



WestEd
Western Educational
Equity Assistance Center

Increasing Attendance and Engagement for American Indian and Alaska Native Students

September 12, 2023



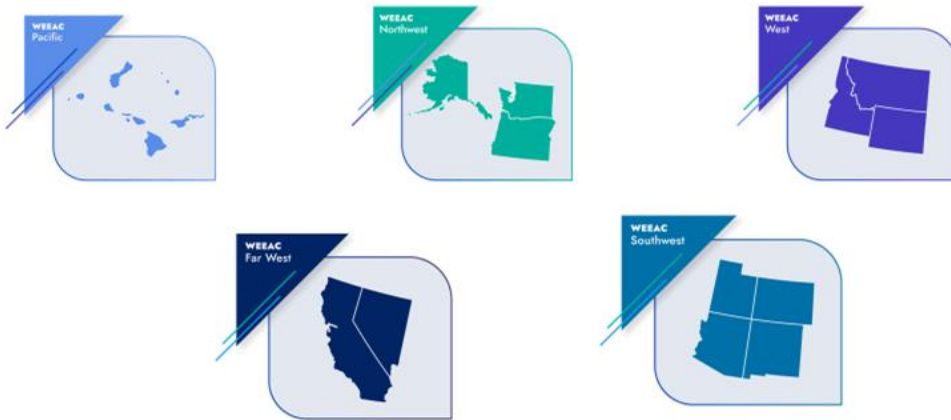
Technical Assistance

Professional Learning

- By request: school boards, governmental agencies, etc.
- Through equity-centered capacity-building to better serve students who have experienced ongoing inequities in our educational system because of their race, national origin, sex, or religion



WEEAC Sub-Regions



Pacific

American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and Hawai'i

Northwest

Alaska, Oregon, and Washington

West

Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming

Far West

California and Nevada

Southwest

Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah

Six-Part Webinar Series



WestEd
Western Educational
Equity Assistance Center

- [Session 1](#) – Data to Identify Patterns of Inequity Friday, February 17
- [Session 2](#) – Organizing a District Team to Address Chronic Absenteeism Monday, February 27
- [Session 3](#) – Data-Driven School Attendance Teams Monday, April 3
- **[Session 4](#) – Increasing Attendance and Engagement for American Indian and Alaska Native Students** **Tuesday, September 12**
- [Session 5](#) – Increasing Attendance and Engagement for Black/African American Students Wednesday, October 11
- [Session 6](#) – Increasing Attendance and Engagement for English Learners Wednesday, December 6

Learning Goals for Session 4



Participants will

- Identify the key functions of a school team that addresses attendance
- Learn about assets, barriers, and strategies that affect student attendance
- Examine processes for incorporating student and family perspectives in identifying barriers and developing solutions

Audience Poll: Getting to Know You



What type of organization do you represent?

- State Education Agency (SEA)
- Tribal Government
- District
- School
- Community Organization
- Other

Please describe in the chat box.

Welcome!



Hedy Chang
Executive Director
Attendance Works



Judy Flores
Superintendent of Schools
Shasta County Office of Education



Dr. Mona Halcomb
Native American Student Success Program Supervisor
Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

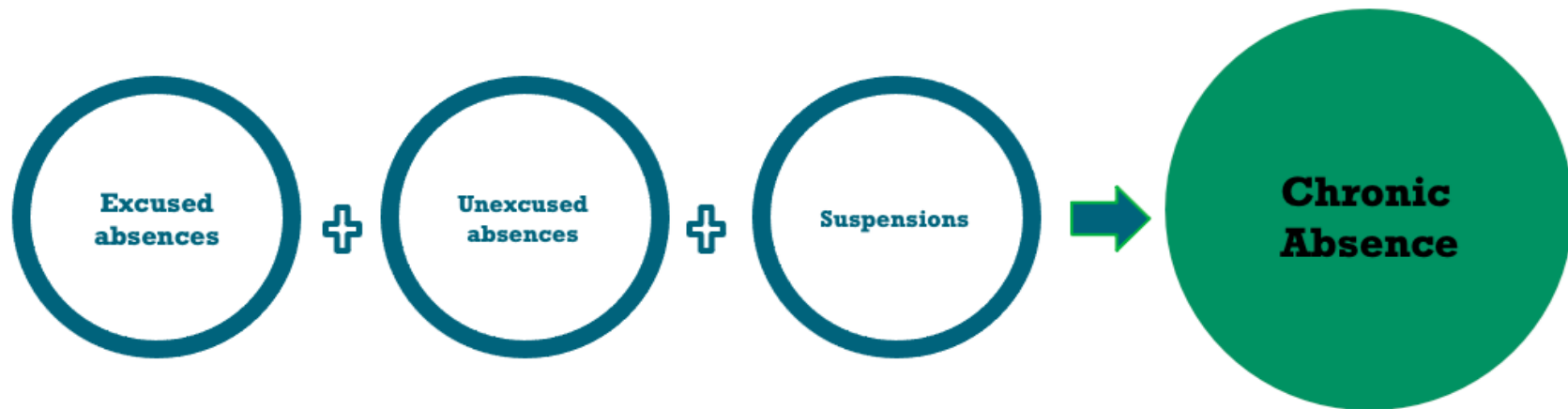
Review of Chronic Absence





What is Chronic Absence?

Chronic absence is missing so much school for any reason that a student is academically at risk. Chronic absence is defined as missing 10 percent or more of school for any reason.



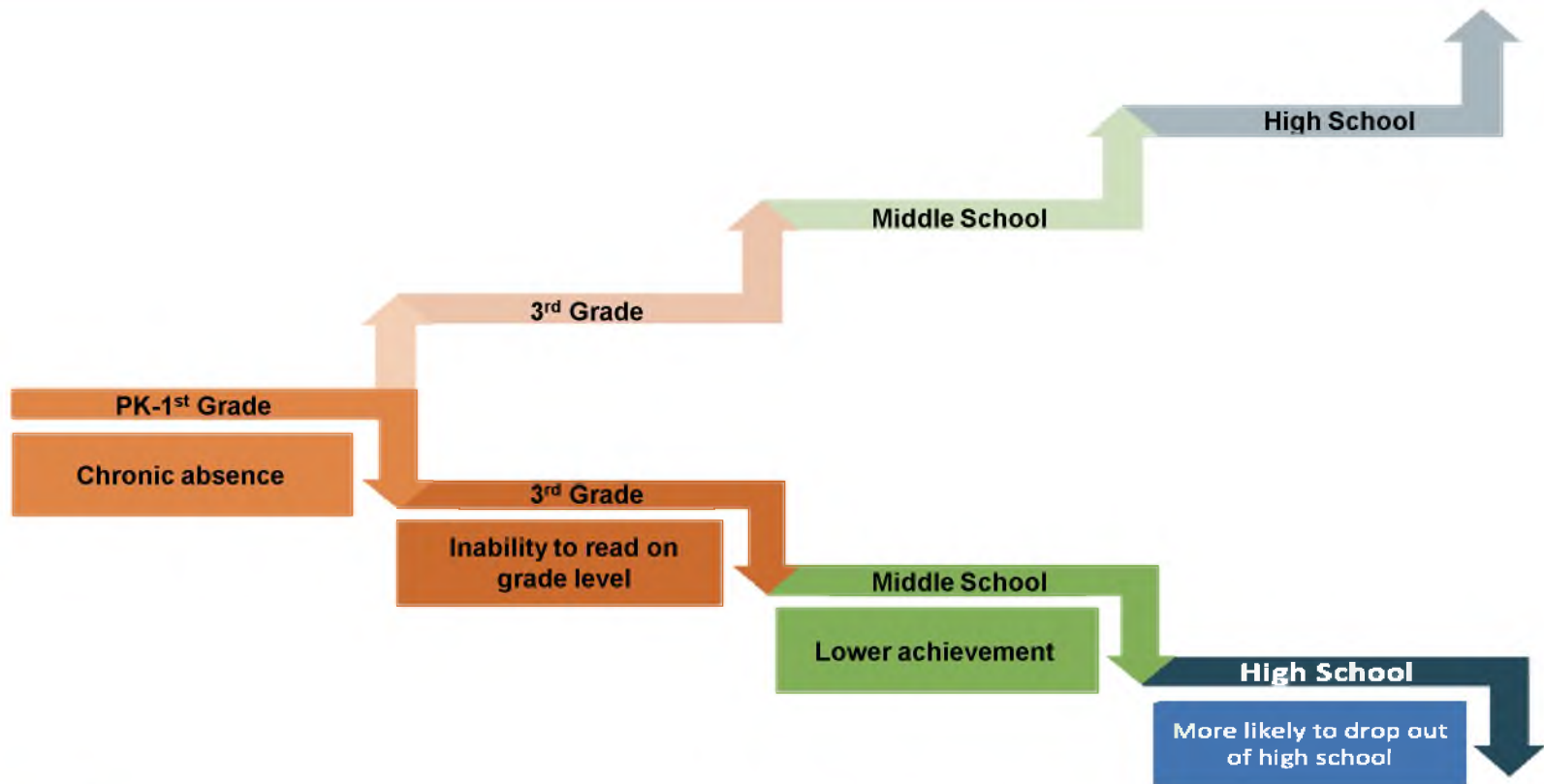
Chronic absence is different from truancy (unexcused absences only) or average daily attendance (how many students show up to school each day).



Chronic Absence and Equity

Chronic absence reflects and exacerbates existing inequities.

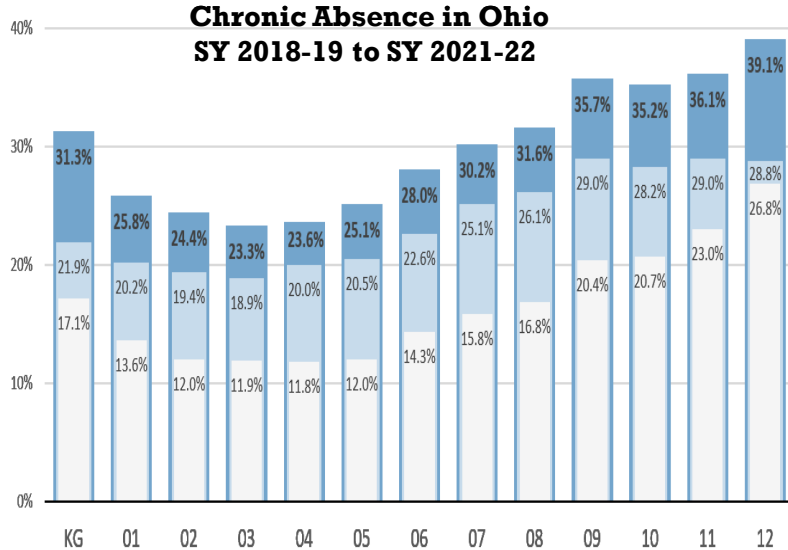
Improving Attendance Matters



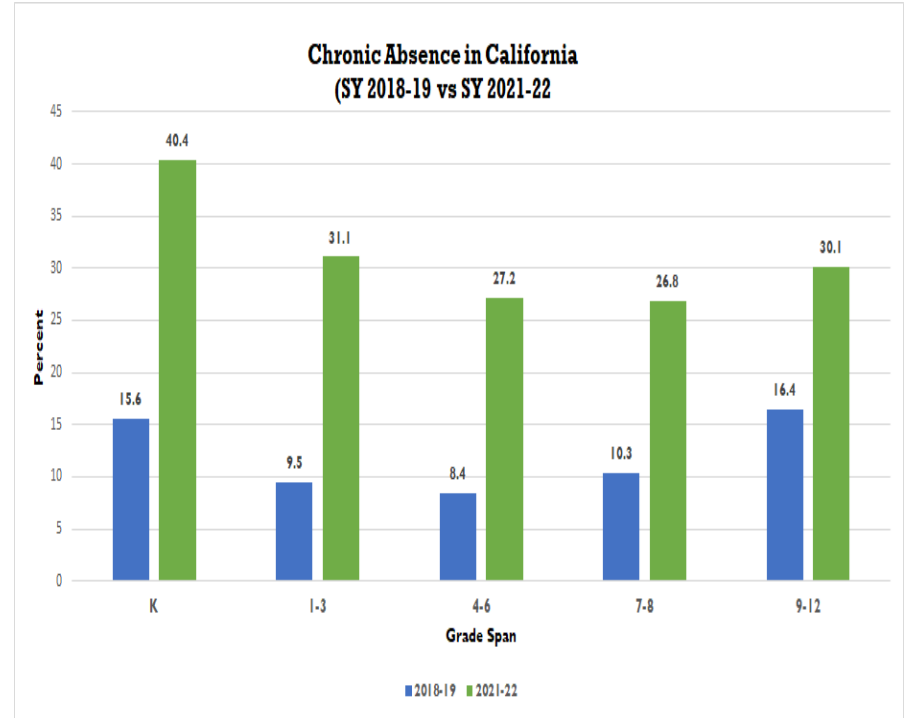
Our Nation Faces an Attendance Crisis

- **Pre-pandemic: 8 million (1 out of 6) students were chronically absent** (*missing 10% or more of school for any reason: excused, unexcused, suspension*).
- **Chronic absence is higher than ever.** By the end of School Year (SY) 2021–22, chronic absence nearly doubled and affected more than 1 out of 4 students. Early data from districts and states for 2022–23 data show rates remain high.
- **Economically disadvantaged** students and families, as well as **Native American, Black, Latine/Hispanic** and **Pacific Islander** students are **disproportionately affected**.
- **Chronic absenteeism is higher than ever, especially in early elementary and all throughout high school.**

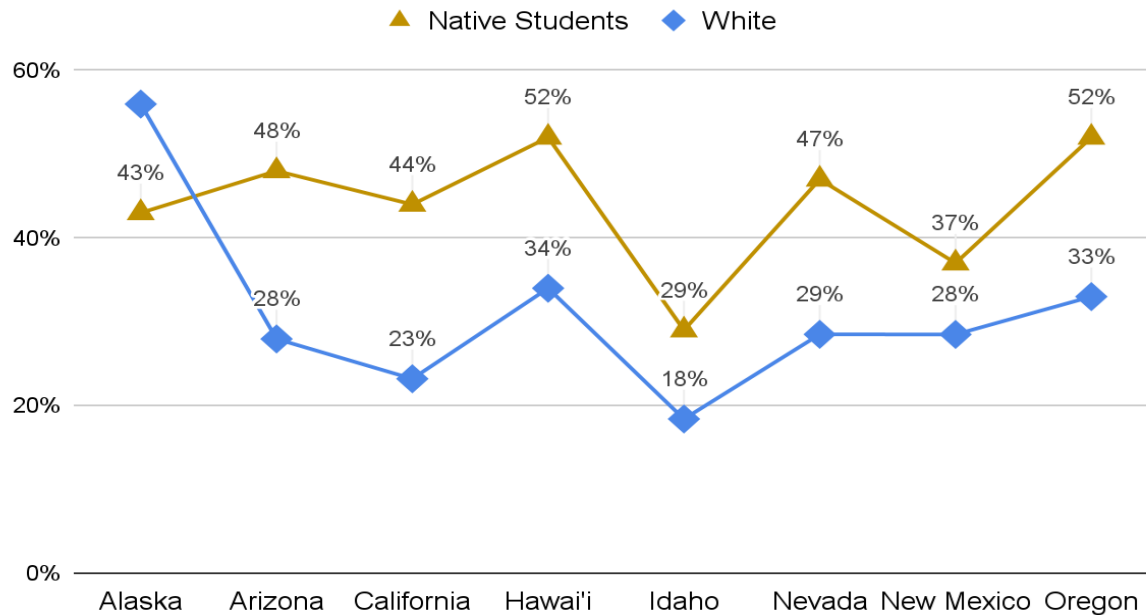
Alarming Increases Seen in Kindergarten Chronic Absence



2018-2019 2020-2021 2021-2022



Western States Chronic Absence 2021–22 Native Students Versus White



Source: Department of Education for AL, AZ, CA, HI, ID, NV, NM, and OR (2021–22)

Native Student Chronic Absence Rates

- Alaska 43%
- Arizona 48%
- California 44%
- Hawai'i* 52%
- Idaho 29%
- Nevada 47%
- New Mexico 37%
- Oregon 52%

* Hawai'i includes *only* Native Hawaiian students

Truancy Versus Chronic Absence

Truancy

- ▲ Counts **ONLY** unexcused absences
- ▲ Emphasizes individual compliance with school rules
- ▲ Uses legal—typically more blaming and punitive—solutions

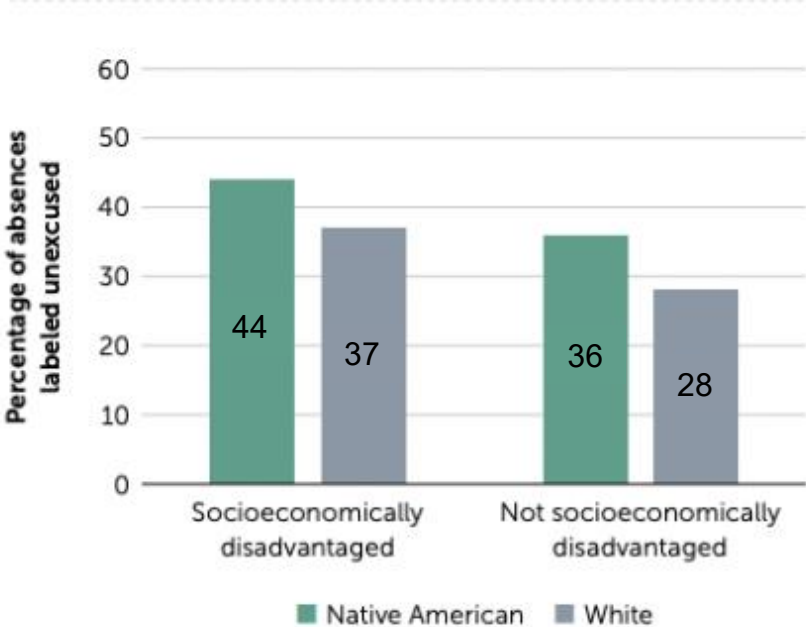


Chronic Absence

- Counts **ALL** absences (*excused, unexcused, and suspensions*)
- Emphasizes impact of missed days and benefits of being present
- Uses preventative, problem-solving, trauma-sensitive strategies
- Cultivates family and student engagement

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/whats-the-difference-between-chronic-absence-and-truancy/>

Unexcused absences are much higher among socioeconomically disadvantaged students and from communities of color.



Percent of all student unexcused absences in regular K–12 California schools, by year and student socioeconomic disadvantage.

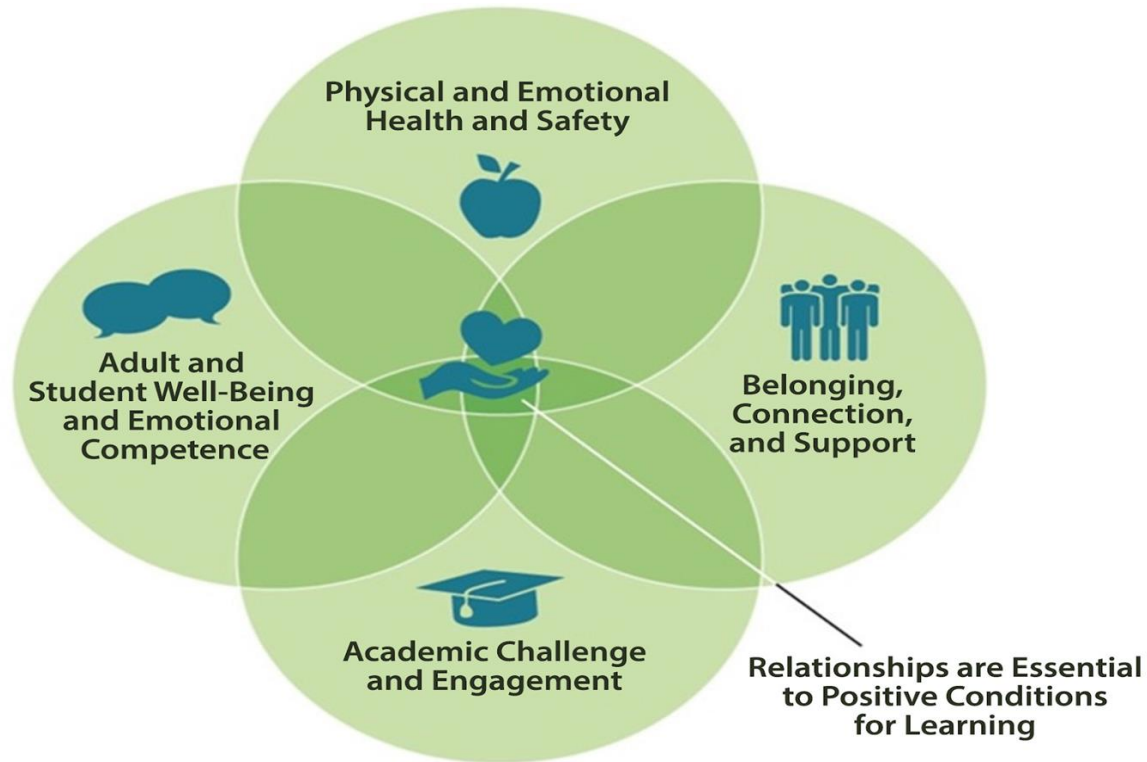
Large disparities in unexcused absenteeism persisted within each socioeconomic stratum in SY 2021–22 for Black, Pacific Islander, **American Indian**, and Hispanic students compared to White students.

McNeely, C., Chang, H., & Gee, K. (2023, March). Disparities in Unexcused Absences Across California Schools. [Report]. Policy Analysis for California Education

How the “Unexcused” Label Can Affect the Response

Response to “Excused”	Response to “Unexcused”
✓ Help with homework	✗ Denial of help or no credit for homework
✓ Make-up exams	✗ No make-up exams
✓ Home tutoring provided	✗ Denial of class credit
	✗ Removal from extracurricular activities
	✗ Send notices of truancy
	<i>* If unexcused absences accumulate despite earlier outreach from schools and districts, courts can do the following:</i>
	✗ Fine students and caregivers
	✗ Require a community service program or parenting program
	✗ Charge caregivers with a misdemeanor

Rather than taking a punitive approach, we must understand that continued high levels of chronic absence reflect the missing opportunities of positive learning conditions for too many students.

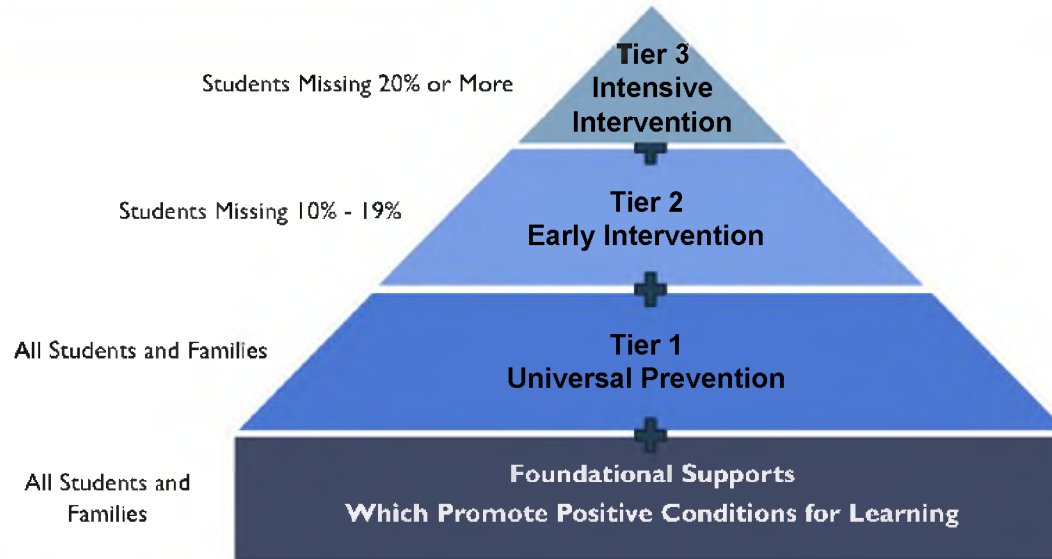


www.attendanceworks.org



We Must Redouble Our Investments in a Multi-Tiered System of Supports Approach

Working across silos is essential!



<https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/>

www.attendanceworks.org

We must tailor our approaches to address underlying challenges

Barriers

- Chronic and acute illness
- Family responsibilities or home situation
- Trauma
- Poor transportation
- Housing and food insecurity
- Inequitable access to needed services
- System involvement
- Lack of predictable schedules for learning
- Lack of access to tech
- Community violence

Aversion

- Struggling academically and/or behaviorally
- Unwelcoming school climate
- Social and peer challenges
- Anxiety
- Biased disciplinary and suspension practices
- Undiagnosed disability and/or disability accommodations
- Caregivers had negative educational experiences

Disengagement

- Lack of challenging, culturally responsive instruction
- Bored
- No meaningful relationships to the adults in the school (especially given staff shortages)
- Lack of enrichment opportunities
- Lack of academic and behavioral support
- Failure to earn credits
- Student needs to work, earning money conflicts with being in high school

Misconceptions

- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused
- Missing 2 days per month doesn't affect learning
- School loses track and underestimates TOTAL absences
- Assume students must stay home for any symptom of illness
- Attendance only matters in the older grades
- Suspensions don't count as an absence

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/root-causes/>



We Must Tap Into the Expertise of Students and Families

- ❖ Students have *untapped* expertise and knowledge that can bring renewed relevance and authenticity.
- ❖ Addressing the challenges students experience requires considering their *specific* realities.
- ❖ Understanding *when* many students and families experience similar challenges allows for scalable solutions.
- ❖ Ensuring that the engagement strategies you create are *inclusive* of students' and families' cultural norms.



Barriers to Attendance

Share in the chat:

What are the major barriers of attendance for Native students in your community?

What community strengths can we draw upon to re-engage Native students in schools?



Welcome!



Judy Flores
Superintendent of Schools
Shasta County Office of Education



Dr. Mona Halcomb
Native American Student Success Program Supervisor
Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

What are the most successful strategies you experience for improving attendance among Native students?

How do state departments of education support that work?



Successful Strategies to Increase Attendance

- Be engaged in the community
- Monitor your communication style and tone
- Be welcoming—greet everyone, everyday
- Make sure families and students know who to contact



Building Bridges

- Be flexible with your time, “When can families connect?”
- Create ongoing feedback loops
- Be interested in American Indian/Alaska Native priorities
- Provide space in committees—look for gaps
- Know what resources you have or need



Positive Experiences/Reasons for Engagement:

“there's not too much drama or drama often. Uh, and the small class sizes help the teachers really focus in on people who need help. I also enjoy the shorter class periods.” – Student

“Yeah, we have a song and dance every Monday in the morning, and that's actually I really love that.” – Student

“Definitely that there's more of an open-door kind of policy in a way. it's more accepting of everyone and anyone versus at my old school where it was always like “oh you're from this area so that means you're poor” and stuff like that. To be fair, I was but yeah. And it was just like a lot of conflict there, like they bully you for anything you do. Here it's more like you get teased once in awhile but that's like it's more of a joking piece” – Student

“Oh I dropped out my sophomore year to hanging out with the wrong crowd. I told my mom I would come back to school. That's why I'm here” – Student

“[My friends] make me want to come to school, because last year I mainly had senior friends like I came to school because like they would pick me up and like make me come. But it was also fun because they were cool people but after they graduated like that first month of school I just felt like “I got... I'm all alone, I got to make new friends. And I made new friends and I like school is like somewhere I want to come. I want to be” - Student

Reasons for disengagement:

“The communication is the main one. That's just the big thing. [My uncles] don't like it because yeah, they don't get a lot of input on anything really.” – Student

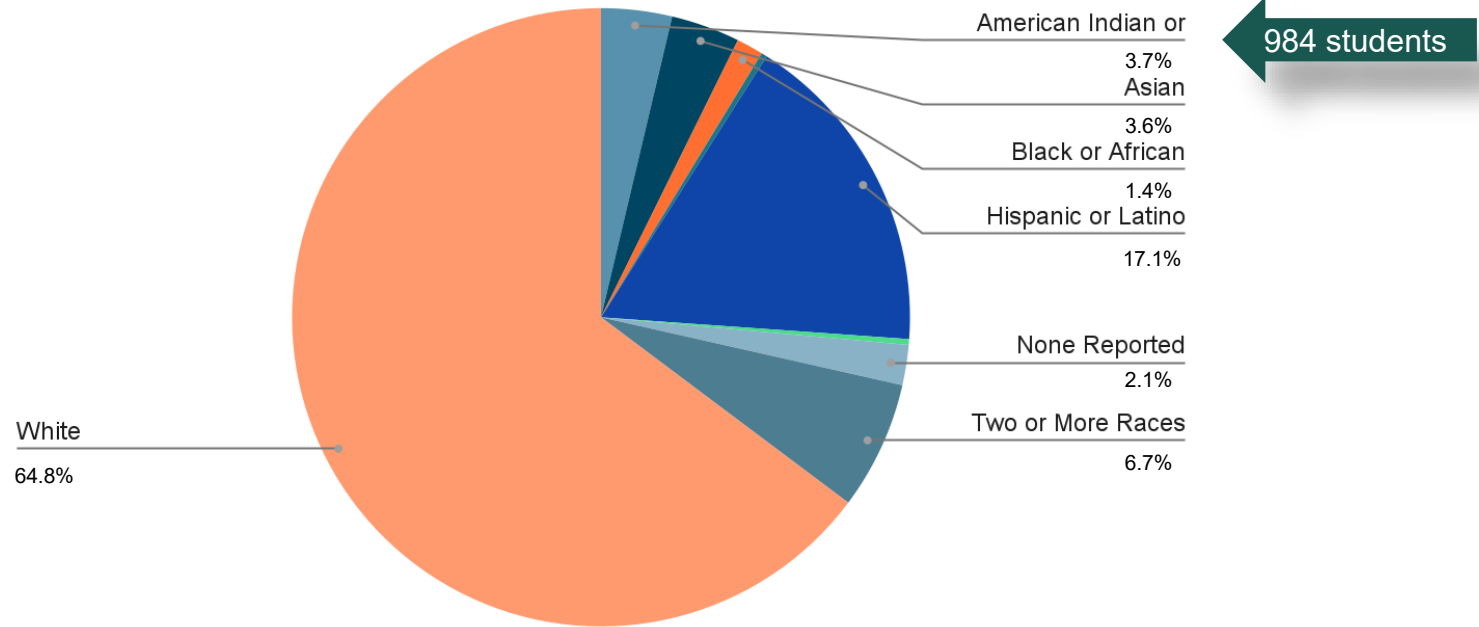
“I mean, my uncle, he kind of. I know he wants to get on me, ask about going to school but he just doesn't. Yeah. And I mean most of the time it's - yeah, I don't know. It's just I get real bored here and I tell I tell him like I don't want to go to school. Today I'm gonna be doing the same thing I'm doing at home. And I could do most of my work from school at home, so that's kind of that's. That's also kind of why I. Like staying home. I just get bored here. I get antsy.” – Student

Tell us about your county demographics. What strategies for improving attendance and engagement of Native students are successfully implemented?

What is your role as the head of your County Office of Education in supporting their implementation?

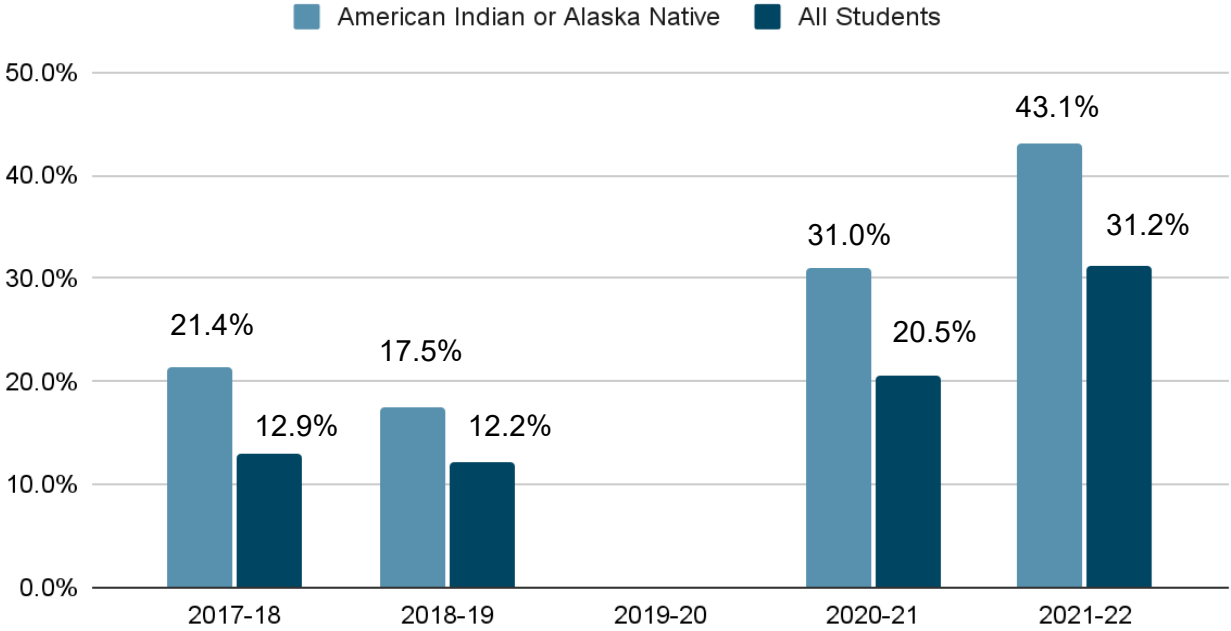


Shasta County Demographics



54–55% receive free and reduced-price lunches

Chronic Absenteeism Data in Shasta County



(in person from August 2020)



districts



charters



students

Tribes in Shasta County

Pit River Tribe

11 bands

Federally recognized

Wintu Tribe of Northern California

9 bands

Seeking federal recognition



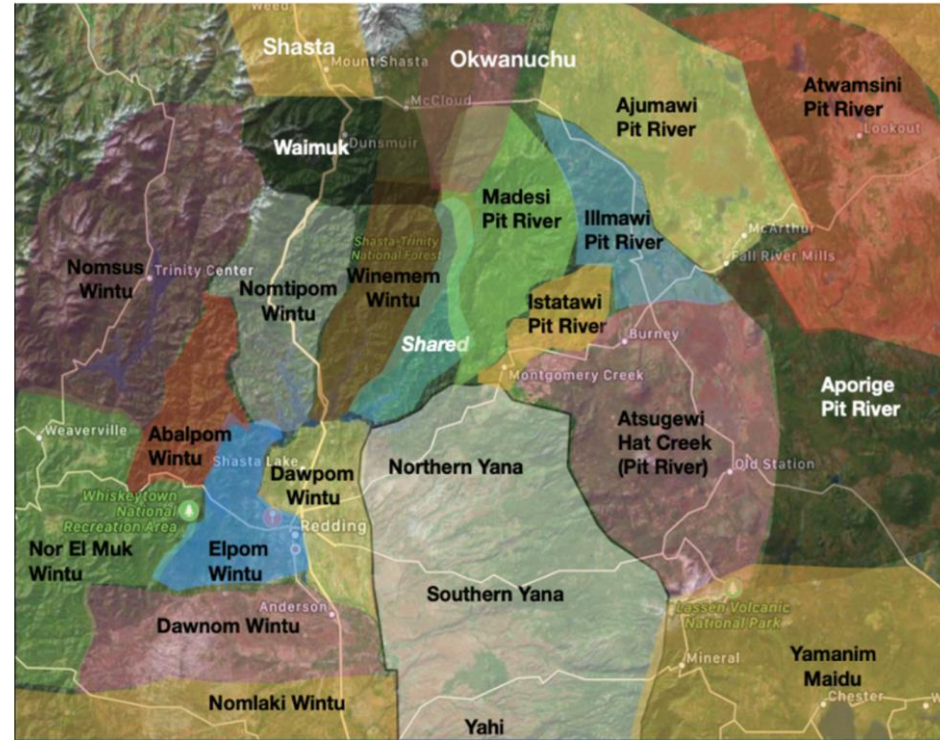
Redding Rancheria

Land initially housing Native Americans experiencing homelessness, includes those of Pit River, Wintu, and Yana descent

Federally recognized

Winnemem Wintu Tribe

1 band



Gathering of Native Americans
GONA

Native Students and Families
Are Welcome!

September 23, 2023
9:00am-4:00pm
Shasta County Office of
Education
Professional Dev. Center
2985 Innsbruck Dr.
Redding

Native Wellness Institute:
Join us! A GONA is a culture-based
planning process where community
members gather to address
community-identified issues such as
historical and generational trauma
linked to the last 75 participants.

Register at: <https://shasta.co.us/2023/09/23/gona>
or by scanning the QR code below!

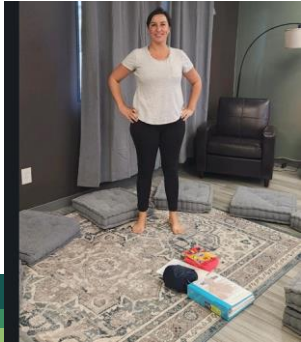
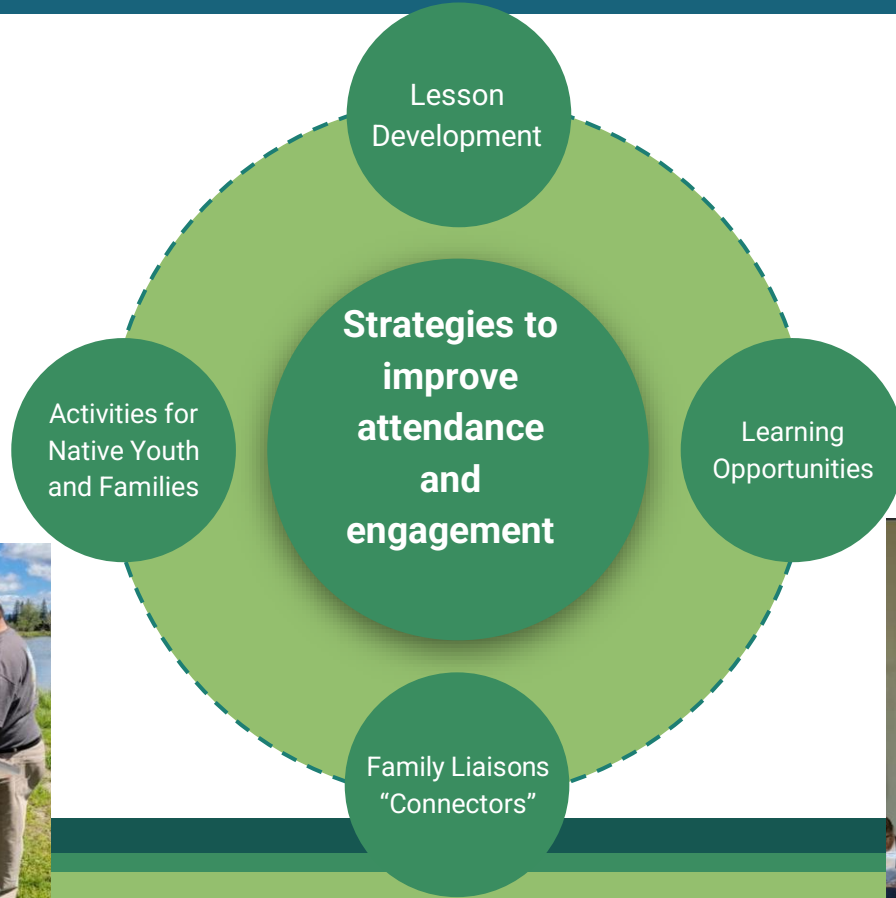


NATIVE WELLNESS
Institute



Continental Breakfast and Lunch Provided

For more information contact Cindy Hogue at (530) 605-2903
or chogue@shastaco.us.



Superintendent's Role in Supporting Implementation

- Seeking to understand the data
- Listening sessions
- Forming and facilitating the Shasta County American Indian Advisory
 - Listening to people's needs
 - Taking action with input and feedback from the group



Superintendent's Role in Supporting Implementation



Purpose of the Advisory:

To support and encourage a more inclusive and robust educational experience for Shasta County students by accurately depicting Native American history, correcting myths, and misconceptions, combating prejudice and promoting safety, appreciation, celebration, and honoring of the history, culture, and continuing contributions of Native Americans.

Early Areas of Focus: American Indian Advisory

ARE YOU
**AMERICAN INDIAN/
ALASKAN NATIVE ?**



AS YOU REGISTER YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL

If you are part American Indian (AI)/Alaskan Native (AN), please check that box (along with any others that apply). By checking the box and later showing proof of tribal status, your child is able to participate in a federally funded education program for AI/AN students, called the Title VI Indian Education Program. Our Indian Education Program wants to meet the educational needs of the Native American students in our public schools. This program helps AI/AN students by providing cultural enrichment as well as assists students with other services. Programs are designed with meaningful parent engagement and input from tribes.

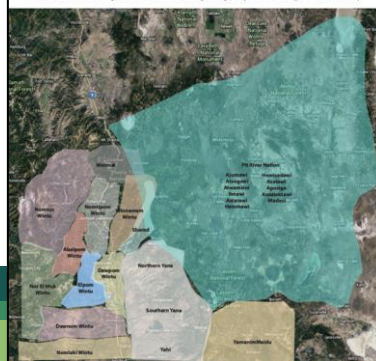
Each program is designed to address the unique needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students. Go to <http://bit.ly/indianedp> for more information.

First full day of professional learning—
“Understanding the Realities of our Native
American Youth and Families”—an introduced
Lesson Development opportunity.

HISTORICAL LAND OF THE EL-POM BAND OF THE WINTU TRIBE



Wintu, Yana, and Pit River tribes have called Shasta County home long before it was a county. Indigenous people had, and continue to have, distinct, rich cultures binding them to the Earth and all of its inhabitants. The Wintu, Yana, and Pit River people continue to thrive in Shasta County. In honoring the history, culture, and resilience of our local tribes and appreciating their ongoing contributions, we uphold understanding, empathy and stronger community.



**SHASTA COUNTY
AMERICAN INDIAN LESSON DEVELOPMENT**

Collaboratively plan and produce eight classroom lessons per grade level (grades 3, 4, 5 & 8) to describe the indigenous peoples in Shasta County long ago and in the recent past.

WHO: TEACHERS OF GRADES 3, 4, 5 & 8

WHAT:

- DESIGN LESSONS AROUND IDENTIFIED THEMES AND CA STANDARDS FOR EACH GRADE LEVEL ENCOMPASSING THE PERSPECTIVES SHARED BY THE CULTURE CONSULTANTS REPRESENTING TRIBES FROM AROUND SHASTA COUNTY
- PILOT LESSONS IN CLASSROOM, PROVIDE FEEDBACK ABOUT LESSONS, AND REVISE LESSONS AS NECESSARY

WHEN:

- OCTOBER 2019 - JUNE 2020
- TWO SCHOOL DAY PLANNING SESSIONS (DATES TBD BASED ON TEACHER PARTICIPANT AVAILABILITY)
- OCCASIONAL AFTER SCHOOL COLLABORATION SESSIONS AT SHASTA DOE (IN PERSON OR VIA ZOOM & TBD BASED ON TEACHER PARTICIPANT AVAILABILITY)

STIPEND: \$1,500
CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS (CEU) AVAILABLE

ARE YOU INTERESTED?
PLEASE FILL OUT INTEREST SURVEY BY OCTOBER 16, 2019
[HTTP://BIT.LY/SHASTALESSENS](http://bit.ly/shastalessons)



Assembly California Legislature

Megan Dable
Assemblywoman, First District

AB 516: Pupil Excused Absences for Cultural Ceremonies

BILL SUMMARY

AB 516 will allow K-12 students to be excused from school when their absences are for participation in a cultural ceremony or event (Education Code 48205).

BACKGROUND

A pupil is considered chronically absent if they miss at least 10 percent of the instructional days that they were enrolled to attend.

Across California, chronic absenteeism among American Indian or Alaska Native students is disproportionately high when compared with students of other backgrounds. More than 21 percent of students in this population qualified as chronically absent in the 2018-19 school year.

A Shasta County study found the Native American student population to have the second highest rate of chronic absenteeism in the district. Many of these absences were due to pupil participation in cultural ceremonies and events, which are important for personal development and to help students gain a deeper knowledge of the rich cultural heritage of this continent's indigenous people.

PROBLEM

Much of America's public school system is structured to accommodate the celebration of and participation in Judeo-Christian holidays, including current California law regarding what is considered an acceptable excused absence for K-12 students.

According to Education Code 48205 (a)(7), absences are only excused if they are for a religious purpose, which excludes legitimate cultural events and

ceremonies that are equally important to encourage pupils to participate in.

Native American families often feel penalized when they have their children participate in cultural ceremonies or events as the days are not excused according to Education Code 48205 (a)(7), unless a school district were to fully categorize the cultural event or ceremony as "religious."

SOLUTION

AB 516 will correct the current oversight in California Education Code by including as another type of required excused absence an absence that is for the purpose of participating in a cultural ceremony or event.

SUPPORT

Small School Districts' Association
Judy Flores, Shasta County Superintendent of Schools
Mike Martin, Modoc County Superintendent of Schools

BILL STATUS

Introduced - 2/10/2021

Staff Contact: Tess Scherlock
Tess.Scherlock@leg.ca.gov
(916) 319-2001
Updated: 3/3/2021



Ongoing Training for Schools and the Community

AN AMERICAN GENOCIDE
Presentation by Author Dr. Benjamin Madley

**SATURDAY
OCTOBER 19**
7:00 PM - 8:30 PM
Cascade Theater
No cost to attend

Copies of the book are available at cost at the Shasta Historical Society and will also be sold at the event. A book signing will take place after the event.

Between 1846 and 1873, California's Indian population plunged from perhaps 150,000 to 30,000. Madley is the first to uncover the full extent of the slaughter, the involvement of state and federal officials, indigenous resistance, who did the killing, the taxpayer dollars that supported it, and why the killings ended. This deeply researched book is a comprehensive history of an American genocide.

Born in Redding, California, Benjamin Madley is associate professor of history at the University of California, Los Angeles. He focuses on Native America, the United States, and colonialism in world history. He holds a B.A., M.A., M.Ph.D., and Ph.D. from Stanford University and an M.S. from Oxford University.

Contact Chris Rodriguez with questions about the event at 530-242-2364 or crodriguez@shastacoe.edu

Transportation will be provided for high school students and school staff from the following high schools: if at least 20 sign up to be transported by October 1: Anderson High School, Central Valley High School, Enterprise High School, Foothill High School, Shasta/Up-Prep High School, and West Valley High School. Sign up for the bus at www.shastacoe.edu

Supported by:

SHASTA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

"The Only Good Indian is a Dead Indian"
Film Viewing

Wed., March 17, 2021
Virtual Session, 3:00- 4:45 PM
Zoom Link
Contact: Becky Love (bllove@shastacoe.org)

AUDIENCE: Educators and Community Members
OBJECTIVES:
The film "The Only Good Indian" will allow participants an opportunity to visually experience the setting and trauma endured by young Native children when they were taken from their homes and enrolled in Boarding Schools as well as the futures laid before them.

THE POWER OF CEREMONY
featuring Chief Caleen Sisk & Dr. Michael Yellow Bird

March 10, 2022 Chief Caleen Sisk representing the Winnemem Wintu Tribe of Shasta County will share powerful traditions and truths about the practice of ceremony. Join us to learn about our local history and the beautiful practices of one of our local tribes.

April 5, 2022 Dr. Michael Yellow Bird, MSW, PhD, is a Native American Dean and Professor. He uses neuroscience research to examine how mindfulness approaches and traditional indigenous contemplative practices can train the mind and positively change the structure and function of the brain.

VIRTUAL SESSIONS WILL BE HELD FROM 3:30-5:30PM
Register for virtual access
<https://bit.ly/AIAPOC22>

For more information contact Kelly Biss, kbiss@shastacoe.org or call 530-225-6216



AMERICAN INDIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE SHASTA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THE FIRESIDE CONVERSATIONS

JOIN US FOR A CONTEMPLATIVE PANEL DISCUSSION TO ADDRESS PRESSING ISSUES OF OUR TIMES, INCLUDING ETHNIC EQUITY AND THE REALITIES OF AMERICAN INDIANS, PAST AND PRESENT.

TWO PART VIRTUAL SERIES OPEN TO ALL

January 27, 2022 & February 10, 2022
3:30-5:30pm
via ZOOM

Register below for the virtual link
<https://bit.ly/Firesidechat21>

Contact Kelly Biss 530-225-6253 or kbiss@shastacoe.org for more information.

Understanding the Realities of American Indian Students and Families
Three Part Series
School staff and community members are welcome!

Join us as we examine the physical and social emotional effects of historical trauma. Learn strategies to mitigate trauma in order to enhance student and family engagement.

SHASTA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

When:
Session 1: Sep. 27th 2:30-4:30pm
Session 2: Boys with Brads Presenter: Mike Durcan Oct. 19th 2:30-4:30pm
Session 3: Generational Trauma and How to Heal Nov. 18th 2:30-4:30pm

Where:
Session 1: Hybrid: Zoom and in Person at the Professional Development Center, 2800 Ironwood Dr. 96003
Session 2: Zoom Only
Session 3: Zoom Only

Register: bit.ly/3RMsjAE

For more information, please email: instructor@shastacoe.org or call 530-225-6203

Trauma and Healing Informed Workshop
Native Wellness Institute

School staff and community members are welcome!

Join us as we learn to be trauma and healing informed while also living in balance. Understand and implement classroom and community practices to honor and engage Native Youth.

SHASTA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

When:
Session 1- December 14 3:00-5:00pm
Session 2- January 11, 2023 3:00-5:00pm
Session 3- February 8, 2023 3:00-5:00pm

Where:
All Sessions are Virtual. A link is provided below for your convenience.

Register:

NATIVE WELLNESS

For more information, please email: instructor@shastacoe.org or call 530-225-6203

How can schools and districts build bridges with Native families and the community at large?

What does an effective partnership look like?



Building Bridges



Learn

- local Native communities
- get to know local Natives as individuals
- about the trauma Natives have faced—past and present



Listen

- Tribal leaders
- Native college and/or high school students—Student Voice Panels
- Native leaders and influencers—Listening sessions
- include Native voices in learning opportunities for school staff and community members

Identify key contacts

- care for students and families
- develop relationships
- listen to truly understand the needs of the students and families
- connect to services and supports
- check in and follow up

Why is being culturally responsive important for improving attendance? How do you make culturally relevant practices part of a school?

What does sustainability look like?



Culturally Relevant Practices

**Training School Staff:
Restorative practices and
cultural sensitivity**

**Community Connectors:
Supporting the whole child
and their families**

**Lesson Development:
Partnerships between
teachers and Tribal
knowledge keepers**

Impact of Native American Lessons

Kenwa Kravitz

Madesi Band Pit River Nation & Wintu

- ▶ Pit River Tribal Culture Consultant
- ▶ Student Ambassador, American Indian College Fund
- ▶ Student of Northwest Indian College, Native Studies Leadership Program



Kenwa's Perspective:

- Made room for us to use our own voices to tell our own story **EQUITY & INCLUSION**
- Gave us the opportunity to correct the painfully inaccurate and false narratives told about our people past and present **HEALING**
- Allowed for the opportunity to have deep conversations with the educators about the “WHY” and how to they think about and teach Native American history**UNDERSTANDING**

**What strategies are schools and districts
prioritizing this year as they work
with Native students?**



Ways to Get Started

- Share our own cultural experiences
- Provide opportunities for listening sessions
- Educate school staff
- Invite 'knowledge keepers' into the classroom to share their culture



Questions? Reflections?

Please type your questions
and reflections in the chat.



Gisela Ariza

gisela@attendanceworks.org





Connect with us

Scan the QR Code below
to register for the
WEEAC Newsletter



@WEEAC_WestEd



WEEAC@WestEd.org



WestEd 
Western Educational
Equity Assistance Center

Thank you!

Please complete our [evaluation form](#).

A Project of
WestEd 

WestEd is a nonpartisan, nonprofit agency that conducts and applies research, develops evidence-based solutions, and provides services and resources in the realms of education, human development, and related fields, with the end goal of improving outcomes and ensuring equity for individuals from infancy through adulthood. For more information, visit [WestEd.org](https://www.wested.org).

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