

The Condition of Education for Members of Oregon's Indian Tribes

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Introduction

The educational achievement and attainment of Native students—American Indians and Alaskan Natives—has received increased attention during the past year. The last decade of standards and heightened school accountability has seen improved outcomes for Latino, African American, and Asian students—but not for Native students. Nationally, the achievement gap has widened between Native students and their white peers during the past decade.¹ Recent reports have primarily focused on the problem’s description, but early diagnoses point to conditions of poverty and disproportionate enrollment in underperforming schools as probable causes. Notably, Native students in Oregon and Oklahoma fare better than their peers in other states.²

Within this national context, the Spirit Mountain Community Fund and the Chalkboard Project commissioned ECONorthwest (ECO) to assess the condition of education for a specific group of Native students in Oregon: enrolled members of Oregon’s federally recognized tribes. A data-sharing agreement between the tribes, the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), and ECO made the study possible. Through a memorandum of understanding with ODE, ECONorthwest maintains de-identified longitudinal records of student outcomes for all Oregon K-12 students dating back to 2003. For this study, each of the nine federally recognized tribes with offices within the State were invited to send the names and birthdates of its Oregon resident members aged 5–24 to ODE. ODE matched enrolled members to unique identification codes. ODE shared the codes—but no personally identifying information—with ECO. The match allowed ECO to identify and follow Oregon tribal members in the larger dataset.

This research allowed Oregon tribes—for the first time—to assess educational outcomes specific to their enrolled members. Prior to this work, tribal leaders were limited to reviewing outcomes for ODE-identified American Indians or Alaskan Natives in school districts in close proximity to their reservations. But as this work shows, not all tribal students live, or attend school, close to their tribe’s reservation. And not all ODE-identified American Indians or Alaskan Natives who live close to a reservation are enrolled in the tribe.

This study reports achievement and attainment findings across the seven participating tribes but does not report findings for individual tribes.³ The findings are primarily descriptive and outline the existing condition of education for tribal members. With the challenge better defined, the study’s goal is to assist tribal leaders, educators, and policymakers as they develop strategies to accelerate achievement gains and boost high school and postsecondary graduation rates.

¹ The Education Trust. August 2013. *The State of Education for Native Students*. Accessed at http://www.edtrust.org/dc/publication/native_student_education
Education Week. 2013. *American Indian Students Lose Ground*. Accessed at <http://www.edweek.org/ew/projects/2013/native-american-education/running-in-place.html#losing-ground>

² The Education Trust (2013), page 12.

³ ECO has briefed and provided reports for each participating tribe.

Summary of Findings

The balance of this report provides the details of the achievement and attainment findings for the seven Oregon tribes that participated in the study. Below is a summary of the key findings:

- In the 2011-12 school year, 67,172 Oregon public school students were identified as American Indian/Alaskan Native in standard ODE ethnicity reporting (ODE AI/AN). Our data match identified 3,210 students who were enrolled in federally recognized Oregon tribes (Oregon tribe-enrolled). Oregon tribal-enrolled students accounted for 4.4 percent of all students who were identified as AI/AN. This work compares student outcomes of the Oregon-based tribal members to the larger population of ODE AI/AN, as well as to all ODE-identified non-AI/AN students. As illustrated in the detailed findings, we find significant differences in outcomes between Oregon tribe-enrolled students and ODE AI/AN students for several key measures.
- Seventy-four percent of Oregon tribe-enrolled students are identified as only AI/AN and no other ethnicity in ODE reporting. Another 18 percent are identified as American Indian in combination with another race/ethnicity. Eight percent of Oregon tribe-enrolled students are not identified as AI/AN in ODE's records.
- Seventy-five percent of Oregon tribe-enrolled students are eligible for free- and reduced-price lunch, which indicates their households have incomes below 185 percent of the federal poverty level. By contrast, 50 percent of All Other students are eligible for the lunch programs.
- Almost one-third of Oregon tribe-enrolled students are enrolled in so-called priority or focus schools. These are schools that are deemed underperforming through federal and state rules and are targeted for management intervention. By contrast, only 6.6 percent of all Oregon students are enrolled in priority or focus schools.
- Oregon tribe-enrolled students show elevated rates of chronic absenteeism—that is, missing 10 percent or more of school days. One-third of Oregon tribe-enrolled students were chronically absent in 2011-12 compared to 19 percent of All Other students. Rates are highest at the high school level, with 43 percent of Oregon tribe-enrolled students chronically absent.
- Almost half of all Oregon tribe-enrolled students in the study group are attending school in rural locations. These students meet or exceed OAKS reading and math benchmarks at much lower rates than their Oregon tribal student peers. This gap does not exist among other ODE AI/AN students and All Other students.
- Achievement gaps in reading—as measured by differences in raw RIT scores, a standardized measure of academic improvement, on Oregon's OAKS test—are apparent in the first testing year (3rd grade) and remain relatively constant thereafter. In reading, Oregon tribe-enrolled students score 5.1 scale points behind All Other peers in 3rd grade—roughly a year's worth of achievement. Oregon tribe-enrolled 8th graders have a similar 4.7 point gap. The reading findings suggest

Oregon tribe-enrolled students are exhibiting learning gains that are comparable to their All Other student peers but fail to close the initial 3rd grade gap.

- In math, the achievement gap starts at 4.3 points in 3rd grade and grows to 5.8 points in 8th grade. Unlike the reading trends, this suggests somewhat lower math gains for Oregon tribe-enrolled students during 3rd-8th grade.
- Fifty-five percent of Oregon tribe-enrolled students from the high school class of 2011 graduated on time with a traditional diploma—compared to 68 percent of All Other students. Fourteen percent of those not graduating continued enrollment for at least an additional year, of which only another four percent of the class earned a traditional diploma.
- Oregon tribe-enrolled students who graduated from high school enrolled in postsecondary education at rates that are comparable to their All Other student peers. Two-thirds of 2010 high school graduates enrolled in postsecondary education within 16 months of graduation.
- Thirty-one percent of Oregon tribe-enrolled students live more than 60 miles (or roughly an hour) from their tribe's offices. The concentration of population near tribal headquarters can be a key factor in service delivery. Tribes with concentrated populations have the option to develop and deliver wraparound educational services (e.g., mentoring, parental engagement). Service delivery is inherently more challenging for tribes with disperse populations.

Geographic Profile of Oregon's Tribal Member Students

Oregon-based Native students represent a small share of the total enrolled student population—less than one percent in the 2011-12 school year—but they face a distinctly challenging set of demographic characteristics that affect academic achievement. This report examines the differences between three groups of students: Oregon-based tribal member students (Oregon tribe-enrolled), students reported by ODE as being ethnically American Indian or Alaskan Native but not enrolled in an Oregon-based tribe (ODE AI/AN), and Oregon's student population as a whole (All Other). These groups are exclusive, so no Oregon tribe-enrolled students are included in the ODE AI/AN or All Other student groups, and ODE AI/AN students are not included in the All Other student group, unless otherwise stated. This analysis also looks at socioeconomic status and special education designation.

The students from seven of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes participating in this study accounted for 3,210 of the roughly 561,000 students enrolled in Oregon public schools in the 2011-12 school year. These students are attending schools across the state, as shown in Figure 1. Table 1 lists the count of Oregon tribe-enrolled students by county in the 2011-12 school year. Counties with fewer than seven students have been omitted.

Figure 1. Density of Oregon tribe-enrolled students by school boundary and school level, SY 2011-12

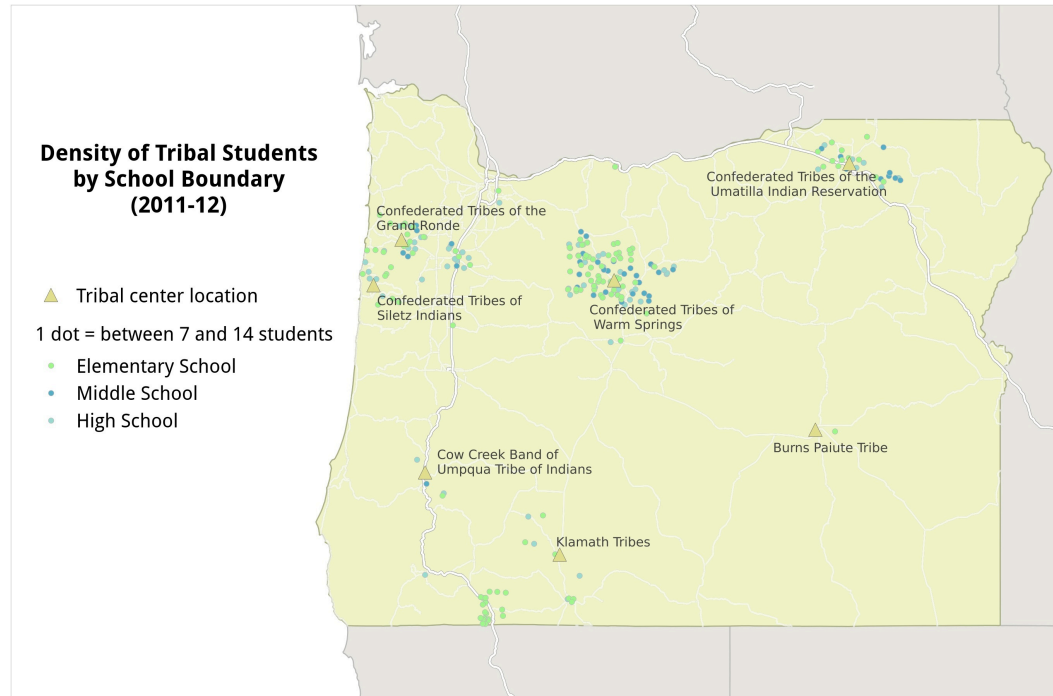
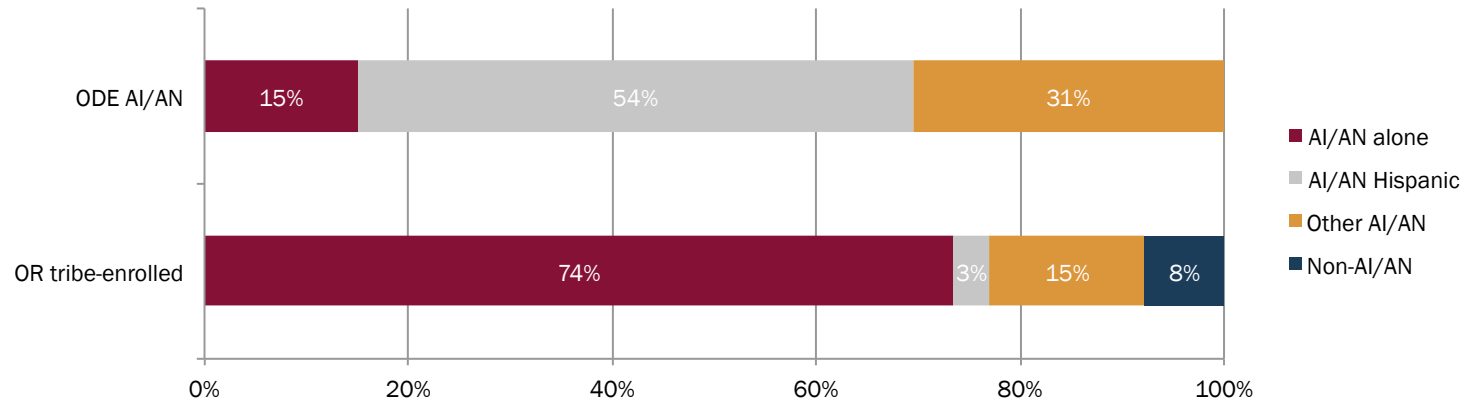


Table 1. Count of Oregon tribe-enrolled students by county, SY 2011-12

County	Student Count	County	Student Count	County	Student Count
Jefferson	759	Lane	127	Tillamook	28
Umatilla	376	Clackamas	108	Columbia	22
Marion	296	Washington	87	Josephine	21
Lincoln	294	Deschutes	85	Harney	21
Yamhill	223	Polk	77	Coos	20
Multnomah	183	Linn	68	Benton	19
Klamath	160	Jackson	41	Malheur	11
Douglas	135	Wasco	29	Curry	9

Demographic Profile of Oregon's Tribal Member Students

Figure 2. ODE race and ethnicity reporting for Oregon Tribe Enrolled students and all non-tribe-enrolled students with at least one ethnicity reported as American Indian or Alaskan Native, SY 2011-12



Oregon tribe-enrolled students have different demographic characteristics than the population of students identified in ODE's data as American Indian or Alaskan Native. Figure 2 shows a comparison of reported race and ethnicity characteristics for each group.

Of Oregon tribe-enrolled students with K-12 enrollment in 2011-12, 74 percent are reported as AI/AN and no other race or ethnicity. This group makes up 23 percent of the 10,131 students reporting as only American Indian or Alaskan Native. An additional 3 percent report as being both AI/AN and Hispanic, while 15 percent report as being both AI/AN and at least one other race/ethnicity that is not Hispanic. The remaining 8 percent of Oregon tribe-enrolled students do not report as being American Indian or Alaskan Native.

Demographic Profile of Oregon Tribal Students - Continued

An analysis of statewide K-12 student enrollment data for the 2011-12 school year indicates that differing shares of Oregon tribe-enrolled students and other Oregon students have free- or reduced-price lunch (FRL) and special education status, but those differences vary in size. (Figure 3).

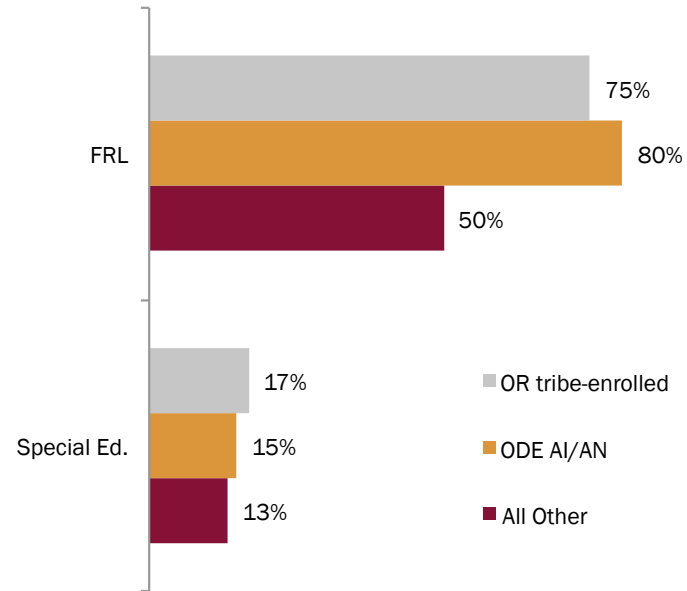
Economic Disadvantage

FRL eligibility serves as a proxy for socioeconomic status, indicating student household income of less than 185 percent of the federal poverty level. Oregon tribe-enrolled students are 50 percent more likely than All Other students to be eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch. ODE AI/AN students are slightly more likely to be eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch than are Oregon tribe-enrolled students.

Special Education Enrollment

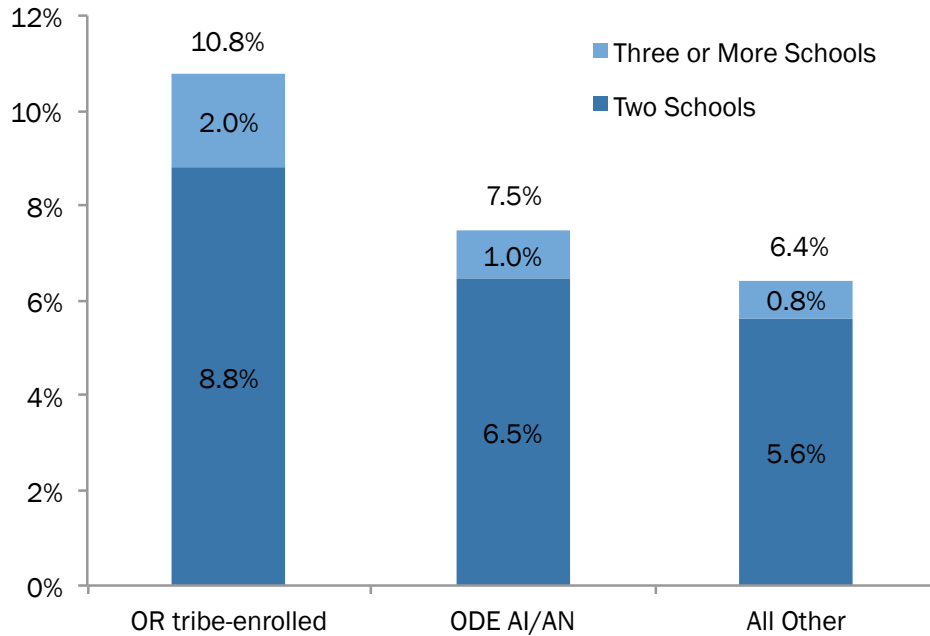
Oregon tribe-enrolled students are slightly more likely to receive special education services compared to ODE AI/AN students and All Other students.

Figure 3. Free- or reduced-price lunch status and special education status of Oregon tribe-enrolled, ODE AI/AN, and All Other students, SY 2011-12



Other Factors Affecting Student: Mobility

Figure 4: Share of Oregon tribe-enrolled, ODE AI/AN, and All Other students attending two schools and three or more schools within a school year, SY 2011-12

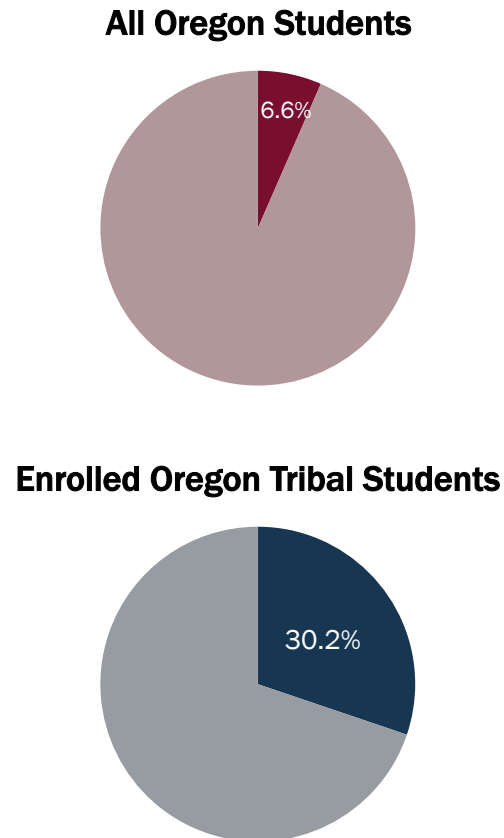


Moving to a new home and changing schools can create difficult and disruptive transitions for children. Adjusting to these changes and building new relationships with teachers and peers can take an academic as well as a social and emotional toll. This problem is mitigated in normal transition years, between elementary, middle, and high school, by orientation programs and extra support for incoming students.

Figure 4 shows a comparison of the proportion of students attending more than one school within the school year. Oregon tribe-enrolled students changed schools, across all grade levels, at a slightly higher rate—10.8 percent—than both ODE AI/AN and All Other students. Oregon tribe-enrolled students were more than twice as likely as their ODE AI/AN and All Other student peers to have attended more than two schools within the 2011-12 school year.

Enrollment in Struggling Schools: Priority, Focus, and Model Title I Schools

Figure 5. Share of Oregon tribe-enrolled students and all students in Oregon attending a Priority or Focus Title 1 School, SY 2011-12



ODE's Priority and Focus schools consist of high-poverty, Title 1 schools identified as needing additional support to close the achievement gap and address achievement levels of historically underserved subgroups. Priority schools are those ranked in the bottom 5 percent and Focus Schools are those ranked in the bottom 15 percent of Title 1 schools, based on Oregon's rating formula. The current formula considers student achievement, growth, subgroup growth, and, for high schools, graduation and subgroup graduation rates for all schools in Oregon, although only Title 1 schools are eligible for inclusion in the program.

The purpose of this identification is to formalize a list of schools to be the focus of ODE's, individual districts', and other state agencies' efforts to diagnose and develop a Comprehensive Achievement Plan (CAP) to address plans for improvement and direct support for each school.

Figure 5 displays the share of Oregon tribe-enrolled students who attended Priority and Focus schools listed on the 2013-14 Priority and Focus schools lists⁴ compared to the share of all Oregon students enrolled in these schools. Nearly a third of Oregon tribe-enrolled students were enrolled in these schools during the 2011-12 school year. In the same year, 6.6 percent of all students across the state enrolled in Priority or Focus schools.

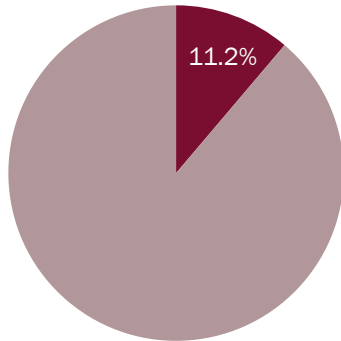
High poverty, Title 1 schools which are rated in the top 5 percent of schools in the state, based on the rating formula, are designated as Model Schools. These schools are models of successful student outcomes. Less than half of one percent (0.4 percent) of Tribal members were enrolled in one of these schools, while 1.6 percent of all students in the state attended one of these schools.

Teacher Experience

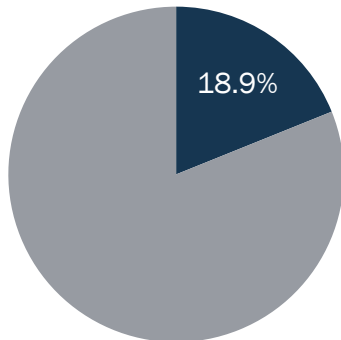
⁴ Oregon Department of Education. <http://www.ode.state.or.us/data/reportcard/docs/priority-focus-model-schools---2013-14.pdf>; Retrieved Dec 10, 2013.

Figure 6. Probability that an Oregon tribe-enrolled student and average student in Oregon is taught by a novice teacher (teacher with less than three years teaching experience) weighted by number of students, SY 2011-12

All Oregon Students



Enrolled Oregon Tribal Students



Research strongly suggests that whether a teacher is a “novice” is more important to student achievement than is total teaching experience. This report defines a novice teacher as one with less than three years experience, although the general conclusions are based on both higher and lower experience thresholds. The results vary by grade level and district.

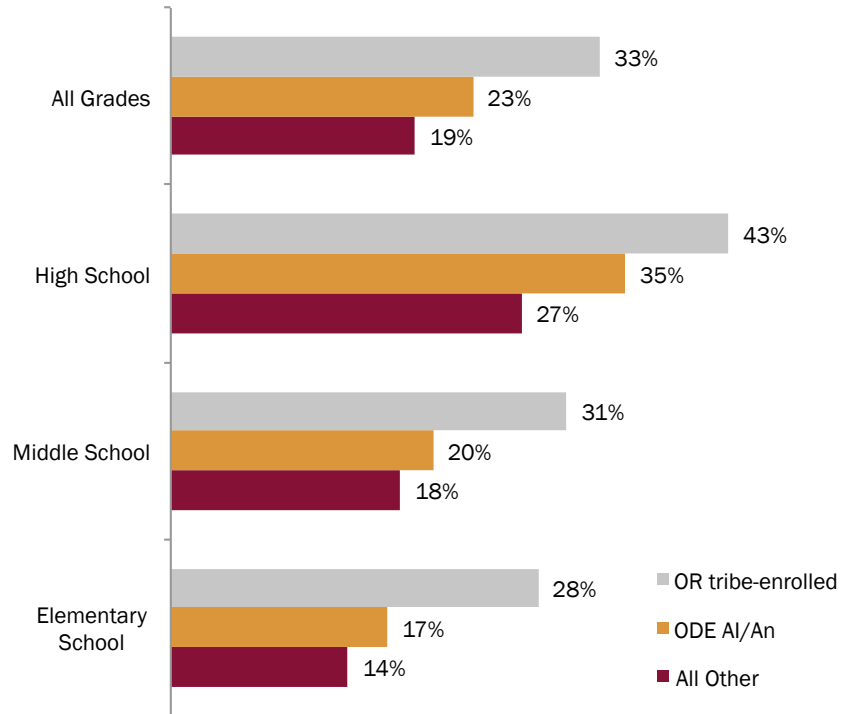
Across all grades, Oregon tribe-enrolled students were slightly – 7.7 percent – more likely to have a novice teacher in the 2011-12 school year than all other students across the state.

Non-Academic Indicators: Chronic Absenteeism

A key indicator of a student’s likelihood of performing well and graduating from high school on time is the amount of time spent in the classroom. Traditionally, the question of how much time a student spends in the classroom has been addressed by looking at the average daily attendance for a school. This statistic captures attendance for all students, regardless of the reason for the absence. Chronic absenteeism—a measurement of the number of students missing more than 10 percent of school days in a year—provides a look at those individual students who are missing a significant number of school days.

In Figure 7, the share of students, by grade level, who were chronically absent in the 2011-12 school year are shown. Oregon tribe-enrolled students in elementary school were chronically absent at twice the rate of All Other students. This gap is also apparent in other grade levels. Across all other school levels, a much greater share of Oregon tribe-enrolled students were chronically absent than ODE AI/AN and All Other students.

Figure 7. Share of students who are chronically absent (missing more than 10 percent of school days), by school level, SY 2011-12



Non-Academic Indicators: Discipline

Figure 8. Percent of students with at least one suspension, by school level, SY 2011-12

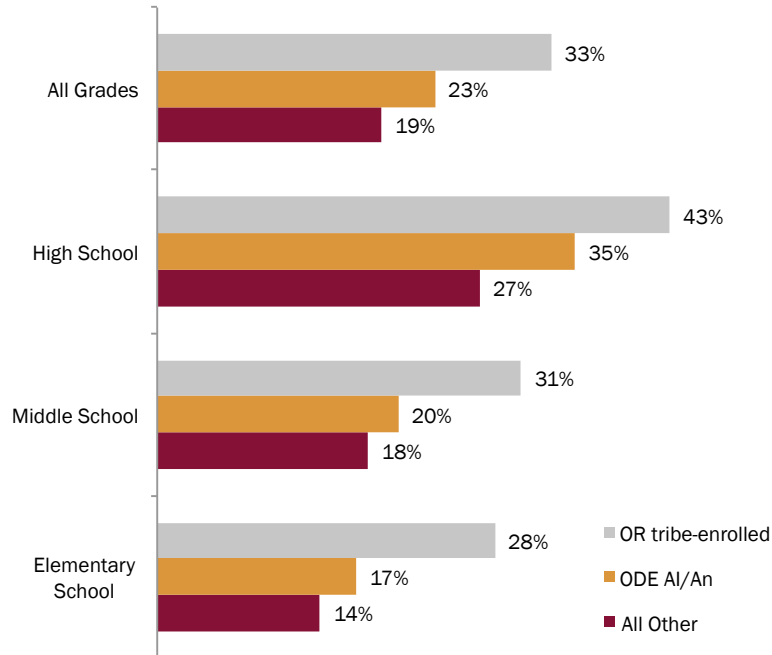


Table 2. Average records per student with at least one suspension record, by school level, SY 2011-12

	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	Total
OR tribe-enrolled	1.7	2.5	2.3	2.3
ODE AI/AN	1.7	2.3	1.9	2.0
All Other	1.8	2.3	1.9	2.0

Another indicator of student performance in the classroom is student behavior. Student disruptions in the classroom can limit the learning of the whole group by making it difficult for the instructor to focus on teaching and learning activities. Student behavior can also be an indicator of broader issues, such as weak engagement with the learning process.

Figure 8 shows the share of students with at least one suspension in the 2011-12 school year. Across all school levels, a greater share of Oregon tribe-enrolled students received suspensions. In middle school, where suspension rates are highest for all groups, Oregon tribe-enrolled students were 13 percentage points more likely to have a suspension record than All Other students.

Table 2 summarizes the average number of suspension records for the students with suspension records shown in Figure 8. In middle school, where a greater share of Oregon tribe-enrolled students had suspension records, these students also had a higher number of average suspension incidences within the year. The number of incidences for Oregon tribe-enrolled students was similar in the elementary school level and higher in high school level, compared to both ODE AI/AN students and All Other students in the state.

Achievement: Meeting the Benchmark

Figure 9. Share of Oregon students meeting or exceeding benchmarks for math, SY 2011-12

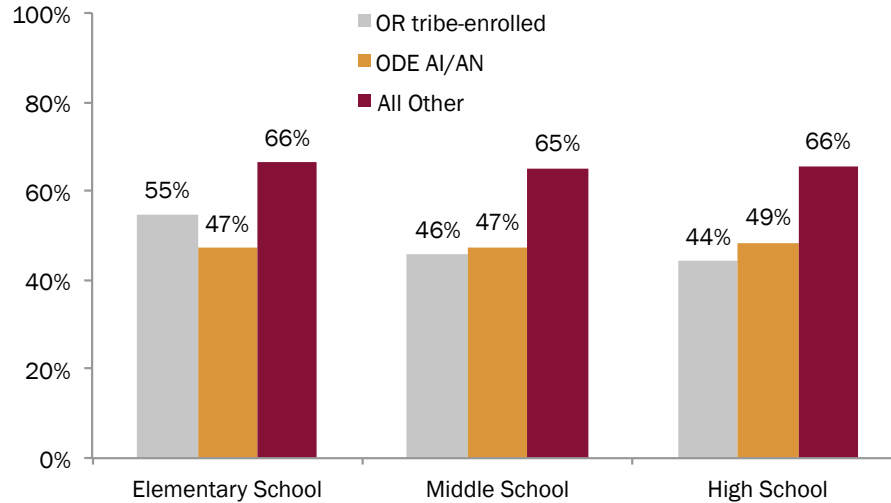
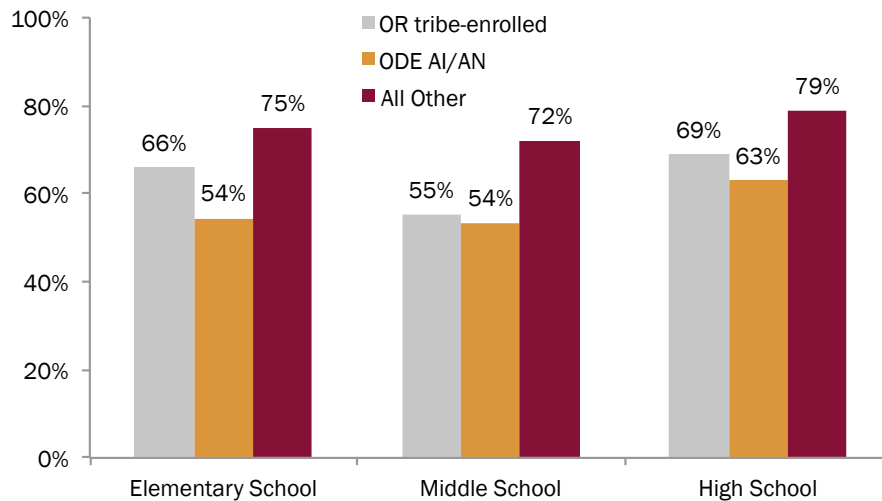


Figure 10. Share of Oregon students meeting or exceeding benchmarks for reading, SY 2011-12



Figures 9 and 10 display the percentage of Oregon tribe-enrolled, ODE AI/AN students, and All Other students at each school level who meet or exceed the state benchmarks for the Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS) achievement tests for mathematics and reading. Benchmarks relate to student RIT scores, a standardized measure of academic improvement, on the OAKS test.

Oregon tribe-enrolled students performed similarly to ODE AI/AN students at all school levels in both the math and reading OAKS tests. Meet or exceed rates for both groups are consistently lagging behind All Other students. The largest gap in the number of students meeting the benchmark is in mathematics, where the share of Oregon tribe-enrolled students in high school meeting or exceeding the benchmark is 22 percentage points below that of All Other students.

Achievement by Region

Figures 11 and 12 take a different look at student achievement by looking at performance by region. Schools were characterized as being in Rural, Town, Suburb, or City communities based on U.S. Census definitions of each region. Student performance on the OAKS achievement test typically does vary significantly across regions. But when this regional overlay was applied to the three analysis groups—Oregon tribe-enrolled, ODE AI/AN, and All Other students—differences emerged. Oregon tribe-enrolled students in rural areas met or exceeded the OAKS benchmark at lower rates than their Oregon tribe-enrolled peers in other regions. The largest gaps exist between Oregon tribe-enrolled students living in rural versus suburban regions: 13 percentage points for math and 25 percentage points for reading. ODE AI/AN and All Other students have smaller and different achievement gaps across regions; meet and exceed rates for these groups vary by eight percentage points or less by student location.

Figure 11. Share of Oregon tribe-enrolled, ODE AI/AN, and All Other students meeting or exceeding the OAKS math benchmark, by region, SY 2011-12

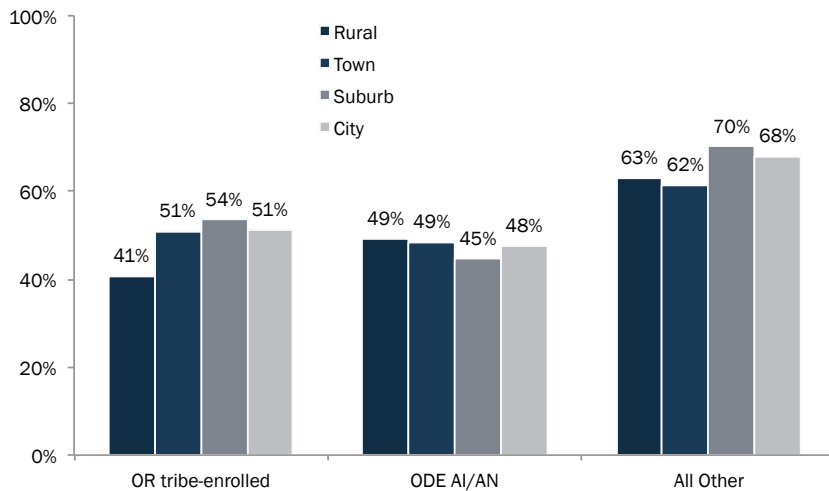
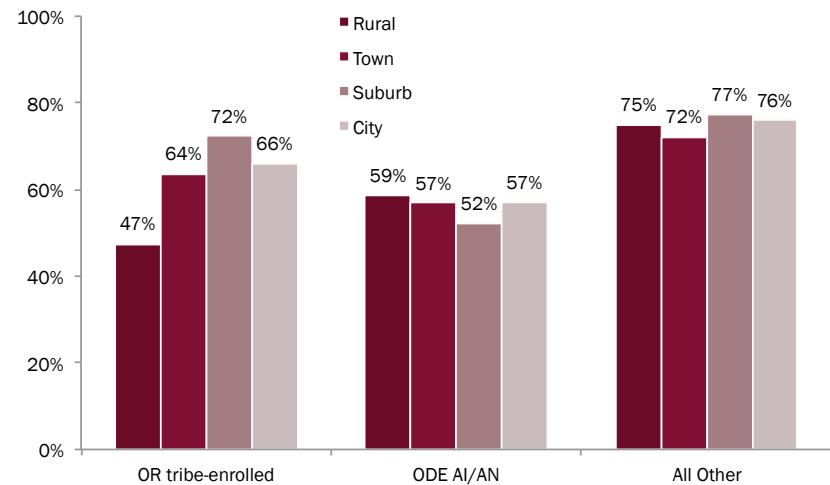


Figure 12. Share of Oregon tribe-enrolled, ODE AI/AN, and All Other students meeting or exceeding the OAKS reading benchmark, by region, SY 2011-12



Achievement: Average Assessment Score

Another way to assess how Oregon tribe-enrolled students are performing compared to their peers is to compare their average RIT scores to those of other student groups. This analysis tells a slightly different story than comparing the share of students meeting annual benchmark standards. Across all grades and years, Oregon tribe-enrolled and ODE AI/AN students consistently fall between 4 and 6 points behind All Other students in Oregon. This gap is an indicator that Oregon tribe-enrolled students are entering 3rd grade behind their peers and aren't able to make up the difference. Table 3 shows this gap, with and without statistical controls, in 3rd through 8th grade and in high school.

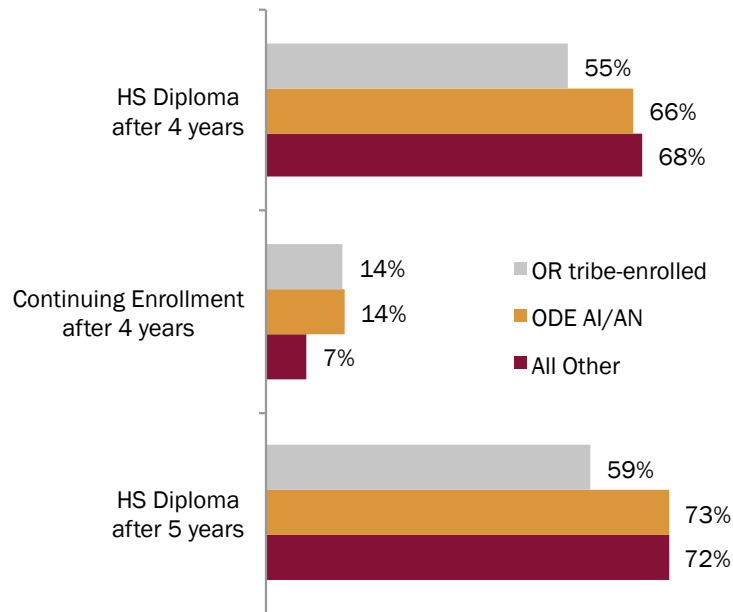
Statistical controls for age, gender, socioeconomic status, special education and Talented and Gifted (TAG) designation, and limited English proficiency were applied for each year, with similar results. When these factors are considered, Oregon tribe-enrolled students fell further behind All Other students than did ODE AI/AN students.

Table 3. Average RIT score differences between Oregon tribe-enrolled and All Other students, and ODE AI/AN students and All Other students, SY 2011-12

	School Grade or Level						
Math RIT Score Average Differences							
	3	4	5	6	7	8	High School
OR tribe-enrolled	-4.3	-4.7	-5.0	-5.4	-4.8	-5.8	-4.2
ODE AI/AN	-4.8	-4.6	-4.2	-4.6	-4.3	-4.8	-3.6
With Statistical Controls							
	3	4	5	6	7	8	High School
OR tribe-enrolled	-2.2	-2.4	-2.9	-3.1	-2.9	-3.5	-2.5
ODE AI/AN	-1.5	-1.3	-1.1	-1.1	-1.3	-1.5	-1.3
Reading RIT Score Average Difference							
	3	4	5	6	7	8	High School
OR tribe-enrolled	-5.1	-4.9	-5.0	-4.9	-5.4	-4.7	-3.6
ODE AI/AN	-5.8	-5.3	-4.8	-4.5	-4.7	-4.0	-3.3
With Statistical Controls							
	3	4	5	6	7	8	High School
OR tribe-enrolled	-2.4	-2.2	-2.8	-2.8	-3.3	-2.9	-2.2
ODE AI/AN	-1.2	-1.0	-1.0	-0.8	-0.9	-0.9	-1.1

Graduation Rates: 2007-08 9th Grader Graduation

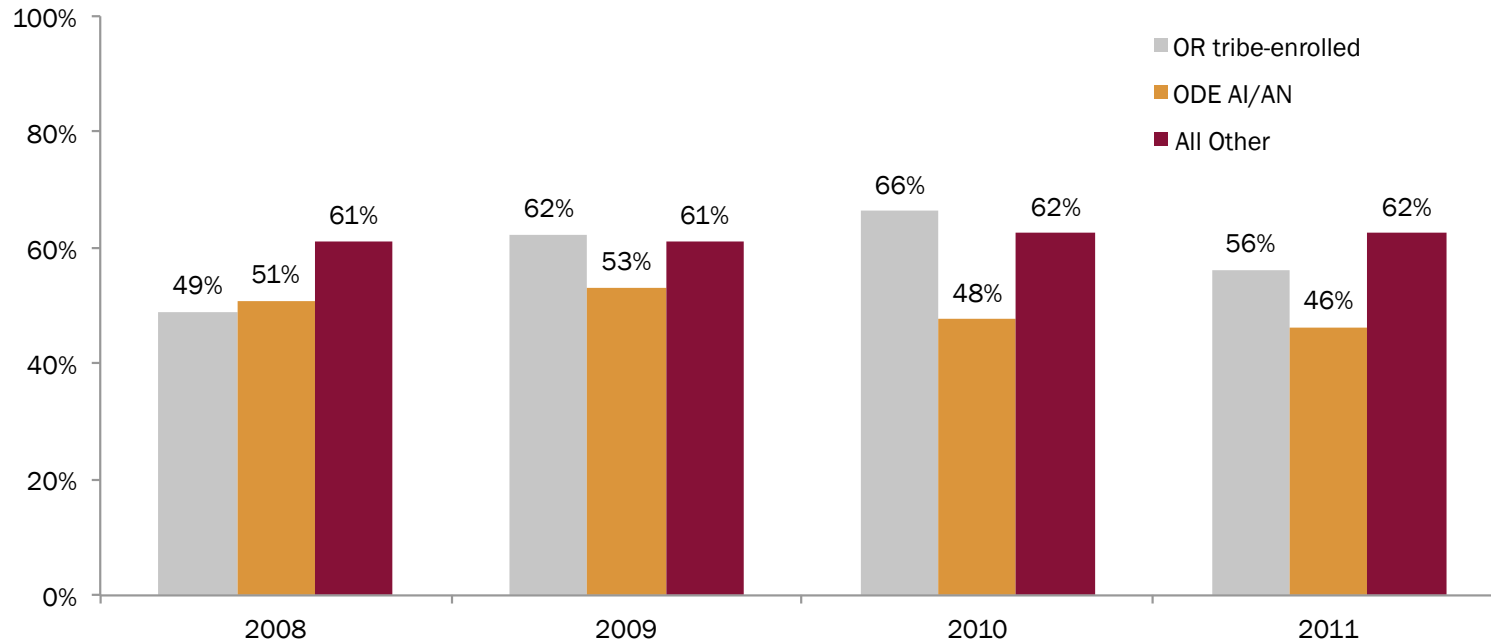
Figure 13. Share of students obtaining a high school diploma within four and five years, and continued enrollment in high school after four years, 2007-08 9th graders



One of the key indicators of success within the K-12 education system is successful completion of high school. Traditional high school diplomas are the standard measurement of successful completion. Figure 13 summarizes the four- and five-year outcomes of students who entered 9th grade at the beginning of the 2007-08 school year. Fifty-five percent of Oregon tribe-enrolled students from this cohort graduated with a traditional diploma on time during the 2010-11 school year, with an additional 4 percent earning a diploma in 2012 with up to an additional year of school. Both ODE AI/AN students and All Other students in the state had graduation rates that were more than 10 percentage points higher than those for Oregon tribe-enrolled students. This continued to be the case with a fifth year of high school. Although a greater share of Oregon tribe-enrolled students not obtaining a traditional degree in four years attempted an additional year (compared with All Other students), less than a third of these students obtained a traditional high school diploma after an additional year of school.

Postsecondary Education Enrollment

Figure 14. Postsecondary education enrollment within 16 months of high school graduation, by high school graduation year, 2008-2011



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of ODE data. Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs students ages 21 to 24 were not available and therefore have been omitted from this analysis.

A second, key picture into the outcomes of students is their enrollment and completion of postsecondary education programs. Figure 14 provides a picture of postsecondary enrollment rates within 16 months of graduation, for Oregon students who received a high school diploma. Generally, Oregon tribe-enrolled students who complete high school are enrolling in postsecondary programs at similar rates to All Other students in the state. ODE AI/AN students are enrolling in college at much lower rates than Oregon tribe-enrolled students. This may be due to the direct support provided by local tribes to their members, which in some cases includes direct scholarships and college and career counseling and support services.