't quite found the course of studies that will inspire and motivate them to achieve their greatest potential.

Unique to the American Indian student population, perhaps, is the desire to return home and help their people. "It would be rewarding to help people on the reservation," said one student, talking about his interest in health care. "Much better than outsourcing them to a place where they don't know anyone."

Overview of Idaho's American Indian education strategic plan

The Idaho Indian Education Committee's Strategic Plan for American Indian Education was approved by the Office of the State Board of Education in June 2015. It was developed with support from the Office of the State Board of Education and the Idaho State Department of Education and will be implemented between 2016 and 2021. The strategic plan has two primary goals and related objectives to improve American Indian education, educational outcomes, and career attainment. It focuses on improving opportunity gaps and recommends best practices to establish an educational environment that allows all American Indian students in Idaho to thrive and reach their full potential.

GOAL 1: AMERICAN INDIAN ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Ensure Idaho's American Indian students are afforded educational opportunities on an equitable basis, and provide resources that promote and support an increase in the educational attainment of American Indian students.

Objective A: Increase American Indian students' access to educational opportunities by:

- ◆ Increasing the number of American Indian students who participate in advanced opportunities in high school, including dual credit, AP classes, and advanced professional-technical opportunities.
- ◆ Ensuring that all American Indian students complete the FAFSA by the priority deadline.
- ◆ Increasing the number of American Indian students who apply for and receive the State Opportunity Scholarship.

Objective B: Increase the level of educational attainment among Idaho's American Indian students by increasing the number of American Indian students who:

- ◆ Score proficient or higher on the Idaho Reading Indicator.
- ◆ Meet the College and Career Readiness benchmark on the SAT college-entrance exam.
- ◆ Enroll in postsecondary institutions directly after high school graduation, complete a program of study within the designated time, and graduate with a certificate or degree.

Objective C: Increase the quality of instruction for Idaho's American Indian students by:

- ◆ Increasing the number of highly qualified teachers in targeted schools by 100%.
- ◆ Requiring a minimum of three credit hours in Idaho tribal culture and history for teacher preparation and recertification standards.
- ◆ Increasing the number of certified American Indian educators in the state.

GOAL 2: CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY

Ensure Idaho K-20 educational institutions provide all educators with an understanding of the distinct knowledge and heritage of Idaho's American Indians.

Objective A: Increase integration of cultural relevancy into professional practice by:

- ◆ Increasing the required number of professional development credits for educators to approach teaching in a manner that incorporates cultural strengths and sense of place into students' educational experiences.

Objective B: Increase knowledge of Idaho's American Indian tribes and federal policies by:

- ◆ Including Idaho's tribal culture, history, and government in the state's K-12 educational standards by 2018.
- ◆ Requiring Idaho's colleges of education to provide a minimum of three credit hours of instruction related to tribal federal policies and Idaho tribal government for teacher, school counselor, and administrator certification programs.

Selected education indicators

IDAHO

American Indians Total Population

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

K-12 public schools: ^a

2013-2014 school year (#) 3,868 295,947

2003-2004 school year (#) 4,019 252,120

Postsecondary institutions granting associate's degrees or certificates: ^e

Fall 2014 (#) 394 27,399

Fall 2000 (#) 138 10,331

Postsecondary institutions granting bachelor's degrees or above: ^e

Fall 2014 (#) 612 93,315

Fall 2000 (#) 784 54,822

ACHIEVEMENT

ISAT scores, all grades, 2014-15 (% scoring proficient or advanced): ^c

Science 36 60

Language Usage 27 51

Math 18 39

ATTAINMENT

Finishing high school and going on to college:

High school graduation rate, 2013-14 (%) ^c 56 77

College-going rate among high school seniors, 2014 (%) ⁱ 41 50

Population aged 25 and older, 2014 (#) ^f 12,685 1,045,193

With at least a high school diploma (%) 87 90

With at least an Associate's degree (%) 22 34

With a Bachelor's degree or higher (%) 14 25

AMERICAN INDIAN: Refers to American Indian or Alaskan Native. Note that when American Indian students are counted for school enrollment totals, they self-identify as American Indian or Alaskan Native and are not necessarily members of one of Idaho's five tribes.

IDAHO INDIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE: Established by the Office of the State Board of Education (SBOE) in 2013, this committee advises the Office of the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction on policies and issues affecting K-20 Indian education in Idaho. Please visit <http://sde.idaho.gov/student-engagement/indian-ed/index.html> for more information.

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DATA SOURCES

a—NCES Elementary/Secondary Information System.

b—Idaho Department of Education, IRI, Public Reports.

c—Idaho Department of Education, Report Card.

d—College Board, Idaho 2014 Results: SAT; and ACT, Inc., The Condition of College and Career Readiness, 2014.

e—NCES Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

f—U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.

g—U.S. Bureau of Indian Education, Schools.

h—A 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate in accordance with 34 C.F.R. 200.19(b).

i—Idaho State Board of Education, June 2015 presentation.

j—Information gathered from each tribe by the Idaho Office of Indian Education.

k—The University of Idaho Institutional Review Board has certified this project as exempt.

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