**NEWS RELEASE**

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New Results from National Indian Education Study

Show Most Native Students Learn About Their History, Language, and Culture From Family Members Rather Than in School

*New study examines integration of Native culture and language in school curricula and overall educational context for Native students in the United States*

WASHINGTON (May 18, 2021)—Most American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) students learn about their history, language, and culture from family members, rather than at school, according to results from the 2019 National Indian Education Study (NIES) released today by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

NIES is the largest nationally representative education study of AI/AN students and sponsored by the Office of Indian Education (OIE). The study is conducted as part of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), known as The Nation’s Report Card, and endorsed across AI/AN communities. NIES puts into context the condition of education and experiences of AI/AN students in the United States.

“The study provides important insights into the educational experiences for American Indian and Alaska Native students,” said Peggy G. Carr, the associate commissioner of assessment at NCES. “We see that families and communities play a key role in educating Native children about their history and culture.”

Sixty-six percent of AI/AN students reported learning about AI/AN history from family members. Teachers were also commonly identified as an important source of cultural information for students; 23 percent of fourth-grade students and 17 percent of eighth-grade students identified teachers as the group that taught them most of what they know about AI/AN traditions. Students learned about their culture in several forms, including storytelling, classroom lessons, or hands-on lessons in traditional arts and crafts.

The study explored the educational experiences of AI/AN students through survey questionnaires, revealing insights into how schools engage with their AI/AN students and how teachers integrate culturally responsive materials, activities, and instructions into their lessons. Students were surveyed about their knowledge of Native culture and use of language; teachers were surveyed about their knowledge of and skill development for teaching AI/AN students, culturally specific instruction, and classroom practices; and school administrators were surveyed about the involvement of AI/AN community members at school and the sufficiency and quality of books specific to AI/AN culture available to students.

The study also includes achievement data for AI/AN students. Reading scores of fourth- and eighth-grade AI/AN students remained flat compared to 2015, while mathematics scores for eighth-graders declined and mathematics scores for fourth-graders did not change.

**Key Findings**

* Reading scores for fourth-graders attending public schools were unchanged compared to 2015.
* Reading scores declined for eighth-graders attending public schools where more than 25 percent of students were AI/AN (“high-density” public schools).
* Mathematics scores have increased since 2009 for fourth-graders attending Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools.
* Mathematics scores for eighth-graders attending BIE schools have risen since 2007.
* Forty-four percent of fourth-grade students in BIE schools reported having a computer at home.
* Fifty-three percent of fourth-grade and 57 percent of eighth-grade AI/AN students reported reading literature with AI/AN themes at least once a year.
* Seventy-two percent of fourth grade and 77 percent of eighth-grade AI/AN students reported receiving in-school instruction about their tribes or cultural groups.
* Over 40 percent of fourth- and eighth-grade students received instruction about AI/AN culture in oral and written language.

A national sample of approximately 13,000 fourth- and eighth-grade students participated in this study. The study separates AI/AN results into three mutually exclusive categories of schools as well as an overall category. Those three categories include: public schools where less than 25 percent of students were AI/AN (“low-density” public schools); public schools where 25 percent or more of students were AI/AN (“high-density” public schools); and BIE schools. The overall scores for AI/AN students include all AI/AN students sampled throughout the nation in public, private, BIE, and Department of Defense schools.

Sixty percent of AI/AN fourth-graders attended low-density public schools, 31 percent attended high-density public schools, and 9 percent attended BIE schools. Similarly, 60 percent of AI/AN eighth-graders attended low-density public schools, 32 percent attended high-density public schools, and 8 percent attended BIE schools.

The 2019 edition of the study also includes state-level data on AI/AN students for 15 states: Alaska, Arizona, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. When the study began in 2005, seven states had reportable data specific to AI/AN students.

All survey questions are available to the public, and data from all survey questions will be available via the NIES Data Explorer at <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/data/> in conjunction with the report’s release.

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*The National Indian Education Study (NIES) is sponsored by the Office of Indian Education (OIE), within the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, and is conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the Institute of Education Sciences. Executive Order 13592, signed by President Obama in December of 2011, reaffirms the mandate of 2004’s Executive Order 13336, which called for closer examination of the educational experiences and progress of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) students, as well as the promotion of research opportunities and collaboration with tribal communities.*

*NCES partnered with a variety of stakeholders, including a Technical Review Panel made up of individuals with expertise in matters related to the education of AI/AN students*, *the U.S. Department of Education’s OIE, the White House Initiative on AI/AN Education, the Bureau of Indian Education, and Tribal Tech, LLC, a Native-owned business.*