

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022–2023

Office of Indian Education

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<https://www.azed.gov/oie>



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF  
**EDUCATION**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Arizona Department of Education's Office of Indian Education (OIE) presents the 2023 Annual Report to provide a comprehensive overview of the educational experiences and outcomes of Native American students across Arizona for School Year 2022–2023 (SY23). Arizona is home to 22 federally recognized tribal nations and serves over 55,000 Indigenous students, representing more than 110 tribes from across the country. These students attend schools that range widely in geographic context, from urban districts to remote reservation communities, and their educational experiences vary accordingly.

This report analyzes Native American student enrollment, academic achievement, attendance, graduation and dropout rates, school safety, and community engagement. A central focus of the analysis is the comparison between high-density schools ( $\geq 25\%$  Native American enrollment) and low-density schools ( $< 25\%$  Native American enrollment), consistent with the National Indian Education Study (NIES) framework.

## Key Findings

### *Enrollment & Demographics*

Native American students represented approximately 4–5% of Arizona's total student population in SY23. Enrollment increased slightly from SY22, with 56,590 Native American students counted in the October 1 enrollment snapshot. Roughly 50–53% of Native American students attend high-density schools, concentrated in Apache, Coconino, and Navajo counties.

### *Special Education*

In SY23, 14% of Native American students were identified as students with disabilities—higher than the 12% rate among all other student groups.

### *Academic Achievement*

Similar to previous years, Native American students in SY23 scored below statewide averages in both English Language Arts (ELA) and Math:

- ELA Proficiency:
  - High-density schools: 14%
  - Low-density schools: 22%
- Math Proficiency:
  - High-density schools: 10%
  - Low-density schools: 17%

Across SY23 assessments, Native American students had the lowest proficiency rates among all reported ethnic groups. Lower participation rates in SY23 statewide assessments (87% ELA, 89.6% Math) may also contribute to underrepresentation in achievement data.

### *Attendance*

Chronic absenteeism remains a significant challenge.

- High-density schools: 48.6% chronic absenteeism
- Low-density schools: 34.5% chronic absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism among Native American students is consistently higher than all other racial/ethnic groups, influenced by transportation challenges, distance to school, limited infrastructure, and seasonal weather conditions in rural and reservation communities.

### *Graduation Rates*

Despite lower academic proficiency, Native American students attending high-density schools continue to achieve higher graduation rates:

- Four-year graduation (Cohort 2022):
  - High-density: 71%
  - Low-density: 59%
- Five-year graduation (Cohort 2022):
  - High-density: 78%
  - Low-density: 65%

### *Dropout Rates*

Native American student dropout rates in FY23 remained at 9%, consistent across both high- and low-density schools. While improved from the spike seen in FY21 during the COVID-19 pandemic, Native American students continue to experience the highest dropout rates statewide.

### *School Safety*

In FY23, Native American experienced disproportionate representation in disciplinary outcomes, illustrating ongoing inequities among the population.

- 4% of Arizona's total student population
- 8% of all long-term expulsions or suspensions

## **OIE Initiatives, Programs, and Partnerships**

In SY23, the Office of Indian Education continued to expand its capacity, programs, and partnerships following recent investments in staffing and state funding.

### *Strategic Initiatives & Program Expansion*

Highlights include:

- Continued development of the Indian Education Advisory Council (IEAC).
- Increased interdepartmental collaboration across ADE academic, English language acquisition, School Improvement and support services teams.

- Strengthened relationships with Tribal Education Departments and Native-serving higher education institutions.

#### *Johnson-O'Malley (JOM) Program*

In SY23, 23 grantees implemented JOM-supported programs focused on:

- Academic tutoring
- Cultural programming and language activities
- Family and community engagement
- Professional learning for educators
- Support for extracurricular, academic, and athletic fees

#### *Tribal College Dual Enrollment Program*

Arizona tribal colleges continued to provide dual-credit opportunities for high school students, with reimbursements reaching a cumulative \$1.2 million from FY16–FY23.

#### *Native American Language Teacher Certification*

In alignment with statewide language revitalization efforts, 377 certified Native American language teachers were active in FY23, representing languages across multiple tribal nations.

#### *Indigenous Text Project & Professional Learning*

OIE hosted events advancing culturally sustaining instruction and expanded K–12 access to Indigenous literature, including:

- Indigenous Literacy Symposium
- Indigenous Author Panel
- Educator Integration Panel

The SY23 data reaffirm persistent disparities in academic performance and attendance for Native American students statewide.

The Office of Indian Education remains committed to:

- Reducing systemic barriers
- Strengthening statewide partnerships
- Expanding culturally responsive programming
- Supporting Indigenous educators and Native language revitalization
- Ensuring equitable access to high-quality learning environments for all Native American students in Arizona

OIE will continue to work collaboratively with tribal nations, educators, families, and community partners to honor Indigenous knowledge, improve student outcomes, and build on the foundation established in recent years.

# INTRODUCTION

Arizona is home to a diverse population of Native American peoples and is home to 22 federally recognized tribal nations.<sup>1</sup> Arizona schools serve over 55,000 Indigenous students representing over 110 sovereign tribal nations from across the country. Home to one of the largest populations of Native Americans, Arizona ranks in the top five states in the United States.<sup>2</sup> According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Arizona's American Indian and Alaska Native population grew by 7.8% and the American Indian and Alaska Native in combination population grew by 28.3% since 2010.<sup>3</sup> This Report focuses on the following:

*Table 1: Summary of Data Included in Annual Report*

Data	SY22	SY23	Grade Level
Characteristics of Native American student October 1 enrollment by county, ethnicity, and special education (SPED)	✓	✓	All
Student educational achievement (Math & ELA)		✓	3-12
Chronic absenteeism rates	✓	✓	K-8
Cohort Graduation rates (Cohort 2022)	✓		12
Dropout rates	✓	✓	7-12
Dropout prevention initiatives		✓	NA
School Safety: Long-term suspension and expelled percentages		✓	All
Tribal Gaming contributions to educational Instructional Improvement Fund (IIF)		✓	NA
Number of Language Certified Teachers in AZ - Native American Languages (Educator Certification System)		✓	NA

Pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S. § 15-244), the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) compiled information regarding Native American students' educational achievements and other indicators.<sup>4</sup> This report covers the period from July 2022 through June 2023, based on the Arizona Department of Education's fiscal year (FY), corresponding to the 2022-23 school year, or SY 2022-23. This report refers to and uses both SY and FY labels where appropriate to ensure accuracy and consistency based on how the data is calculated and reported from the Arizona Department of Education.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Intertribal Council of Arizona, "Maps," <https://itcaonline.com/maps/>.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. "PROFILE OF GENERAL POPULATION AND HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS." Decennial Census, DEC Demographic Profile, Table DP1, <https://data.census.gov/table/DECENNIALDP2020.DP1?d=DEC+Demographic+Profile>. Accessed 30 Jan 2026.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. "Race and Ethnicity in the United States: 2010 Census and 2020 Census." <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/race-and-ethnicity-in-the-united-state-2010-and-2020-census.html>. Accessed 23 Apr 2026.

<sup>4</sup> Arizona Revised Statute, A.R.S. § 15-244, <https://www.azleg.gov/ars/15/00244.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> ADE measures the school year from July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023, which may vary for some schools in Arizona.

# CHARACTERISTICS OF NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Throughout this report, terminology referring to Native American students may vary. Terms such as “Native American,” “American Indian/Alaska Native,” and “Indian” are used interchangeably. This variation reflects differences in source data, assessment reporting conventions, and commonly accepted usage within educational contexts. All references are intended to represent the same student population.

The Native American Student Enrollment section in this report presents October 1 enrollment data, which provides a snapshot of student enrollment in Arizona schools on that date each year. This data has been published on the Arizona Department of Education website and collected consistently across years.<sup>6</sup>

Additionally, the following data will examine the differences in educational environments because of its direct correlation to student performance. According to the National Indian Education Study (NIES) 2019, “Native American students’ experiences may vary depending on the types of schools they attend.”<sup>7</sup> The Arizona 2023 Annual Indian Education Report examines differences in academic performance among Native American students by comparing those enrolled in *high-density schools* to those in *low-density schools* as defined by the NIES study.

## High-Density Schools

- Schools with 25% or more of Native American students

## Low Density Schools

- Schools with less than 25% of Native American students

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<sup>6</sup> AZ Department of Education, “Accountability & Research Data - Enrollment,” <https://www.azed.gov/accountability-research/data/>.

<sup>7</sup> US Department of Education, “National Indian Education Study 2019,” <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/publications/studies/pdf/2021018.pdf>

## Ethnicity

According to October 1 enrollment data, there was an overall increase in student enrollment from SY22 to SY23 as shown in Figure 1. Native American students comprised approximately 4% of October 1 student enrollment population (preschool-grade 12) in Arizona schools as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 1: October 1 Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity in SY22 and SY23

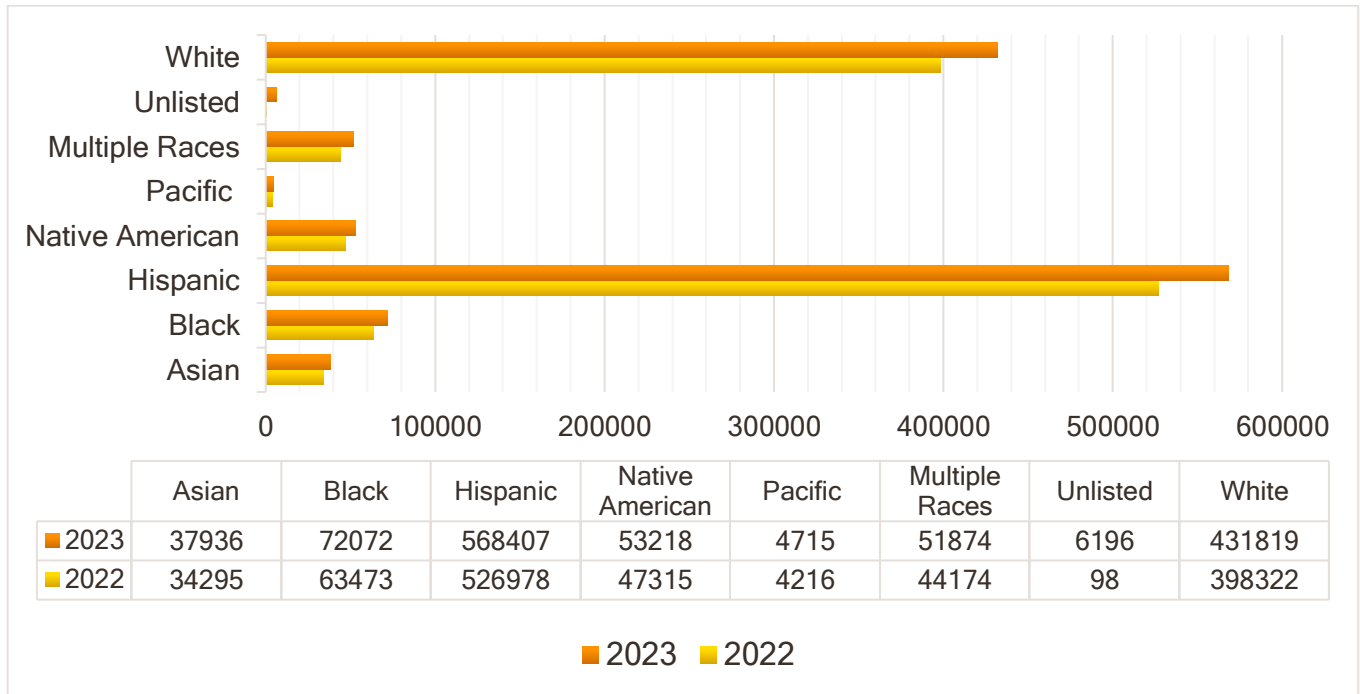
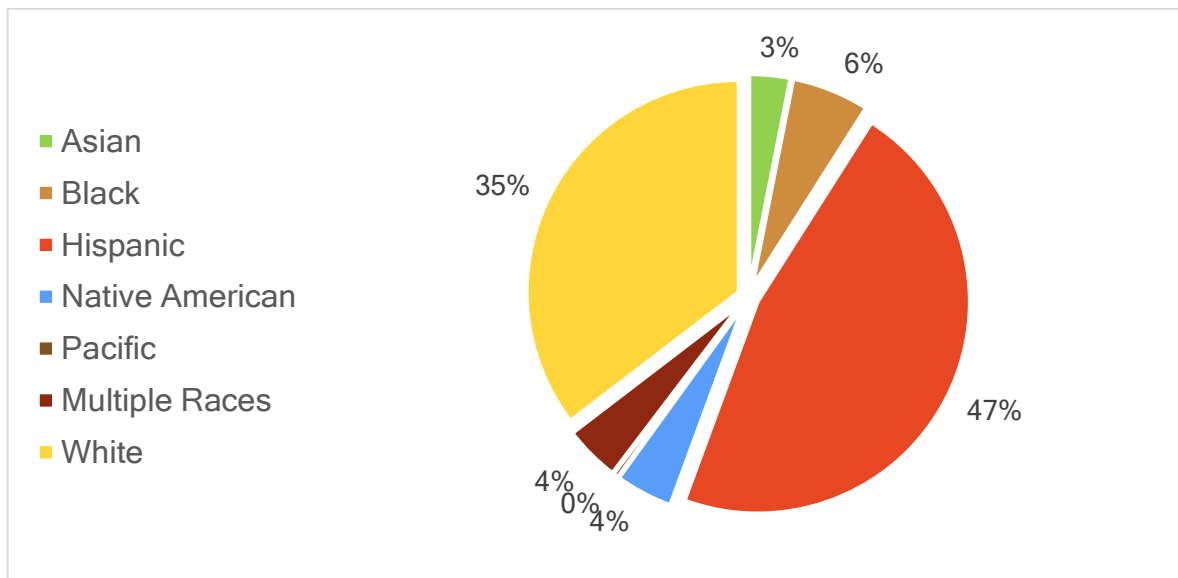


Figure 2: Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity in FY23



## Special Education

Special Education (SPED) is defined as specially designed instruction that meets the unique needs of a child with a disability and that is provided without cost to the parents of the child.<sup>8</sup> When a student enters a special education program, their information is recorded in the Arizona Education Data Standards (AzEDS) for funding and accountability purposes. As illustrated in Table 2, SPED students comprise approximately 12% of the total student population in SY 2022–23. Around 14% of the Native American students are classified as students with a disability, while 12% of the students in Other Ethnicity/Race are classified as students with disability.

*Table 2: Percent of Special Education Students in SY23 October 1 Enrollment*

Race/Ethnicity	# of Non-Special Education	# of Special Education	Total Student Population	% SPED in Total Student Population
Native American	46,736	7,791	54,527	14%
Other	140,858	140,858	1,192,541	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,098,419</b>	<b>148,649</b>	<b>1,247,068</b>	<b>12%</b>

<sup>8</sup> Arizona Revised Statute, A.R.S. § 15-761, <https://www.azleg.gov/ars/15/00761.htm>.

## Native American Student Enrollment by County in SY 2022–23

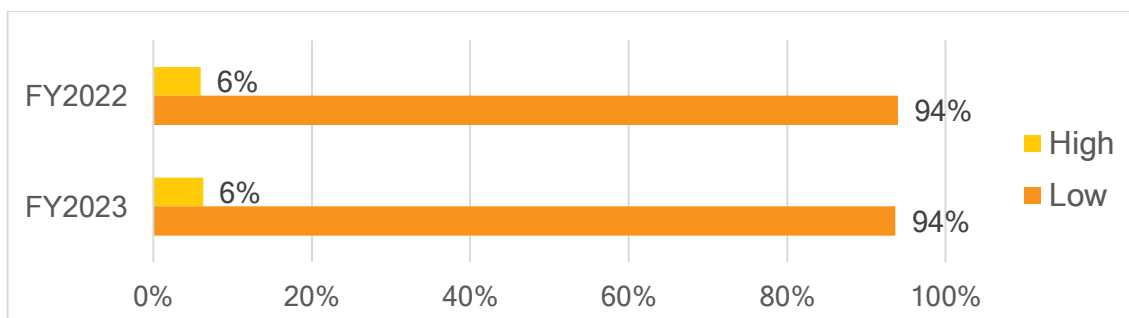
Table 3 depicts the number and percent of Native American students enrolled in each county by high-density and low-density schools.

Table 3: County Level SY23 October 1 Native American Student Enrollment & High- and Low-Density Schools

County	# of Native American Students	# of Total Enrollment	% Native American Students	# of Schools	# of High-Density Schools	% of High-Density Schools	# of Low-Density Schools	% of Low-Density Schools
Apache	7,573	10,785	70%	37	26	70%	11	30%
Cochise	130	19,673	1%	73	0	0%	73	100%
Coconino	6,775	18,317	37%	55	32	58%	23	42%
Gila	2,408	8,071	30%	24	9	38%	15	63%
Graham	747	7,837	10%	33	5	15%	28	85%
Greenlee	100	2,058	5%	6	0	0%	6	100%
La Paz	569	2,487	23%	11	6	55%	5	45%
Maricopa	18,787	795,885	2%	1,305	7	1%	1,298	99%
Mohave	758	26,381	3%	70	6	9%	64	91%
Navajo	9,810	20,756	47%	77	40	52%	37	48%
Pima	4,948	169,702	3%	364	10	3%	354	97%
Pinal	3,099	61,975	5%	118	6	5%	112	95%
Santa Cruz	10	10,978	0%	26	0	0%	26	100%
Yavapai	558	26,160	2%	95	2	2%	93	98%
Yuma	318	40,408	1%	72	0	0%	72	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>56,590</b>	<b>1,221,473</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>2,366</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>2,217</b>	<b>94%</b>

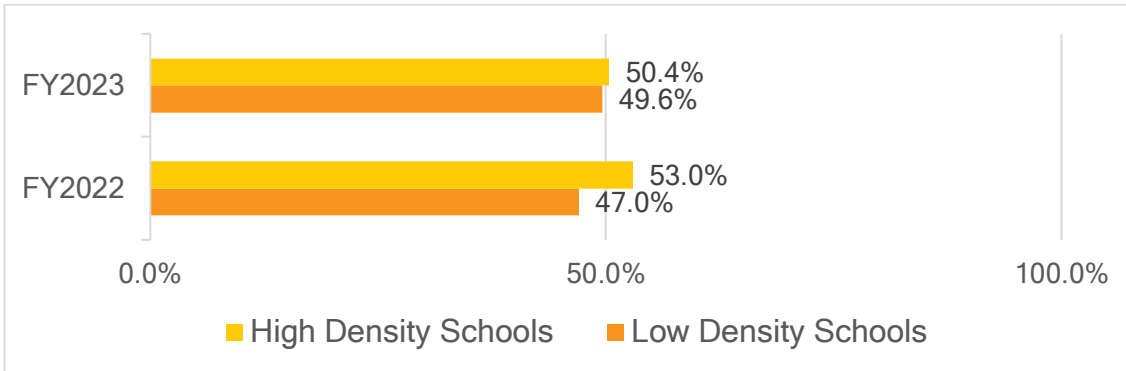
In FY22 and FY23, the percentage of high-density and low-density schools remained the same. In both years, 6% of Arizona schools were identified as high-density schools and 94% of Arizona schools were identified as low-density schools as illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Percent of High- and Low-Density Schools in Arizona



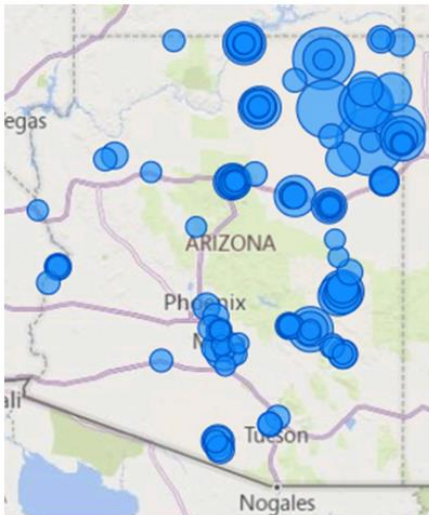
Similarly, when comparing the total student population of Native American students enrolled in high-density and low-density schools in Arizona in FY22 and FY23, the pattern remains the same for both years. Figure 4 illustrates that approximately 50%-53% of Native American students were enrolled in high-density schools and 47-49% of Native American students were enrolled in low-density schools.

*Figure 4: Percent of Native American Students Enrolled in High- and Low-Density Schools in Arizona*

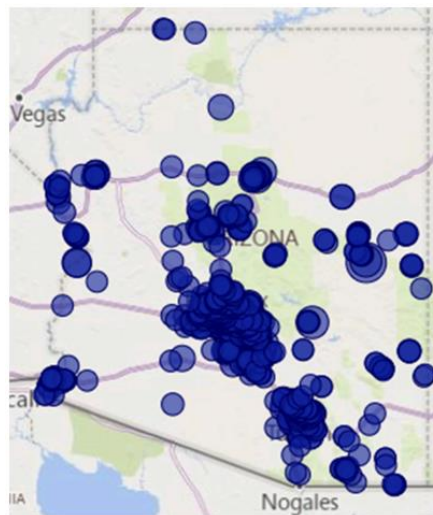


In Arizona, high-density schools are concentrated in counties where tribal lands are located, as depicted in Figure 5 and Table 4. In contrast, low-density schools are concentrated in Maricopa and Pima counties, as depicted in Figure 6 and Table 4.

*Figure 5: High-Density School Enrollment and Distribution*



*Figure 6: Low-Density School Enrollment and Distribution*



Note: Bubble size represents the higher Native American student counts in October 1 enrollment data. Different schools may overlap by serving students in the same area.

Table 4: Tribal Lands in Arizona Counties

County	Tribal Lands
Apache	Navajo Nation, Pueblo of Zuni
Cochise	None
Coconino	Havasupai Tribe, Hualapai Tribe, Hopi Tribe, Navajo Nation, Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians, San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe
Gila	San Carlos Apache Tribe, White Mountain Apache Tribe, Tonto-Apache Tribe
Graham	San Carlos Apache Tribe
Greenlee	None
La Paz	Colorado River Indian Tribes
Maricopa	Tohono O'odham Nation, Gila River Indian Community, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation
Mohave	Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians, Hualapai Tribe, Fort Mohave Indian Tribe
Navajo	Hopi Tribe, Navajo Nation, White Mountain Apache Tribe
Pima	Tohono O'odham Nation, Pascua Yaqui Tribe
Pinal	Tohono O'odham Nation, Ak-Chin Indian Community, Gila River Indian Community, San Carlos Apache Tribe
Santa Cruz	None
Yavapai	Yavapai-Prescott Indian Community, Yavapai Apache Nation
Yuma	Quechan Tribe, Cocopah Indian Tribe

Source: Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona, <https://itcaonline.com/maps/>.

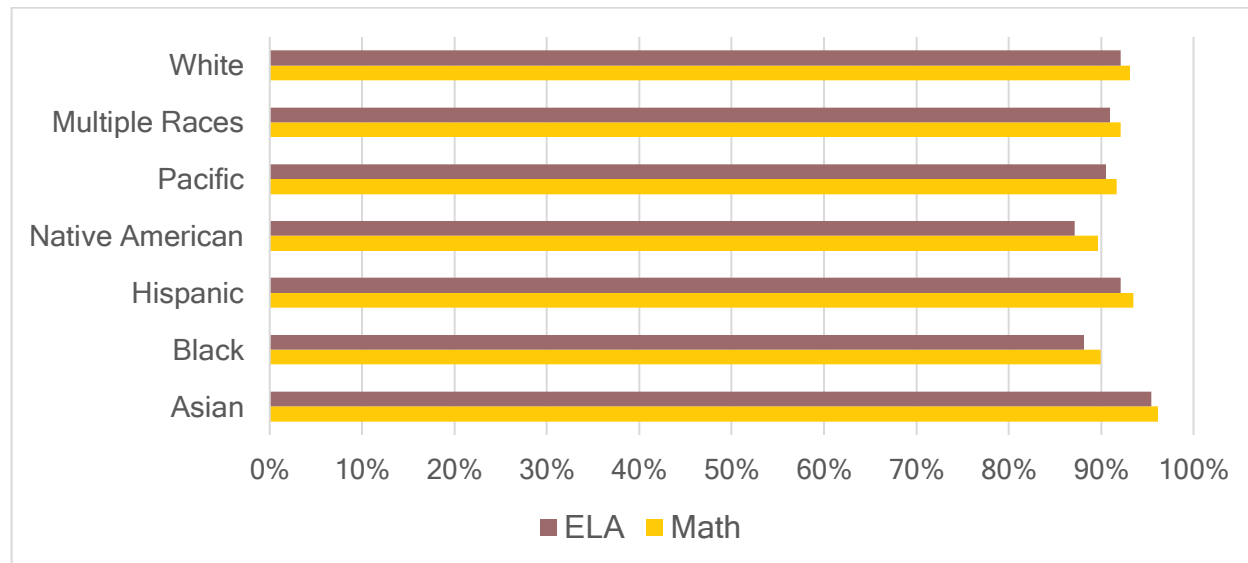
Note: Three counties highlighted to show that the majority of Native American students enrolled in high-density are located within these areas.

# STUDENT EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

In SY 2022–23, Arizona assessed student learning through a variety of statewide tests. Students enrolled in Grades 3–8 were administered the *Arizona Academic Standards Assessment (AASA)* in English Language Arts and Math. Students enrolled in Grades 5, 8, and 11 were administered the *AzSCI Science Assessment*. High school students participated in *ACT Aspire* for the 9th Grade Cohort and the *ACT* for the 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Cohort. For students with significant cognitive disabilities, the *Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA)* measured English Language Arts and Math in Grades 3–8 and 11, as well as Science in Grades 5, 8, and 11.

In SY 2022–23, participation rates reflect the percentage of students who were enrolled, who were required to take the state assessments, and who completed them. Figure 7 presents the test participation rates and indicates that Native American student participation is the lowest among all ethnic groups at 87.1% in English Language Arts and 89.6% in Math.

Figure 7: Test Participation Rates in SY23



Assessments including the AASA, MSAA, and ACT are scored across four performance levels as shown in Figure 8. Students who achieve a score at level 3 (Proficient) or level 4 (Highly Proficient) meet the expectations for proficiency.

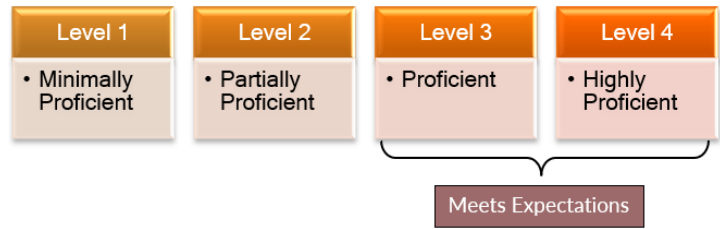


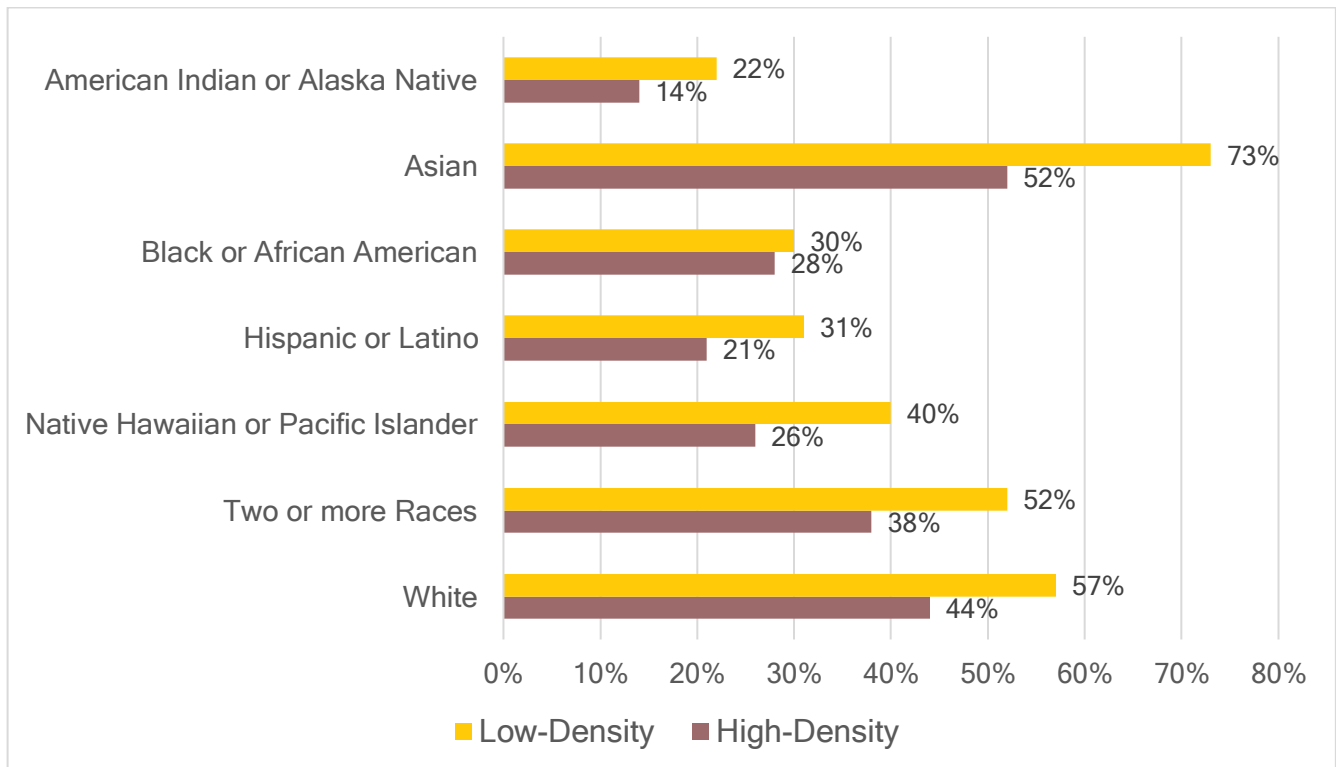
Figure 8: Assessment Performance Levels

Data in this report reflects the percentage of students achieving proficiency (levels 3 and 4). Additionally, results are disaggregated by school density and/or by race and ethnicity to provide a more comprehensive view of student performance.

### English Language Arts

As demonstrated in Figure 9, the percentage of Native American students who met expectations in SY 2022–23 AASA, MSAA, and ACT ELA was lower at high-density schools (14%) than those at low-density schools (22%). In comparison to other ethnic groups, Native American students have the lowest percent scoring in Proficient or Highly Proficient levels at both high-density and low-density schools in Arizona.

Figure 9: Percentage of Students Proficient in ELA at High-Density and Low-Density Schools

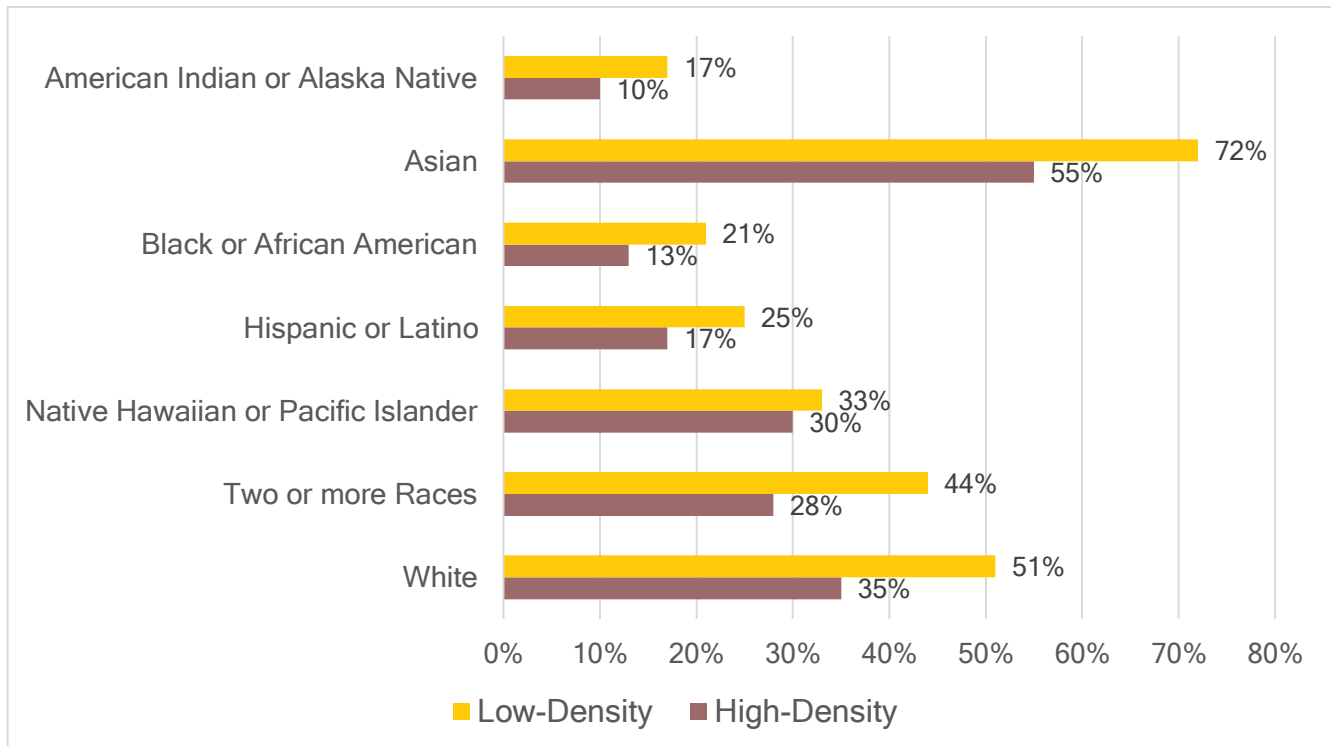


## Math

As shown in Figure 10, the percentage of American Indian or Alaska Native students who met expectations in SY 2022–23 AASA, MSAA, and ACT Math, was lower at high-density schools (10%) than those at low-density schools (17%). In comparison to other ethnic groups, American Indian or Alaska Native students have the lowest percent scoring in Proficient or Highly Proficient levels at both high-density and low-density schools.

For both ELA and Math, the percent of Native American students meeting expectations at high-density schools has been lower than those at low-density schools in Arizona.

Figure 10: Percentage of Students Proficient in Math at High-Density and Low-Density Schools



# ATTENDANCE

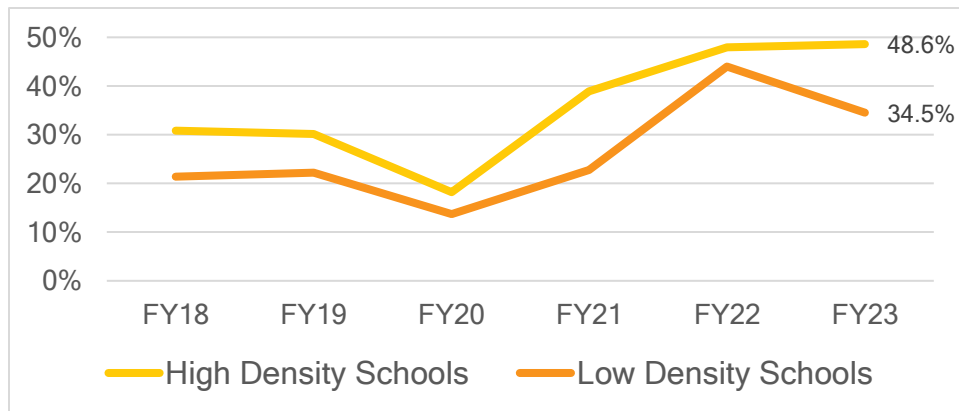
Per Arizona Revised Statute (A.R.S. § 15-244), the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) compiled information regarding Native American students' attendance to include the following: Absenteeism, graduation rates, dropout rates, and dropout prevention initiatives.

## Chronic Absenteeism Rates

A student is chronically absent if that student has absences (excused and unexcused) greater than 10% of a school's calendar year (e.g., 18 days for a school meeting 5 days per week).

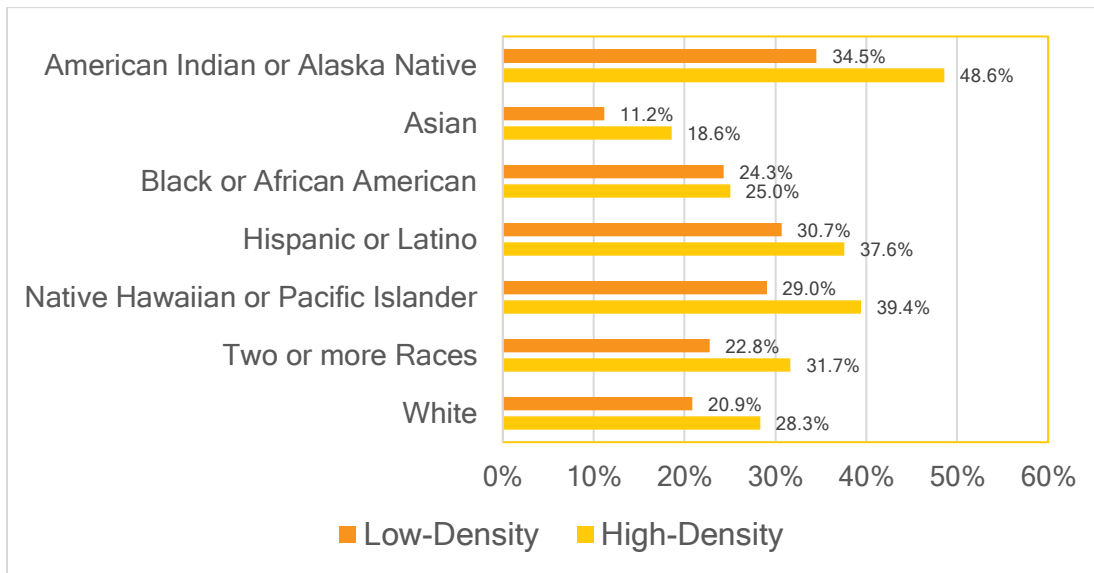
$$\text{Chronic Absenteeism rate} = \frac{\text{Number of students with greater than 10\% absences}}{\text{Total number of students}}$$

Figure 11: Chronic Absenteeism Rates of Grades 1–8 Native American Students in FY18–23



The chronic absenteeism rates for grades K–8 Native American students at high-density schools were consistently higher than those at low-density schools from FY18 to FY23 as depicted in Figure 11. When comparing the chronic absenteeism rates among ethnicities, the chronic absenteeism rates for Native American students were higher than other ethnic groups in both high-density and low-density schools in FY23 as illustrated in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Chronic Absenteeism Rates of Grades 1–8 Students at High- and Low-Density Schools by Race/Ethnicity in SY23



The chronic absenteeism rate is a key factor in student success. Rural barriers may contribute to higher absenteeism rates and lower academic performance among Native American students in high-density schools compared to those in low-density schools.

## Graduation Rates

All students entering grade 9 for the first time are grouped into a graduation cohort. Cohort 2022 includes students who began Grade 9 in the 2018–2019 school year, expecting to graduate in 2022. Those who graduated by August 31, 2022 are four-year graduates. Any student who remains in school after August 31, 2022 and graduates before June 30, 2023 is a five-year graduate.

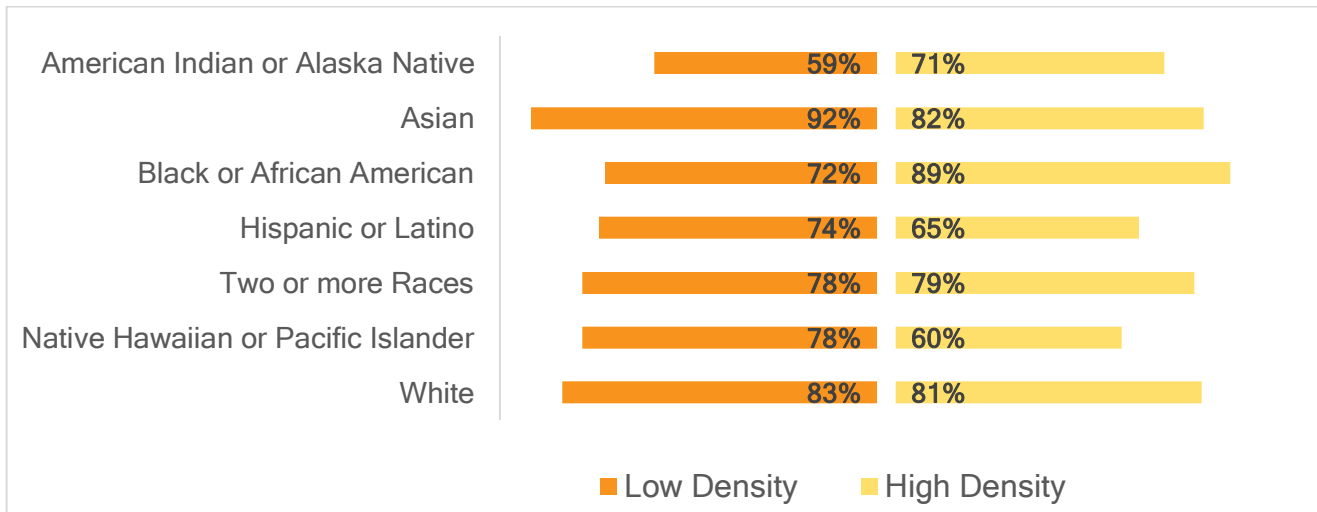
Please note: All graduation data are lagged by one year for Accountability purposes because four-year graduates may graduate after the fiscal year their cohort year ends (June 30).<sup>9</sup> ADE defines the graduation rate formula as:

$$\frac{\text{Number of Graduates in the Cohort}}{\text{Number of Graduates} + \text{Number of Non-Graduates}} = \text{Graduation Rate}$$

<sup>9</sup> Arizona Department of Education, “Graduation, Dropout & Persistence Rate Technical Manual,” <https://www.azed.gov/sites/default/files/2017/08/2018%2006%2001%20Graduation%20DO%20and%20Persistence%20Rate%20Tech%20Manual.pdf?id=598a34233217e10ce06647ff>.

As shown in Figure 13, 71% of Native American students from high-density schools graduated in 4 years for Cohort 2022. However, 59% of Native American students from low-density schools graduated in 4 years. The four-year graduation rate of Native American students that attended high-density schools was 12% higher than their Native American peers at low-density schools.

*Figure 13: Four-Year Graduation Rates for the 2022 Cohort at High- and Low-Density Schools by Race/Ethnicity*



For the Cohort 2022 five-year graduation rate, 78% of Native American students from high-density schools graduated in 5 years. However, only 65% of Native American students from low-density schools graduated in 5 years. Figure 14 illustrates the five-year graduation rate of Native American students that attended high-density schools was 13% higher than their Native American peers at low-density schools.

*Figure 14: Five-Year Graduation Rates for the 2022 Cohort at High- and Low-Density Schools by Race/Ethnicity*

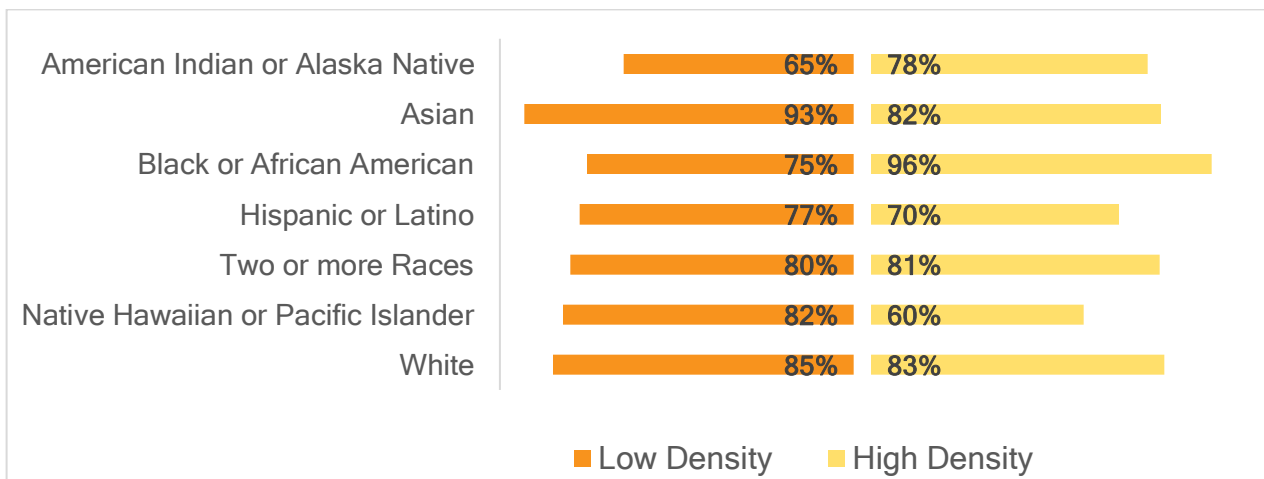
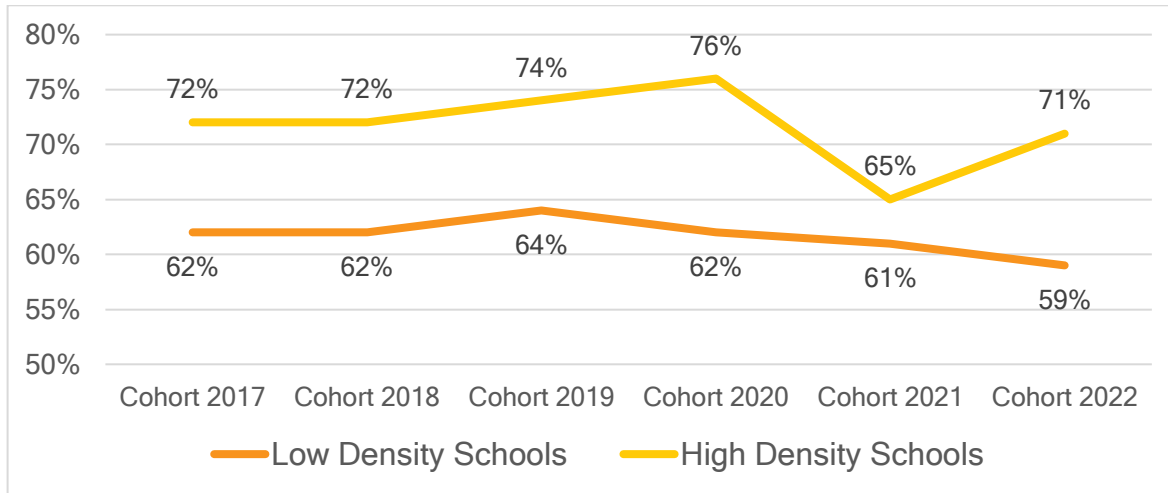


Figure 15 illustrates that Native American students at high-density schools consistently have a higher 4-year graduation rate than those at low-density schools.

Figure 15: Four-Year Graduation Rates of Native American Students at High- and Low-Density Schools for the Cohort Years 2017-2022



In Arizona, the State Board of Education sets the statewide minimum requirements for graduating high school students, which can be found in Arizona Administrative Code R7-2-302.<sup>10</sup> However, schools may establish additional graduation credit requirements for their students on top of the statewide requirements. Further research on the high school's specific graduation requirements will contribute to a better understanding of why Native American students at high-density schools have consistently higher graduation rates than those at low-density schools from Cohort 2017 to Cohort 2022.

## Dropout Rates

Dropouts are defined as students who are enrolled in school at any time during the school year but are not enrolled at the end of the school year and did not transfer, graduate, or were reported as deceased. Students who withdraw from school due to chronic illness are not counted because their circumstances are beyond the school's control. Students in Grades 7 through 12 are included in the dropout rate calculation.<sup>11</sup>

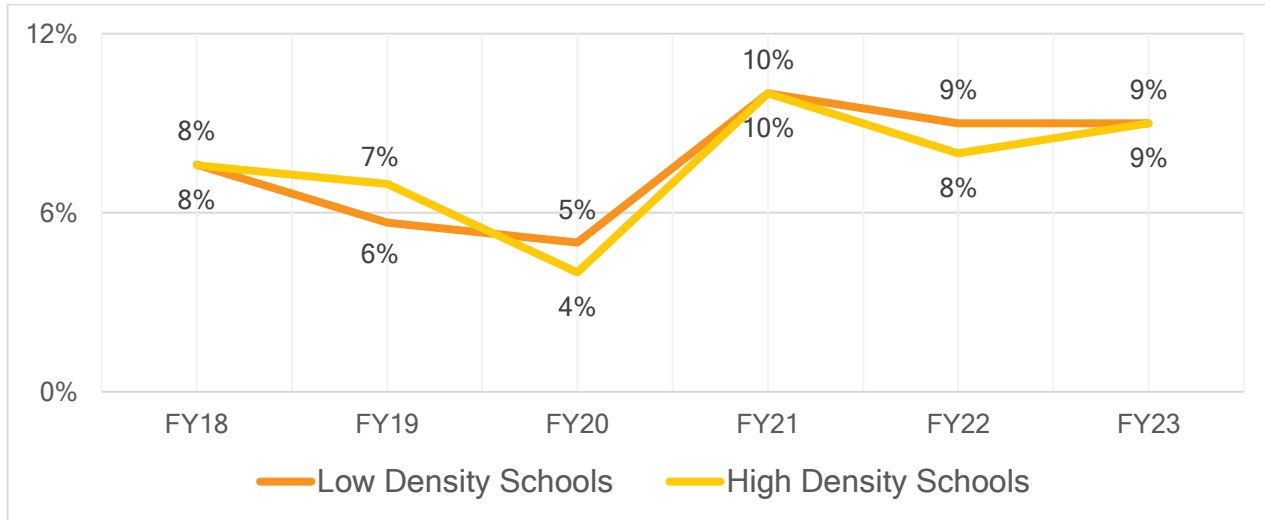
$$\frac{\text{Number of Dropouts}}{\text{Number of Students Enrolled}} = \text{Dropout Rate}$$

<sup>10</sup> Arizona State Board of Education, "High School Graduation Requirements," <https://azsbe.az.gov/schools/graduation-requirements>.

<sup>11</sup> Arizona Department of Education, Accountability & Research Data, <https://www.azed.gov/accountability-research/data>.

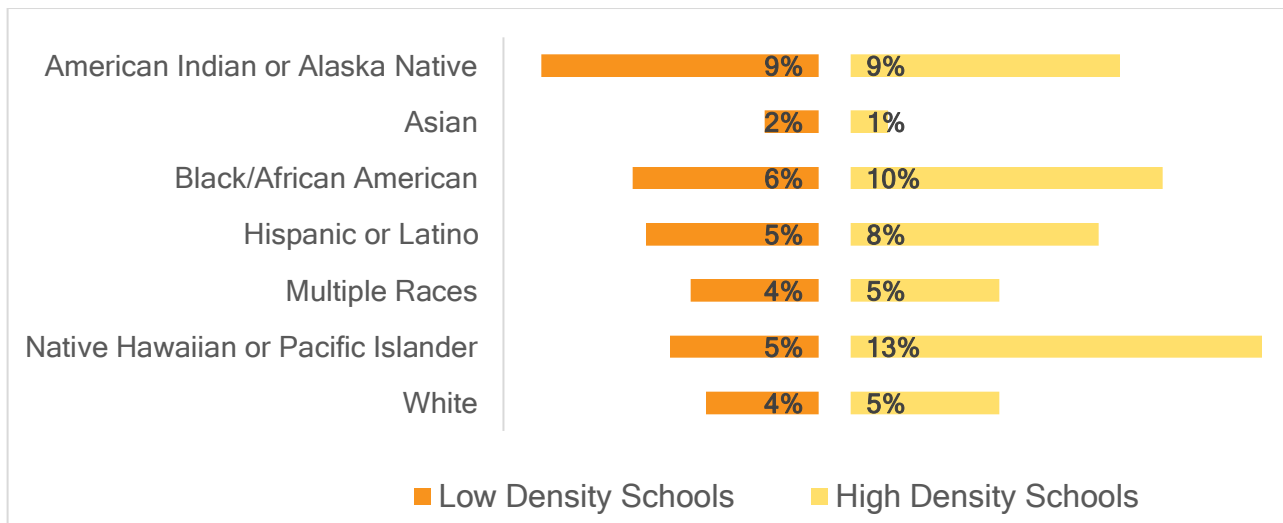
Figure 16 demonstrates that dropout rates for Native American students in Grades 7–12 increased dramatically for both low-density and high-density schools, by at least 5% from FY20 to FY21, slightly lowered in FY22, and stabilized at 9% in FY23.

Figure 16: Dropout Rates of Grades 7–12 Native American Students at High- and Low-Density Schools in FY18–23



The Native American student dropout rate is the highest among all race/ethnic groups in low-density schools; however, it is not the highest among high-density schools (Figure 17).

Figure 17: Dropout Rates at High- and Low-Density Schools for Grades 7–12 by Race/Ethnicity in FY23



### Dropout Prevention Initiatives

Local Education Agency (LEAs) address dropout prevention through a wide variety of initiatives to decrease the dropout rates of Native American students. Johnson O’Malley is a program that provides support for dropout prevention. An examination of the 2022–2023 Johnson O’Malley (JOM) grantee programs found that LEAs incorporated a broad range of strategies, activities, and practices to support dropout prevention tailored to Native American

students. The focused areas were parent engagement, cultural competency, and targeted interventions through academic and cultural programming. In addition, extracurricular activity fee payments and instructional supports and materials were offered. Statewide programs that address dropout prevention are shown in Table 5.

*Table 5: List of Statewide Programs Addressing Dropout Prevention*

Title I and Title II	Alternative School Programs	Dual Credit Programs
School Improvement	School Guidance Counseling	Online Education
Career and Technical Education	Athletic Programs	McKinney-Vento Homeless Education
Title VI Indian Education	Johnson O'Malley Program	Education & Career Action Plans

# SCHOOL SAFETY

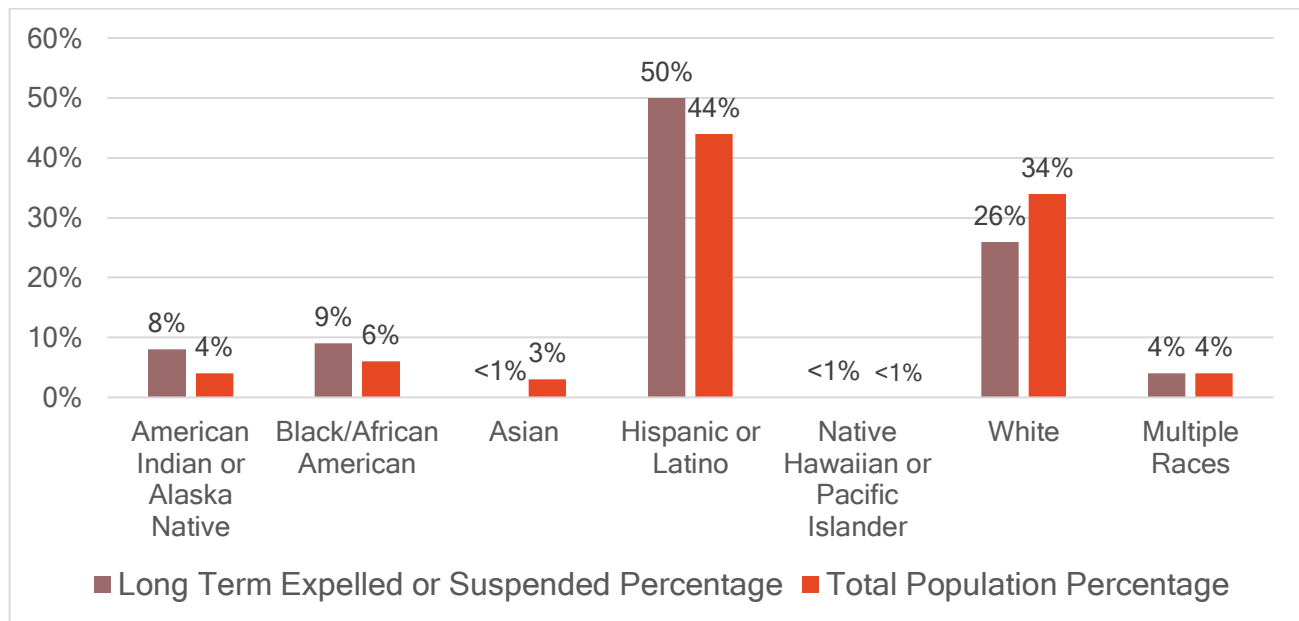
## Long-Term Expelled or Suspended Percentage Analysis

In SY23, the total number of students who are expelled or suspended on a long-term basis before scheduled end of school year or during summer increased to 1,838. Of these, 151 were American Indian or Alaska Native students. The long term expelled or suspended percentage formula is:

$$\frac{\text{Number of Long – Term Expelled or Suspended NA Students}}{\text{Number of Long – Term Expelled or Suspended Students in FY23 in AZ}}$$

When comparing the long-term expelled or suspended percentage among ethnic groups with the total population, Native American students comprised 4% of the total population. However, Native American students comprised 8% of the long-term expelled or suspended population in Arizona as shown in Figure 18.

Figure 18: Percentage of Long-Term Expulsions and Suspensions Among Ethnic Groups with Total Population Percentage (All Grade Levels)



## Additional Funding for School Safety Program

The School Safety Program is established within the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) to support, promote, and enhance safe and effective learning environments for all students by supporting the costs of placing school resource officers, juvenile probation officers, school counselors, and school social workers on school campuses, per ARS §15-154.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> ADE, School Safety Program Grantees, <https://www.azed.gov/ssp/school-safety-program-grantees>.

In FY23, the School Safety Program funded 869 positions in schools across Arizona:

- School Counselors/Social Workers: 566
- School Resource Officers/Juvenile Probation Officers: 303
- School Safety Officers: NA
- Total: 869

In 2023, the Office of Indian Education had school safety hotline resources available for distribution. Stickers were customized by tribe, and additional bags and water bottles were available to spread awareness for the resources.

## **Parent and Community Involvement**

In SY 2022–23, the Johnson-O'Malley (JOM) grant funded programs to significantly strengthen parent engagement in their local communities. Through Indian Education Committees (IECs), parents provided feedback in decision-making processes and approved budgets and program activities to ensure alignment with community priorities. JOM resources enabled parents to attend workshops and statewide conferences, providing valuable training on program goals and strategies for student success. Additionally, funding supported family engagement events such as cultural nights, academic fairs, and career days. These fostered meaningful connections between parents, students, and schools. To reduce barriers to involvement, JOM funds provided essential educational resources such as school supplies and assistance in academic, athletic, and extracurricular fees. Administrative support for IEC meetings and annual planning further ensured transparency and accountability amongst JOM programs. These efforts collectively created a strong foundation for parent involvement, blending governance, training, cultural engagement, and practical support to enhance student achievement.

# TRIBAL GAMING CONTRIBUTIONS TO PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION

In compliance with Proposition 301, the Office of the Auditor General conducts biennial reports on all local educational agencies (public school districts and charter school holders).<sup>13</sup> Tribes in Arizona contribute to the state from gaming revenue pursuant to A.R.S. §5-601.02(H)(3)(a)(i) and 5-601.02(H)(3)(b)(i), and the portion reserved for education is the Instructional Improvement Fund (IIF). Pursuant to A.R.S §15-979, ADE shall pay the monies in the IIF to local education agencies. The IIF payments to each county are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6: FY23 Instructional Improvement Fund Payment

County	Fall Payment	Spring Payment	Total
Apache	\$182,213.60	\$498,409.44	\$680,623.04
Cochise	\$336,031.62	\$920,482.22	\$1,256,513.84
Coconino	\$316,081.79	\$865,589.11	\$1,181,670.90
Gila	\$144,081.32	\$394,571.36	\$538,652.68
Graham	\$128,939.25	\$355,396.01	\$484,335.26
Greenlee	\$30,785.92	\$84,769.49	\$115,555.41
La Paz	\$41,164.00	\$113,221.88	\$154,385.88
Maricopa	\$13,667,644.76	\$37,508,744.83	\$51,176,389.59
Mohave	\$426,771.92	\$1,172,688.70	\$1,599,460.62
Navajo	\$318,276.75	\$873,914.42	\$1,192,191.17
Pima	\$2,833,391.20	\$7,815,178.48	\$10,648,569.68
Pinal	\$993,214.15	\$2,702,979.55	\$3,696,193.70
Santa Cruz	\$188,746.11	\$518,736.63	\$707,482.74
Yavapai	\$440,210.32	\$1,213,179.36	\$1,653,389.68
Yuma	\$689,133.51	\$1,895,270.26	\$2,584,403.77
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$20,736,686.22</b>	<b>\$56,933,131.74</b>	<b>\$77,669,817.96</b>

Note: These data align with the intended FY disbursements for all Charter and District schools. School Finance may submit Spring payments during the following fiscal year.

These funds are not specifically targeted for Indian Education. LEAs may expend these funds as follows:

- 1) Utilize up to fifty percent for teacher compensation increases and class size reduction
- 2) Monies that are not utilized shall be utilized for maintenance and operation purposes (i.e., dropout prevention programs and/or instructional improvement programs, including programs to develop minimum reading skills for students by the end of third grade).

<sup>13</sup> Arizona Auditor General, "Reports," <https://www.azauditor.gov/reports>.

# EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS THAT TARGET NATIVE AMERICAN PUPILS

The following programs affiliated with the Office of Indian Education contain programs and services that target Native American students in Arizona. Some of the services are contingent upon eligibility criteria.

## Impact Aid

The US Department of Education disperses Impact Aid funding to school districts. Funding can be used for culturally relevant support and general education needs under local district discretion. Impact Aid funds can be used for textbooks, transportation, technology, after-school programs, facility needs, etc. A component of Impact Aid, Program Section 7003, outlines payments for federally connected children, including school districts who provide public education to children residing on Indian lands.<sup>14</sup>

## Arizona Johnson O'Malley Program

Johnson-O'Malley (JOM) funds were awarded by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) to 28 eligible grantees for the 2022–2023 school year. Of those 28 grantees, 23 accepted the funding for a total allocation of \$1,026,134.06. JOM grantees incorporated a wide range of academic support and cultural programs to strengthen student learning. The grantees applied most of the funding towards the following areas:

- Instructional Staff/Program Liaisons
- Tutoring Services for K–12 students
- Cultural Events (Pow Wow, workshops, language programs, etc.)
- Academic Events (end of year award banquets, higher education field trips, etc.)
- Attending conferences for professional learning
- School supplies
- Dual Enrollment opportunities
- Payment of eligible academic, athletic, and/or extracurricular fees

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<sup>14</sup> US Department of Education, “Section 7003 Basics,” <https://impactaid.ed.gov/section-7003-basics/>.

## Native American Education Programs

In Arizona, many school districts that receive Johnson O'Malley and/or Title VI Indian Education Formula Grant funding have established Native American Education programs within their school districts. Based on staffing and student population as well as funding availability, these programs develop and implement plans to address the needs of Native American students. In 2023, the US Office of Indian Education published a document outlining the differences between Johnson O'Malley and Title VI funding.<sup>15</sup> These programs provide valuable assistance and support to district and school staff, parents, and students.

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<sup>15</sup> US Department of Education, "JOM vs. TVI Comparison," <https://easie.communities.ed.gov/#communities/pdc/documents/21977>.

# OFFICE OF INDIAN EDUCATION

The Office of Indian Education (OIE) administers federal and state programs designed to support the educational and cultural needs of Native American students across Arizona. OIE provides outreach and technical assistance to local education agencies (LEAs) located on reservations and in urban areas with significant Native American student populations.

OIE was repositioned within a different division of the Arizona Department of Education to strengthen its organizational alignment and operational support. OIE now reports under the leadership of Associate Superintendent Michelle Udall, who oversees the division of School Improvement, School Support, and Indian Education. This change reflects an administrative restructuring intended to support OIE's work and ensure continuity of services for Native American students.

In addition, OIE received \$5 million in state funding to support the expansion of staffing and program capacity. Together, these administrative and funding changes enhance OIE's ability to provide sustained services and supports to Native American students and communities statewide.

## Office of Indian Education Initiatives

In addition to the expansion noted above, OIE supported numerous programs and outreach. OIE administered funding for various grants and participated or presented in a range of conferences to strengthen the capacity of educators serving Indigenous students. Table 7 provides a comprehensive list of OIE Initiatives.

*Table 7: 2022-2023 OIE Initiatives*

Support Type	Specific Initiatives
Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Johnson O'Malley (JOM)</li> <li>• Native American Code Writer's Project (NACWP)</li> </ul>
Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tribal College Dual Enrollment</li> <li>• Policy and Program Updates for Indigenous Stakeholders</li> <li>• Indian Education Advisory Council</li> </ul>
Trainings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADE-OIE Program Area Collaborations</li> <li>• Johnson O'Malley Quarterly Forums</li> <li>• Integrating Indigenous Perspectives in Social Studies Summer Virtual Series</li> <li>• Reclaiming the Narrative: Teaching about Native American Boarding Schools Virtual Series</li> </ul>
Conferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• American Indian/Indigenous Teacher Education Conference (AIITEC)</li> <li>• National College Attainment Network (NCAN)</li> <li>• National Indian Education Association (NIEA)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Johnson O’Malley Association (NJOMA)</li> <li>• Office of English Language Acquisition Services (OELAS) HOPE</li> <li>• ESSA Conference</li> <li>• Teacher’s Institute and Leading Change</li> <li>• Native American Grant School Association (NAGSA)</li> <li>• Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL)</li> </ul>
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## Community Partnerships

Through intentional collaboration with both internal and external organizations, OIE has cultivated and maintained a handful of partnerships to drive positive change for Native American students as seen in Table 8.

*Table 8: OIE Highlighted Partners*

Partner Type	Respective Entity
Internal (ADE Affiliate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Standards - English Language Arts</li> <li>• Academic Standards – Social Studies</li> <li>• Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion</li> <li>• Office of English Language Acquisition Services</li> <li>• Homeless Education Program</li> <li>• Exceptional Student Services</li> </ul>
External (Non-ADE Affiliate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arizona State University Next Education Workforce</li> <li>• Heard Museum</li> <li>• Arizona Humanities</li> <li>• Phoenix Indian School Visitor Center</li> <li>• Institute for Native-Serving Educators (INE) at Northern Arizona University</li> <li>• Labriola National American Indian Data Center at Arizona State University</li> <li>• Helios Education Foundation</li> <li>• Navajo Nation Department of Dine Education</li> </ul>

## OIE Programs

### *Tribal College Dual Enrollment Program*

Diné College, Navajo Technical University, and Tohono O’odham Community College offer Tribal College Dual Enrollment Programs to Arizona high school students pursuant to A.R.S. §15-244.01 Tribal Dual Enrollment Program Fund. Reimbursements to community colleges are based on eligible students receiving a grade of “C” or better in a 100-level or higher course. Additional funding will be requested for future years. Table 9 displays the student total and reimbursement amount from FY16 to FY23.

*Table 9: Summary of Approved Reimbursements - Tribal College Dual Enrollment Program Fund*

Fiscal Years 2016 through 2023		
Tribal College	# of Students	Reimbursement
Dine College	730	\$263,885.00
Navajo Technical University	1791	\$867,241.00
Tohono O’odham Community College	442	\$71,452.75*
<b>Total</b>	<b>2963</b>	<b>\$1,202,578.75</b>

\*Tohono O’odham Community College waived tuition fees for Native American students. Per ARS §15-244.01, funds are 15% of unclaimed lottery funds, capped at \$250K per year.

### *Native American Language Teacher Certification—Preservation of Native American Languages*

Most tribal nations in the US have language revitalization efforts, especially those where fluent speakers are dwindling. There are 167 Indigenous languages in the US, and there could be as little as 20 languages by the year 2050.<sup>16</sup> Recruiting and retaining Native language teachers in Arizona is essential to supporting language revitalization efforts. To become certified to teach a Native language in Arizona, candidates must pass an assessment developed by the tribe. In addition, they must submit an official letter from the tribe to ADE’s Certification Unit.

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<sup>16</sup> Bureau of Indian Affairs, “BIA Native Language Revitalization Literature Review 2023,” Kauffman and Associates Incorporated, [https://www.bia.gov/sites/default/files/media\\_document/native\\_american\\_revitalization\\_lit\\_review\\_final\\_stc.pdf](https://www.bia.gov/sites/default/files/media_document/native_american_revitalization_lit_review_final_stc.pdf)

However, many aspiring Native language teachers face challenges. For example, some tribes do not have an assessment in place, some languages in whole or part are unwritten, and the number of fluent speakers has declined significantly. These factors have slowed both the certification process and the number of certified Native language instructors. Per the Educator Certification system, 377 certified teachers were authorized to teach a Native language in Arizona in FY23, as presented in Table 10.

*Table 10: Number of AZ Language Certified Teachers for Native American Languages*

Language	Certified Count
Akimel O'odham	12
Apache	52
Cheyenne	1
Hopi	11
Hualapai	1
Navajo	281
Pima	1
Tohono O'odham	14
Yaqui	3
Yavapai	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>377</b>

## OIE Events

In SY 2022–23, OIE saw the beginning of statewide professional learning opportunities in the form of in-person and virtual events, as well as requests from school districts and charter schools. A more structured approach to planning annual professional learning began to take shape, with the Indigenous Text Project serving as the first initiative. Planning conversations also began for the OIE Stakeholder’s Summit, a convening of educators, tribal education staff, tribal leadership, students, and parents.

### *Indigenous Text Project*

Transitioning out of the COVID-19 pandemic, planning began on the first annual Indigenous Text Project, a three-part project focused on elevating and affirming Indigenous knowledge and literature within K–12 learning environments. This project was created in partnership with Arizona Humanities, ASU Labriola National American Indian Data Center, and the Arizona Department of Education (Office of Academic Standards, Office of English Language Acquisition Services, and Office of Educational Equity).

1) K–12 Indigenous Literacy Symposium in October 2022

Purpose: To bring Indigenous-serving educators for a one-day professional learning opportunity focused on building their capacity to integrate Indigenous literature using culturally sustaining and revitalizing approaches.

2) Indigenous Author’s Panel in November 2022

Purpose: To provide Indigenous-serving educators with the opportunity to hear award-winning Indigenous Young Adult authors’ perspectives on diversity, inclusion, and equity in Native American youth literature with an emphasis in culturally sustaining- revitalizing education.

3) Using Indigenous Literature: Educator Panel in November 2022

Purpose: Current Indigenous-serving educators shared how they accurately and respectfully integrate Indigenous Young Adult literature withing their respective educational environment.

# CONCLUSION

School Year 2022–2023 marked a period of continued growth, rebuilding, and renewed strategic direction for the Office of Indian Education (OIE) and the Indigenous students and communities it serves. The data presented throughout this report highlights both ongoing challenges and areas of strength across Arizona’s schools. While disparities in academic achievement, attendance, and disciplinary outcomes persist for Native American students—especially those attending high-density and rural schools—the report also demonstrates the resilience of students, the dedication of educators, and the important role of culturally grounded supports that promote student success.

Throughout SY23, Native American students continued to experience lower proficiency rates in English Language Arts and Math compared to their peers. Chronic absenteeism remained notably higher for students in high-density schools, where distance, transportation, and weather barriers can significantly impact access to school. These challenges reinforce the need for sustained targeted interventions that acknowledge the unique geographic, cultural, and structural contexts in which Indigenous students learn.

At the same time, the data reveals encouraging trends that speak to the strengths within Native-serving communities. High-density schools—with closer alignment to tribal communities and cultural values—continue to produce higher four-year and five-year graduation rates for Native American students than low-density schools.

In addition, OIE expanded its reach through programs such as Johnson-O’Malley, the Tribal College Dual Enrollment Program, and professional learning opportunities rooted in culturally sustaining practices—most notably the Indigenous Text Project. These initiatives provided educators with tools to integrate Indigenous knowledge into instruction, elevated Native authors and voices, promoted language revitalization, and strengthened partnerships between schools and tribal nations. OIE also advanced its internal capacity, strengthened interdepartmental collaboration across ADE, and expanded partnerships with higher education institutions, museums, advocacy organizations, and tribal education departments.

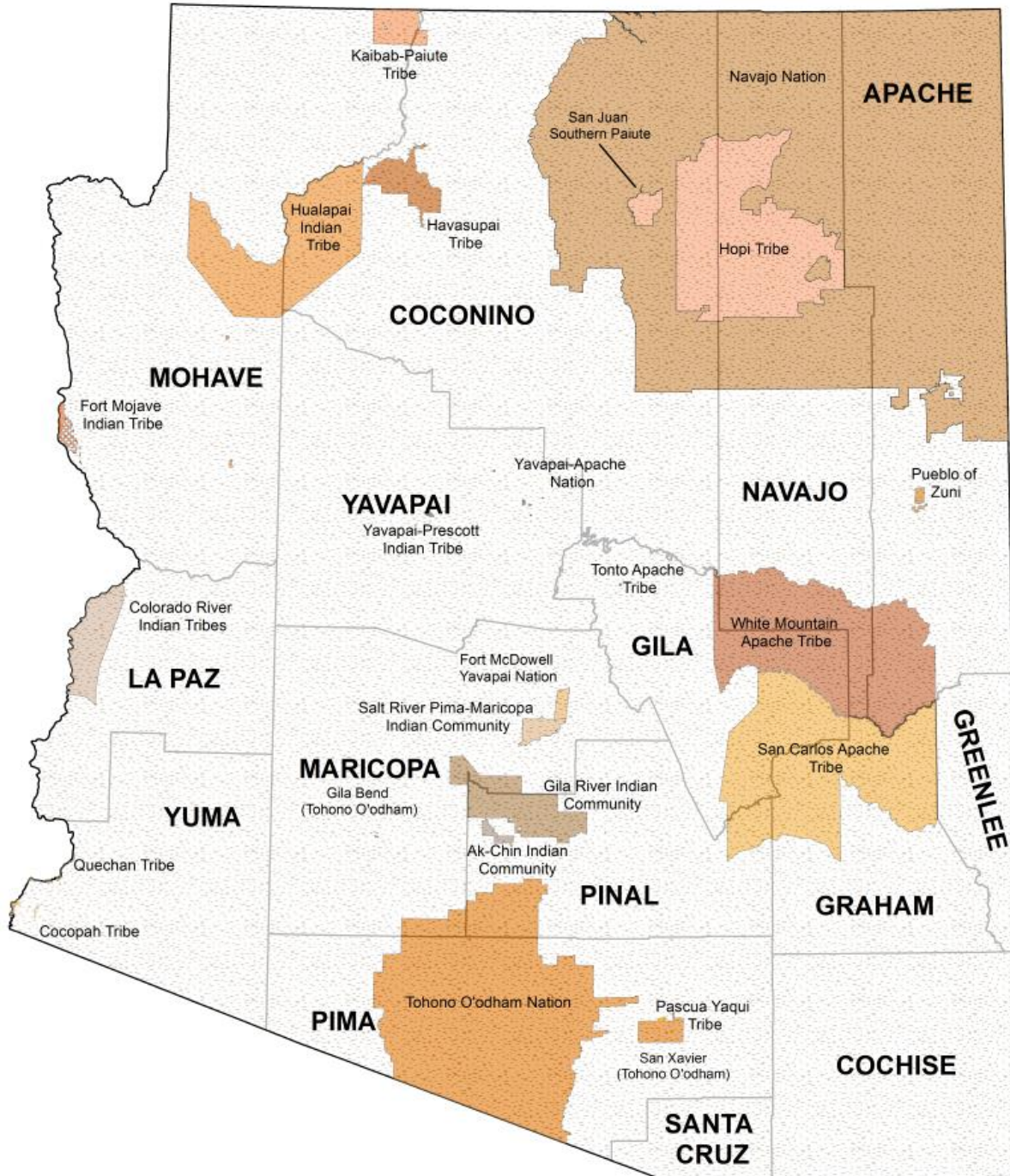
In parallel with these efforts, SY 2022–23 represented a foundational year of development for OIE. The office underwent a transition into a new division and focused on establishing internal systems, clarifying roles, and building the infrastructure necessary to support long-term

strategic work. The year served as an important stage for organizational building, program planning, and capacity strengthening.

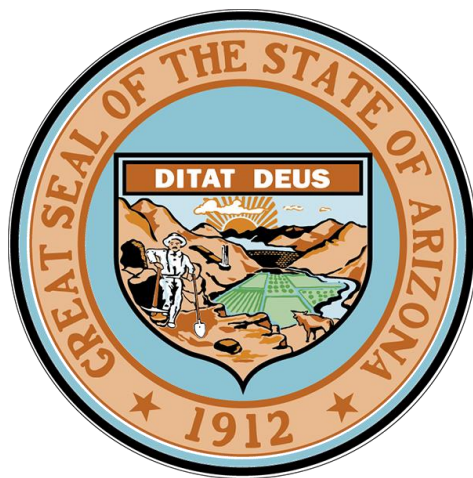
As OIE continued to develop new programs and refine its operational structure, the office entered this phase with high expectations for delivering meaningful support to educators serving Native American students. The foundational work undertaken during SY 2022–23 positions OIE to move forward with greater readiness, intentionality, and alignment, creating stronger conditions for future stakeholder engagement, strategic implementation, and statewide impact in support of Indigenous students and communities.

# APPENDIX

## Tribal Homelands In Arizona



Source: Inter Tribal Council of Arizona; <https://itcaonline.com/maps/>.



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