
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 1581 (Ramos) - Pupils: data reporting: American Indian and Alaska Native pupils

Version: March 23, 2026
Urgency: No
Hearing Date: June 22, 2026

Policy Vote: ED. 7 - 0
Mandate: Yes
Consultant: Lenin Del Castillo

Bill Summary: This bill requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to define and collect, as part of the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS), a record of the tribal affiliation of each pupil who identifies as American Indian or Alaska Native (AI/AN). This bill also requires a local educational agency (LEA) to collect and report in CALPADS the tribal affiliation of each pupil enrolled who identifies as AI/AN.

Fiscal Impact: The CDE estimates General Fund costs of \$610,000 each year and 4.0 positions for data collection, the ongoing monitoring and management of tribal information within CALPADS, and providing ongoing technical assistance to LEAs.

Background: Existing law establishes CALPADS to among other things, provide school districts and the CDE access to data necessary to comply with federal reporting requirements and a better means of evaluating educational progress and investments over time. It also provides LEAs with the data needed to improve pupil achievement, including college and career readiness. CALPADS provide an efficient, flexible, and secure means of maintaining longitudinal statewide pupil level data between and among the state's educational segments and operational tools, as defined.

Existing law, pursuant to the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, requires specified LEAs to consult with appropriate officials from American Indian tribes or tribal organizations approved by the tribes located in the area served by the LEA prior to its submission of a required plan or application for a covered program under the Act.

Existing law establishes the California American Indian education centers program to serve as community-based educational resource centers for American Indian pupils, parents, guardians, and public schools in order to promote the academic and cultural achievement of American Indian pupils.

Existing law encourages LEAs to form California Indian Education Task Forces with California Indian tribes local to their region or tribes historically located in the region.

Proposed Law: This bill requires CDE, beginning with the 2027-28 school year, to define and collect, as part of CALPADS, a record of the tribal affiliation of each pupil who identifies as AI/AN, including a pupil who identifies as AI/AN and another race or ethnicity. The bill also requires an LEA to collect and report in CALPADS the tribal affiliation of each pupil enrolled who identifies as AI/AN, including a pupil who identifies

as AI/AN and another race or ethnicity, when an LEA collects race or ethnicity information for the purposes of CALPADS reporting.

This bill requires CDE to provide technical assistance to LEAs in implementing this section.

Related Legislation: AB 1821 (Ramos, Chapter 658, Statutes of 2024) requires instruction on the Spanish colonization of California and the Gold Rush Era to include instruction regarding the treatment of Native Americans during those periods within the History and Social Sciences course of study for grades 1 to 6 and 7 to 12.

AB 1703 (Ramos, Chapter 477, Statutes of 2022) establishes the California Indian Education Act and encourages LEAs to form California Indian Education Task Forces with California Indian tribes local to their respective regions for purposes of discussing issues of mutual concern and to undertake certain work.

Staff Comments: According to the analysis of this bill by the Senate Education Committee, a 2023 report by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and the Indigenous Education State Leaders Network (IESLN) found that although Indigenous students in the country are estimated to be about 1% of the K-12 student population in public schools, the “undercounting of Indigenous students may be as high as 70% nationwide.” The author has indicated that this bill is aimed at addressing the findings of this report. According to the author, “the accurate identification of Native American students in California is a critical issue that significantly affects the allocation of educational resources and the development of culturally responsive programs. The current practice to collect ethnicity and race data creates challenges in accurately counting students’ tribal affiliation. Inaccurate counting results in underrepresentation and a failure to address the unique needs of Native students.

The current way of collecting data has inadvertently led to many students being misclassified or overlooked, particularly when identified as Hispanic/Latino, as responses are often not disaggregated. Furthermore, the lack of fields to capture tribal affiliation or enrollment results in incomplete data, making it difficult to allocate resources effectively or tailor educational programs to their specific cultural and academic needs.

By leveraging [recent revisions to OMB’s Statistical Policy Directive No. 15], the CDE can implement policies to standardize and enhance the collection of tribal data, ensuring that Native students are accurately represented and receive the resources they need.”

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