

ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Absence Patterns of
Native American Students in APS

2002-2003

**District Goal #1: Academic Excellence
Closing the Achievement Gap**

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Curtis J Mearns Ph.D.
Kyndra Abeyta



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RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

930-A Oak Street SE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106
(505) 848-8710
www.rda.aps.edu
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ABSENCE PATTERNS OF NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENTS IN APS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study results from the observation that Native American students in APS consistently have the lowest attendance rates of all ethnic groups reported. Studying attendance as a means of improving accountability ratings within APS suggested this study. Additionally, a study of attendance may lay the groundwork for more effective attendance interventions. This study attempts to understand the patterns of absences of Native American students.

METHOD

This report only studied students absent for a full day or more according to the state ADS method of reporting. Absences and dates were associated to show number of days absent consecutively and dates of absences.

FINDINGS

- Of the 1726 students studied, 88.4% of students were absent 1 or two days at a time. Only twelve percent were absent 3 or more days at a time.
- 16% of absences occurred in the last month of school. This may be associated with the Gathering of Nations celebrations or with seasonal spring distractions common with the general population.

CONCLUSIONS

- Interventions for Native American student attendance problems should focus the same issues as for students of other ethnicities. Health, mobility, and family care issues may be important avenues for schools to consider when attempting to reduce the absence rates of Native American students.
- APS Health and Mental Health Unit has developed asthma policy and educational opportunities that have proven effective at reducing absence rates for asthmatic students. They, also offer contact information for free student health care and insurance options.
- Indian Education unit may consider requesting a short-term task force on mid-year school transfer processes. The purpose would be to develop strategies that facilitate rapid transfers of students moving from one APS school to another during the school year as a means of reducing registration lags and absences.

ABSENCE PATTERNS OF NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENTS IN APS

This study results from the observation that Native American students in APS consistently have the lowest attendance rates. The feature of attendance in the State accountability system suggests studying attendance as a means of improving accountability ratings within APS. A study of attendance may lay the groundwork for more effective attendance interventions. Many APS educators assume that their Native American students are absent more consecutive days (three or more) than single days at a time. The common notion among APS educators is that Native American students often return to their pueblo or reservation and then fail to get a ride back to Albuquerque for several days, thus contributing to sequential days absences. Therefore, some believe, Native American students are often absent many days at a time. This study attempts to understand the patterns of absences of Native American students.

Students affiliated with a tribe three hours or less from Albuquerque can make a trip to his/her tribe or reservation in one day. The majority of the Native American students who attend Albuquerque Public Schools are from those tribes. These students are able to make a roundtrip to and from Albuquerque in one day.

Method

This study analyzed a subset of 1,726 students with absences during the 2002-2003 school year. The data set only included students missing a full day or more. The definition of students missing a day or more follows the New Mexico Public Education Department Accountability Data System description. Only students who declare affiliation with a tribe or reservation are included in the analysis. Further, the study participants were included if their reported tribal affiliation is within a three hour drive of Albuquerque. This subset of Native American students reports 1,896 absences during the school year. IT supplied the student demographic information and each date absent. The data set includes Acoma, Apache, Cochiti, Isleta, Laguna, Navajo, San Felipe, Sandia, and Santo Domingo. The study includes tribal sub groups that are a minimum of five students.

Limitations

Reporting data accuracy varies from school to school due to onsite data collection inconsistencies. The dataset contained small sizes of some tribal subgroups limiting conclusions about these groups.

Results

The results of the analysis refute the assumption that Native American students are absent three or more consecutive days. Absences of one to two days represented 88.4% of all absent events, while absences of three or more consecutive days composed the remaining 12.6%. A complete listing of the total number of Native American students absent per day is located in the Appendix. The appendix may be used by Indian Education staff to see if dates with high absence rates correspond to special ceremonies and holidays. Although there is no intervention for absences during religious holidays, Indian Education staff may consider strategies to facilitate students learning and homework completion during those periods.

Figure 1 shows the number of full day student absences associated with each tribe. These values reflect the differences in populations attending APS as well.

Figure1. Number of absences by tribe.

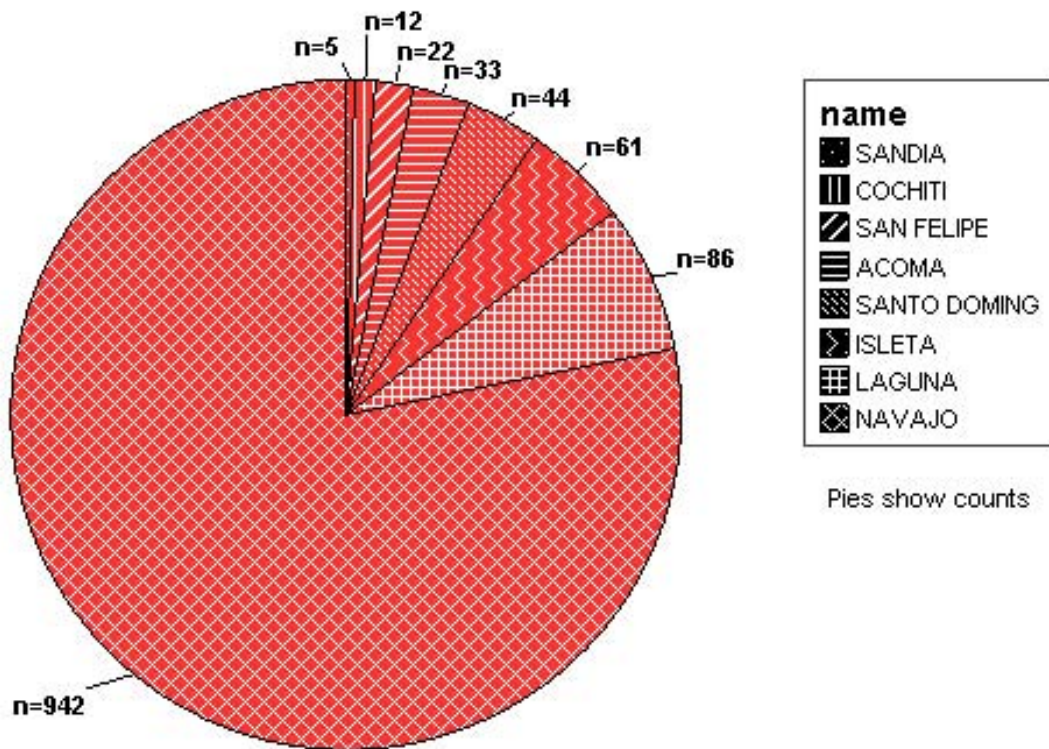


Table 1 contains descriptive statistics of consecutive days absent for local tribes. The average number of consecutive absences of 2 or less may indicate that travel from the pueblo or reservation has little influence on absences. The maximum number of consecutive days absent for each tribe are also shown.

Table 1. Absences by tribe.

Tribe	N	Maximum	Average Consecutive Absences per student
Acoma	33	4	1.575
Apache	16	9	1.937
Cochiti	12	4	1.583
Isleta	61	11	1.590
Laguna	86	6	1.546
Navajo	942	24	1.822
San Felipe	22	5	1.681
Sandia	5	3	2
Santo Domingo	44	9	1.750

The last month of the school year (April 22 to May 22), accounts for 16% of the total full day absences during the 2002 - 2003 school year. During this period the annual Gathering of the Nations occurs in Albuquerque and its diversity. The Gathering of the Nations promotes education about the Native American culture. This three-day event, open to all people, includes traditional dancing, special ceremonies, food and cultural art. The results show that students began an absence trend the week before and continue through the week after the celebration. Alternately, this one-month period also corresponds to the last month of school, and may reflect some sort of “spring fever” trend in absences. Table 2 presents dates absent with consecutive days missed.

Table 2: Table of Absences around the Gathering of Nations celebrations

Date Absent	ACOMA	APACHE	COCHITI	ISLETA	LAGUNA	NAVAJO	SAN FELIPE	SANDIA	SANTO DOMINGO	Total
22-Apr-2003	2		1		7	38	2	1	1	52
23-Apr-2003	2			6	6	33		1	6	54
24-Apr-2003	2	2	2	2	3	53			4	68
25-Apr-2003	1			7	6	73	2	1	8	98
28-Apr-2003	2	2		5	6	77	4		2	98
29-Apr-2003	2		2	3	6	43	1	3	4	64
30-Apr-2003	1	2	2	3	5	37	1		2	53
1-May-2003	1		1	2	5	38	3	1	4	55
2-May-2003	2	6	2	8	10	70	5		1	104
5-May-2003		2		6	6	67		1	6	88
6-May-2003	3	1	3	4	6	47	1	1		66
7-May-2003		3	1	2	5	40			4	55
8-May-2003				2	11	40	1		5	59

Date Absent	ACOMA	APACHE	COCHITI	ISLETA	LAGUNA	NAVAJO	SAN FELIPE	SANDIA	SANTO DOMINGO	Total
9-May-2003	1	1		4	7	73	2	2	1	91
12-May-2003	2	3		3	3	74			4	89
13-May-2003	1	1		2	8	39			4	55
14-May-2003	2		1	6	1	40			3	53
15-May-2003	2	2	1	4	13	42	1		4	69
16-May-2003	2	2		4	5	60	1		4	78
19-May-2003		3	2	4	7	35	2		2	55
20-May-2003		1	1	1	1	46			2	52
21-May-2003	1	3			1	24			3	32
22-May-2003	1		1			24				26
23-May-2003						12			3	15

The State Public Ed Department (PED) requires that a student attend school 94% of the 180 school days. The state's goal is for students to miss fewer than 10 days of school. During the 2002-2003 school year the average Native American student attends school 92.2% of the time. As a whole Native American students do not meet the absence standards.

Conclusion

Evidence shows that absences of 3 or more days describe only 12.6% of Native American student absences. However, as a whole Native American students are absent greater than the number of days (10). Understanding that the Native American attendance gap can be closed by reducing absences one day at a time may assist Indian Education program staff in designing effective interventions. As in the general population, causes for Native American absence patterns are likely the same. Seasonal health issues such as colds, asthma etc, days lost due to families moving their residence (and corresponding registration lags), and child and elder care need to be addressed to decrease total days absent in Native American students. APS Health and Mental Health Services department continues to develop a comprehensive system to connect students to health interventions. They have also developed an asthma policy that is being implemented district wide in three phases. The asthma policy includes student education and has been effective in reducing absences. Indian Education staff may consider ways to facilitate students access to APS Health and Mental Health Services. Additionally, home school liaisons may set up procedures to facilitate the withdrawal and re-enrollment of students who must transfer from one school to another during the school year.

Appendix
Number Of Absences By Tribe Per Day

DATE	ACOMA	APACHE	COCHITI	ISLETA	LAGUNA	NAVAJO	SAN FELIPE	SANDIA	SANTO DOMINGO	Total
19-Aug-2002	1				1	2				4
20-Aug-2002					2	6				8
21-Aug-2002				1		3				4
22-Aug-2002					2	9				11
23-Aug-2002	1					7				8
26-Aug-2002	1				3	17				21
27-Aug-2002		1			3	12			2	18
28-Aug-2002	1			1	4	13			1	20
29-Aug-2002				1	1	20			1	23
30-Aug-2002				1	4	22	2	1		30
3-Sep-2002	2			1	3	26	1		1	34
4-Sep-2002	1			1	1	17			1	21
5-Sep-2002				3	2	15			1	21
6-Sep-2002	1		1	1	4	27				34
9-Sep-2002			1	3	2	28	1		6	41
10-Sep-2002			1	4		22			1	28
11-Sep-2002		2		2	6	30	1		2	43
12-Sep-2002				2	2	13				17
13-Sep-2002	1			2	3	24	1	1	1	33
16-Sep-2002		1	1	5	4	31	2	1	1	46
17-Sep-2002	3			2		31			5	41
18-Sep-2002			1	3	2	16			1	23
19-Sep-2002		2		5	7	24			4	42
20-Sep-2002		1		3	3	24				31
23-Sep-2002				5	6	38			4	53
24-Sep-2002	1	1	1	2	5	21	3	1	1	36
25-Sep-2002		1	3	1	1	25	2		2	35
26-Sep-2002	1			2	2	27				32
27-Sep-2002	2	1		3	2	23	1		1	33
30-Sep-2002		1		2	6	30			3	42
1-Oct-2002		1		3	3	30				37
2-Oct-2002		2	1	1	4	25	1			34
3-Oct-2002			1	5	1	26			5	38
4-Oct-2002	5			4	1	33			2	45
7-Oct-2002	2			4	5	41	1			53
8-Oct-2002			1		4	24	1		2	32
9-Oct-2002	3			6	2	45	1		2	59
10-Oct-2002				1	1	2				4
11-Oct-2002					1	2				3
14-Oct-2002	1			1	9	49	1			61
15-Oct-2002		1	1	3	2	25	2		4	38

DATE	ACOMA	APACHE	COCHITI	ISLETA	LAGUNA	NAVAJO	SAN FELIPE	SANDIA	SANTO DOMINGO	Total
16-Oct-2002	4		2		4	32	1		2	45
17-Oct-2002				3	2	24			2	31
18-Oct-2002	3	1	1	1	2	24			2	34
21-Oct-2002	1	1	1	2	2	42			4	53
22-Oct-2002			2	5	5	35	1	1	2	51
23-Oct-2002	1			2	2	36	1			42
24-Oct-2002		1		4	1	19			1	26
25-Oct-2002	1		1	3	6	44	2		4	61
28-Oct-2002	3			6	4	34	2		2	51
29-Oct-2002		1		6	4	36			2	49
30-Oct-2002	1			1	6	25	3			36
31-Oct-2002	3			1	2	28			2	36
1-Nov-2002	3	1	2	4	6	75	6		5	102
4-Nov-2002	2		1	6	6	36	1		2	54
5-Nov-2002	3		1	3	1	26	1			35
6-Nov-2002	1		1	6	2	37		1	2	50
7-Nov-2002			1	3	4	23	1	1		33
8-Nov-2002	1		2	3	5	35	3		3	52
11-Nov-2002	3	1		6	4	48	1	2	1	66
12-Nov-2002			1	4	6	41			4	56
13-Nov-2002	1			2	2	20			1	26
14-Nov-2002	1			4	1	28	1			35
15-Nov-2002	2		1	1	3	44	1		4	56
18-Nov-2002		1		5	2	45			1	54
19-Nov-2002	1			6	3	44	1	1		56
20-Nov-2002			1	3	1	28			2	35
21-Nov-2002		2	3	3	4	22	1		5	40
22-Nov-2002			1	1	2	39	1	1		45
25-Nov-2002	1	1		4	6	34			6	52
26-Nov-2002	3		3	1	2	25			1	35
27-Nov-2002	1		2	2	9	85	2			101
2-Dec-2002	2			9	2	40	4		3	60
3-Dec-2002	2		1	2	4	30			2	41
4-Dec-2002	3			1	2	38			4	48
5-Dec-2002	1	1		3	3	40	4		3	55
6-Dec-2002	3			4	13	44			1	65
9-Dec-2002	2	2	3	6	1	49	1		1	65
10-Dec-2002	1	1	2	3	3	27	1		1	39
11-Dec-2002	1			5	4	37	1		2	50
12-Dec-2002	1		2	4	3	48	1		3	62
13-Dec-2002				5	2	51			3	61
16-Dec-2002	2		1	7	4	39	1		2	56
17-Dec-2002				7	2	39	2		2	52
18-Dec-2002	1	1		3	3	33	1		3	45
19-Dec-2002	1	1		1	3	23	1			30

DATE	ACOMA	APACHE	COCHITI	ISLETA	LAGUNA	NAVAJO	SAN FELIPE	SANDIA	SANTO DOMINGO	Total
20-Dec-2002	1			2	5	55	1		4	68
6-Jan-2003	1	2		1	6	28	1	1	1	41
7-Jan-2003		1		6	4	48	3		5	67
8-Jan-2003	3			4	3	31			3	44
9-Jan-2003	1			1		31			1	34
10-Jan-2003	1	1	1	2	6	48		1	1	61
13-Jan-2003	2			4	7	53	1		3	70
14-Jan-2003	2		1	2	7	34		1	2	49
15-Jan-2003		1	1	2	1	37			1	43
16-Jan-2003	2	1	1	1	9	34	1		2	51
17-Jan-2003	4		2	8	10	78	2	1	2	107
21-Jan-2003	1	1	2	8	6	64	3	1	3	89
22-Jan-2003	3		1	4	3	42	2		3	58
23-Jan-2003	1			3	6	45				55
24-Jan-2003	1	2	3	8	5	61	1	2	3	86
27-Jan-2003	1	1	1	4	7	66	1		4	85
28-Jan-2003	2		1	1	7	48	1		1	61
29-Jan-2003	2			1	7	32			2	44
30-Jan-2003	1	2		6	3	43	1	1	1	58
31-Jan-2003	2	4		7	6	90	1	1	2	113
3-Feb-2003	3		4	5	4	71	2		4	93
4-Feb-2003	1			4	5	58	1		1	70
5-Feb-2003	3	1			1	47		2	2	56
6-Feb-2003		2		3	4	41			3	53
7-Feb-2003	3	2	2	7	5	69	1	1	2	92
10-Feb-2003	4			15	10	63			5	97
11-Feb-2003	3	2	2	5	5	53	1	1	6	78
12-Feb-2003			2	5	3	48	5		2	65
13-Feb-2003	2		1	3	10	42	1	1	1	61
14-Feb-2003	2	4	1	9	7	80		1	2	106
18-Feb-2003		2		4	2	73	1		3	85
19-Feb-2003	2		1	2	4	42	2		2	55
20-Feb-2003	1		1	3	4	55	1		3	68
21-Feb-2003	5			6	2	66	1		3	83
24-Feb-2003	1	1	1	6	8	65	1	1	1	85
25-Feb-2003	2		1	5	7	58	1	2	6	82
26-Feb-2003	1	2	2	4	3	41	1	1	1	56
27-Feb-2003	1			1		30	1		1	34
28-Feb-2003	3	1	4	6	5	69	1	1	5	95
3-Mar-2003	3	2		9	9	54	2		1	80
4-Mar-2003	1			3	1	46	1		1	53
5-Mar-2003	1	1	2	2	2	34		2	3	47
6-Mar-2003	2			3	5	37				47
7-Mar-2003	1	1	1	5	6	58	2	1	3	78
10-Mar-2003			1	5	6	55	1		4	72

DATE	ACOMA	APACHE	COCHITI	ISLETA	LAGUNA	NAVAJO	SAN FELIPE	SANDIA	SANTO DOMINGO	Total
11-Mar-2003				3	5	32			3	43
12-Mar-2003	1		1	2	3	31		1		39
13-Mar-2003	1	1		3	6	36	1	1	2	51
14-Mar-2003		2		8	10	46	2	1	3	72
17-Mar-2003	1	2	2	3	7	50	1	1	3	70
18-Mar-2003	1			3	4	41			2	51
19-Mar-2003		1	2	3	5	40	1	1	4	57
20-Mar-2003	3	2	1	4	5	34	1	1	1	52
21-Mar-2003	2	3	2	4	10	105	2	2	3	133
24-Mar-2003					1	1				2
25-Mar-2003						1				1
26-Mar-2003						1				1
27-Mar-2003						2				2
28-Mar-2003						1				1
31-Mar-2003	1	1		11	10	67		1	2	93
1-Apr-2003	1	4	1	3	6	58	2	1	3	79
2-Apr-2003		1	3	2	3	42	1		3	55
3-Apr-2003	1	1		2	4	44			2	54
4-Apr-2003	1	4	2	8	6	53	2		3	79
7-Apr-2003	2			3	9	86	2		1	103
8-Apr-2003	3	2	2	5	4	55			5	76
9-Apr-2003	2	4	3	4	3	42	2		5	65
10-Apr-2003		1			2	39		1	2	45
11-Apr-2003	3	3	1	5	6	47	1		3	69
14-Apr-2003	2		3	5	6	58	1	1	8	84
15-Apr-2003	2	2		4	6	57	3	1	4	79
16-Apr-2003	1	1	2	3	1	29				37
17-Apr-2003	1	3	2	12	12	73	2	1	10	116
21-Apr-2003	3	2	1	4	10	77	1	2	2	102
22-Apr-2003	2		1		7	38	2	1	1	52
23-Apr-2003	2			6	6	33		1	6	54
24-Apr-2003	2	2	2	2	3	53			4	68
25-Apr-2003	1			7	6	73	2	1	8	98
28-Apr-2003	2	2		5	6	77	4		2	98
29-Apr-2003	2		2	3	6	43	1	3	4	64
30-Apr-2003	1	2	2	3	5	37	1		2	53
1-May-2003	1		1	2	5	38	3	1	4	55
2-May-2003	2	6	2	8	10	70	5		1	104
5-May-2003		2		6	6	67		1	6	88
6-May-2003	3	1	3	4	6	47	1	1		66
7-May-2003		3	1	2	5	40			4	55
8-May-2003				2	11	40	1		5	59
9-May-2003	1	1		4	7	73	2	2	1	91
12-May-2003	2	3		3	3	74			4	89
13-May-2003	1	1		2	8	39			4	55

DATE	ACOMA	APACHE	COCHITI	ISLETA	LAGUNA	NAVAJO	SAN FELIPE	SANDIA	SANTO DOMINGO	Total
14-May-2003	2		1	6	1	40			3	53
15-May-2003	2	2	1	4	13	42	1		4	69
16-May-2003	2	2		4	5	60	1		4	78
19-May-2003		3	2	4	7	35	2		2	55
20-May-2003		1	1	1	1	46			2	52
21-May-2003	1	3			1	24			3	32
22-May-2003	1		1			24				26
23-May-2003						12			3	15