INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE
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INFORMATIVE

TO: Members, Board of Education	**DATE:** October 17, 2018
Austin Beutner, Superintendent	

FROM: Glenn Daley, Director Independent Analysis Unit
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SUBJECT: **NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENTS AND CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM**

The purpose of this informative is to answer questions related to Native American students and chronic absenteeism. To accurately measure the relationship between race/ethnicity and chronic absenteeism, the District needs reliable race/ethnicity data.

However, analyses of race/ethnicity categories in L.A. Unified indicate that race/ethnicity categories are **unstable** across years, making it difficult to make accurate inferences about smaller subgroups.

The table below shows the racial/ethnic composition of the District during the 2015-2016 school year and the percent of students whose racial/ethnic identity **changed** in the following year, the 2016-2017 school year.
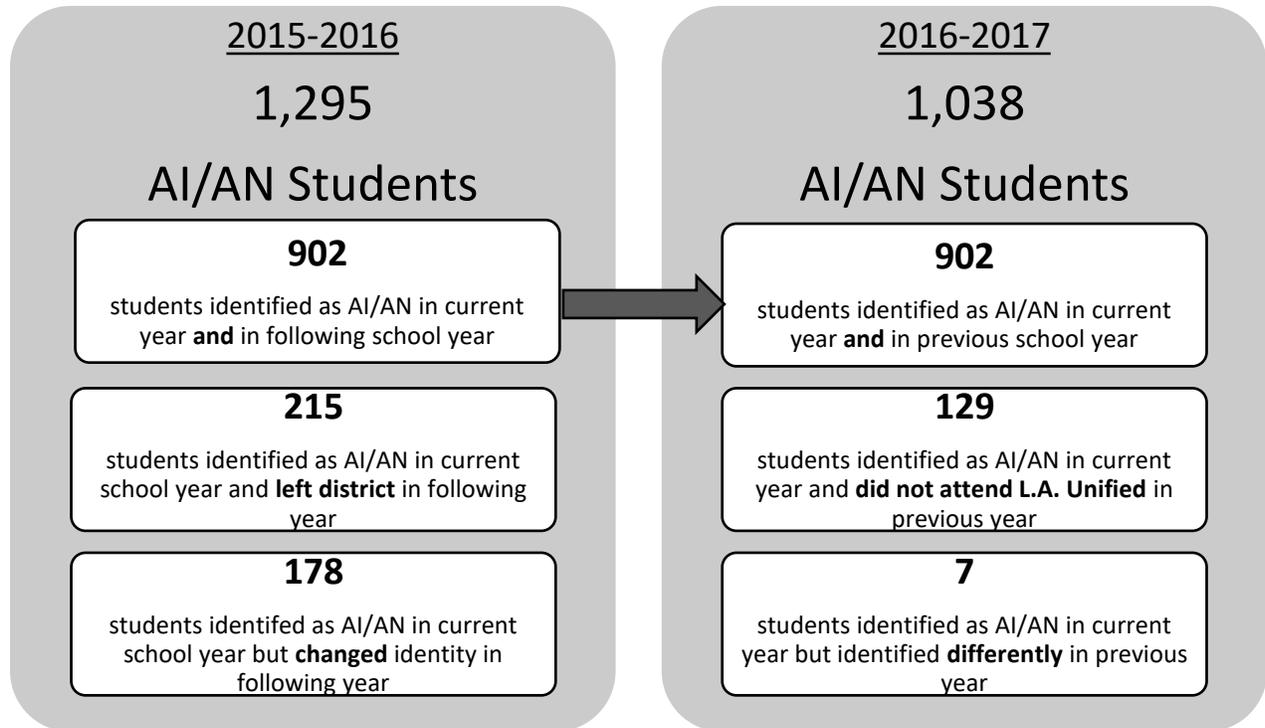
	Number of students in 2015-2016 school year	Number of students whose race/ethnicity <u>changed</u> in 2016-2017	% of students in each category whose race/ethnicity <u>changed</u>
American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN)	1,295	178	13.7%
Asian[1]	35,097	2,858	8.1%
Black	48,807	5,283	10.8%
Hispanic	417,230	24,199	5.8%
Pacific Islander	2,111	169	8.0%
White	58,539	4,589	7.8%

Source: MiSiS Data

Of the 1,295 students who identified as "American Indian/Alaska Native" (AI/AN) during the 2015-2016 school year, 178 (13.7%) of those students did **not** identify the same way in the following school year. Of these 178 students, 119 have "unknown" race/ethnic identities during the 2016-2017 school year. Across all racial/ethnic categories, students in the "American Indian/Alaska Native" category show the highest rates of instability.

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[1] The Asian category includes Filipino in this analysis. Though the District does collect information on Filipino students, this category shows great fluctuation across years—suggesting that statistical inferences made about Filipino students may be unreliable. In the 2008-2009 school year, roughly 16,000 students identified as Filipino. In the 2009-2010 school year, roughly 800 students identified as Filipino. About 80% of the students who identified as Filipino in the 2008-2009 school year identified as "Asian" during the 2009-2010 school year.

The following graphic represents the movement of AI/AN students between racial/ethnic categories across two school years. Of the 1,295 students identified as AI/AN during the 2015-2016 school year, 902 identify the same way in the following school year, 215 leave the district, and 178 change their racial/ethnic identity in the following school year.

2015-2016	2016-2017
1,295	**1,038**
AI/AN Students	**AI/AN Students**
902 students identified as AI/AN in current year **and** in following school year	**902** students identified as AI/AN in current year **and** in previous school year
215 students identified as AI/AN in current school year and **left district** in following year	**129** students identified as AI/AN in current year and **did not attend L.A. Unified** in previous year
178 students identifed as AI/AN in current school year but **changed** identity in following year	**7** students identified as AI/AN in current year but identified **differently** in previous year

Since AI/AN students comprised 0.20% of the student population during the 2016-2017 school year and students move between racial/ethnic categories, statistical inferences should be made with caution. Compared to Hispanic students:

- Native American students are *113% more likely* (more than twice as likely) to be chronically absent.

- *Black* students are *131% more likely* (more than twice as likely) to be chronically absent.

- *Pacific Islander* students are *73% more likely* to be chronically absent.

- *White* students are *33% more likely* to be chronically absent.

- *Asian* students are *75% less likely* to be chronically absent.

In sum, racial/ethnic identity is a complex issue and directly impacts the District's ability to accurately monitor outcomes for subgroups. Analyses of student demographic data show that **students move between racial/ethnic categories *across* years and also *within* years, making it particularly difficult to make statistical inferences about small subgroups such as Native American students.** Since racial/ethnic categories are socially constructed and differentially interpreted, it is reasonable for students to move between racial/ethnic categories.

Appendix

Table 1. Odds Ratio from Logistic Regression of Chronic Absenteeism on Student and School Characteristics (*N*=298,741)

	Odds Ratio
College-Educated Parents	0.75***
	(0.015)
Free/Reduced Price Meal	2.01***
	(0.067)
English Learner	1.063 ***
	(0.017)
Dual Language Program	0.55***
	(0.027)
Magnet Program	0.49***
	(0.012)
Race/ethnicity	
Native American	2.13***
	(0.236)
Asian	0.57***
	(0.022)
Black	2.31***
	(0.044)
Pacific Islander	1.73*
	(0.148)
White	1.33***
	(0.033)
High-Poverty School	1.44***
	(0.031)
School with High Shares of English Learners	1.41***
	(0.076)
School with High Shares of Hispanic Students	0.79***
	(0.014)

Note. Standard deviations are in parentheses.
* p < 0.05. ** p < 0.01. *** p < 0.001.