

The Native American Achievement Gap



LORYNN HACKERT

What is the Achievement Gap?

THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

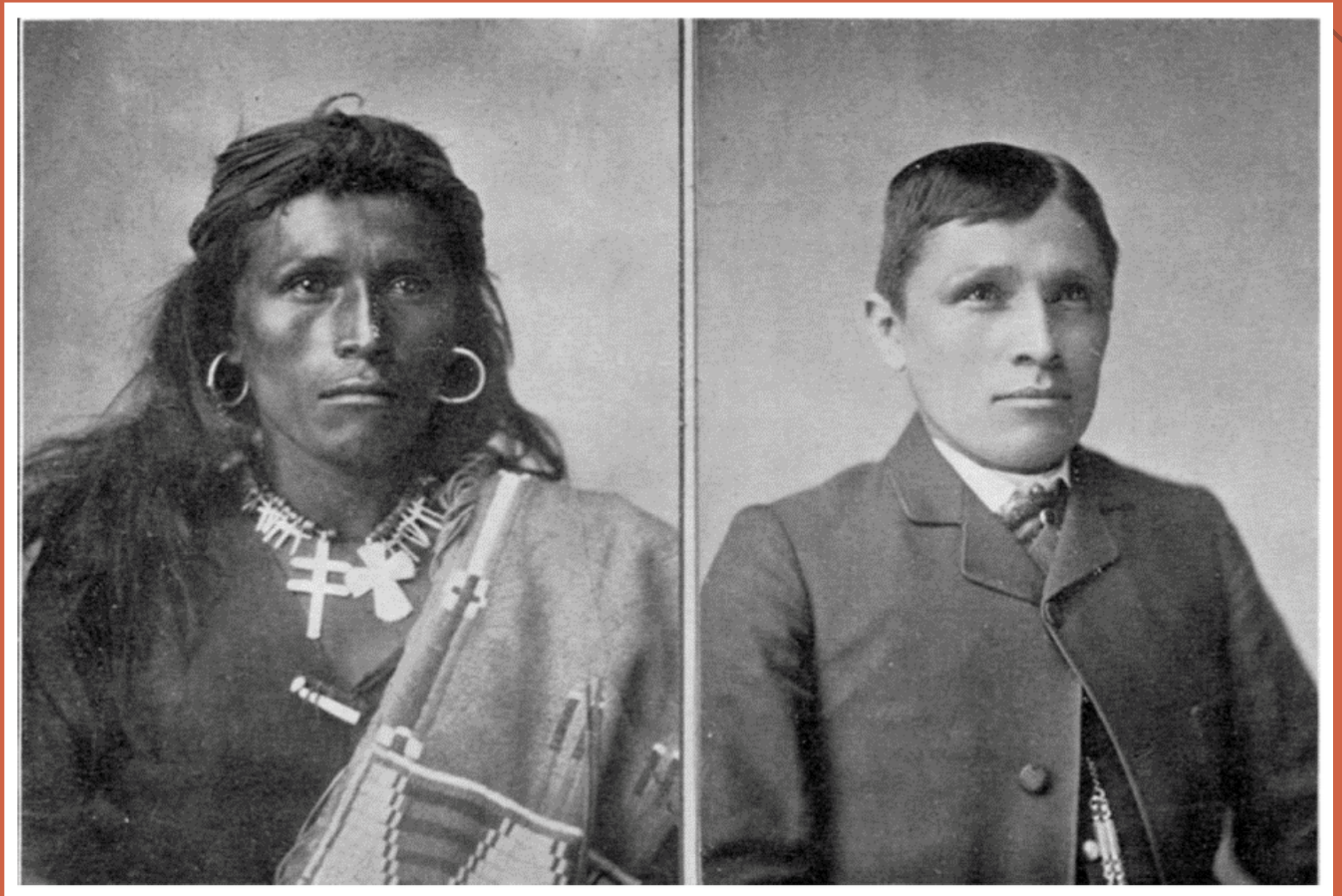
According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (2020), "Achievement gaps occur when one group of students (e.g., students grouped by race/ethnicity, gender) outperforms another group and the difference in average scores for the two groups is statistically significant (i.e., larger than the margin of error)." (para.1)

Native American Education in the United States

HOW IT BEGAN

- The Indian Removal Act of 1830

At the beginning of the 19th century, there were several misguided attempts to educate Native American children. Residential schools, known as Indian Boarding Schools, were ran by religious organizations, and Native children were forced to attend. The main focus of these schools was to assimilate Native children into a "white society," and strip them of their Native cultures and qualities. (para. 4)





Inland 360. (n.d.). Unpacking the past: Nez Perce woman shares her family's Native American boarding school experience. <https://inland360.com/top-headlines/2020/02/unpacking-the-past-nez-perce-woman-shares-her-familys-experience-with-native-american-boarding-schools/>

Native American Education in the United States Con't

PROGRESSION

- *The Indian Act*
- *The Indian Citizenship Act of 1924*

As a result of the Native American Citizenship Act, The Institute for Government Research formed a committee that conducted an investigation into Indian affairs. After their observances, this group created the Meriam Report. The Meriam Report "chronicled the operational problems of residential schools, and the poverty and poor health of Native Americans. It called for a broader curriculum, better facilities, and more qualified teachers." (para. 5)

Native American Education in the United States Con't

CURRENT

Under the instruction of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Congress passed the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. This act "recognized the sovereignty of tribal self-government." The Johnson O'Malley Act was also passed, making states "responsible for the education of Native American children."



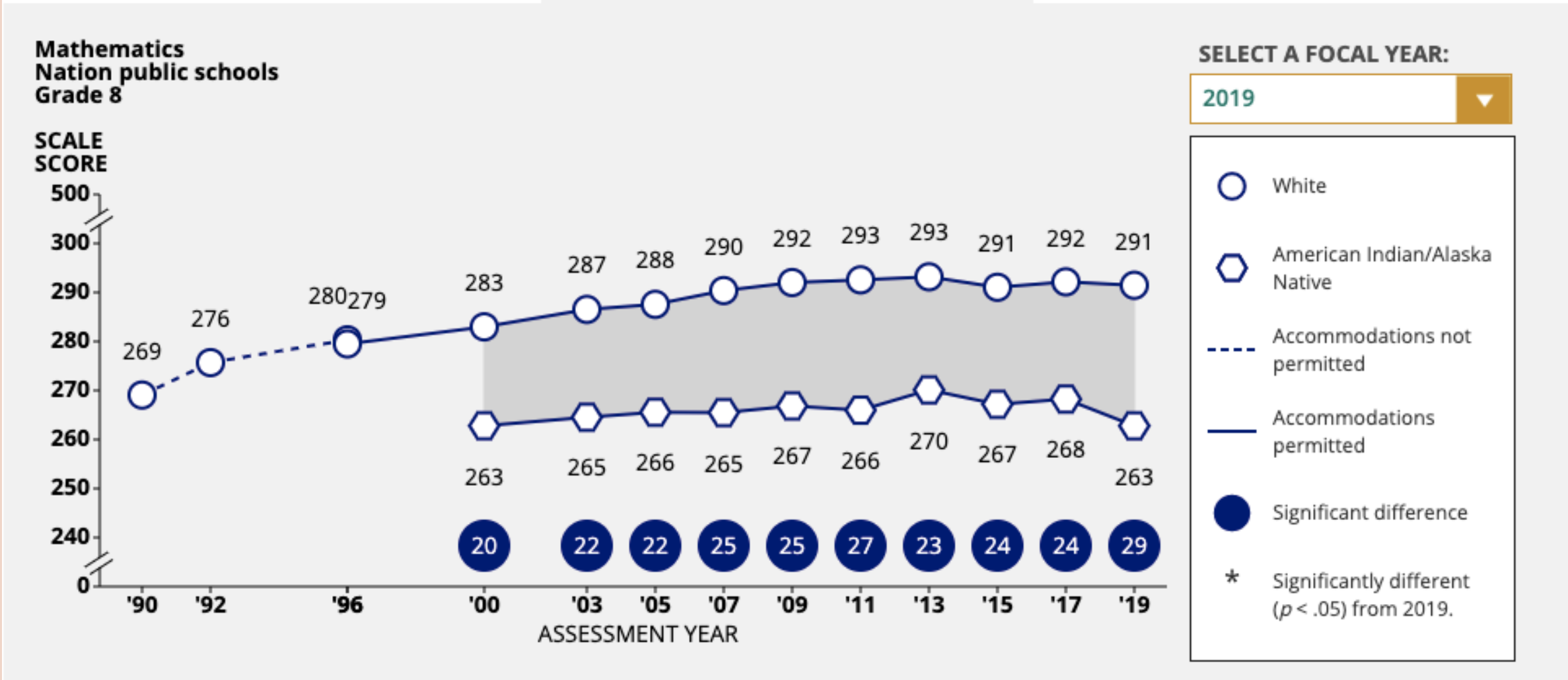
However, the implementation of these policies continued without consultation with Native American tribal governments. Ultimately, this resulted in little progress toward creating a viable solution to the Native American educational crisis, and the issue still persists to this day.

Why Does the Native American Achievement Gap Still Exist?

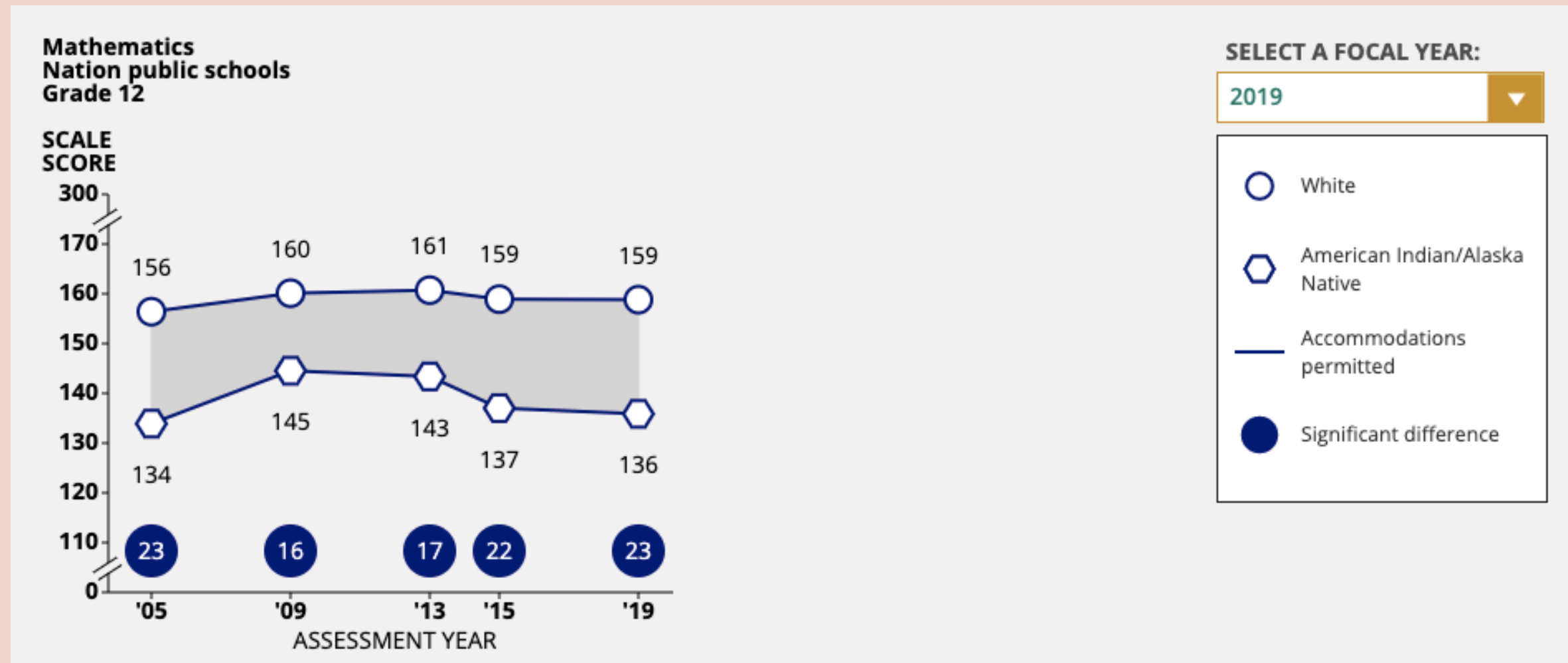
IN 2003, THE U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS REPORTED:

"As a group, Native American students are not afforded educational opportunities equal to other American students. They routinely face deteriorating school facilities, underpaid teachers, weak curricula, discriminatory treatment, and outdated learning tools. In addition, the cultural histories and practices of Native students are rarely incorporated in the learning environment. As a result, achievement gaps persist with Native American students scoring lower than any other racial/ethnic group in basic levels of reading, math, and history. Native American students are also less likely to graduate from high school and are *more likely to drop out in earlier grades. (p. xi)"*

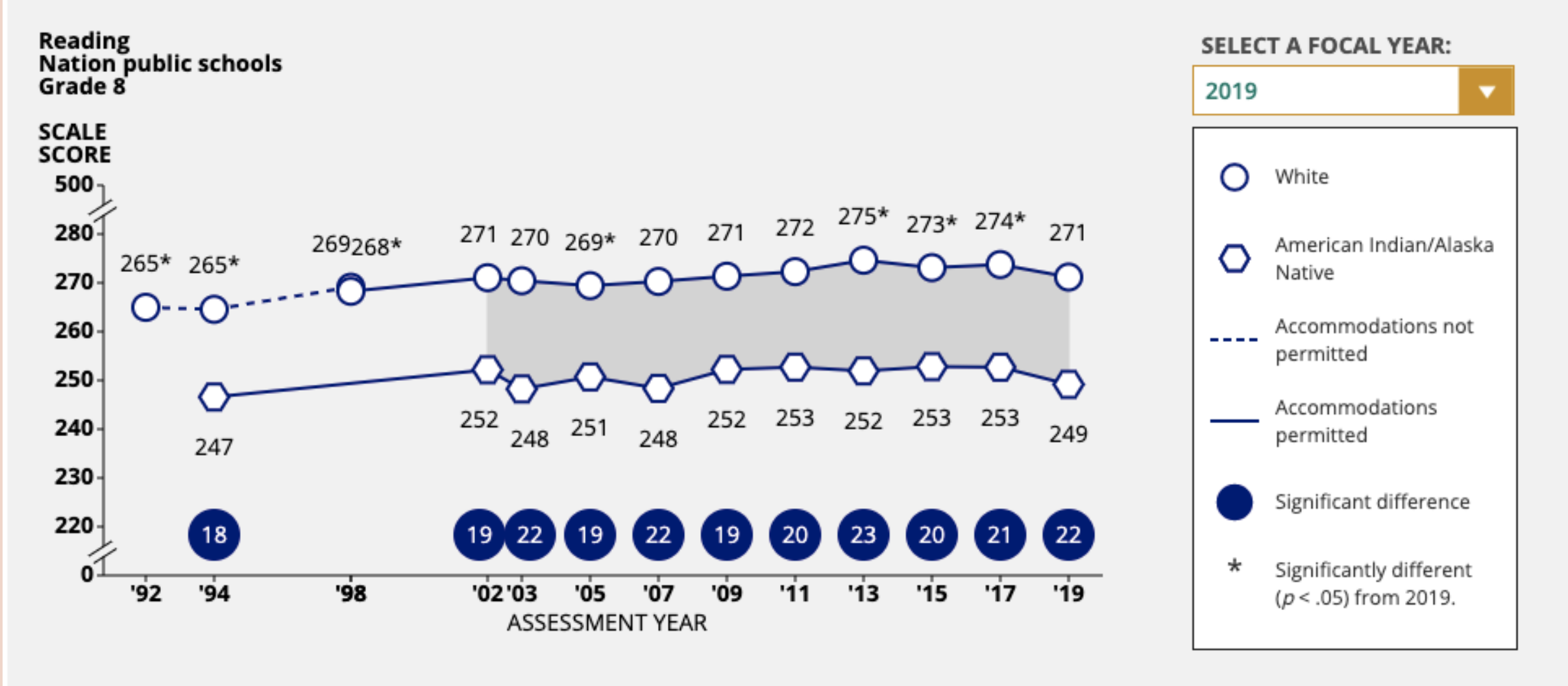
The Achievement Gap: Math, Grade 8



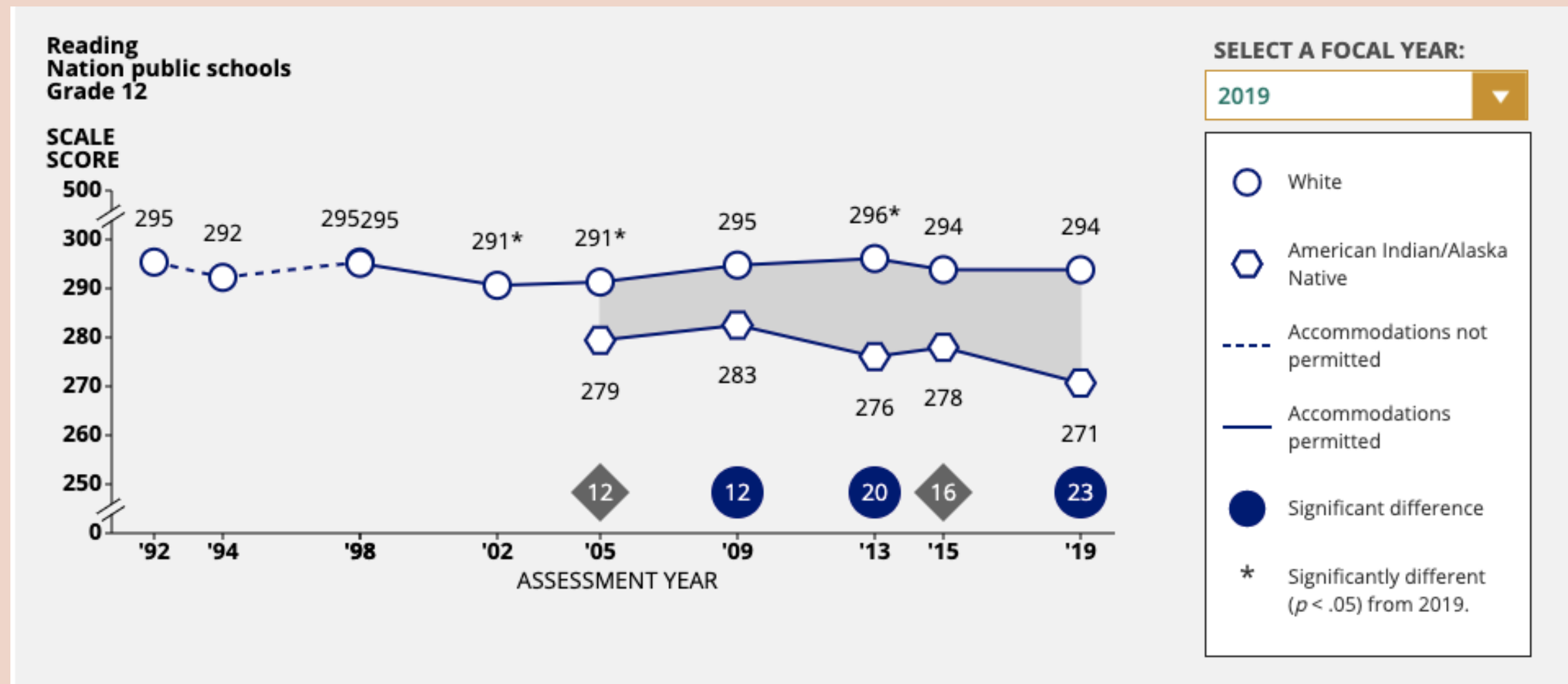
The Achievement Gap: Math, Grade 12




The Achievement Gap: Reading, Grade 8



The Achievement Gap: Reading, Grade 12





Why Should
We Teach
Native
American
Culture in
Schools?

**Benefits for
Native students:
Teaching Native
history,
language and
culture in
schools**

- increase comfortability for Native students in school
- assist in keeping Native culture alive
- promote positive Native identity and sense of pride
- increase Native American youth and families' awareness about themselves and their culture
- protect Native American Rights

**Benefits for
Others:
Teaching Native
history,
language and
culture in
schools**

- increase respect, understanding and awareness for Native people and culture and the hardships they have faced
- reduce/eliminate stereotypes and ignorance about Native Americans
- demonstrates that schools value Native culture
- increase communication and understanding between Native American youth, families and school community



My Application of
Native American
Literature in the
Classroom

Native American Literature: Indian Boarding Schools

"The School Days of an Indian Girl" (1996), Zitkala-Sa

In 'The School Days of Indian Girl,' Zitkala-Sa, a writer and an activist for Native American rights, exhibits her personal experience of encountering white American people, as well as her experience regarding the assimilation tactics used against her while attending an Indian Boarding School.



Excerpt from "The School Days of an Indian Girl":

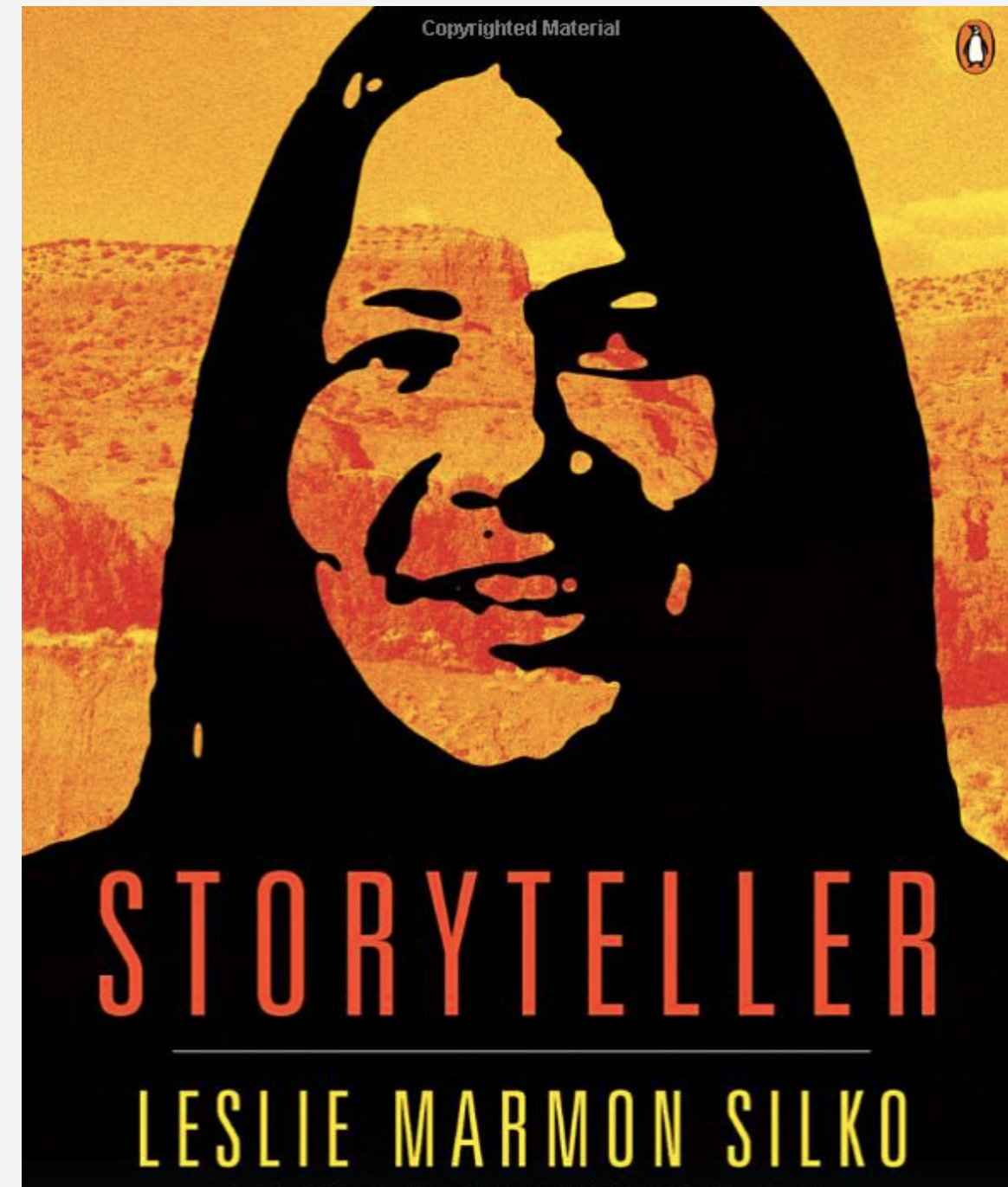
"I cried aloud, shaking my head all the while until I felt the cold blades of the scissors against my neck, and heard them gnaw off one of my thick braids. Then I lost my spirit. Since the day I was taken from my mother I had suffered extreme indignities...And now my long hair was shingled like a coward's! In my anguish I moaned for my mother, but no one came to comfort me. Not a soul reasoned quietly with me, as my own mother used to do; for now I was only one of many little animals driven by a herder..."

- ZITKALA-SA, "THE SCHOOL DAYS OF AN INDIAN GIRL"

Native American Literature: Storytelling

Storyteller (1981), Leslie
Marmon Silko

"Leslie Marmon Silko's book
Storyteller, blends original short
stories and poetry influenced by the
traditional oral tales that she heard
growing up on the Laguna Pueblo in
New Mexico with autobiographical
passages, folktales, family memories,
and photographs..."



Excerpt from *Storyteller*:

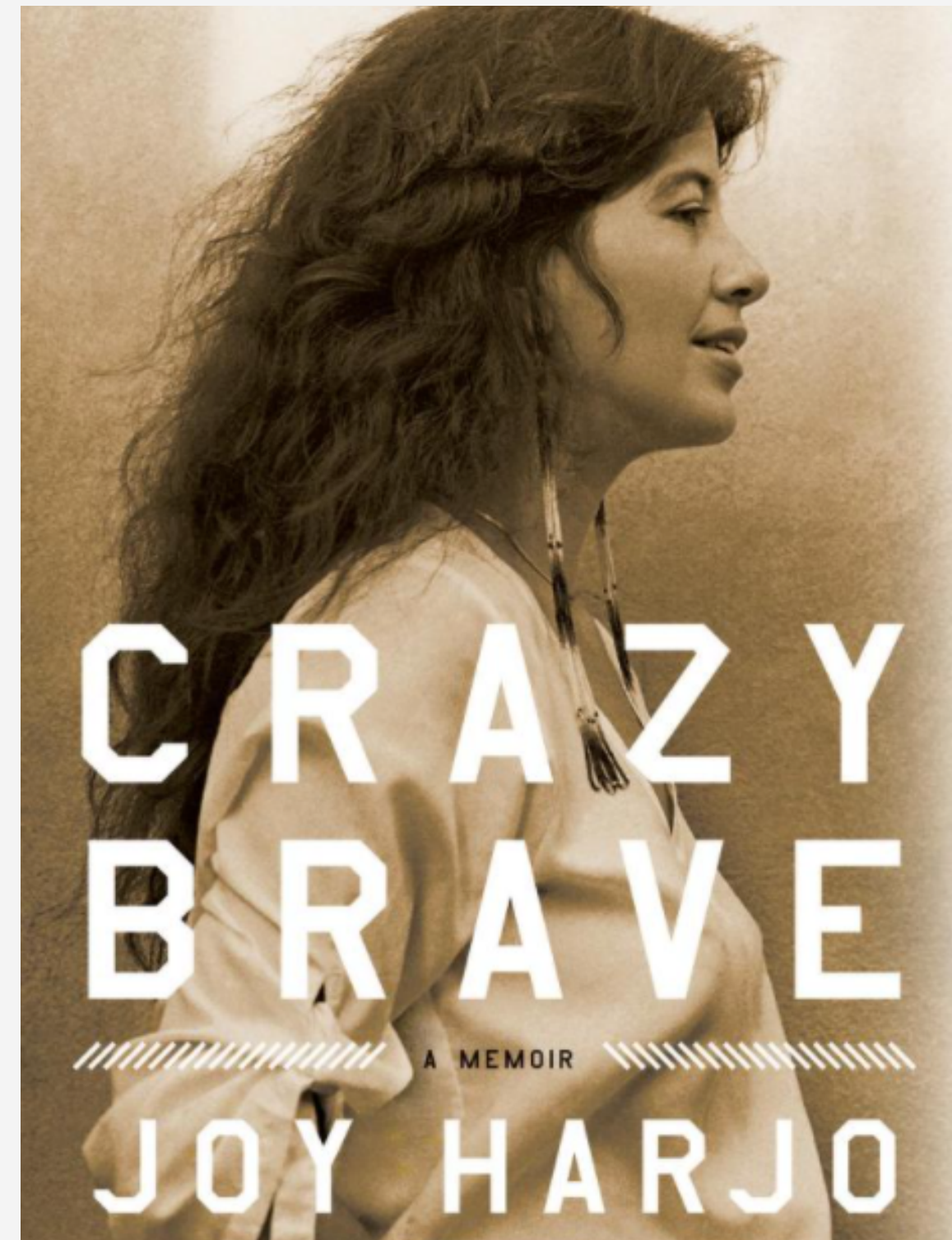
"The humma-hah (meaning 'long ago') stories are traditional Pueblo stories that have been told continuously for thousands of years about a time when amazing things were possible, when the plants and animals and even rocks and stars used to converse with human beings. The humma-hah stories describe the various supernatural beings and other worlds and other times that still exist right beside the present world and present time..."

- LESLIE MARMON SILKO, *STORYTELLER*

Native American Literature: To Be Native American

Crazy Brave (2013), Joy Harjo

"Joy Harjo details her journey to becoming a poet. Harjo grew up learning to dodge an abusive stepfather by finding shelter in her imagination, a deep spiritual life, and connection with the natural world. Narrating the complexities of betrayal and love, *Crazy Brave* is a haunting, visionary memoir about family and the breaking apart necessary in finding a voice."



Excerpt from *Crazy Brave*:

"In the end, we must each tend to our own gulfs of sadness, though others can assist us with kindness, food, good words, and music. Our human tendency is to fill these holes with distractions like shopping and fast romance, or with drugs and alcohol."

- JOY HARJO, *CRAZY BRAVE*

