

A Native Hawaiian Focus on the Hawai‘i Public School System, SY2015

Ho‘ona‘auao (Education) Fact Sheet, Vol. 2017, No.1

Traditionally, Native Hawaiian communities were oral societies; history, knowledge, and instruction were passed from generation to generation via verbal narratives and chants. Observing, listening, memorizing, and imitating were fundamental skills of education. Reading and writing were introduced by the missionaries beginning in 1820. The establishment of a written Hawaiian alphabet between 1821 and 1826 led to the production of numerous Hawaiian-language documents and newspapers. By 1834, the literacy rate among Native Hawaiians was estimated to be between 91% and 95%.¹

Missionaries believed that teaching Western education within the Hawaiian cultural and social context inhibited the development of the student; therefore it was necessary for the “destruction of the old to prepare for the way for the new” (Charlot, 2005). This change in educational methodology also represented a purposeful transformation of the culture. The practice of using Western standards to validate Hawaiian culturally-based activities and behaviors led to the devaluing of the traditional Hawaiian system and caused shame and embarrassment among Native Hawaiians. Navigating the immense cultural shifts and the depreciation of Hawaiian values and traditions caused internal moral conflicts between preserving the old and embracing the new. These effects can still be seen today.¹



Photo credit: Weinberg Village

E mālama ‘ia nā pono o ka ‘āina e na ‘ōpio.

The traditions of the land are perpetuated by its youth.²

Based on federal data reporting standards released by the U.S. Department of Education in 2007, Native Hawaiian student data are classified as “Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander”³ within the Asian/Pacific Islander racial group. Disaggregated data is often not reported making it difficult to assess the conditions of Native Hawaiian students within the Hawai‘i public school system. Although Hawaiian-based education has made a resurgence in Hawai‘i public schools, the disaggregated data suggests Native Hawaiian students continue to struggle.

This fact sheet provides demographic and educational assessment information for the Kindergarten (K) through grade 12 Native Hawaiian student population in the Hawai‘i State Department of Education (DOE) and public charter school systems for school year 2014-2015 (SY2015). It begins with the enrollment of Native Hawaiian students in the public, immersion, and charter school systems followed by gender, grade, socio-economic status, and Special Education (SPED) status. Next are the results of the SY2015 Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBA) in Mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy. Data presented will compare Native Hawaiian students to non-Hawaiian students, as well as across each demographic group. Assessment results will serve as the baseline for any future comparisons as SY2015 was the first year of the full implementation of the SBA. Lastly, this fact sheet reports on middle school retention and high school graduation rates, followed by a summary of key findings, definitions, and works cited.

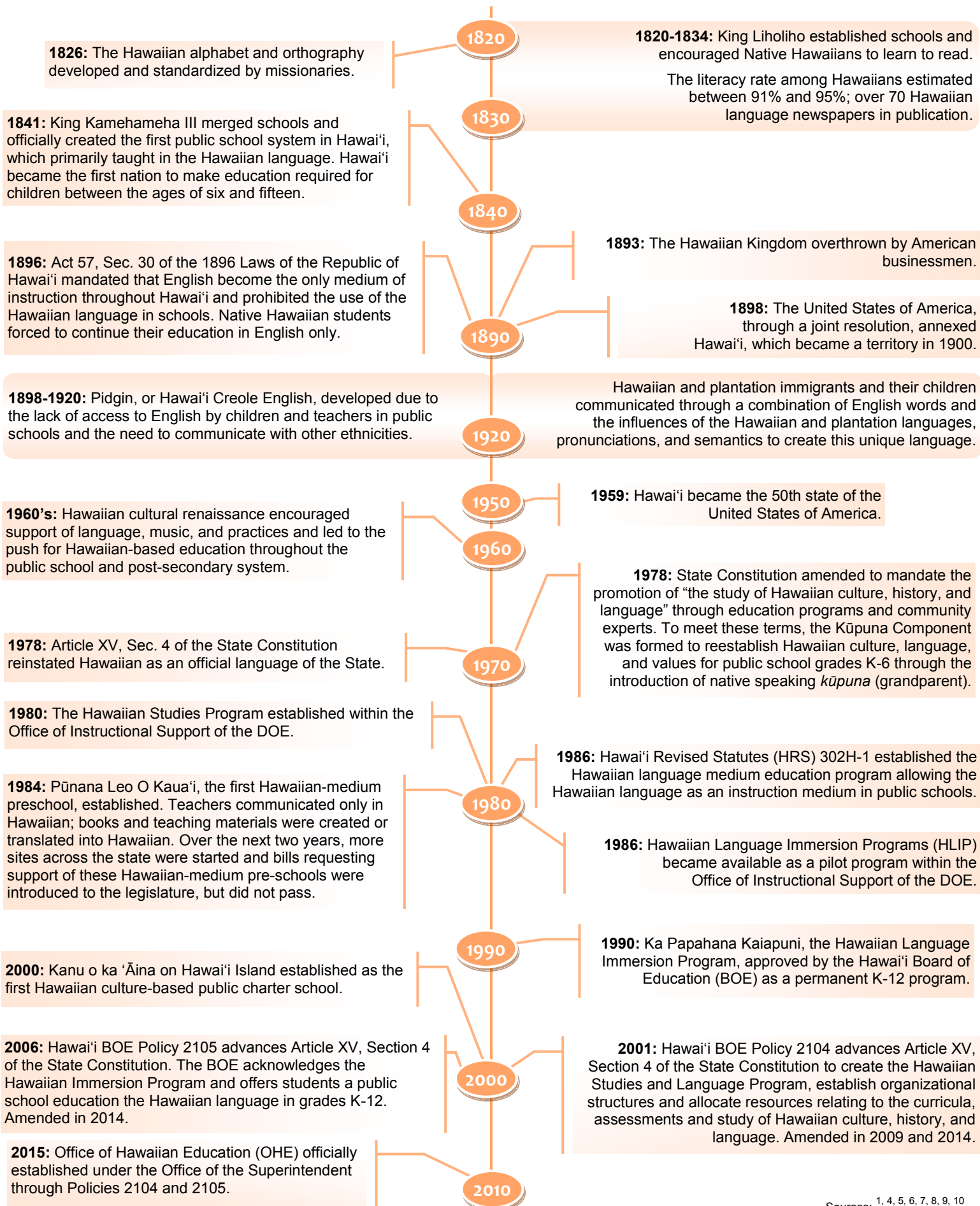
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A BRIEF HISTORICAL TIMELINE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN HAWAII



Sources: 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

NATIVE HAWAIIAN POPULATION IN THE HAWAII PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

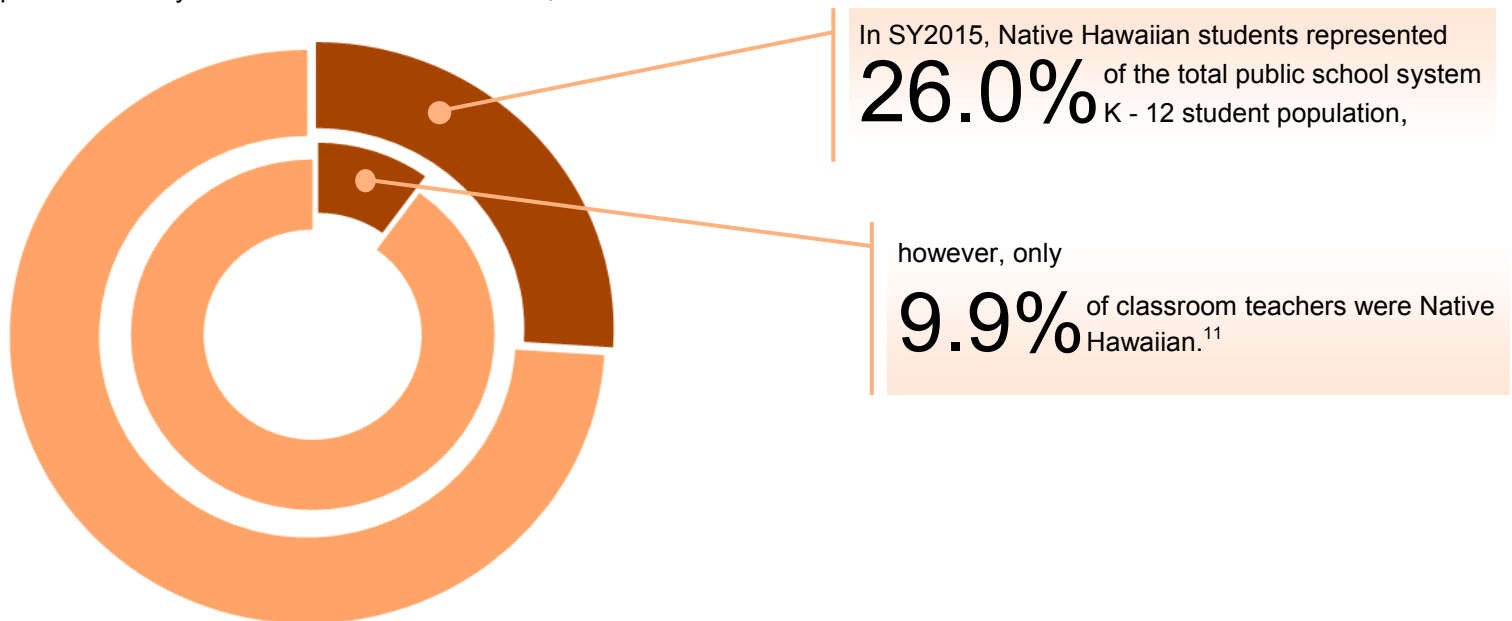
Currently, the Hawai'i public school system, governed by the Hawai'i Board of Education, provides education for over 180,000 children of Hawai'i. The Department of Education (DOE) oversees 40 complexes grouped into 15 complex areas encompassing 255 DOE elementary, middle, and high schools and over 170,000 students. The Hawai'i State Public Charter School Commission manages 34 elementary, middle, and high public charter schools across six of the eight major Hawaiian Islands for over 10,000 students.¹¹

The ethnic composition of Hawai'i's public elementary and secondary school student population varies greatly from the rest of the United States. Nationwide, racial distribution of public school student enrollment shows pre-dominantly White, Black, or Hispanic populations.²² Whereas, in Hawai'i, Native Hawaiian students represent the single largest ethnic group (26.0%); this is followed by Filipino (22.1%) and White/Caucasian (17.0%) students.¹²

Studies have suggested that teacher impact is the most significant school factor contributing to a student's academic success; estimated at two to three times that of any other school factor (leadership, facilities, services).¹³ The ethnicity of the teacher, in comparison to the ethnic composition of the classroom or school provides added value. Teacher-student relationships, developed with trust and respect and aided by matching ethnic traits, increase teacher support towards a student's capabilities, and decrease stereotypical ethnic perceptions.¹⁴ Research conducted by Egalite, Kisida, & Winters (2015) showed that student attendance and behavior, as well as achievements such as math and reading test results, is positively impacted by teachers with ethnic and demographic characteristics similar to that of their students.¹⁵

Prior to 1893, Native Hawaiian teachers made up 41.1% of the total number of teachers. The combination of non-Hawaiian teacher recruitment, lower pay for Native Hawaiian teachers, and the mandate of using only the English language in schools led to the decline of Native Hawaiian teachers.⁷ Although changes have occurred to help mitigate these events, the Native Hawaiian classroom teacher population still does not reflect the Native Hawaiian student population.

Figure 1. Percent of students and teachers in the Hawai'i public school system who are Native Hawaiian, SY2015



Source: Hawai'i State Department of Education; Office of Strategy, Innovation and Performance, Assessment and Accountability Branch. (2016). OHA_RequestOEC2014-2015rpt [March 18, 2016].

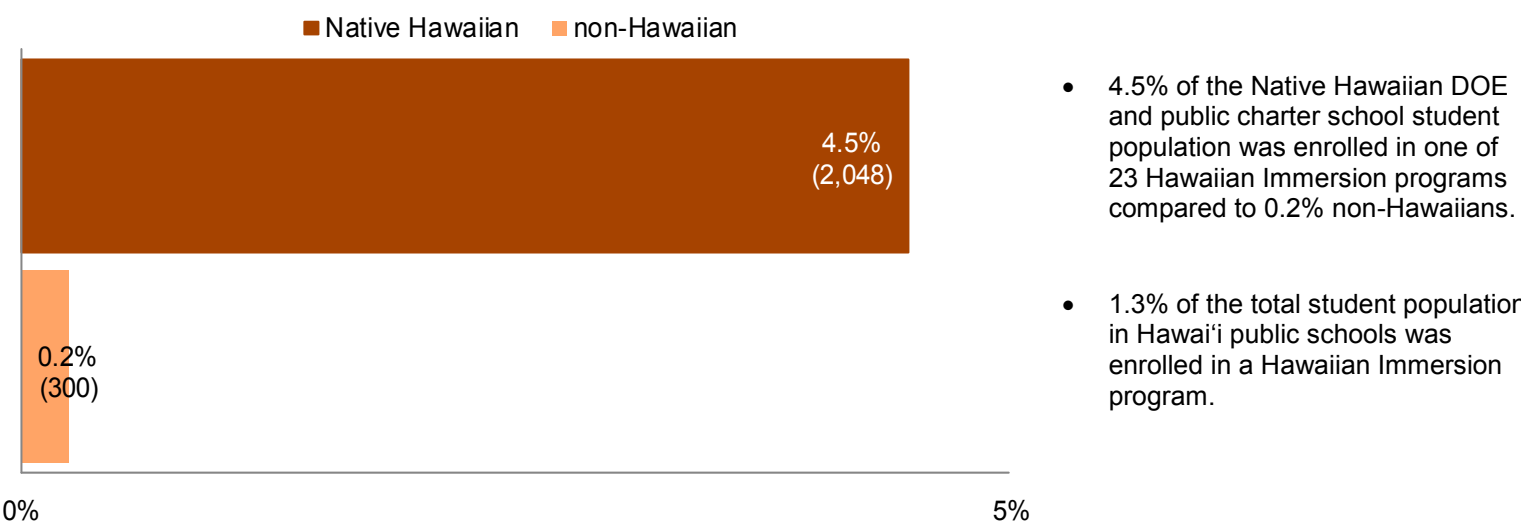
HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAM

Along with perpetuating traditions and customs, there are documented benefits of learning in an indigenous language. A white paper from the University of Oregon states that “second language instruction improves overall school performance, cognitive development, problem solving, and creativity.” This paper also notes that indigenous students taught in their native language also tend to have higher rates of retention and attendance, and a sense of positive well-being and self-esteem, thus increasing their chances of academic success. Indigenous students in these settings score higher on verbal English standardized tests, are able to solve complex problems, and develop better planning skills.¹⁶

With the introduction of non-Hawaiian-based education, the elimination of the Hawaiian language in schools, the repression of Hawaiian culture, and the decline in the Native Hawaiian population, the Hawaiian language was being threatened. The Hawaiian renaissance, a revitalization effort in the 1970’s, led to the legislature approval of two Hawaiian-based programs. The Hawaiian Studies Program, established in 1980, began with the Kūpuna Component developed by the Lili’uokalani Trust and fulfilled the 1978 State constitutional mandate promoting Hawaiian culture, history, and language through education programs and community experts. Pūnana Leo Hawaiian language preschools, established in 1984, were the first schools to provide education solely in the Hawaiian language and cultural context. With the eventual advancement of the preschool class into a mainstream Western-based public school system, parents and community supporters sought an avenue to continue Hawaiian culturally-based education within the DOE system. In 1987, HRS 302H-1 approved the Hawaiian language as a medium of instruction in Hawai’i public schools and established Ka Papahana Kaiapuni, the Hawaiian Language Immersion Program. Ka Papahana Kaiapuni schools, which are grounded on community-driven priorities, are known as a model for other indigenous nations seeking to perpetuate their native language. Ka Papahana Kaiapuni and the Hawaiian Studies Program are currently housed under the newly established Office of Hawaiian Education (OHE). OHE was established in February of 2014 through Policies 2104 (currently update to BOE Policy 105.7) and 2105 (currently update to BOE Policy 105.8) within the State DOE’s Superintendent’s office and is responsible for overseeing the Kaiapuni Educational program’s implementation.⁹

Today, Hawaiian immersion programs are available in grades K-12 across five islands; 17 in the DOE and six within the public charter school system. Hawaiian knowledge, values, and skills are taught through a Hawaiian cultural lens and instruction is delivered entirely in the Hawaiian language until grade 5 when English instruction is officially introduced. Programs are either accommodated on an English-speaking school campus or ‘self-contained’ where the full curriculum is delivered in the medium of Hawaiian.¹⁷ In SY2015, over 2,300 Hawai’i DOE and public charter school students were enrolled in a Kaiapuni program.

Figure 2. Percent of public school students enrolled in a Hawaiian Immersion program by Native Hawaiian status, SY2015



Source: Hawai’i State Department of Education; Office of Strategy, Innovation and Performance, Data Governance and Analysis Branch. (2016). OHA 2014-2015 [September 30, 2015].
Note: Counts include K-12 students enrolled in DOE and public charter schools: n=170,355; 10,147 not reportable.

Note. Data provided by the Hawai’i Department of Education Data Governance and Analysis Branch is considered ‘unofficial’ and includes 1) student enrollment data pulled on the date of August 13, 2014; and 2) student demographic data pulled on June 3, 2015. Therefore, certain data is unavailable for students who did not appear on the dataset on the date the data was pulled.

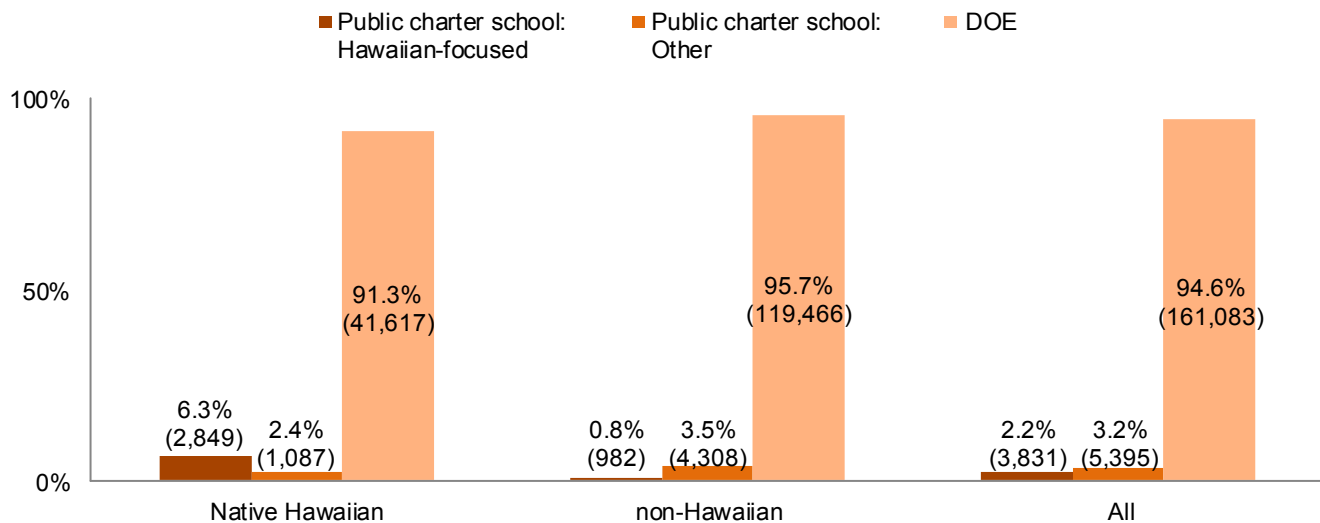
HAWAIIAN-FOCUSED PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

Hawai'i Public Charter Schools are privately managed, semi-autonomous schools within the Hawai'i public school system and are established to provide innovative educational options while still being accountable to student academic achievement. No tuition is collected and enrollment into a charter school is based on family choice instead of home district assignments. Although schools are independent in developing and delivering curriculum and exempt from some DOE regulations, they receive both state and federal funding and are held to the same federal mandates as the DOE schools, including accountability and assessment requirements.¹⁸ In SY2015, Hawai'i's public charter school system housed over 10,000 students in 34 schools across five of the eight major islands with Native Hawaiian students representing 40.4% (4,211) of the total public charter school population.

Although the first public charter school in Hawai'i was founded in 1996, it was not until 2000 that the first Hawaiian-culture based public charter school, Kanu o ka 'Āina on Hawai'i island, was established. Nā Lei Na'auao (NLN), the Native Hawaiian Charter School Alliance established in 2000, supports a method of education through Hawaiian philosophy, values, beliefs, practices, and language based on their respective communities and families. NLN was created by educators, community members, and parents associated with Hawaiian-focused public charter schools to provide an alternative choice in education.¹⁹

Today, Nā Lei Na'auao consists of 17 schools and educates over 4,000 Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian students. Native Hawaiians represent three-quarters (74.4%) of the Hawaiian-focused public charter school student population and one-fifth of the other public charter school population.¹²

Figure 3. Enrollment of students by school type and Native Hawaiian status, SY2015



Source: Hawai'i State Department of Education; Office of Strategy, Innovation and Performance, Data Governance and Analysis Branch. (2016). OHA 2014-2015 [September 30, 2015].
 Note: Counts include K-12 students enrolled in DOE and public charter schools: n=170,355; 10,147 not reportable.

- 8.7% of the Native Hawaiian student population in Hawai'i public schools were enrolled in a public charter school, compared to 4.3% of non-Hawaiian students.
- There were approximately 3 times more Native Hawaiian students (2,849) enrolled in one of the 17 Hawaiian-focused public charter schools than non-Hawaiian students (982).

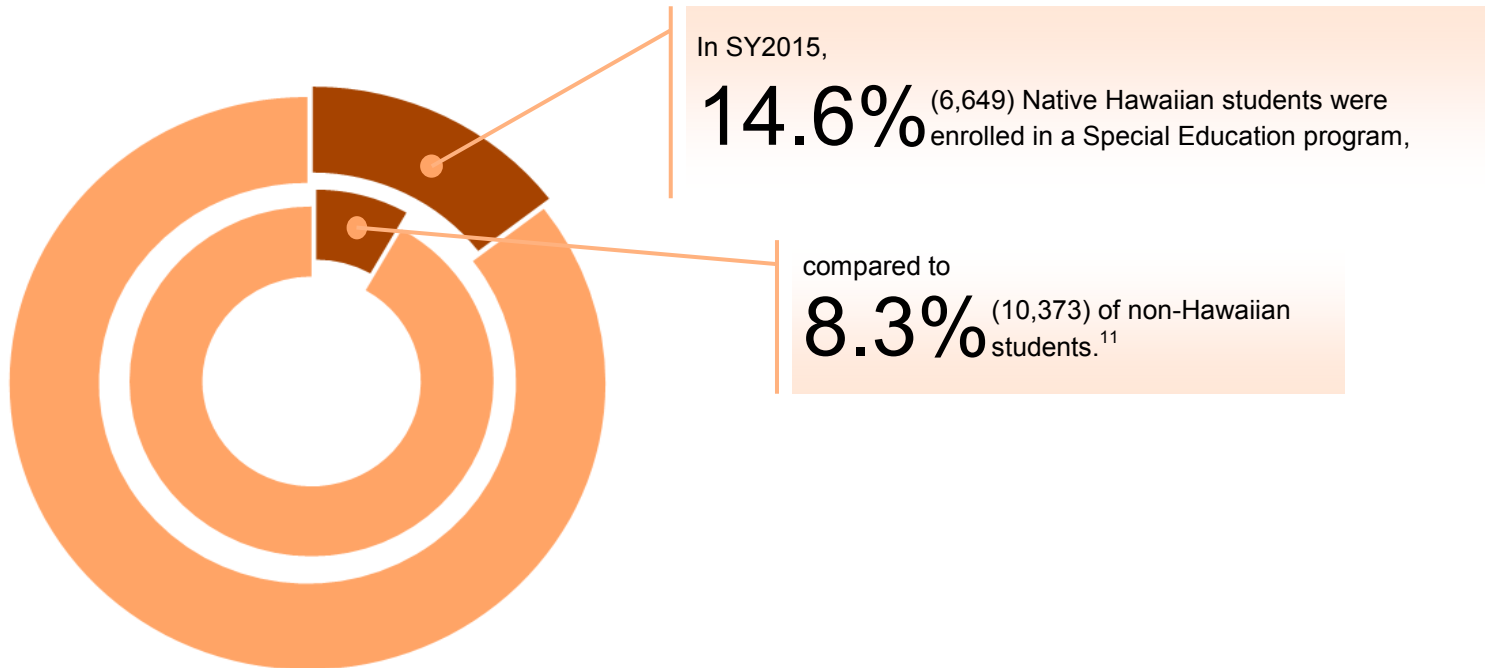
SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special education (SPED) instruction is centered on specific individual student needs and may include academic services, speech-language services, physical or occupational therapy, counseling services, and parent education at no cost to the parents.²⁰

The disproportionate representation of certain demographic or socio-economic categories within the special education student population has been an ongoing national controversy for many decades. The concern is the over-representation of certain groups of students in comparison to the under-representation of others across and within ethnic groups and genders, as well as across disability diagnoses. Swanson (2008) listed possible factors influencing disparate representations to include, but not limited to, health issues; the unequal access to resources and correct diagnoses; stigmas attached to cultural beliefs and ideals; or discrimination and bias (conscious or unconscious) based on race and class. Diagnoses more likely to be based on subjectivity, such as emotional disturbance and learning disabilities, versus those requiring a medical opinion have a higher degree of male and minority representation. Certain minorities tend to be underrepresented implying a more cultural and historical bias.^{21, 22}

Nationwide, approximately 9% of all school-aged children receive special education services.²¹ During SY2015, almost 10% (17,636) of all Hawai'i State public school students (K-12) received special education services. Native Hawaiian students represent 39.1% of students enrolled in a Special Education program compared to representing only 26.0% of the total public school population.

Figure 4. Percent of students enrolled in a Special Education program by Native Hawaiian status, SY2015



Source: Hawai'i State Department of Education; Office of Strategy, Innovation and Performance, Data Governance and Analysis Branch. (2016). OHA 2014-2015 [September 30, 2015].

Note: Counts include K-12 students enrolled in DOE and public charter schools: n=170,355; 10,147 not reportable.

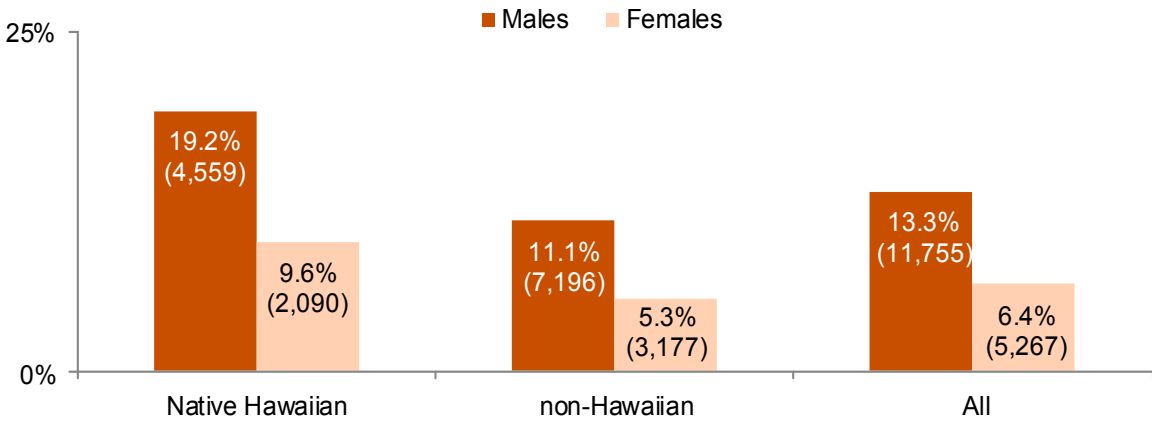
Data from the National Center for Education Statistics showed that in SY2013, only 79% of students nationwide receiving special education services graduate with either a regular (65%) or alternative/modified (14%) high school diploma, while 19% ultimately drop out of school.²² For those students in special education who are able to obtain employment after graduation, they are more likely to have entry-level jobs with lower wage earnings and limited opportunities for promotions.²³

GENDER/ETHNICITY

A report by the Education Research Center shows that there is a disparate representation in special education across genders, as well as historically disadvantaged groups across race and income levels. Males across all races are approximately 80-90% more likely than females to be given a disability diagnosis and are identified as needing special education services twice as often than females.²¹ As depicted by **Figure 5**, in SY2015, Native Hawaiian males were more likely to receive special education services than any other gender/ethnicity combination.

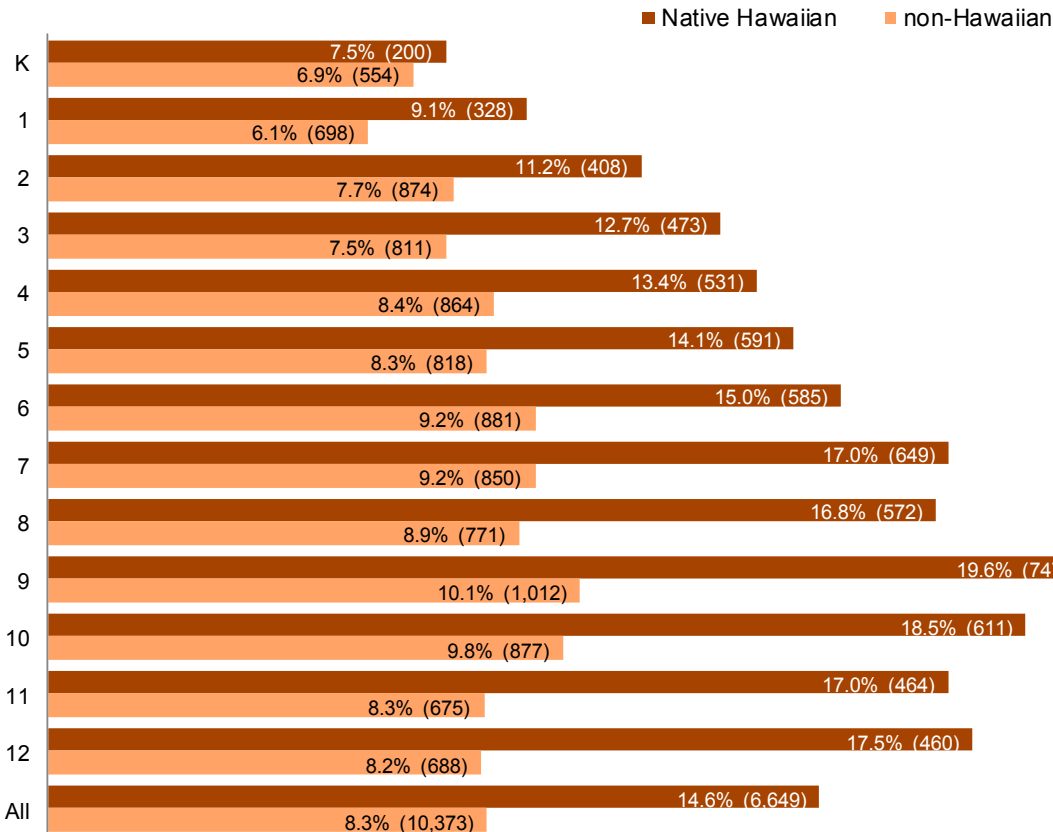
- 19.2% of Native Hawaiian male and 9.6% of Native Hawaiian female students received special education services, compared to 11.1% of non-Hawaiian male and 5.3% of non-Hawaiian female students.
- There is a larger gender gap in special education enrollment between Native Hawaiian male and female students (9.6 percentage points) than non-Hawaiian male and female students (5.8 percentage points).

Figure 5. Special education enrollment of students among Native Hawaiian status and gender, SY2015



Source: Hawai'i State Department of Education; Office of Strategy, Innovation and Performance, Data Governance and Analysis Branch. (2016). OHA 2014-2015 [September 30, 2015].
Note: Counts include K-12 students enrolled in DOE and public charter schools: n=170,355; 10,147 not reportable.

Figure 6. Special education enrollment of Native Hawaiian students by grade, SY2015



Source: Hawai'i State Department of Education; Office of Strategy, Innovation and Performance, Data Governance and Analysis Branch. (2016). OHA 2014-2015 [September 30, 2015].

Note: Counts include K-12 students enrolled in DOE and public charter schools: n=170,355; 10,147 not reportable.

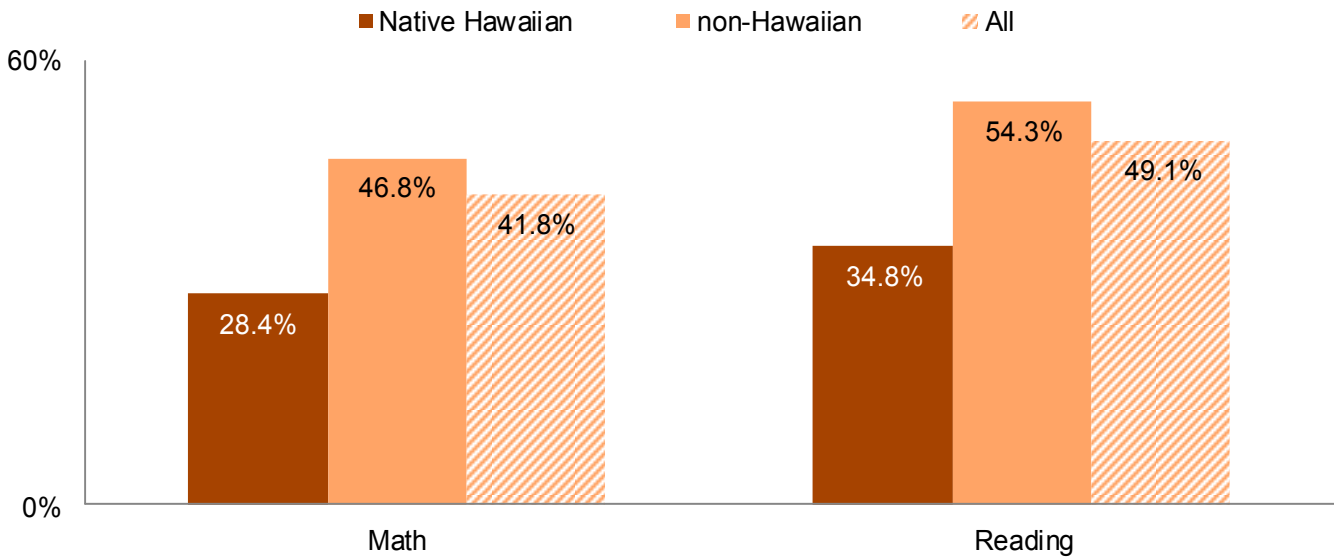
- The gap between the percentage of Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian students enrolled in a special education program steadily increases between K (0.6 percentage points) and grade 9 (9.5 percentage points).
- The largest gap increase between consecutive grades among Native Hawaiian students enrolled in special education is 2.4 percentage points and occurs between K (0.6 percentage points) and grade 1 (3.0 percentage points).
- Native Hawaiian students in grades 9 and 12 are almost twice as likely to be enrolled in SPED than non-Hawaiian students. These grades represent the largest gap between Native Hawaiians and non-Hawaiian students at 9.5 and 9.3 percentage points, respectively.

ASSESSMENTS

In 1983, the report, *A Nation at Risk* by National Commission on Excellence in Education, set in motion a push for national standards in education. Using the nationally developed concepts of these standards as a foundation, the Hawai'i Content and Performance Standards (HCPS) were created in 1991 by the Hawai'i State Legislature. The HCPS, which underwent three revisions, governed the standards by which the students of Hawai'i were instructed and on which assessments were based for over two decades. The Hawai'i Standard Assessment (HSA) measured student attainment of the HCPS in Mathematics, English Language Arts/Literacy, and Science between SY2003 and SY2013. In SY2012, the HCPS began phasing out and were fully replaced by the Hawai'i Common Core State Standards (Common Core) in SY2014. After a bridging period in SY2014, to align with the newly implemented Common Core standards, the Hawai'i Standard Assessments in Mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy were replaced by the Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBA) in SY2015. Science proficiency continues to be tested using HSA tests. Like the HSA, the SBA is administered at the end of the school year to DOE and public charter school students enrolled in grades 3-8 and 11. Scores are categorized into four achievement levels (Exceeded, Met, Nearly Met, and Did Not Meet). Proficiency is defined as those students scoring within the Exceeded and Met standard levels.^{24, 25}

Native Hawaiians scoring disproportionately lower than non-Hawaiians on standardized tests was documented as early as 1983.²⁶ SBA test results for SY2015 continue to show a smaller percentage of Native Hawaiian students than non-Hawaiian students are proficient in both Mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy.

Figure 7. Percent of students proficient in Math and Reading assessments by Native Hawaiian status, SY2015



Source: Hawai'i State Department of Education; Office of Strategy, Innovation and Performance, Assessment and Accountability Branch. (2016). OHA_StriveHI-HSA2014_SBA2015_GrowthJD [May 18, 2016].
Note: n=86,991; Math Assessments scores not reported = 3,317. Reading Assessments scores not reported = 3,375.

MATH ASSESSMENT

- 28.4% of Native Hawaiian students tested as proficient in math compared to 46.8% of non-Hawaiian students, a difference of 18.4 percentage points.
- The percent of Native Hawaiian students who tested proficient in math is 13.4 percentage points lower than the state compared to non-Hawaiian students at 5 percentage points higher than the state.

READING ASSESSMENT

- 34.8% of Native Hawaiian students tested proficient in reading compared to 54.3% non-Hawaiian students, a difference of 19.5 percentage points.
- The percent of Native Hawaiian students who tested proficient in reading is 14.3 percentage points lower than the state compared to non-Hawaiian students at 5.2 percentage points higher than the state.

GENDER

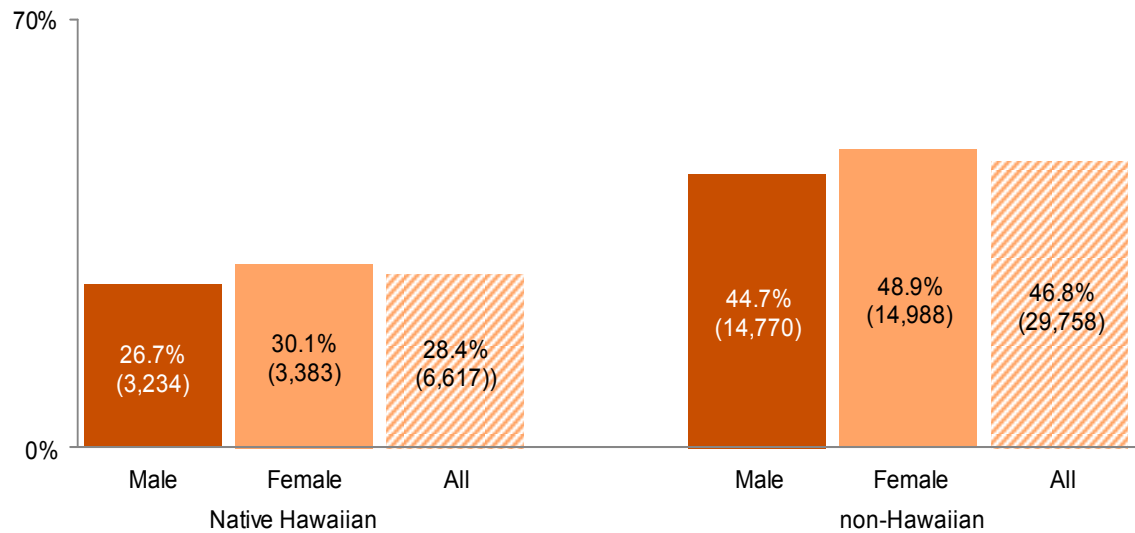
It has been generally touted that males are the higher achievers in math and females outperform males in reading. These stereotypical mindsets could impact the expectations of one gender over the other and set a precedence in the classroom. However, two separate 2010 studies completed by The Center on Education Policy (CEP) and the University of Wisconsin-Madison reported no significant or consistent gender gaps in math proficiency. The CEP study also showed a significant gender gap in reading proficiency where females outperformed males in all reporting states.^{27, 28}

Regardless of Native Hawaiian status, the difference between male and female proficiency rates in Hawai'i public schools were consistent in both math and reading, with more females testing proficient in both subjects, although at a lower percent in math than reading. There are significant gender gaps between the percent of proficient Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian male and female students in both math and reading.

MATH ASSESSMENT

- A greater percentage of Native Hawaiian females (30.1%) were proficient in math than Native Hawaiian males (26.7%) by 3.4 percentage points. This difference also holds true for non-Hawaiian females (48.9%) and male (44.7%), a 4.2 percentage point difference.
- The percent of proficient Native Hawaiian males and females was lower than non-Hawaiians regardless of gender (18.0 and 18.8 percentage points, respectively).

Figure 8. Percent of students proficient in math by Native Hawaiian status and gender, SY2015

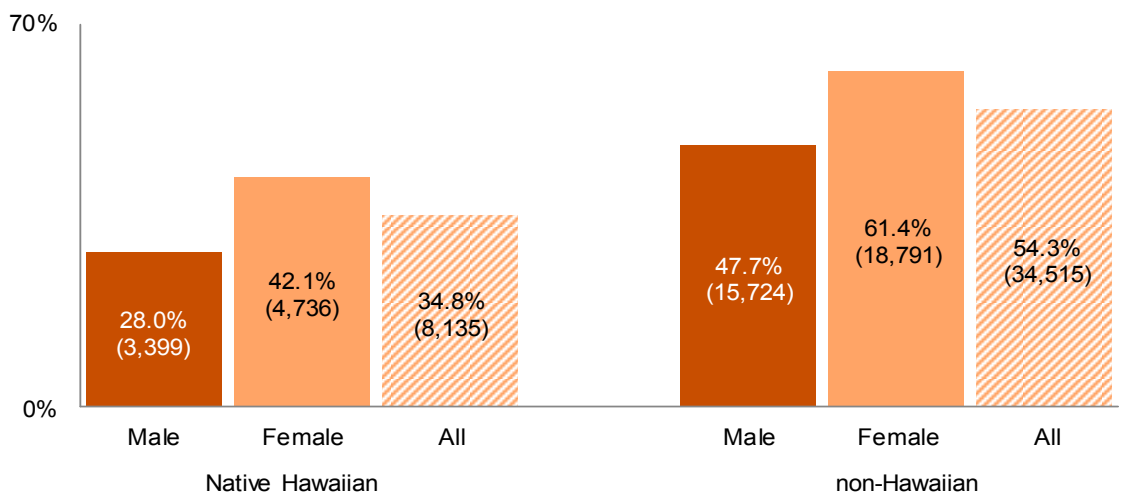


Source: Hawai'i State Department of Education; Office of Strategy, Innovation and Performance, Assessment and Accountability Branch. (2016). OHA_StriveHI-HSA2014_SBA2015_GrowthJD [May 18, 2016].
Note: n=86,991; Math Assessments scores not reported = 3,317 (Native Hawaiians = 1,435; male = 727, female = 708).

READING ASSESSMENT

- More Native Hawaiian females (42.1%) were proficient in reading than Native Hawaiian males (28.0%) by 14.1 percentage points. This difference also occurs between non-Hawaiian females (61.4%) and male (47.7%), a 13.7 percentage point difference.
- The percent of proficient Native Hawaiian males and females was lower than non-Hawaiians regardless of gender (19.7 and 19.3 percentage points, respectively).

Figure 9. Percent of students proficient in reading by Native Hawaiian status and gender, SY2015



Source: Hawai'i State Department of Education; Office of Strategy, Innovation and Performance, Assessment and Accountability Branch. (2016). OHA_StriveHI-HSA2014_SBA2015_GrowthJD [May 18, 2016].
Note: n=86,991; Reading Assessments scores not reported = 3,375 (Native Hawaiian = 1,369; male = 696, female = 673).

GRADE

Customarily, the concept of education involves students building on previous information to achieve current grade-level proficiency. Foundational learning generally occurs from early childhood through grade 3 and then built upon through middle and high school. If a student was to lag behind at any point, especially in the crucial early years, the ability to persist and consistently remain at grade-level becomes difficult, leading to complications and setbacks in overall academic success.²⁹

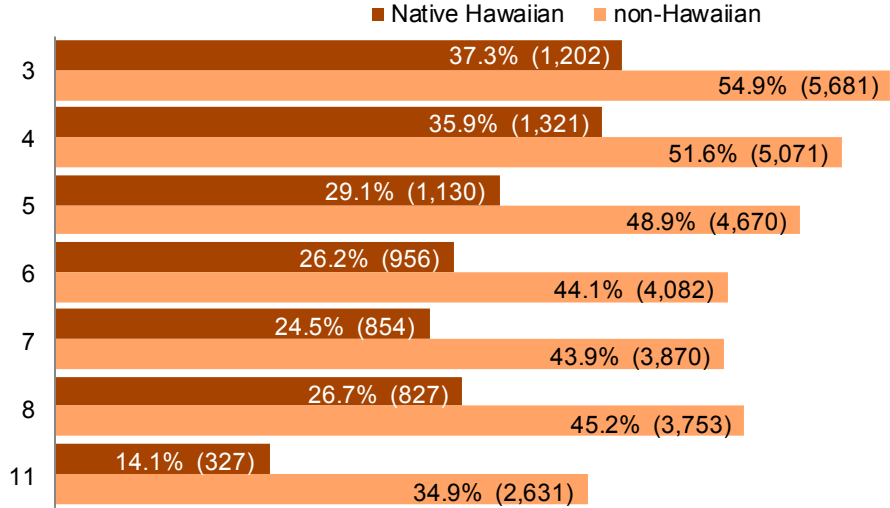
Math and reading skill levels in early grades are relatively dependable predictors of academic achievement and adult socio-economic outcomes, therefore, identifying struggling students early in their school experience is essential. There is a strong association between math skills upon entering school and math skills in middle school.³⁰ Likewise, almost one in three children with poor reading skills in grade 3 still had poor reading skills in grade 9.³¹

Figures 10 and 11 show drastic proficiency gaps in math and reading across grade levels among Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian students. The gap between the percent of Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian math proficient students is larger and steadily increases between grades 3 and 11 with the largest proficiency gap of 20.8 percentage points occurring in grade 11. The percent of reading proficient students follow relatively the same pattern and hold a consistent gap percentage between Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian students across grade levels with the largest gap of 21.8 percentage points in grade 11.

MATH ASSESSMENT

- One in seven Native Hawaiian students in grade 11 are proficient in math compared to more than one in three non-Hawaiian students.
- Native Hawaiian math proficiency percentages range from high of 37.3% in grade 3 to a low of 14.1% in grade 11, far below the non-Hawaiian range of 54.9% in grade 3 through 34.9% in grade 11.

Figure 10. Math proficiency among Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian students by grade, SY2015

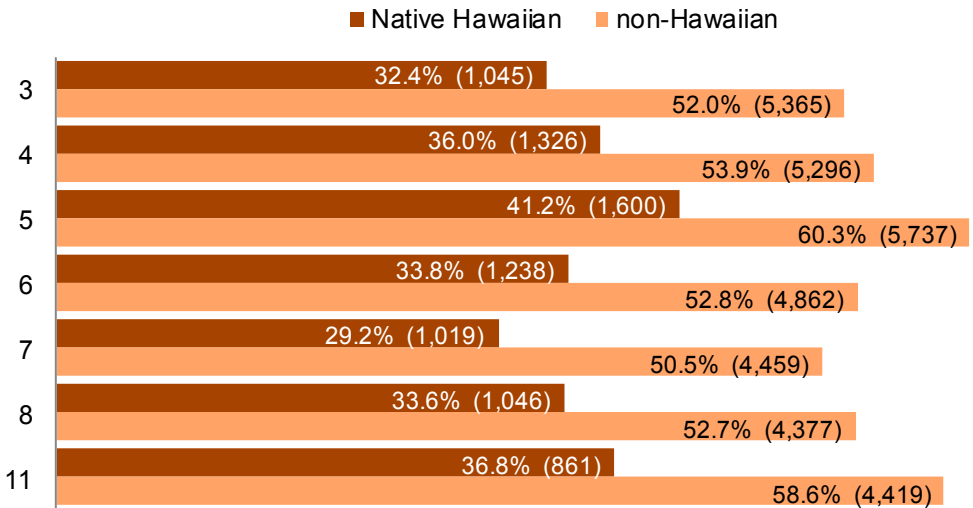


Source: Hawai'i State Department of Education; Office of Strategy, Innovation and Performance, Assessment and Accountability Branch. (2016). OHA_StriveHI-HSA2014_SBA2015_GrowthJD [May 18, 2016].
Note: n=86,991; Math Assessments scores not reported = 3,317 (Native Hawaiians = 1,435; male = 727, female = 708).

READING ASSESSMENT

- Almost one in three Native Hawaiian students in grade 7 are proficient in reading compared to more than one in two non-Hawaiian students.
- Native Hawaiian reading proficiency percentages range from high of 41.2% in grade 5 to a low of 29.2% in grade 7, far below the non-Hawaiian range of 60.3% in grade 5 through 50.5% in grade 7.

Figure 11. Reading proficiency among Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian students by grade, SY2015



Source: Hawai'i State Department of Education; Office of Strategy, Innovation and Performance, Assessment and Accountability Branch. (2016). OHA_StriveHI-HSA2014_SBA2015_GrowthJD [May 18, 2016].
Note: n=86,991; Reading Assessments scores not reported = 3,375 (Native Hawaiians = 1,369; male = 696, female = 673).

GENDER ACROSS GRADES

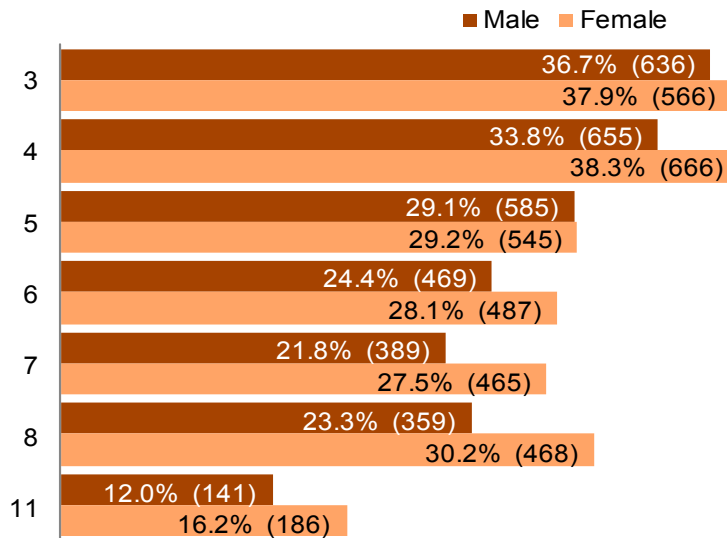
When looking at 2008 proficiency rates by gender and across three grade levels, The Center on Education Policy reported no differences larger than 10 percentage points among reporting states in math proficiency and parity between the amount of states where one gender outperformed another. This study also showed that although there is a narrowing of the gap between males and females in reading proficiency, there is still clear gender differences where females surpassed males in all reporting states.³²

Within the Native Hawaiian student population, gender differences and grade pattern tendencies follow the trends of the general student population nationwide. As shown in **Figures 12** and **13** below, the gender gap between Native Hawaiian males and females in math assessments does not exceed 7 percentage points and females also outperformed males in reading. Regardless of grade or subject, Native Hawaiian females consistently performed better than Native Hawaiian males on standardized assessments. Overall, Native Hawaiian female students outperformed Native Hawaiian male students in math by 3.4 percentage points (26.7% vs. 30.1%) and reading by 14.1 percentage points (42.1% vs. 28.0%).

MATH ASSESSMENT

- Almost one in eight Native Hawaiian male students were proficient in math in grade 11 compared to one in six Native Hawaiian female students.
- The largest decrease in percentage between consecutive grades for both males (14.0 points) and females (9.1 points) occurs between grades 8 and 11.
- Native Hawaiian male proficiency rate decreases from grades 3 to 11, with a small peak in grade 8, whereas Native Hawaiian females decrease from grade 4 with a slightly larger peak in grade 8.

Figure 12. Math proficiency rates among Native Hawaiian students by gender and grade, SY2015

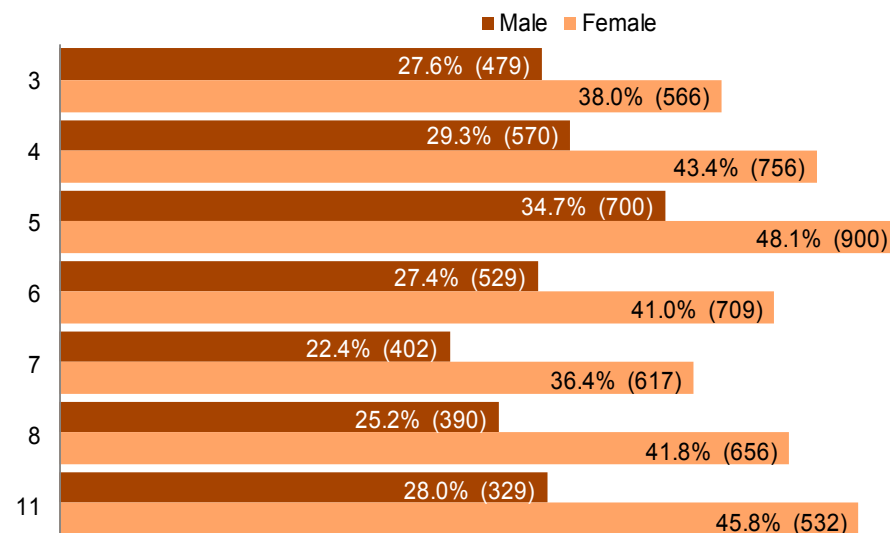


Source: Hawai'i State Department of Education; Office of Strategy, Innovation and Performance, Assessment and Accountability Branch. (2016). OHA_StriveHI-HSA2014_SBA2015_GrowthJD [May 18, 2016].
Note: n=86,991; Math Assessments scores not reported = 3,317 (Native Hawaiians = 1,435; male = 727, female = 708).

READING ASSESSMENT

- Less than one in four Native Hawaiian male students were proficient in reading in grade 7 compared to more than one in three Native Hawaiian female students.
- The largest decrease in proficiency rates between consecutive grades for both males (7.3 points) and females (7.1 points) occurs between grades 5 and 6.
- Both Native Hawaiian male and female proficiency rates increase from grades 3 to 5, decrease from grades 5 to 7, then increase from grades 7 to 11.

Figure 13. Reading proficiency rates among Native Hawaiian students by gender and grade, SY2015



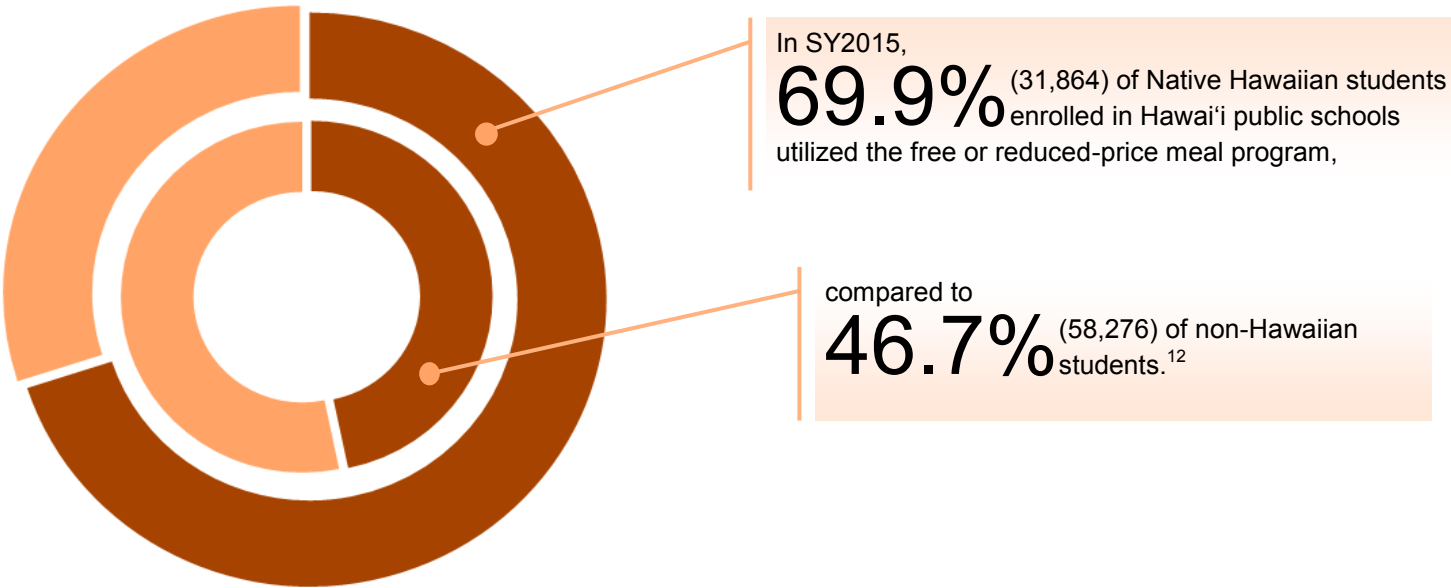
Source: Hawai'i State Department of Education; Office of Strategy, Innovation and Performance, Assessment and Accountability Branch. (2016). OHA_StriveHI-HSA2014_SBA2015_GrowthJD [May 18, 2016].
Note: n=86,991; Reading Assessments scores not reported = 3,375 (Native Hawaiian = 1,369; male = 696, female = 673).

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

Socio-economic status (SES) is measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation. Family income impacts a child’s academic achievement; due to limited financial resources, children from low-income homes are less likely to have access to academic tools such as school supplies, books or computers. As they fall further behind, they may also lack the ability to seek out academic support like tutors or educational assistance programs. This is further compounded by higher rates of behavioral, social, and health issues which lead to more absences from school. Along with the barriers associated with household poverty including poor nutrition and unstable housing, families living in high poverty communities may also be affected by the lack of quality schooling, availability of resources, and peer support.^{33, 34}

In the Hawai’i public school system, the free or reduced-price meal program is used as the indicator to determine socio-economic status—eligibility is established through family size and household income as reported by parents. According to the 2015 ACS 1-year estimates, the percent of Native Hawaiian children in Hawai’i under the age of 18 in families whose income fell below the poverty level was 18.6%, 4.4 percentage points higher than all children in Hawai’i (14.2%).^{35, 36} During SY2015, 52.8% (94,040) of all Hawai’i public school students (K-12) were eligible to receive free/reduced meals. As shown below, when compared to other ethnic groups, Native Hawaiian students were more likely to be economically disadvantaged as shown by the amount of students enrolled in the free/reduced meal program. While Native Hawaiian students constitute only 26.0% of the total public school population, they are 34.5% of all students using the free or reduced-price meal program.

Figure 14. Percent of students in the Hawai’i public school system who receive free or reduced-price meal, SY2015



Source: Hawai’i State Department of Education; Office of Strategy, Innovation and Performance, Data Governance and Analysis Branch. (2016). OHA 2014-2015 [September 30, 2015].
Note: Counts include K-12 students enrolled in DOE and public charter schools: n=170,355; 10,147 not reportable.

“Poverty is the single most powerful demographic factor that increases an individual student’s chances of dropping out of school.”

-National Education Association²⁴

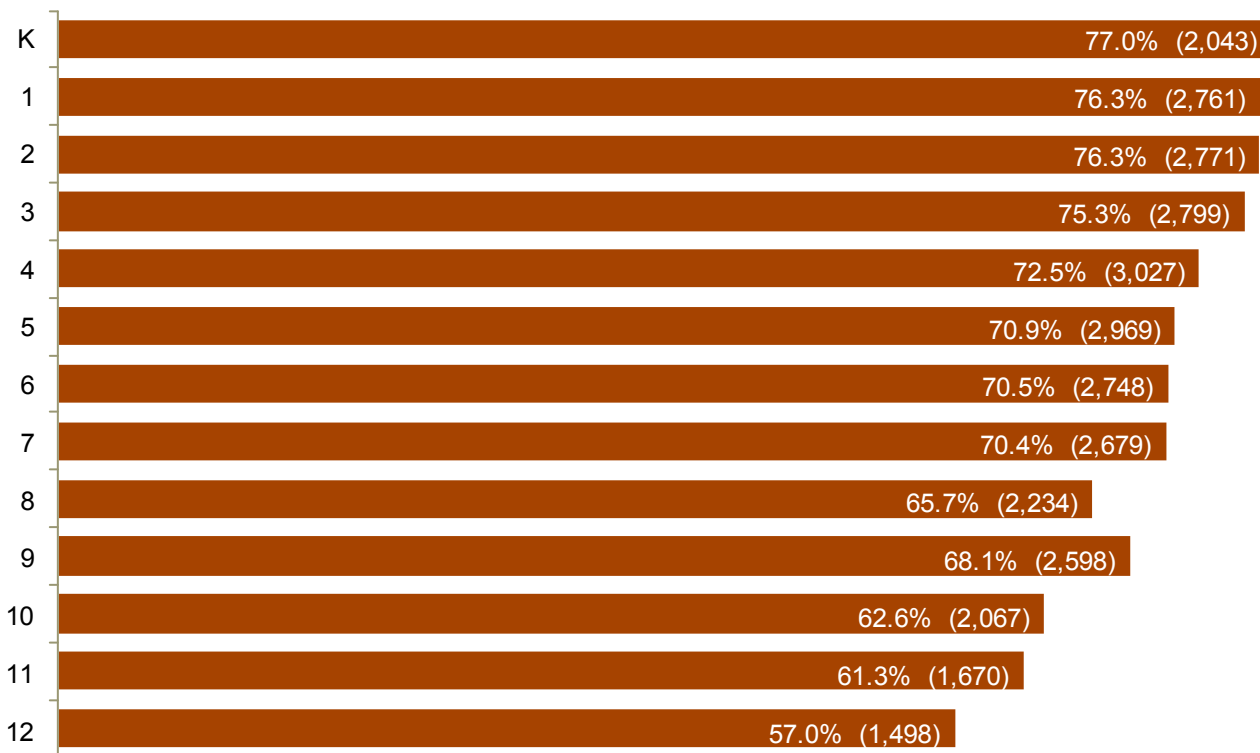
GRADE

The relationship between poverty and the academic success of children can also be impacted by the level, duration, and timing of poverty. Children living in poverty prior to and early in their school career are more likely to have lower rates of school completion than those who come into poverty later. Research shows that the academic history of students living in poverty from as early as kindergarten include decreased academic achievement, lower test scores, lower school completion rates, and often enter the workforce without a post-secondary degree.³⁷ In 2009, the American Psychological Association stated that “students from low-income families dropped out of high school five times more than students from high-income families.”³⁸

Independently, indicators of a student’s likelihood of dropping out of high school include higher levels of emotional and behavioral problems, low attendance and high retention rates, and low academic achievement; all of which economically disadvantaged students are at an increased risk of experiencing. These indicators can be attributed to (but not limited to) the inability to access parental, medical, social and academic support, and resources; the necessity of obtaining a job to supplement household income; the lack of daily essentials such as hygiene, housing, transportation, or food; and poor social choices (such as drugs, alcohol, and teen pregnancy).^{33, 34}

As shown in **Figure 15**, approximately three in four Native Hawaiian students have the possibility of encountering at least one of these hardships in elementary school, about two in three in middle school, and more than one in two during their high school career. The noticeable decrease in the percentage of economically disadvantaged Native Hawaiian students in high school could be attributed to early dropout rates, not due to the increase in their economic status.

Figure 15. Percent of economically disadvantaged Native Hawaiian students among all Native Hawaiian students by grade, SY2015



Source: Hawai'i State Department of Education; Office of Strategy, Innovation and Performance, Data Governance and Analysis Branch. (2016). OHA 2014-2015 [September 30, 2015].
 Note: Counts include K-12 students enrolled in DOE and public charter schools: n=170,355; 10,147 not reportable.

- More than three out of four (77.0%) Native Hawaiian kindergarten students start their educational careers living in an economically-disadvantaged household.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND PROFICIENCY RATES

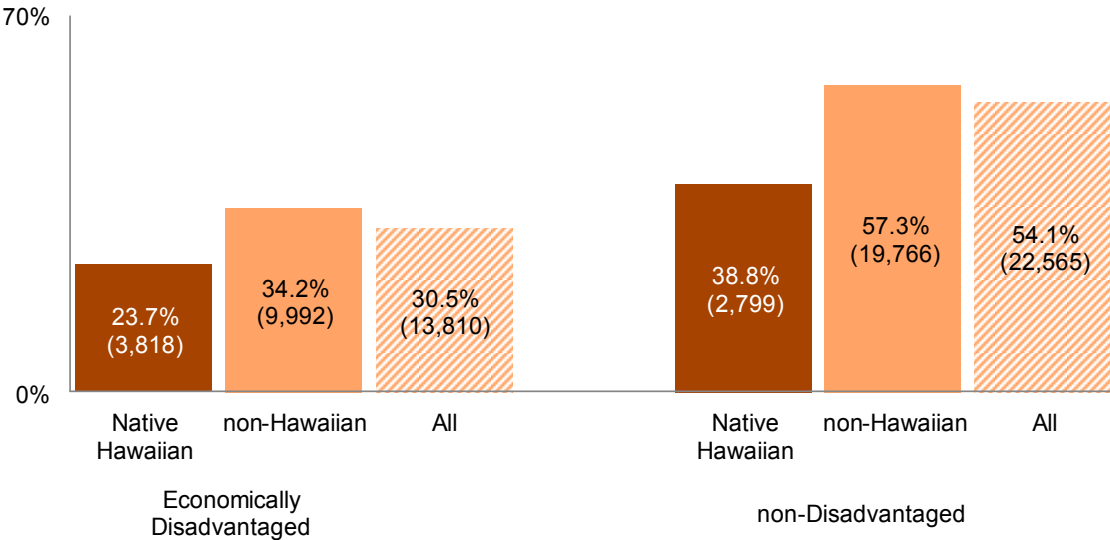
Children from low socio-economic environments enter their educational careers with most necessary math competencies, such as counting and recognizing basic shapes. However, they eventually fall behind by the end of middle school and lack the ability to succeed in high school math courses.³⁹ They also fall behind in acquiring necessary reading skills such as the ability to recognize letters, developing language skills, and reading comprehension. Although there was an increase in math and reading proficiencies in the last ten years nationally, the gap between socio-economically disadvantaged students and their counterparts has not changed.³³

Differences in proficiency rates between Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian students are greater among those who are not economically disadvantaged. For math, a 10.5 percentage point gap between economically disadvantaged Native and non-Hawaiian students (23.7% and 34.2%) and a 18.5 percentage point gap between non-disadvantaged Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian students (38.8% and 57.3%). For reading, there is an 11.0 percentage point gap between economically disadvantaged students (29.0% and 40.9%) and an 18 percentage point gap between non-Disadvantage Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian students (47.7% and 65.7%).

MATH ASSESSMENT

- There is a 15.1 percentage point gap in math proficiency rates between economically disadvantaged Native Hawaiian students (23.7%) and non-economically disadvantaged Native Hawaiian students (38.8%)
- There is a 23.1 percentage point gap between economically disadvantaged non-Hawaiians (34.2%) and non-economically disadvantaged non-Hawaiians (57.3%).

Figure 16. Percent of math proficient students by Native Hawaiian and economic status, SY2015

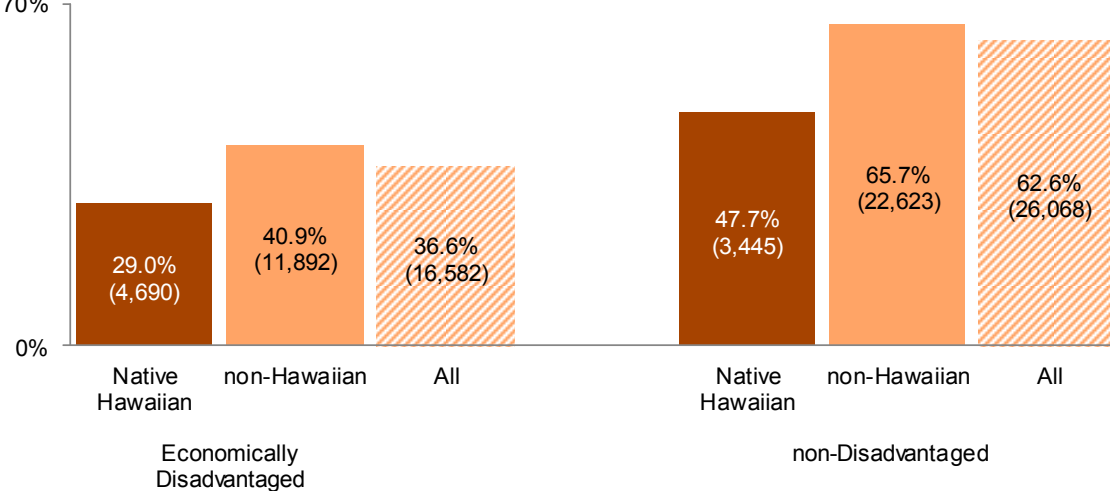


Source: Hawai'i State Department of Education; Office of Strategy, Innovation and Performance, Assessment and Accountability Branch. (2016). OHA_StriveHI-HSA2014_SBA2015_GrowthJD [May 18, 2016].
Note: n=86,991; Math Assessments scores not reported = 3,317 (Native Hawaiians = 1,435; male = 727, female = 708).

READING ASSESSMENT

- There is a 18.7 percentage point gap in reading proficiency rates among economically disadvantaged Native Hawaiian students (29.0%) and non-economically disadvantaged Native Hawaiian students (47.7%)
- There is a 24.8 percentage point gap between economically disadvantaged non-Hawaiians (40.9%) and non-economically disadvantaged non-Hawaiians (65.7%).

Figure 17. Percent of reading proficient students by Native Hawaiian and economic status, SY2015



Source: Hawai'i State Department of Education; Office of Strategy, Innovation and Performance, Assessment and Accountability Branch. (2016). OHA_StriveHI-HSA2014_SBA2015_GrowthJD [May 18, 2016].
Note: n=86,991; Reading Assessments scores not reported = 3,375 (Native Hawaiian = 1,369; male = 696, female = 673).

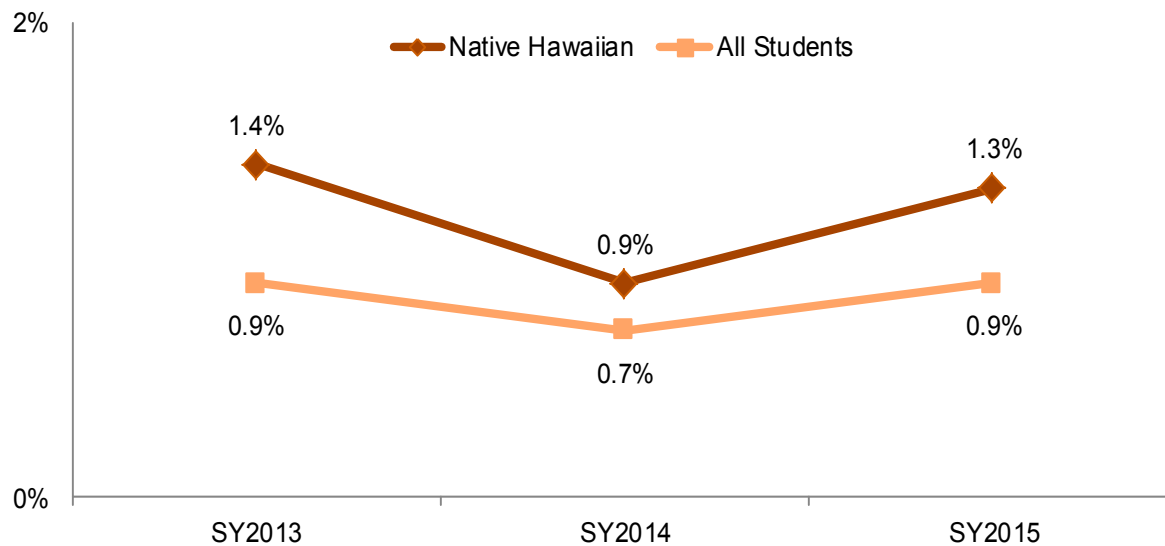
MIDDLE SCHOOL RETENTION RATE

The benefits of requiring a student to repeat a grade has been a subject of ongoing controversy since the mid-1960's. School accountability for student performance in recent years brought the debate back to the forefront. The concept that grade retention affects a student's development socially, cognitively, and academically has also been adversely argued.⁴⁰

One study completed in the Chicago public school system in the late 1990's showed that the time period in which retention has taken place has an impact on a student's likelihood to drop out. The earlier in their academic career in which they are retained, the more opportunity they have to catch up to their peers and the less likely they will drop out of school. The likelihood of dropping out increases by 8 percentage points if a student is held back in grade 8 compared to being held back in grade 6. Moreover, if a student is held back in grade 6, the student is less likely to be held back in grade 8.⁴⁰ However, a synthesis of grade retention research by Shepard and Smith (1990) states that, although there is an immediate impact, repeating a grade does not improve student achievement in the long run. On average, retained students perform more poorly when they are promoted to the next grade compared to if they were promoted without being held back. A study by the Association of California Urban School Districts in 1985, and referenced by Shepard and Smith (1990), show that students who drop out of school are 5 times more likely to have been retained, and students who have been held back twice have a nearly 100% probability of dropping out. The debate around students repeating grades is further compounded by the annual cost to school districts to retain a student. Shepard and Smith provide low-cost alternative ideas that are more effective than retention such as remedial help; programs after and before school and during the summer; and in-class aides and peer tutors.⁴¹

Retention and dropout rates are high among certain demographic groups who commonly have lower educational achievement rates including minorities, low-income families, and those receiving special education services. When looking at factors influencing high school dropouts, repeating a grade is the single most influential predictor, among other familial and school factors, of non-completion.⁴²

Figure 18. Percent of 8th grade students who are not promoted to the next grade level, SY2013-2015



Source: Hawai'i Department of Education (DOE). (2016). ARCH Accountability Data Center. Graduation/Retention. Retrieved from <https://adc.hidoe.us/#/graduation-retention>
 Note: Lower percentages are desired.

- In SY2015, 1.3% of Native Hawaiian students were retained in 8th grade, compared to the total public school population rate of 0.9%, a 0.4 percentage point difference.
- Between SY2013 and SY2014, the percent of Native Hawaiian students retained in 8th grade decreased by 0.5 percentage points, compared to only 0.2 percentage points difference by all students during the same time period.

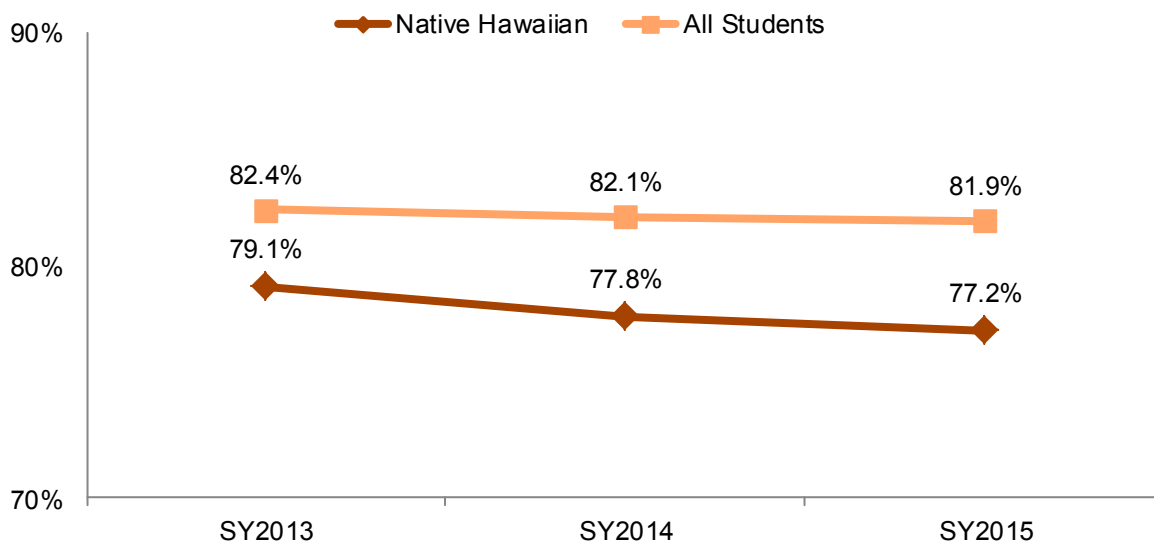
GRADUATION RATE

Dropping out of high school affects the individual, their families, and the job market through high unemployment rates, low wage earnings, high employment turnover, and decreased opportunity for upward job mobility. As a result of joblessness and low earnings, nearly 36.6% of high school dropouts are living in poor or nearly poor families. To supplement income, families rely on federal and state assistance in the form of food stamps, rental subsidies, and Medicaid benefits. Incarceration rates were also 63 times higher for high school dropouts between 16 and 24 years of age than those with a four-year college degree.⁴³

Based on data compiled by the National Center for Education Statistics, more than half (58.8%) of students between 16 and 24 years of age who were enrolled in school in 2013 and dropped out were not employed, nor actively seeking employment. The 2014 unemployment rate (percentage of persons in the civilian labor force who are not working and who made specific efforts to find employment sometime during the prior 4 weeks) among persons between 25 and 64 years of age with less than a high school education was at 11%; males at 9.9% and females at 12.9%. In 2014, males 25 years of age and older who did not complete high school earned roughly 25% less in median annual earning than those who completed high school; females earned almost 29% less.⁴⁴

According to the 2015 American Community Survey (ACS), 9.2% of Hawai'i's population 25 years and older did not received a high school diploma or its equivalent. This population earned 20.6% less median income than high school graduates and held a 16.7% poverty rate.⁴⁵ The ACS also showed 7.4% of Native Hawaiians in Hawai'i who are 25 years and older have not received a high school diploma or its equivalent.³⁵ The Hawai'i DOE had a dropout rate of 14.5% in SY2014 compared to the national rate of 6.5%.^{11, 22} Among all major ethnic groups in Hawai'i, Native Hawaiians in the public school system have the lowest graduation rate.⁴⁶

Figure 19. Percent of high school students completing high school within four years of their 9th grade entry date, SY2013-2015



Source: Hawai'i Department of Education (DOE). (2016). ARCH Accountability Data Center. Graduation/Retention. Retrieved from <https://adc.hidoe.us/#/graduation-retention>

- Slightly more than three of every four (77.2%) Native Hawaiian students graduated from high school in SY2015, a decrease of 1.9 percentage points from just two years prior.
- There is a 4.7 percentage point gap between the graduation rate for Native Hawaiian students and all students (81.9%) in SY2015.
- Between SY2013 and SY2015, the percent of Native Hawaiian students receiving a diploma within a four-year timeframe decreased by 1.9 percentage points, compared to only 0.5 percentage points difference by All Students during the same time period.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Although Native Hawaiians within the Hawai'i public school system represent more than one-quarter of the student population, their data are often aggregated with other ethnicities causing inequalities and imparities to be hidden within the larger picture. Although these concerns were brought to the forefront in recent years, disparities and proficiency rate gaps still persist. This fact sheet provides research and data of the status of the Native Hawaiian student population within the Hawai'i public school system.

Disparate Representation

- Less than one of every ten teachers are Native Hawaiian, compared to one of every four students.
- Twice as many Native Hawaiian males receive special education services than Native Hawaiian females.
- Seven out of ten Native Hawaiian students are enrolled in the free or reduced-price meal program.
- A higher percentage of Native Hawaiian students are retained in grade 8.
- Fewer Native Hawaiian students complete high school within four years of entering grade 9.

Proficiency Rate Gaps

- Math and reading proficiency rate gaps persist between Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian students.
- Less than one in three Native Hawaiian students tested proficient in math; less than four in ten tested proficient in reading.
- Native Hawaiian student proficiency rates in math and reading are almost 20 percentage points lower than non-Hawaiians.
- The difference in proficiency rates between Native Hawaiian females and Native Hawaiian males is larger in reading than in math.
- The percent of Native Hawaiian students testing proficient in math decrease by almost half between grades 8 and 11.
- Proficiency rates for economically disadvantaged Native Hawaiian students were more than 15 percentage points lower than Native Hawaiian students not identified as economically disadvantaged.

E hahai i ke ala o
ka hana paʻakikī.

Pursue the path of
challenging work.⁵⁰

Photo credit: Weinberg Village



TERMS

Complex: Consists of an elementary, middle/intermediate, and high school within a **Complex Area** attendance boundary.¹¹

Complex Area: Two or more complexes.¹¹

Economically Disadvantaged: Students whose families are eligible for the federal free/reduced-cost lunch program based on income qualifications; an indicator of school-community poverty.¹¹

Graduation Rate: Percent of high school students, including public charter school students, completing high school within four years of their 9th grade entry date.¹¹

Hawaiian Studies Program: Established in 1980 by the DOE to fulfill the 1978 State Constitution mandate that the “State shall promote the study of Hawaiian culture, history and language” (Article X, Section 4). This mandate was initially met through the **Kūpuna Component** in 1979. Today, the Hawaiian Studies Program is housed within the office of the Superintendent and provides support and resources to implement the Hawaiian education goals as outlined in Board Of Education (BOE) Policy 105-7 (previously **Policy 2104**).⁴⁹

Kūpuna Component: To revitalize the Hawaiian culture through language, native-speaking kūpuna were introduced into the classroom through this pilot project developed by the **Lili‘uokalani Trust** in 1979. This pilot project was eventually integrated into the Hawaiian Studies Program in 1980 and has since expanded statewide, serving kindergarten through grade 6.⁴⁹

Lili‘uokalani Trust: Created in 1909 by the late Queen Lili‘uokalani, Hawai‘i’s last reigning monarch. The Trust is dedicated to providing support and services to orphan and destitute children, with preference given to those of Hawaiian ancestry.⁴⁸

Native Hawaiian: For students enrolled in the public school system, race is based on the student’s enrollment application which is completed by the parent/guardian of each student.⁴⁷

Official Enrollment Count: Enrollment count taken yearly at the opening of the school year; may be different throughout the course of the school year.¹¹

Policy 2104 (Hawaiian Education): Advances Article X, Section 4 of the State Constitution, which requires the State to provide for a Hawaiian education program consisting of language, culture, and history in the public schools. This policy therefore expressly recognizes that Hawaiian language, culture and history be an integral part of Hawai‘i’s education standards for all students in grades K-12. This policy applies to both DOE and charter schools; however, individual charter schools may request a waiver from the State Board of Education (BOE). **Policy 2104** has been renumbered Policy 105-7. (Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Advocacy Division, personal communication, April 12, 2017)

Policy 2105 (Ka Papahana Kaiapuni): Advances Article XV, Section 4 of the State Constitution, which recognizes Hawaiian as a co-official language of the State along with English. The Kaiapuni Educational Program offers students a public school education in the medium of the Hawaiian language in grades K-12. This policy applies to both DOE and charter schools; however, individual charter schools may request a waiver from the BOE. **Policy 2105** has been renumbered Policy 105-8. (Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Advocacy Division, personal communication, April 12, 2017)

Retention Rate: Percent of 8th grade students who are not promoted to the next grade level the following year.¹¹

Unemployment Rate: The percentage of persons in the civilian labor force who are not working and who made specific efforts to find employment sometime during the prior 4 weeks.⁴⁴

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