

Equity Study for Cuba Independent School District (CISD)

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Dec. 1, 2023

DRAFT FINAL REPORT

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1. Executive Summary

Notwithstanding and in some ways because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Cuba Independent School District made *significant* progress toward achieving equitable outcomes for students and staff between 2018 and 2023. The progress is measured both by reduction of quantitative gaps, as well as qualitative interviews with various stakeholders.

However, stakeholders have adopted change and the accelerated approach to achieving equity with varying levels of buy-in. Progress will continue with:

1. a continued laser focus on equity by the Superintendent and School Board;
2. standardized collection of equity-related outcome measures (including traditional ones such as attendance, test scores, and graduation rates, as well as school discipline data, access to health care, and participation in extracurricular activities such as sports and clubs);
3. annual review of desired outcome measures;
4. ongoing training about the importance of equity, inclusion, and belonging to staff, faculty, students, and families;
5. continued communication of community values around equity, inclusion, and belonging;
6. continued, swift responses to biased words and behavior by holding actors accountable for their words and actions; and
7. planning ahead and predicting new challenges and opportunities regarding equity.

Compliance with these recommendations also will position the District well in terms of compliance with the *Yazzie/Martinez* decision and potential claims of discrimination by affected individuals.¹

¹ In October 2023, New Mexico State Attorney General Raul Torrez announced he was creating a civil rights division within the agency, and that division that will work to hold the government accountable for compliance with *Yazzie/Martinez* or else face lawsuits.

“Equality requires acknowledgement of inequality.”
- Justice Sotomayor (dissenting) in *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard/UNC*

II. Introduction and Context

As part of a multi-year strategic effort to help students obtain a solid, equal, and equitable education, the Cuba Independent School District School Board (CISD School Board) decided to assess its progress toward achieving equitable outcomes for students. This report originated from a request from the Board to shine a “light” on the data collected in 2019. The data showed a number of inequities, including between students, on campus, hiring practices, equal pay, preferential treatment for those in the local community, and harsh practices for Native American students and/or students whose families did not work in the school and/or did not have power in an economic structure (Navarrete, 2019; internal surveys, 2020; UNM Professors, 2021). As a result of the data sharing, efforts were made to ensure that *all* students had opportunities to be fully involved in the education system, rather than special opportunities being reserved for particular students on the basis of familial and other relationships. This report builds upon and is unique from the others commissioned by the Board because it attempts to situate data with a legal lens to tell the story of a colonized and learned power system.

In September 2022, the CISD School Board and Superintendent Dr. Karen Sanchez-Griego hired Professor Maryam Ahranjani to conduct an equity study for CISD over the five-year period starting with the 2018-2019 academic year and ending with the 2022-2023 academic year. They hired Professor Ahranjani and her team to describe progress and identify challenges to equitable access to education for students in all three CISD schools.

The research team included Professor [Maryam Ahranjani](#), Maria Trujillo, and Jamshed Jehangir.

Maryam Ahranjani

Professor Ahranjani is a tenured professor of law at the University of New Mexico School of Law. Her primary areas of teaching and writing are criminal law and procedure, constitutional law, and education law. She has worked in and with school districts across the country and abroad in various capacities, including through the Marshall-Brennan Constitutional Literacy Project, as a developer of law-related education curriculum, and as a volunteer teacher. A first generation American born to Iranian immigrants, she earned her BSEd from Northwestern University, JD from American University Washington College of Law, and LLM from the University of Pennsylvania Law School.

Maria Trujillo

Maria is a rising third-year law student at the University of New Mexico School of Law. She earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration with a dual concentration in management information systems and human resources from the Anderson School of Management at UNM. She worked at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) beginning in high school and retained the position through her undergrad program. After graduation she transitioned from an intern position to a full-time position at LANL. While at LANL she worked as a communications

specialist, focusing on web design and technical editing. She also has experience working with American Systems Corporation, a Department of Defense contractor, where she works as a technical editor.

Maria is from Coyote, a rural town nestled in the mountains of Northern New Mexico. She comes from a tight-knit family that has been in the area for generations.

Jamshed Jehangir

Jamshed Jehangir is a recent graduate of the University of New Mexico School of Law. He was born and raised outside Chicago, Illinois, and received his undergraduate degree in history from the University of Miami. After graduating, Jamshed served as an Officer in the U.S. Marine Corps, where he led a platoon of 50 Marines before accepting a position to write and review policy and best-practices for his unit of 14,000 personnel. After his military service, he moved to Albuquerque to work as a legal assistant for the Department of the Interior (DOI). At the DOI Jamshed guided families and individuals through the complex process of probating Indian trust lands across the western United States. After taking the bar exam, Jamshed began working at the Law Office of the Public Defender in Albuquerque, where he lives with his wife, two cats, and one dog.

The five-year period of study by the research team aligns with Dr. Griego's leadership in the District and immediately follows the 2018 First Judicial District consolidated case of *Yazzie/Martinez v. State of New Mexico*. In that landmark decision, Judge Sarah Singleton ruled that the state was failing to provide "at-risk" students - especially low-income, Native American, English language learner (ELL), and students with disabilities - their right to education guaranteed under the New Mexico Constitution. In particular, the state was failing to fund programs and services necessary for at-risk students to be college and career ready.

Judge Singleton ruled that students ought to be college and career ready upon graduation. As evidence that the state was failing to meet that threshold, she cited New Mexico's low graduation rate (70% - the lowest in the nation at the time), low proficiency rates in reading and math (70% of New Mexico students could not read or do math at grade level), and high rates of college remediation (almost 50% of those students who did attend college needed remedial courses). In the decision, Judge Singleton instructed districts to be concerned with both equality and, more importantly, equity (that is, equitable outcomes). The case aligns with similar decisions in other states that have led to improved outcomes for all children.

In addition to the *Yazzie/Martinez* decision, many New Mexico state laws and federal law promote equity in programs receiving public funding, including the following:

- **Article XII, Education Clause, from the New Mexico Constitution:** "A *uniform* system of free public schools *sufficient* for the education of, and open to, all the children of school age in the state shall be established and maintained" (emphasis added).
- **Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act** prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin within any school receiving federal financial assistance. Incidents of

intentional disparate treatment, which often appears as race-based harassment, can lead to a loss in federal funding.

- The **Bilingual Multicultural Education Act (1973)** requires schools to implement bilingual education programs to both develop kids' abilities with a second language and also to foster equitable and culturally relevant learning environments.
- The **Indian Education Act (IEA) (2003)** requires school districts to implement policies and practices to ensure an equitable and culturally relevant learning environment for Indian children.
- The **Hispanic Education Act (HEA) (2010)** created an advisory council within the DOE to develop and implement systems that close the achievement gap, increase graduation rates, and increase post-secondary enrollment.
- In *Yazzie/Martinez v. State of New Mexico (2018)*, the New Mexico First Judicial District Court held that the state had failed to provide a public school education that prepares students for college and careers in violation of the NM Constitution's Education Clause. This included violations of the IEA and HEA.
- The **Black Education Act (BEA) (2021)** created an advisory council similar to that of the HEA but, additionally, explicitly mandates combatting discrimination and racism and sustaining equitable and culturally responsive learning environments.
- **New Mexico Human Rights Act (2021) (HRA)**,² allows for claims for violations of civil rights protected by the Bill of Rights under the New Mexico Constitution (removing qualified immunity for public bodies and persons acting on behalf of public bodies).
- **Title VI, Part A, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**³, requires "ensuring that programs that serve Indian children are of the highest quality and provide for not only the basic elementary and secondary educational needs, but also the unique educational and culturally related academic needs of these children. It is further the policy of the United States to ensure that Indian children do not attend school in buildings that are dilapidated or deteriorating, which may negatively affect the academic success of such children."

In many ways, CISD is the epicenter of the *Yazzie/Martinez* case. New Mexico in general and the region that feeds into CISD in particular enjoy rich cultural and linguistic traditions, including Navajo (Diné Bizaad or Diné) and Spanish. The natural beauty and resources of the state and district are plentiful. Students learn about their cultures and languages at home, in their communities, and, because of changes in the law, in public school as well. These strengths are also accompanied by challenges related to rurality, economic poverty, systemic structural racism within school districts, and other factors.

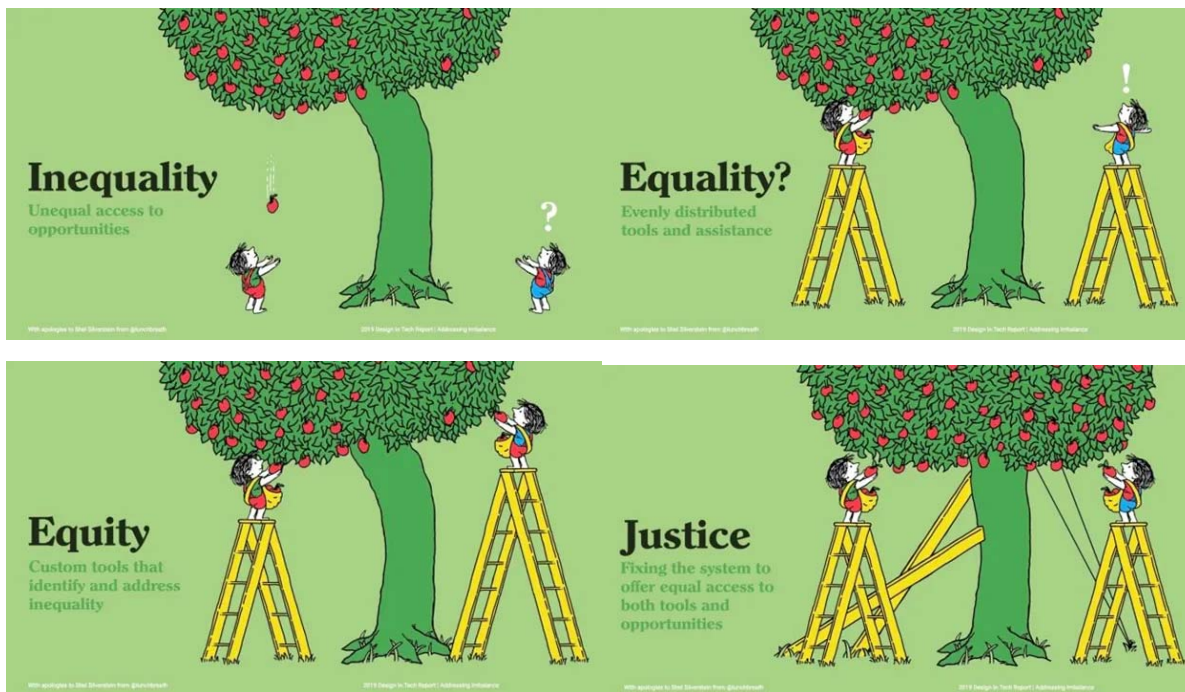
² <https://casetext.com/statute/new-mexico-statutes-1978/chapter-41-torts/article-4a-new-mexico-civil-rights/section-41-4a-3-claim-for-violation-of-rights-established-pursuant-to-the-bill-of-rights-of-the-constitution-of-new-mexico>

³ [Title VI Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native Education - Office of Elementary and Secondary Education](#)

Nearly 100% of CISD students qualify for free and reduced lunch. The economy of the communities feeding into CISD have struggled due to the departure of mining, logging, and other businesses from the area in recent years. Additionally, approximately 16-18% of students in the District have diagnosed disabilities. Total enrollment in the District across its elementary, middle, and high schools increased every year during the study period and was 667 students in 2022-2023. Due to a combination of “risk factors” for academic success, CISD is ranked 89th out of 89 districts in New Mexico, a state that is consistently ranked 50th out of 50 states in the United States of America, for at-risk students.

Because of student outcomes across the state and in the district, the *Yazzie* and *Martinez* lawsuits (eventually consolidated into one) sought to and did establish a judicially-recognized right to education under the state constitution *and* a finding that the quality of education did not meet the requirements for a “uniform and adequate education” required by the state constitution’s education clause.

Wilhelmina Yazzie, a Navajo mother of three, served as one of the original plaintiffs. The CISD School Board was also a plaintiff in the case against the State of New Mexico (specifically the Public Education Department and the legislature). The court focused on four separate and sometimes overlapping groups of underserved students (Native American, low-income, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities). In effect, almost all the students in CISD fall into one or more groups of students identified by Judge Singleton as who were deprived of their constitutional right to “uniform and adequate education.” Judge Singleton’s order required the legislature and Public Education Department to focus on equal opportunity and equitable outcomes in order to make sure students are college and career ready.



Richard Leong wrote about John Maeda’s 2019 Design in Tech report that described equity in relation to inequality, equality, and justice. Leong explained that inequality describes what

happens when the status quo – based on health disparities, housing, wealth, discrimination, and other factors – are ignored. Some students – through accident of birth – have access to a particular type of education. Typically, if there are no interventions, some students will have unequal access to educational opportunities. Equality focuses on evenly distributing tools and assistance such that in theory every child has equal access. Equity takes it a step further and focuses on customized tools that identify and address inequality such that outcomes are roughly even.

Finally, justice means dismantling oppressive systems so that students truly have equal opportunities to succeed at equal rates. Justice requires a long-term commitment to change that a school system can only do in conjunction with many other government and private actors. At this point in time, the equity drawing most closely reflects CISD because it is not clear whether there is a long-term commitment to change that will be done in conjunction with other government and private actors. While CISD certainly is moving in the direction of justice, with School Board elections on the horizon and an impending change in Superintendent, it remains to be seen whether CISD has a *long-term* commitment to equity. Time will tell.

III. Goals

As per the approved scope of work, this equity study focused on the five-year period between the 2018-19 and 2022-23 school years and aimed to:

- 1) identify and describe the racial and ethnic diversity of the three schools in the Cuba Independent School District;
- 2) document any gaps in terms of participation and outcomes of particular communities within the schools;
- 3) listen to stakeholders¹ regarding their experiences with regard to equity; and
- 4) to the extent that equity challenges are identified, identify causes of the gaps and propose remedies.

These goals relate to the CISD Strategic Plan Goals - School Years 2021-2023 listed in the SY 2021-2022 Indian Education Act Student Needs Assessment in which the CISD committed to reaching the following goals by 2023:

- 100% of our students increase reading levels (move towards proficiency but supported by growth model)
- School Culture and Learning represents the diversity of the students attending CISD
- Strong Partnerships with surrounding community entities (economic related and all feeder schools)
- 100% of our students will be College and Career Ready (pipeline from pre-K through 12th grades)

CISD identified the use of data in three critical ways as part of the action plan to address student achievement gaps and help the district to achieve their goals and objectives, as outlined in section 4.4.1 of the CISD Indian Education Act Needs Assessment. These strategies include:

- Use data to change the curriculum
- Use data to refocus and improve instruction
- Use data to address individual student weaknesses and build upon individual strengths.

CISD hired Munetrix to create a cloud-based platform to manage data. The initial report, listed in Appendix D, from Munetrix provided useful data for this report. As of the final draft of this report, the District is working on making the Munetrix and other valuable reports listed in Appendix D available on its website.

IV. Methodology

The central question for this project was to assess improvement in student equity across the District's three schools between 2018 and 2023. Exploration of this question required collection of quantitative data *and* performing qualitative observations and interviews because numbers never tell the full story. It was immediately and increasingly apparent that during the study period, CISD has engaged in serious self-reflection and has a wealth of reporting about its recent work to improve student outcomes. Our research was informed by a continuous flow of reports provided by Superintendent Griego from Munetrix, CU Boulder, the CISD Indian Education Act Student Needs Assessment. We also obtained some data from various District staff members.

Per our scope of work, we proceeded in three phases as follows. The focus of Phase One was to collect quantitative data, including attendance, discipline, graduation, health, post-high school plans, and participation in extracurriculars. Quantitative data came from multiple sources including school-level and District-level administrators from administrators at CISD, the NM Public Education Department (PED), and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Superintendent Griego also shared recent reports written about the District that provided helpful data points and context. We were not successful in obtaining data about post-high school plans and collected some but not all data about extracurriculars that we sought. All data was carefully scrubbed for any identifying information about students to maintain their privacy.

The research team would like to flag an important point relative to identity. There are some students who fall into more than one racial and/or ethnic category. Those students may select just one identity, and this happens for a variety of reasons. For example, a student whose father is Black and mother is Native American may self-identify as Native American. However, that student likely faces unique challenges because of their intersectional identity. They may face a greater likelihood of disciplinary action that would not be revealed as problematic from an equity standpoint because of how the student's identity is assigned. Educating students and data collectors of this challenge is important to ongoing equity efforts.

The PED website provides annual state, districts, and schools attendance reports. To access the data, the research team filtered by the academic year and the Cuba school district. After applying those filters, the team was able to take a look at attendance data. According to District officials, since the pandemic NMPED data has not been fully correct and/or consistent. There have been

five secretaries of education for the State of New Mexico since 2019. Therefore, the state data has not provided a full picture of the story of the school districts.

The focus of Phase Two was to collect qualitative data through interviews with CISD stakeholders - including School Board members, administrators, faculty, staff, students, and parents. The research team drafted a series of standard questions (see Appendix A) that was utilized during the interviews. During the interviews we asked follow-up questions as needed. The research team discussed an approach to conducting the interviews that discussed a balance between making stakeholders feel comfortable by describing the possibility for anonymity and asking follow-up questions to suss out nuances. After being approved by Superintendent Griego, the same questions were asked during all interviews with stakeholders. Several staff were very helpful in providing names of parents to contact and by connecting stakeholders with researchers for interviews while on campus.

Phase Three involved visits to the three Navajo Chapter Houses that send students to the District and report-drafting. Professor Ahranjani introduced the equity study at each meeting and invited attendees to share thoughts about student equity during her presentation and after the meetings. She left a sign-in sheet (Appendix B) at each meeting and passed around business cards. A more detailed breakdown of each phase of research follows.

Phase One (October-December, 2022) – Quantitative Data

- During this period, the primary goal was to collect quantitative data from CISD.
- Professor Ahranjani and her research team visited the Cuba elementary, middle, and high schools on October 27, 2022 to introduce themselves and become familiar with the schools and with key stakeholders on-site.
- The research team began to collect, digest, and summarize quantitative data about rates of attendance, participation in extracurriculars, and graduation of various students based on race, ethnicity, and gender, and other relevant characteristics.
- The research team presented a summary of its work to date to the School Board at its December meeting.

Phase Two (January-May, 2023) – Qualitative Data

- During this period, we continued to gather quantitative data through individual meetings, emails, and calls with various stakeholders and from the NM Public Education Department website.
- During this period, we turned our primary focus to gathering qualitative data.
- Members of the research team visited each of the three schools over four days (April 25-27 and May 16) to speak with stakeholders about their experiences with equity.
- We continued to digest and summarize qualitative data about rates of attendance, participation in extracurriculars, and graduation of various students based on race, ethnicity, and gender, and other characteristics with equity implications.
- We submitted/presented a summative report on quantitative and qualitative data gathered to date to the School Board at its May 17 meeting. See Appendix C.

Phase Three (June-August, 2023) – Final Report

- The research team conducted visits to the three Navajo Chapter Houses (Torreon on July 9, Ojo Encino on July 14, and Counselor on August 20) to share information about the

equity study and invite members of the community to share their thoughts at and after the meetings.

- Draft final report, which will summarize findings, articulate goals, and propose solutions and next steps to strengthen existing assets and address identified challenges.

V. Findings

The findings are reported below by subsections broken down by each goal mentioned in Part III.

Goal 1: Identify and describe the racial and ethnic diversity of the three CISD schools

Because of the court's holding in *Yazzie/Martinez*, as well as CISD's Goals 2019-2023 (referenced above), the scope of work of this study defined equity as student performance being roughly equal regardless of a student's individual characteristics. In discussions with Superintendent Griego prior to the creation of the scope of work, she indicated she wanted to see not just equal opportunities for students to succeed but also equal outcomes, which she described as attendance, graduation, standardized test scores, and participation in extracurricular activities. Because of the history of discrimination against Native American children in CISD, special attention was paid to whether Native children have equal outcomes to their non-Native peers. Of course, in order to have equal outcomes, we must understand *who* the students are.

Like the state in which it is situated, CISD is a majority minority school district. Some of the largest populations of students at CISD are economically disadvantaged students, American Indian/Alaskan Native students, and English language learners. Nearly eighty percent of CISD students are Native American, approximately 17% are Hispanic, and nearly all the rest are white (or "Anglo"). Minority enrollment is 97% in CISD, compared to 79% for the average New Mexico public school. Additionally, according to District staff, a significant population of students experience housing insecurity (25% of CISD students meet the McKinney-Vento Act definition for homeless⁴), and Superintendent Griego and her staff were able to access more and regular funding through McKinney-Vento once they realized that a significant percentage of their students met the technical definition.

Additionally, the District serves a relatively high number/percentage of students with disabilities. According to reports by District staff, as well as community members with whom we spoke, many families in both local Cuba and the surrounding reservations bring special needs students to CISD due to the strong support and equity lens towards students with disabilities. A concerted effort of additional financing (budget) has been added to better serve the population of special needs students.

There are some similarities in the statewide demographic breakdown. Again, there are a significant number of students who are economically disadvantaged and experiencing housing insecurity. 100% of CISD students qualify for free/reduced lunch. In Cuba, the largest ethnic population is made up of Native American students who account for 77.3% of CISD's student

⁴ <https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/conf-elig.pdf>

population. Statewide, the largest ethnic population is made up of Hispanic student⁽⁶⁶⁾

Goal 2: Document any gaps in terms of participation and outcomes of particular communities

This section includes original quantitative data, as well as data from others' reports, the team was able to gather. Overall, in terms of the data that we were able to gather, it appears CISD is improving relative to its own performance and relative to the State of New Mexico when it comes to equity efforts. It appears as though CISD's commitment to equity has helped to maintain an even playing field in terms of opportunities and increasingly equal outcomes for students. There are similar rates of success in terms of attendance and graduation, and test scores, and disciplinary data appears to be generally reflective of the student population. There are many additional positive steps in terms of equity, including access to health care, greater access to extracurricular activities, new educational opportunities such as summer programming and language and cultural education, the creation of Student Voice (a student group dedicated to voicing concerns to administration), Cuba Cares, pay equity based on gender, and pay in line with cost of living in Sandoval County.⁵ The Board hired the law firm of Ortiz & Zamora to conduct a pay equity pay study in 2019, which resulted in updated and equal pay for all employees.

Attendance

The New Mexico Public Education Department explains that students who are chronically absent, which means missing 10% or more of school days for any reason, translates to an inability to master important skills like reading and an increased number of students failing school subjects.⁶ Chronically absent students often have social and emotional needs, which, unaddressed, result in negative academic performance.

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, humans' most basic needs must be met before more advanced needs may be met. According to Maslow, physiological needs such as food, drink, clothing, shelter, warmth, sleep, and health first must be met. Then schools must provide safety and security, which include order, predictability, and control, as well as emotional security. Next comes love and belonging, which includes relationships and connections to family and friends. Fourth is esteem needs such as respect and reputation. Finally, self-actualization needs are the highest level in Maslow's hierarchy. These needs include realizing your potential, self-fulfillment, self-development, and peak experiences. The idea is that students cannot fully self-actualize until the other needs are mostly met.⁷

For students' attendance and engagement in school to be strong, their various needs must be met. As described throughout this part (Part V. Findings), CISD has gone above and beyond over the

⁵ *From Teachers to Custodians, Meet the Educators Who Saved a Pandemic School Year*, TIME (Sept. 2, 2021), <https://time.com/6094017/educators-covid-19-school-year/>.

⁶ <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/safe-healthy-schools/attendance-for-success/>

⁷ See Molly H. Fisher and Ben Crawford, *Promising Practice: Using Maslow's Hierarchy in a Rural Underperforming School*, The Rural Educator, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1251459.pdf>

past five years to meet students' physiological needs and has taken many steps to make students feel safe and secure. The District has also enhanced relationships with students by hiring more faculty and staff from the community. The Social Emotional Learning Program – which is very new – is supposed to facilitate development of respect and reputation. As described later, there is significant room for improvement in that program.

The state legislature recognizes the importance of attendance in helping students self-actualize. In 2019, House Bill 236 was introduced to the New Mexico Legislature. HB 236, or the Attendance for Success Act, was enacted to prevent absences and provide early interventions for absences and chronic absenteeism.⁸ The Act defines “chronic absence rate” as the percentage of students in a school or district who have been enrolled for at least 10 days and have missed 10% or more since the start of the school year, taking into account medical, excused, and unexcused absences.⁹

Beginning in the 2020-2021, the State of New Mexico began requiring public schools with five percent or more students with a chronic absence rate during the prior year, or with five percent or more of one or more subgroups of students with a chronic absence rate during the previous school year, to develop an attendance improvement plan to be submitted to the PED as part of the school's educational plan for student success.

With the Attendance for Success Act, a four-tier intervention protocol was also introduced.¹⁰ Students are categorized into four groups based on their rate of absenteeism, and each category establishes different protocols and strategy to prevent additional absenteeism and intervention measures for more extreme cases.

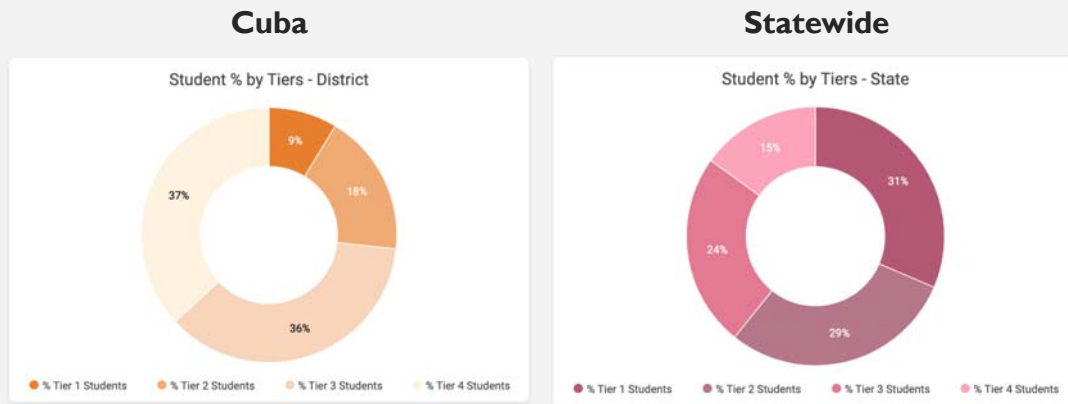
- Tier 1: Whole school prevention - students who have missed less than 5% of classes for any reason.
- Tier 2: Individualized prevention - students who are missing 5% or more but less than 10% of classes or school days for any reason.
- Tier 3: Early intervention - students who are considered chronically absent and missing 10% or more but less than 20% of classes or school days for any reason.
- Tier 4: Intensive support - students who are considered excessively absent and missing 20% or more of classes or school days for any reason.

⁸ https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/SHSB_Afsa-PPT-final.Suman_.pdf

⁹ https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/SHSB_Afsa-PPT-final.Suman_.pdf

¹⁰ https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/SHSB_Afsa-PPT-final.Suman_.pdf

2022-2023



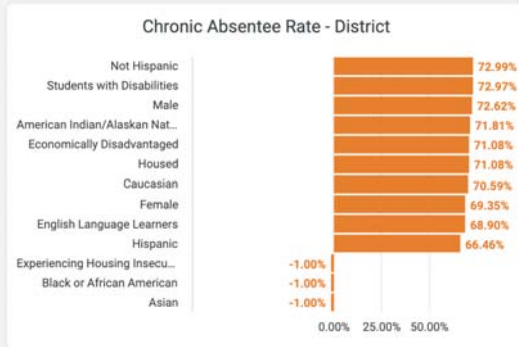
The team’s analysis began with the 2018-2019 academic year, the same year the district began to increase its focus on equity and used it as a comparative point to the 2022-2023 academic year. There were significant improvements in attendance rates over the five-year period.

In the 2018-2019 school year, the PED reported a 71.6% chronic absentee rate for CISD. In the same year, the statewide chronic absentee rate was 17.87%, a rather stark difference. While Cuba had an average of 70.97 excused absences per student compared to 5.06 average excused absences per student statewide. Again, a stark difference. There are many potential reasons for the high chronic absentee rate in CISD, including the typical challenges associated with rurality (transportation, parents’ limited ability to actively engage in schools because of distance and other factors). These challenges were likely exacerbated by the pandemic and its ongoing effects on physical and emotional wellness of families and children, particularly in the community served by CISD, which experienced high infection, illness, and death rates relative to other populations.¹¹

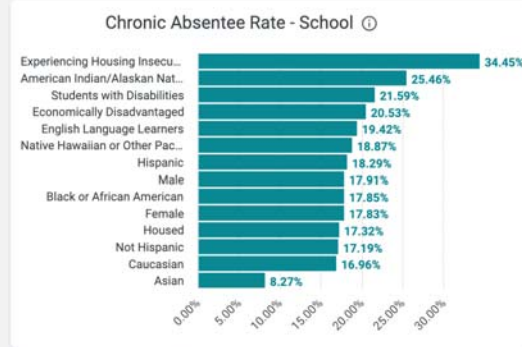
¹¹ Donovan Quintero, *The COVID-19 Outbreak in the Navajo Nation*, American Indian, <https://www.americanindianmagazine.org/story/the-covid-19-outbreak-in-the-navajo-nation> (Summer 2021); Haoying Wang, *Why the Navajo Nation Was Hit So Hard by the Coronavirus*, *Applied Geography*, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0143622821001429> (Sept. 2021).

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM 2018-2019

Cuba



Statewide

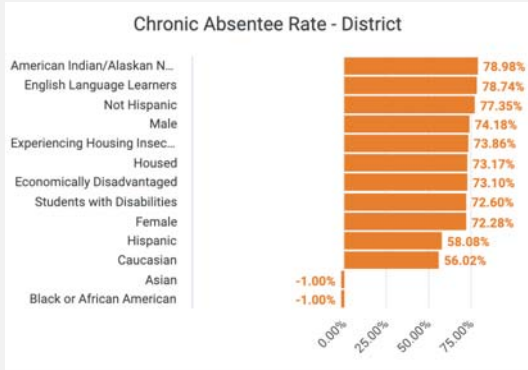


Additionally, chronic absentee rate increased slightly from 71.6% in 2018-2019 to 73.3% in 2022-2023. The largest populations of chronically absent students were American Indian/Alaskan Native (78.98%) and English Language Learners (78.74%).

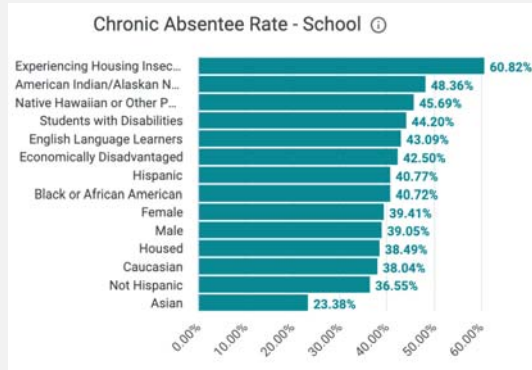
It is notable that during this period, attendance record-keeping may have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Additionally, during the 2022-23 year, "remote days" were instituted at CISD. Some of the interviewees voiced concern with student attendance and engagement during these remote days. The administration implemented but ultimately removed remote Mondays, except as needed for weather and other emergencies. The Starlink access provided by the District to children enrolled in CISD has been a game-changer in terms of access to schooling, especially during the pandemic. Additionally, stable internet service has allowed for more professional development for teachers and technology classes for parents. Online learning and work is more common and widely considered to be part of the future of the workforce, so providing this early training is crucial for students' long-term efficiency and success in online environments.

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM 2022-2023

Cuba



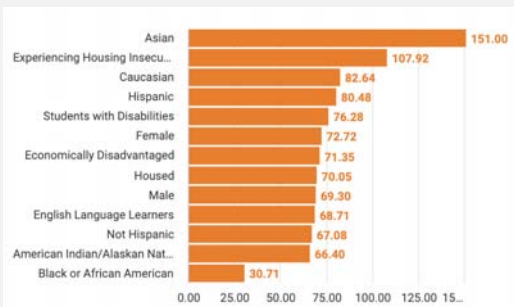
Statewide



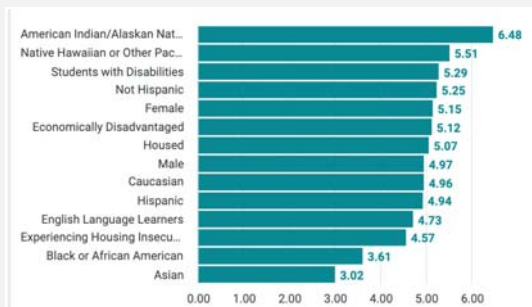
On average, there were 8.32 excused absences per student and 9.66 unexcused absences statewide. CISD averaged only 6.68 excused absences per student but 41.21 unexcused absences per student. The number of absences, both excused and unexcused decreased dramatically from the 2018-2019 academic year.

AVERAGE UNEXCUSED ABSENCES BREAKDOWN 2018-2019

Cuba

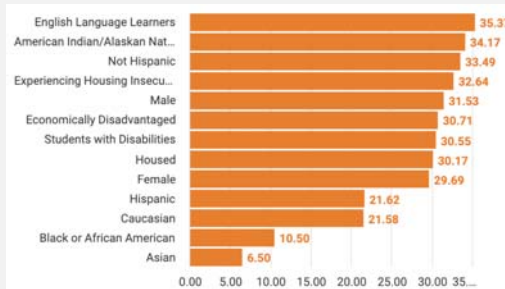


Statewide

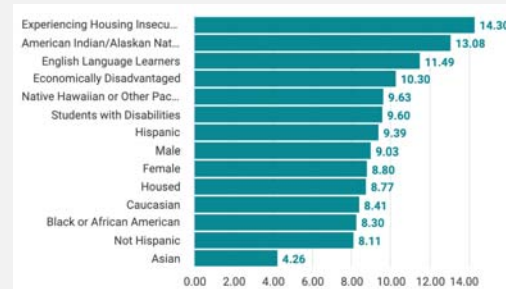


AVERAGE UNEXCUSED ABSENCES BREAKDOWN 2021-2022

Cuba



Statewide



During the pandemic, Superintendent Griego and the School Board provided Starlink internet access to enable every student with WiFi at home, which became incredibly important as schooling moved to online during the Covid-19 pandemic. Providing access to internet is a significant move in the focus on equity due to a lack of access in rural communities surrounding Cuba. The District received national attention for its efforts to provide internet access for its students.¹²

The National Center for Education Statistics reports most recently that 40.3% of households in the Cuba district have households with broadband internet compared to 80% of households statewide and 87% of households nationwide. While there is not currently data available regarding access prior to the district's move to provide Starlink, the NCES report indicates the issue still exists to an extent. **As noted previously, there are some concerns about engagement on remote days, but nonetheless there was improvement in attendance within the five-year period.**

The communities surrounding CISD face challenges as a result of the communities being very rural, **underserved**, and geographically spread out. Weather will occasionally make access to these communities impossible, contributing to attendance-related issues. Returning to the district's effort to make internet access more accessible was a significant contributor to improving equity. Now, students are more likely to be able to have classroom time, even if only in a virtual nature, when they are unable to attend classes in-person. Many students, especially Native American students who reside on tribal land, are faced with commutes of up to two hours each way.

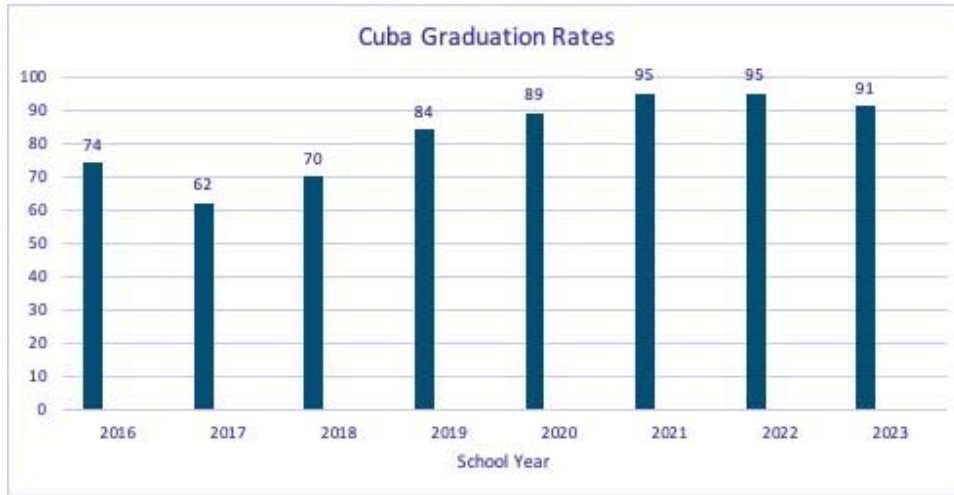
During the interviews, students indicated enthusiasm about attending school and seemed very willing to participate in long commutes because they felt it was worthwhile. The only challenge

¹² <https://apnews.com/article/technology-cuba-new-mexico-education-36333e9a8820378463c6a60b03f1b745>

with regard to attendance identified – by parents, teachers, *and* students – was the tendency not to take remote days seriously.

Graduation Rates

The table below was produced by District officials and demonstrates a consistent increase in graduation rates.



Between 2018 and 2023 in particular, CISD has seen a significant increase in the graduation rate. In the 2018-2019 school year, the graduation rate was 62.1%. Most concerning was the graduation rate for boys in CISD. According to District staff, both Hispanic and Native American boys were proportionally kicked out of CISD due to factors of non-support for attendance and the state 10-day attendance drop rule, as well due to drugs and lack of mental health resources. Notably, the graduation rates for Native American students were lagging in the 2017-2018 school year, almost ten percentage points behind the rates for all students. At the same time that CISD began focusing more intentionally on equity initiatives there was an increase among all students and a notably smaller gap, now only about two percentage points, between Native American students and all students.

Superintendent Griego implemented a targeted effort in 2020 and beyond to have specific programs for boys, resulting in higher graduation rates for boys in CISD. In 2020-2021, the graduation rate among Native American students surpassed that of the graduation rate of all students.¹³ In 2022, the overall the graduation rate increased to over 95%. The rate dipped a little bit (by two students) in 2023. This incredible increase over a relatively short period illustrates the effort CISD has been making to level the playing field for all students and to enable every student's success.

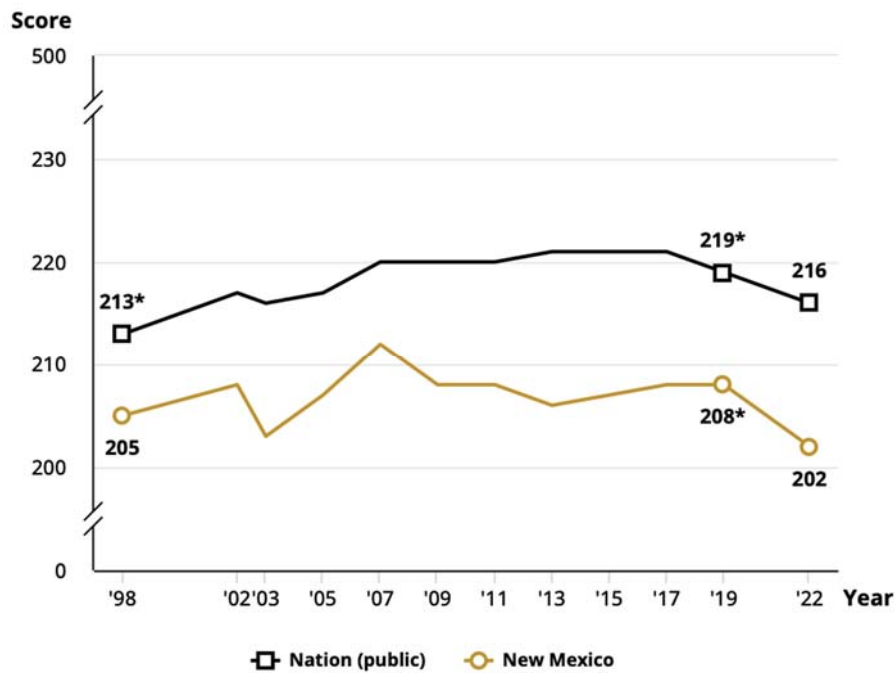
Test Scores

¹³ Tribal Education Status Report

In the fall of 2022, new statewide standardized test scores were released and showed subpar performance statewide. For most grade levels in most subjects, only about a quarter to a third of students met the proficiency standard. CISD administers Galileo assessments to evaluate academic performance. At the beginning of 2020-2021, these assessments indicated that only 6.3% of Native American students were proficient in math, but that rate increased to 11.3% by the end-of-year assessment. Hispanic students similarly struggled in math with only 16.2% showing proficiency in the assessments.

These rates of proficiency illustrate the necessity for continued focus on improving equity to help students get on the same level and continue improving together. The increases in performance also indicate that CISD’s varied efforts in enabling student success are not wasted.

AVERAGE SCORES FOR STATE/JURISDICTION AND THE NATION (PUBLIC)



* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2022. Significance tests were performed using unrounded numbers.

RESULTS FOR STUDENT GROUPS IN 2022

| REPORTING GROUPS | PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS | AVG. SCORE | PERCENTAGE AT OR ABOVE NAEP | | PERCENTAGE AT NAEP ADVANCED |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| | | | BASIC | PROFICIENT | |
| Race/Ethnicity | | | | | |
| White | 22 | 221 | 67 | 35 | 9 |
| Black | 2 | ‡ | ‡ | ‡ | ‡ |
| Hispanic | 63 | 197 | 42 | 17 | 3 |
| Asian | 1 | ‡ | ‡ | ‡ | ‡ |
| American Indian/Alaska Native | 9 | 186 | 28 | 9 | 1 |
| Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | # | ‡ | ‡ | ‡ | ‡ |
| Two or More Races | 2 | ‡ | ‡ | ‡ | ‡ |
| Gender | | | | | |
| Male | 52 | 198 | 43 | 19 | 4 |
| Female | 48 | 207 | 52 | 23 | 5 |

School Discipline

As noted earlier, safety and security are essential to students’ self-actualization. The District is concerned also with the safety and security of its staff. There have been recent incidents of violence and credible threats of serious violence on campus. Additionally, many students experience or witness physical and emotional violence in their communities and in their homes. In numerous conversations with the Superintendent and District officials, it is apparent that notwithstanding the violence and relative lack of law enforcement presence in Cuba¹⁴ and in the schools, the District must be conscious of creating a positive, evidence-based approach to safety and security because of the potential negative effects of metal detectors, armed guards, and police practices for students and other stakeholders.

School discipline serves as an important equity indicator because students of color and students with disabilities often are punished at higher rates and with more serious punishments. Disparities in disciplinary practices can be indicative of systemic biases and inequalities that exist within schools. Disproportionate disciplinary incidents can indicate the existence of things like implicit bias and issues with community involvement or policies. Additionally, harsh disciplinary systems can have long-term effects like causing students to fall behind in classes, become disengaged, or even increase the likelihood of ending up in the criminal justice system (i.e., school to prison pipeline).

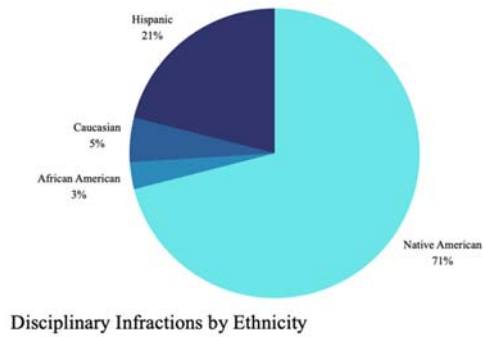
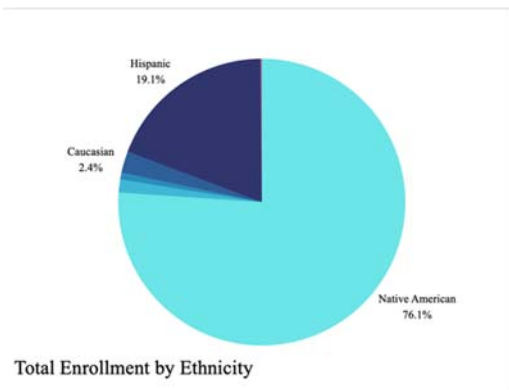
During interviews and conversations with CISD, teachers and administrators noted initiatives to implement restorative justice. One such example is avoiding out of school suspension and instead keeping kids in the classroom. In cases where out of school suspension is necessary, students attend classes virtually which avoids missing important instructional time. One point of concern in evaluating the disciplinary data was the inconsistency with which the incidents were

¹⁴ Rural districts have unique concerns with regard to policing. The International Association of Chiefs of Police published a report commissioned by the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Community Oriented Policing Services with the Department of Justice’s COPS in 2018 that provides helpful guidance for districts like CISD. See https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/2018-11/IACP_PMP_SmallTribal.pdf.

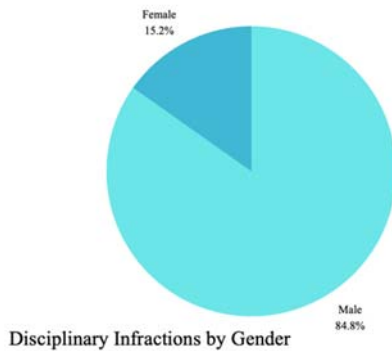
recorded. Not every entry had the student’s ID number, and some entries were missing information regarding the consequence or other details of the disciplinary referral.

We recommend CISD formalize their disciplinary record keeping practices in the interest of transparency. Consistency in record keeping would allow CISD to continue monitoring trends, allow for easy identification of disparities, and enable accountability for addressing any concerns. Also, anyone tasked with discipline – including private security – must receive regular, consistent anti-bias training.

On a positive note, CISD’s disciplinary rates reflect the ethnic breakdown of the total school population. When disciplinary rates mirror the ethnic breakdown of the student population, it suggests that students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds are being treated fairly and equitably.



However, that is not the case when it comes to the gender breakdown. Boys and girls are represented almost evenly in the total student population at CISD. Despite that breakdown, boys get disciplinary referrals at a disproportionately higher rate than girls. While this can seem like a point of concern, studies indicate that this is generally the case. Within racial and ethnic subgroups, boys are consistently more likely than girls to experience school discipline.¹⁵



¹⁵ <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1188491.pdf>

Extracurriculars

CISD identified a point of concern in extracurricular participation. The first step was to identify and eliminate the barriers that hindered students from engaging in extracurriculars. The district worked to provide resources and support for transportation, ensuring that no student was left behind due to logistical challenges. A concerted effort was made to diversify the range of extracurricular offerings. New clubs, sports teams, and artistic pursuits were introduced, catering to a wide spectrum of interests and talents.

The Future Farmers of America (FFA) club was a highlight of this effort. In the 2018-2019 school year, only 23 students were participating in the organization. The majority of students participating in FFA at this time were Hispanic and Caucasian despite the large population of Native American students enrolled at CISD. The participation remained stagnant over the next couple years and dipped in 2020-2021 during the pandemic, understandably. However, in the 2021-2022 school year, participation in FFA jumped to 92 students and increased Native American student population. By the 2022-2023 academic year, that number increased to 131 students. According to data provided by District officials, this was due to hiring of five more teachers, including Native American faculty, to support FFA.

Also noteworthy were changes in outreach to students who were previously underrepresented (especially Native students) to encourage them to join clubs such as National Honor Society and Science Club. Prior to the pandemic, students participating in these clubs had opportunities to travel out of state, although families mostly had to support the costs of travel. Native American students were only 0.5% of the traveling students. However, the high school assisted students with fundraising and participation in those clubs that travel out of state has increased.

Increasing participation in extracurricular activities is important for several reasons. Extracurricular participation is positively associated with student success indicators.¹⁶ Involvement in extracurricular activities allow for practical application of principles learned in the classroom. Additionally, studies have indicated that participating in extracurriculars can boost students' sense of engagement or attachment to their school and could decrease the likelihood of academic struggles and dropping out.

Health Care

According to interviews with school district staff tasked with health care, the range and amount of services has increased since 2018. Staff reported that the District did not always offer those services and also did not advertise available services very well. She says that these numbers also dropped and pretty much stopped during Covid. Analia Bridge, Director of Health Services for CISD, was able to provide data for the 2022-2023 school year, since she only began in that role in that year. According to qualitative interviews, the use of mental health supports increased during and after Covid but varied.

There is some paperwork required by families to access mental health resources, and due to some families' negative experiences with health care systems, in some instances there may be a

¹⁶ <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2378023119845496>

reluctance or inability to complete the required paperwork. In particular, this seemed to be an issue raised by the then-middle school principal who has since left the District. It is important for District staff and officials to follow up and make the systems as easy as possible to access.

| | Dentist screening on campus | Missing required immunizations (1 or more) | Vision screenings | Hearing screenings | Total nurse office visits |
|-------------|-----------------------------|--|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Total: | 108 | 245 | 600 | 600 | 3864 |
| Male: | 60 | 120 | 314 | 314 | 1876 |
| Female: | 48 | 125 | 286 | 286 | 1988 |
| Asian: | 5 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 55 |
| African Am: | | | | | |
| Caucasian: | 11 | 3 | 26 | 26 | 308 |
| Hispanic: | 22 | 112 | 206 | 206 | 1494 |
| Am. Indian: | 70 | 127 | 363 | 363 | 2007 |

Goal 3: Listen to stakeholders regarding their experiences with equity

Our aim was to extract a 360 review of stakeholders’ perceptions of equity in the District. To that end, we worked hard to reach out directly and indirectly, in person, over the phone, and via Zoom to anyone and everyone we thought 1) has a stake in children’s success in the District, and 2) might have a unique perspective. By the end of the final Chapter House meeting, the team conducted a total of 57 interviews. Most interviews were conducted one-to-one by a member of the research team, but a few interviews involved two or more interviewees with one researcher for scheduling reasons. Many stakeholders have multiple touch points with CISD – some of them are graduates themselves, some work for the District, some had children, grandchildren, and/or other family members enrolled in the District. The range of years of experience with the District include one to over fifty years. Interviews were conducted with:

- District-level administrators (9 total)
- Health and wellness (3 total)
- High school (14 total)
- Middle school (13 total)
- Elementary school (9 total)
- School Board (1 total)
- Parents/guardians referred by Victoria Dominguez and Raphelita Phillips (4 total)
- Community members through Chapter House meetings in Ojo Encino, Torreon, and Counselor Chapters (4 total)

To develop trust with interviewees and respect the privacy of stakeholders who live in a small community, researchers promised to maintain anonymity to the maximum extent possible. Here are some of the comments and concerns raised during the interviews:

Strengths related to equity

- Culture and language
- Tight-knit communities (“We are all neighbors.”)
- Strong connections to family
- Connections to the land
- Growing representation of faculty and staff that matches the families that feed into CISD
- Commitment within the current power structure (School Board and Superintendent) to equity
- Commitment to hiring diverse faculty and staff, including targeted outreach to CISD alums
- Commitment among most members of the faculty and staff to equity
- Legal obligations under state and federal law to focus on equal opportunity and equitable outcomes
- Awareness of legal obligations by CISD decision-makers and some community members

Problems before 2018 (and, to some extent, continuing):

- Superintendent's “color blindness,” which meant ignoring equality and equity goals
- High turnover of faculty
- If you lived closer to Cuba (which means you’re probably Hispanic rather than Native), you had more access, privilege, influence)
- Parent involvement
- Absenteeism (especially online)
- Financial poverty at home
- Prejudice among staff and some students
- Struggles with tribes, jurisdiction questions
- Support for LGBTQ+ students and teachers
- Lack of support for LGBTQ+ students

Areas of Improvement Since 2018:

- Summer school
- Scholarships
- Career and Technical Education
- Capstone for 8th graders
- Construction of the hogun
- Activity buses
- Laptops
- Starlink access for all families in the District
- Cuba Cares
- Food delivery to children and families

- Focus on ELL
- More extracurricular sports and clubs
- Students accepting of peers with special needs
- Putting people in place who truly support the students (Navajo children do not need to be talked down to or disrespected)
- Onsite and other internships
- Caring and support for the whole family (e.g., showers for families)
- Recruitment efforts – apartments, daycare, 4-day weeks
- Transportation to school events for parents and guardians
- Creation of Student Voice, which gives students agency and helps them move toward self-actualization¹⁷

Areas for Continued Improvement:

- Onboarding of new faculty (especially cultural issues and sensitivity)
- Social/emotional learning (curriculum feels robotic, classes scheduled for last period which makes it hard for students to leave with raw feelings, inflexibility with regard to change and ideas, and staffing of some of the classes with some poorly trained and perhaps uninterested teachers)
- Teaching Yazzie/Martinez case and other legal protections described in Part II. to staff, faculty, and students
- Cultural competency for all students
- More engagement from School Board members at Chapter House Meetings and school events
- Parent University – with food, working with parents to speak Dine more at home (not just when punishing or upset)
- Better communication with grandparents
- Reduce or eliminate online school
- Kids need homework support at home
- Facilitate teachers giving feedback to principals – online and individual meetings
- More Native teachers, especially at the high school
- Address lack of motivation for school since it’s mostly an agricultural community
- Teaching kids about their culture and language
- Daycare for staff – can this also be extended to the community?
- Continuing to hire Educational Assistants from the community and support their pathway to teacher licensure¹⁸
- Create regular data collection habits around extracurricular activities that include equity-related information

¹⁷ Student Voice conducted a survey of all middle and high school students in late November 2023. The goal of the survey was to assess students’ sense of physical and emotional safety at school. The results are included in Appendix E.

¹⁸ Drop in Maria’s research about connections between learning about one’s culture, history, and language and overall academic success

By and large, the interviews – especially with arguably the most important stakeholders, which are students - reveal that stakeholders have positive feelings about the District’s focus on equity over the past five years, and especially in the past two to three years. Students – arguably the most important stakeholders – report feeling supported by teachers and administrators, they look forward to going to school, and they appreciate the extra resources, programs, courses, extracurriculars, and opportunities offered by the District.

Goal 4: To the extent equity challenges are identified, identify causes of the gaps and propose remedies

While the research team include two lawyers and one law student, we are not acting as counsel in this research study. CISD is represented by counsel who regularly provide advice and guidance about legal and policy matters. As mentioned in Part II (Introduction and Context), there are a number of state and federal laws that relate to equity. They are included to inform the reader of the numerous ways in which regulators and courts have an interest in ensuring student equity. In no way are the comments in this section or elsewhere in this report intended to provide legal advice.

In this particular instance, there are many challenges to achieving *and maintaining* equitable outcomes. There are a small number of CISD employees with whom we spoke who seem resistant to change. The way this manifested in the interviews is that they feel there’s only so much the District can do and that it’s up to parents to be more involved. These voices seem concerned about certain children (specifically, the nearly 80% of the District that identify as Native American) receiving what they describe as “preferential treatment.” One stakeholder explained that CISD’s recent emphasis on poverty as a condition that merits intervention rather than race or ethnicity feels like a more fair and appropriate approach. Of course, as explained by Judge Singleton and many other experts, there are particular students who are particularly at-risk due to past and continuing discrimination and isolation. For the people with whom we spoke who are concerned about preferential treatment, it seems past and continuing discrimination is either somehow self-inflicted or does not matter.

To the extent that there are some faculty and staff who resist the focus on racial and economic equity, they may pose a risk to the District’s goals and progress and also expose themselves and the District to liability. It is important to understand that the law around the New Mexico Civil Rights Act (2021) is developing and there are efforts to make it possible to hold individual government employees accountable for illegal, racist conduct or discriminatory actions against other groups.¹⁹

VI. Limitations

There were two major limitations to the research that led to this report: responsiveness of various stakeholders and timeline. Public school teachers and administrators understandably are very busy during the school year. Sometimes it was difficult to get in touch with and receive responses from District employees. In addition, response rates from certain stakeholders were

¹⁹ Johnson v. Board of Education for Albuquerque Public Schools, <https://casetext.com/case/johnson-v-bd-of-educ-6>.

less than desirable with regard to outreach for interviews. For example, only one School Board member agreed to be interviewed. Continued focus on equity measures will require that certain key employees – the District’s data person, principals, and their designees – regularly collect additional data.

The limited duration of the period of research posed a challenge that the researchers see in hindsight. Should the District wish to conduct an equity study in the future, it would be ideal to start at the beginning of the school year to give researchers more time to visit CISD and build trust. It would have been ideal to attend the Chapter House meetings once at the beginning of the school year and return again at the end. Starting earlier also would have allowed time to attend more Chapter House meetings to build relationships with community members. Also, starting earlier would have allowed researchers the opportunity to administer a survey to all members of the community.

VII. Conclusions

“The nature of injustice is that we may not always see it in our own times.” Justice Joseph Kennedy wrote those words in his majority opinion in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the 2015 case in which the Supreme Court held that same-sex (they didn’t say different-sex but that’s one way to interpret the opinion) marriage is a fundamental right. CISD is attempting to see injustice right now and do something about it right now.

There is an adage that applies well to the question of continuing efforts toward student equity. They say you shouldn’t throw an umbrella away during a storm just because you’re not getting wet. You still need to keep an umbrella to be prepared for rain even if it isn’t currently raining. The point is that progress means building on efforts that led to the progress when there may be an instinct to say, “everything is better now, so we don’t need to keep up everything we’ve been doing.” Since the qualitative interviews do seem to reveal some burnout among some District teachers and staff, it is important to acknowledge the tremendous achievements, take breaks, and understand that it would be very easy to slide backwards without continued focus on equity.

Revisiting the inequality/equality/equity/justice apple trees from p. 7, if the District’s goal is justice, there needs to be continued future focus over a period of time on achieving equitable outcomes. This will require the School Board and Superintendent to continuously be gathering and assessing data and using that data to innovate, adjust, evaluate, and re-evaluate.

There are four areas of potential future concern: potential liability for people who exhibit racism in violation of state and federal laws, the role of private security guards at the school, LGBTQ+ equity and inclusion, and the impact of *SFFA v. Harvard* on equity. After spending over one year learning about CISD, spending time at CISD, and interviewing stakeholders, these areas are identified as potential concerns from a standpoint of both effectiveness with regard to equity and legal requirements.

In terms of potential liability for people who exhibit racism in violation of state and federal laws, a number of stakeholders indicated an interest in regular, required anti-bias training of staff and faculty. A number of stakeholders expressed gratitude for swift and public actions to denounce

instances of bias and discrimination by Superintendent Griego, including reassignment and up to termination of employees.

This report recommends keeping an eye on the role of armed security guards in school discipline. Understanding that an acute security threat led to the hiring of three full-time security guards, and that interviews with two of the IPS officers indicated that there are ongoing concerns with regard to student safety, their presence comes at a significant financial cost to the District. There also may be intangible psychological effects for their presence. It was beyond the scope of our current study to further investigate the psychological impacts, but that could be an area for research in the future.

While the limited data we reviewed does not show disproportionate discipline for Native American students in CISD, research shows that there may be better, evidence-based ways to secure campuses and promote a positive school climate than contracting with armed private security guards. The interviews led the research team to believe the current officers assigned to the school are well-intentioned and well-regarded, but record-keeping on equity and types of infractions is not consistent or precise at this time. Their presence is new, so they may be encouraged and even required to do a more precise job of keeping records. Such record-keeping may assist the District in determining whether the steep costs outweigh the benefits, especially since the IPS officers have done a good job of smoothing over and streamlining communications and relationships with local and state law enforcement. There is a large body of research to suggest that the costs (financial, constitutional, psycho-social, and other) associated with on-site officers outweigh the benefits. After the contract with IPS ended, in the summer of 2023 CISD hired and trained their own security detail. Continued tracking of their role and weighing of the costs and benefits associated with their presence and particular practices is important to the future of equity.

Also, importantly, the District has focused on diversity in terms of racial/ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, but there seems to be some reluctance to fully embrace LGBTQ+ youth. In many districts across the country, the main areas of focus for LGBTQ+ equity include bathrooms/locker rooms, affinity groups, and sports teams. The U.S. Department of Education has proposed changes to Title IX that would clarify school districts' obligations to avoid discriminating on the basis of sex or gender identity, particularly in the context of athletics. Our research team's qualitative research reveals a concern that access to bathrooms may be an issue at the high school. The reluctance to fully embrace the unique needs of students who identify as LGBTQ+ likely reflects the views of some members of the community. For example, in one of the chapter house meetings attended by the team, an elected official and several community members voiced opposition to same-sex marriage.

Several qualitative interviews revealed that some administrators are having a hard time straddling full embrace of LGBTQ+ students with what may be their own reluctance and/or pushback by some community members. Problem areas articulated by stakeholders, especially students, include access to bathrooms consistent with students' gender identity and inclusivity training for stakeholders (e.g., gender-affirming pronouns and the difference between gender

identity and sexual orientation). Additionally, many districts adopt policies regarding athletics that can help students feel included and reflect a commitment to equity.²⁰

Finally, the *SFFA v. Harvard* case may have implications for any focus on race in the K-12 context as well. Even though that Supreme Court opinion struck down the use of race and specifically in higher education admissions processes, experts predict it may have an effect on the ways that K-12 schools. In particular, magnet school admissions' policies and districts that make assignment decisions based on individual student characteristics) will be under close scrutiny. That said, CISD does not seem to make any admissions decisions on the basis of race. Further, the District seems to have made efforts to provide *all* students, not just students who are members of a particular racial/ethnic group, with the same extra resources such as school supplies and access to clothing through Cuba Cares.

²⁰ See resources available on the GLSEN website: <https://www.glsen.org/activity/gender-affirming-inclusive-athletics-participation#:~:text=Recommendations%20for%20Inclusive%20Athletics%20Guidance&text=A%20student%20has%20the%20right,registration%20records%20or%20birth%20certificate..>

APPENDIX A: Questions for Individual Stakeholder Meetings

Instructions:

Thank you for participating in this conversation with us. Professor Maryam Ahranjani, Maria Trujillo, and Jamshed Jehangir were hired by Cuba Independent School District (CISD) to perform an “equity study” during the 2022-2023 academic year. The goals of the study are to assess what, if any: 1) progress has been made in the past 5 years, and 2) work remains to achieve equitable outcomes.

For purposes of this conversation, we are exploring equity in CISD’s three schools. When we refer to equity, we’re talking about the extent to which CISD children achieve roughly equal outcomes regardless of their personal characteristics like race and ethnicity, gender, disability, etc. We have gathered data to tell us about whether there are equitable outcomes in grades; attendance; graduation; college application, acceptance, and attendance; and participation in extracurricular activities.

You were referred to us as someone who could help put a story behind those numbers and perhaps to share insights that will not appear in the numbers. We are speaking with a number of stakeholders on an individual basis, and each of you will be asked the same set of questions.

Your participation is confidential. Your name and other identifying information will be kept confidential to the maximum extent possible, unless you choose to share that information. At the end of our conversation, you will also have a chance to share additional relevant information.

1. Would you like your responses to remain confidential?
2. What is your name, your role in CISD, and how long have you been in your current role?
3. How long have you worked in or been associated with CISD total? Have you had any other roles during that time?
4. How would you describe the focus on equity in CISD over the past five years (since 2018)? Would you say there an appropriate amount of focus, not enough focus, or too much focus? Please explain.
5. Is there anything CISD has done since you began working that has improved equity? Please describe.
6. Do you believe that CISD’s children have equal opportunities to succeed? Please explain.
7. With regard to equitable *outcomes*, have you noticed any things that may be improved? If so, what?
8. Is there anything else you would like to share?

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Professor Ahranjani at (505) 318-6246 or Maryam.Ahranjani@law.unm.edu or MaryamAhranjani@gmail.com.

APPENDIX C: May 17, 2023 Presentation to School Board

APPENDIX D: Sources

- Interviews with stakeholders (notes on file with Maryam Ahranjani)
- Reports, surveys, and data provided by Superintendent Dr. Griego and other CISD employees
- Data from NM PED website
- Cuba Independent Schools Colleague Handbook 2023-2024:
<https://www.cuba.k12.nm.us/common/pages/DownloadFileByUrl.aspx?key=oZJVYZ7RsxG9smN7vCrIOS9gi4hpZg%2fDBXE%2f6YvbeEotALkCg5Ad2FUOJwGS%2bH%2fvpLReyoYgURvPWV9iN1E6yQxUwLU1P0KYTWrW%2bV6kXU38CM09sgCguxqujKzDqKJIIWW6XIO6hBkxaEPWyjcyiBhOGwGfnSSPptqTs2%2fCePrFIU81L%2fvkTw7vRfTC4PaRBVMwfw%3d%3d>
- <https://newmexicoschools.com/state/999999/graduation>
- Tribal Education Status Report 2020-2021: <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Cuba-Independent-Schools-TEsr-SY20-21.pdf>
- Munetrix report
- Accountant audit

APPENDIX E: Student Voices Survey Results – Nov. 28, 2023