



## Students Enrolled in Oregon's Public Alternative Education Schools

### Methods Summary



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## Introduction

The Oregon Child Integrated Dataset (OCID) analysis, [Students Enrolled in Oregon's Public Alternative Education Schools](#), provides an initial high-level description of students who had been enrolled in public alternative education schools, using an equity approach to examine the administrative data collected by various publicly funded programs that served these students. The data are examined through intersectional equity considerations, first by the social constructs of race and ethnicity categories, and then by sex/gender and disability status. This summary provides technical documentation of the analysis methods.

## Methods

### Study Population

This descriptive analysis included 7,498 children born in Oregon in 2001 or later and who were enrolled in public alternative education schools for any period of time between 2007 and 2019. Comparisons of proportions between groups of students in public alternative education were used to create line and dot charts for the policy brief. The numbers and percentages for these comparisons can be found in Appendix A. Of the entire cohort, 4,443 children were enrolled in a public alternative education school during the 2018-19 school year, the most recent year of data available from ODE; some of our analyses focused on these students, looking retrospectively at their program contact.

We also compared the children who had been enrolled in a public alternative education school at any point (exposure group) to the 207,505 children who were only ever enrolled in traditional public schools in the same districts that had public alternative education schools (comparison group). Both groups were enrolled in their respective school types between 2007 and 2019.

None of the analyses we present in this methods brief, or the accompanying policy brief, demonstrate causality, rather, the results are descriptive. To ensure that we protect the privacy of individuals in OCID, we only reported numerators of more than 10 and denominators of more than 50. Although not ideal for understanding variations between groups, to preserve information, we sometimes combined individuals who were members of small groups when, otherwise, the information would have been suppressed. For example, we combined individuals who were identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander and individuals who were identified as Asian into 1 group to report information about the intersection of race/ethnicity, sex/gender, and disability.

Staff at the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) generated a list of schools in Oregon that have been active since 1999, including information about grades enrolled, program focus of school (e.g., charter school, public alternative education school), dates associated with shifts in program focus or grades enrolled, and institution identifiers. We used the date ranges and institution identifiers of schools that were noted as public alternative education schools to determine which students were ever enrolled in public alternative education schools, and to locate those schools within school districts. In order to generate our comparison group, we also used this list to identify students who had only been enrolled in traditional public education schools in the districts that had active public alternative education schools.

We used study identification numbers to link the focal students (public alternative education school students) to administrative records in child welfare, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid/Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) juvenile justice contact, and Head Start/Oregon Pre-kindergarten. Due to time constraints, we did not link the students in the comparison group (students only enrolled in traditional education) to administrative records from publicly-funded programs.

## Exposure to Cumulative Advantages or Disadvantages

### Sex/Gender

In 2018, ODE added an option for “nonbinary” on school enrollment forms. We were able to use this information in Table 1 of the policy brief, but we acknowledge that this might undercount students who were unable to select the nonbinary categories in prior years who might not have been enrolled in public school in the 2018-19 school year. We used the most recent information available about sex/gender for all students, which means that we “rolled back” the identification for students from the 2018-19 school year.

*Source: ODE*

### Race and Ethnicity

Most programs and agencies sharing data with OCID have different data definitions, collection methods, and reporting methods for race and ethnicity, which are not easily reconciled. To consistently report race and ethnicity information across data sources, OCID, in consultation with subject matter experts, developed a methodology to select information for individuals when there are multiple options within and across points in time. The OCID Race and Ethnicity Data Overview provides a more complete summary of that methodology.

The OCID dataset only includes children born in Oregon, which facilitates longitudinal examination of information collected beginning at birth throughout adolescence by state programs and services that share data with OCID. Because OCID does not include public school students who were not born in Oregon, some racial and ethnic groups might not be represented in the dataset in proportion to the population currently living in Oregon. Please see the Explore the OCID Population section of our website for more information.

OCID uses race and ethnicity information to describe disparities in outcomes among groups of individuals living in Oregon. Any association between race and ethnicity and outcomes does not imply that the social constructs of race and ethnicity caused that outcome or that there is a biological basis for differences between groups. Personal characteristics such as race and ethnicity often serve as proxies for experiences that are associated with different outcomes for subgroups, such as systemic racism, stress, poverty, or housing instability.

### *Comparison of Race and Ethnicity Information*

ODE’s method for making race and ethnicity attributions about individual students from school districts’ enrollment information is different from the method that OCID uses with cross-program data. Tables 1 and 2 compare how ODE reports the race and ethnicity information about the students in the analysis and how our method reports race and ethnicity information for the same cohorts.

**Table 1. Comparison of OCID and ODE Methodology for Determining Race And Ethnicity Categories for The Students who Were Ever Enrolled in Public Alternative Education Schools**

| RACE OR ETHNICITY CATEGORY          | OCID METHODOLOGY |                 | ODE METHODOLOGY |         |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------|
|                                     | NUMBER           | PERCENT         | NUMBER          | PERCENT |
| American Indian or Alaska Native    | 999              | 13.3%           | 266             | 3.6%    |
| Asian                               | 226              | 3.0%            | 152             | 2.0%    |
| Black or African American           | 494              | 6.6%            | 309             | 4.1%    |
| Hispanic or Latinx                  | 1,167            | 15.6%           | 1,539           | 20.5%   |
| Multiracial                         | <i>Not used</i>  | <i>Not used</i> | 497             | 6.6%    |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 83               | 1.1%            | 45              | 0.6%    |
| White                               | 4,529            | 60.4%           | 4,687           | 62.5%   |

Source: ODE, Oregon Health Authority (OHA), Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS)

**Table 2. Comparison of OCID and ODE Methodology for Determining Race and Ethnicity Categories for the Students who Were Always Enrolled in Traditional Education**

| RACE OR ETHNICITY CATEGORY          | OCID METHODOLOGY |                 | ODE METHODOLOGY |         |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------|
|                                     | NUMBER           | PERCENT         | NUMBER          | PERCENT |
| American Indian or Alaska Native    | 19,475           | 9.4%            | 3,031           | 1.5%    |
| Asian                               | 13,094           | 6.3%            | 8,297           | 4.0%    |
| Black or African American           | 10,247           | 4.9%            | 5,136           | 2.5%    |
| Hispanic or Latinx                  | 38,629           | 18.6%           | 50,435          | 24.3%   |
| Multiracial                         | <i>Not used</i>  | <i>Not used</i> | 13,214          | 6.4%    |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 3,486            | 1.7%            | 1,564           | 0.8%    |
| White                               | 122,574          | 59.1%           | 125,813         | 60.6%   |

Source: ODE, Oregon Health Authority (OHA), Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS)

### Proxy for Disability

In this analysis, as a proxy for disability, we used ever being eligible for individualized education plans (IEP), which is a school system designation of having a disability that interferes with a student's ability to learn. Other available proxies for disability in OCID include eligibility for Section 504 services, participation in Early Intervention or Early Childhood Special Education services, and information from Medicaid/CHIP claims data. We limited our exploration of disability in this analysis to students with IEPs during any school year of the students' records.

Any disproportionality of IEP status by all categories of race and ethnicity or sex/gender does not imply there is a biological relationship to disability, but rather may suggest that structural or interpersonal bias could contribute to differences in which students are identified, tested for, and labeled with a disability.

Source: ODE

## Exposure to Barriers to Health or Access to Resources

### Low Birth Weight

The percentage of newborns weighing less than 2,500 grams.

Source: OHA

### Exposure to Prenatal Tobacco Use

The percentage of newborns whose birth certificate notes that the gestational parent used tobacco during the prenatal period. This does not capture any other household or community exposure to tobacco.

Source: OHA

### Having a Medicaid-funded Birth

The percentage of newborns whose birth certificate notes that costs associated with the birth were paid for by Medicaid.

Source: OHA

### Maternal Educational Attainment of High School or Less at Child's Birth

The percentage of newborns whose birth certificate notes that the gestational parent had obtained a high school diploma, General Education Development certificate, or less education.

Source: OHA

## Exposure to Family and Community Poverty

### Individual or Community Eligibility for Free or Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL)

The percentage of students flagged by ODE as being eligible for FRPL; this could be an indicator of either individual eligibility for FRPL based on family economic circumstances, or school-wide eligibility based on a certain proportion of students in that school meeting the individual eligibility requirements.

Source: ODE

### Attending a Title I School

The percentage of students whose administrative records indicate that they were ever enrolled at a Title I school.

Source: ODE

### Experiencing Homelessness

Percentage of students who were determined to be McKinney-Vento eligible for any duration of an academic year. This designation included several living situations: shared housing ("doubled up"); shelter; motel/hotel; and unsheltered. This was a binary outcome; children either experienced homelessness or did not.

This indicator of experiencing homelessness first became available for individual student administrative records during the 2012-13 academic year; therefore, we do not have information about homelessness prior to that academic year.

Source: ODE

## Education System Designations of Supports, Barriers, and Outcomes Needing Extra Support to Learn the English language

The percentage of students whose administrative records indicate that they were ever eligible for services related to learning the English language.

Source: ODE

## 9th Grade On-Track to Graduate

The percentage of first-time high school freshmen who earned at least 25% of regular graduation credits by the start of their 10th grade year.

Source: ODE

## Experiencing School Discipline

The percentage of students with a suspension (in-school or out-of-school) or expulsion during any school year of the students' records. This category did not include removal of students to an alternative setting.

Source: ODE

## Geographical Designations

We divided counties in Oregon into 3 categories based on current population density: rural, urban, and the tri-county region.

- Rural counties included those whose largest city has a population fewer than 50,000: Baker, Clatsop, Columbia, Coos, Crook, Curry, Douglas, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Hood River, Jefferson, Josephine, Klamath, Lake, Lincoln, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Tillamook, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Wheeler, Wasco, and Yamhill
- Urban counties included non-Metro counties whose largest city has a population of 50,000 or more: Benton, Deschutes, Jackson, Lane, Linn, Marion, and Polk
- Tri-county region included the 3 counties comprising the Portland metropolitan region: Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington

## Program Contact

For the Medicaid/CHIP, TANF, and SNAP programs, we required that students or their families be enrolled in the program for a minimum of 3 months within a calendar year to consider them as having had contact with those programs. For child welfare removal, juvenile justice contact, and Head Start/Oregon Pre-kindergarten, we considered any enrollment or designation of administrative enrollment to indicate program contact. For substantiated maltreatment, we only used records that indicated that the maltreatment report was substantiated; findings that were noted as outside of this category were excluded from this indicator (i.e., indicated or reason to

suspect, alternative response to victim, alternative response to nonvictim, unsubstantiated, unsubstantiated due to intentionally false reporting, closed without finding, other, and unknown or missing). We chose to exclude the home visiting programs (i.e., Healthy Families Oregon, Babies First!/Maternity Care Management), Early Intervention, and Early Childhood Special Education programs from this analysis due to a lack of data for these programs for children born prior to 2008.

Head Start is a federally-funded program for children from birth to 5 years old, from families with low incomes. Service models depend on the needs of the local community and can be based in centers, schools, childcare centers, or family childcare homes. Models typically include components of preschool and early-childhood development, child health/mental health and nutrition, and parent education and family support. Oregon Pre-kindergarten (OPK) is a state-funded program that partners with Head Start to offer services in all 36 of Oregon's counties. For more information on both programs, please visit the [Early Learning Division's website](#).

[Temporary Assistance for Needy Families \(TANF\)](#) provides cash assistance to families with low incomes. The [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#) provides nutrition assistance to families and individuals with low incomes.

Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) are federal/state partnerships to provide free or low-cost health care coverage to people with low incomes who also meet other eligibility requirements. Oregon's programs are administered under the [Oregon Health Plan](#); visit their website for additional information.

*Sources: ODE, ODHS, OHA, Oregon Youth Authority (OYA)*

## Study Limitations

- This descriptive analysis only included children who were born in Oregon, because the OCID population is anchored to Oregon birth records. The OCID population includes approximately three-quarters of all enrolled Oregon public school students, although this completeness varies by demographic characteristics (e.g., sex/gender, race/ethnicity).
- Because this analysis was designed to be descriptive in nature, we did not explore associations of characteristics between those ever enrolled in a public alternative education school and those who only ever enrolled in traditional public schools. Disproportionality might be observed in this descriptive analysis, but could be explained by other personal and family characteristics in a more advanced analysis adjusting for relevant variables.
- Some of the characteristics included in this analysis were time-varying (e.g., family receipt of SNAP, TANF, and Medicaid/CHIP benefits are broken out enrollment per year of a child's life) whereas others were measured at a point in time (e.g., mother's education at birth). Point-in-time measurements offered a snapshot of a child or family characteristic at a particular phase in life, but did not allow us to account for changes in those characteristic over the child's life course.
- When assessing family characteristics, children were linked to the parents identified on their birth record; these parents might not be the residential or legal guardians of the child.
- Results rely on the accuracy and availability of administrative data, which were not collected for the purposes of conducting this analysis.

- Because the oldest individuals in OCID were born in 2001, we have limited information about graduation from high school. Therefore, we used the 9th Grade On-Track to Graduate measure as a proxy for understanding an earlier indicator for high school completion.
- The larger context and environment that the individuals and families live in and experience play important roles in opening and closing opportunities, and limiting or maximizing exposures to positive and negative experiences. This analysis included proxies for some experiences, such as poverty, but did not describe the complexity of individual, family, school, or geographical characteristics or experiences.

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## Appendix A. Supplementary Table

The table below shows numbers and percentages of students who had ever been enrolled in public alternative education schools by intersections of race/ethnicity, sex/gender, and disability with discipline events, eligibility for free or reduced price lunch, enrollment in TANF, and recorded experience of substantiated maltreatment. This table is a companion to Figures 2, 3, and 8 in the policy brief.

| RACE AND ETHNICITY                                  | SEX/GENDER & DISABILITY    | TOTAL FOR EACH ROW |                                   | EXPERIENCED DISCIPLINE |             | FREE OR REDUCED PRICE LUNCH |             | FAMILY ENROLLED IN TANF  |             | SUBSTANTIATED MALTREATMENT |             |
|---|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|-------------|
|   |                            | Number             | Percent for Race and Sex Category | Number                 | Row Percent | Number                      | Row Percent | Number                   | Row Percent | Number                     | Row Percent |
| <b>Total</b>  |                            | 7,498              |                                   | 3,570                  |             | 6,174                       |             | 1,076                    |             | 1,784                      |             |
| <b>American Indian or Alaskan Native</b>            | Male without IEP           | 370                | 61.8%                             | 232                    | 62.7%       | 340                         | 91.9%       | 63                       | 17.0%       | 98                         | 26.5%       |
|   | Male with IEP              | 229                | 38.2%                             | 141                    | 61.6%       | 179                         | 78.2%       | 47                       | 20.5%       | 62                         | 27.1%       |
|   | Female without IEP         | 336                | 77.1%                             | 154                    | 45.8%       | 310                         | 92.3%       | 63                       | 18.8%       | 91                         | 27.1%       |
|   | Female with IEP            | 100                | 22.9%                             | 54                     | 54.0%       | 96                          | 96.0%       | 33                       | 33.0%       | 32                         | 32.0%       |
| <b>Asian or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</b> | Male or female without IEP | 252                | 81.8%                             | 67                     | 26.6%       | 199                         | 79.0%       | <i>Too few to report</i> |             | 34                         | 13.5%       |
|   | Male or female with IEP    | 56                 | 18.2%                             | 30                     | 53.6%       | 42                          | 75.0%       | <i>Too few to report</i> |             | 13                         | 23.2%       |
| <b>Black or African American</b>                    | Male without IEP           | 149                | 58.7%                             | 101                    | 67.8%       | 144                         | 96.6%       | 26                       | 17.4%       | 44                         | 29.5%       |
|   | Male with IEP              | 105                | 41.3%                             | 83                     | 79.0%       | 101                         | 96.2%       | 46                       | 43.8%       | 46                         | 43.8%       |
|   | Female without IEP         | 182                | 76.2%                             | 89                     | 48.9%       | 171                         | 94.0%       | 30                       | 16.5%       | 53                         | 29.1%       |
|   | Female with IEP            | 57                 | 23.8%                             | 39                     | 68.4%       | 53                          | 93.0%       | 26                       | 45.6%       | 26                         | 45.6%       |
| <b>Hispanic/Latinx</b>                              | Male without IEP           | 437                | 69.7%                             | 262                    | 60.0%       | 413                         | 94.5%       | 42                       | 9.6%        | 82                         | 18.8%       |
|   | Male with IEP              | 190                | 30.3%                             | 141                    | 74.2%       | 180                         | 94.7%       | 51                       | 26.8%       | 55                         | 29.0%       |
|   | Female without IEP         | 440                | 81.6%                             | 173                    | 39.3%       | 403                         | 91.6%       | 67                       | 15.2%       | 101                        | 23.0%       |
|   | Female with IEP            | 99                 | 18.4%                             | 56                     | 56.6%       | 93                          | 94.0%       | 21                       | 21.2%       | 31                         | 31.3%       |
| <b>White</b>  | Male without IEP           | 1,579              | 65.4%                             | 728                    | 46.1%       | 1,164                       | 73.7%       | 147                      | 9.3%        | 284                        | 18.0%       |
|   | Male with IEP              | 837                | 34.6%                             | 555                    | 66.3%       | 708                         | 84.6%       | 147                      | 17.6%       | 242                        | 28.9%       |
|   | Female without IEP         | 1,691              | 80.7%                             | 474                    | 28.0%       | 1,224                       | 72.4%       | 168                      | 9.9%        | 351                        | 20.8%       |
|   | Female with IEP            | 405                | 19.3%                             | 186                    | 45.9%       | 342                         | 84.4%       | 75                       | 18.5%       | 132                        | 32.6%       |

Note. Students identified as Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native Hawaiian were aggregated in this table because there were too few students in each category. Within this race and ethnicity aggregation, males and females with IEPs and without were combined because there were too few students in each gender category.

Abbreviations. IEP: individualized education plan; TANF: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.