

Can Interdistrict School Choice Remedy School Segregation?

New Jersey’s Interdistrict School Choice Program

- The Program enables approved Choice Districts to enroll students who do not reside within their districts without cost to their parents.
- The Program has been in existence since the 2000-2001 school year.
- During the 2023-24 School Year, 5,174 Choice Students attended 125 Choice Districts.
- For the 2025-26 school year, there will be 119 participating Choice Districts, in 19 counties. There are no Choice Districts in Middlesex or Essex counties.
- **The Program has been frozen for nearly a decade – no new schools or seats have been allocated by the State. Over 2,000 are on waitlists.**

Where are New Jersey’s “Intensely Segregated” Districts?

- Intensely Segregated School Districts are defined by the plaintiffs in the *Latino Action Network v. State of New Jersey* case as **districts where the student population is 90% or more non-white and a majority are in poverty.**
- There are 23 such districts across 8 counties in the State of New Jersey.
- Similarly, highly segregated school districts contain more than 80% students of one race, including districts that are more than 80% all white. There are 130 school districts in New Jersey that are highly segregated.

Few Choice Districts Are In Proximity to Intensely Segregated Districts

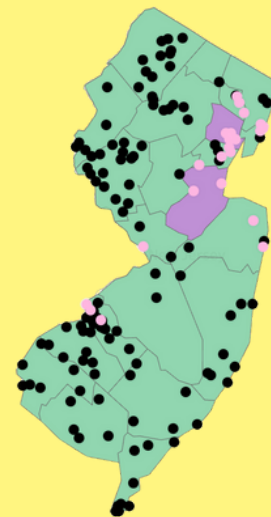
County	Number of Intensely Segregated” Districts	Number of Choice Districts
Camden	3	16
Essex	4	0
Hudson	4	1
Mercer	1	1
Middlesex	2	0
Monmouth	2	3
Passaic	3	2
Union	4	3

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Expanding the Choice Program Could End *De Facto* Segregation



- **Pink Dots**
23 “intensely segregated” schools
- **Black Dots**
119 Choice Districts
- **Purple Counties**
No Choice Districts

In Middlesex and Essex Counties, there are **no** choice districts, despite there being several intensely segregated schools in both counties.

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33 of the 130

Highly Segregated School Districts (25%) already are Choice Districts, but the seats in these segregated districts remain frozen.

Creation of An Interdistrict Desegregation Transfer Plan

- The eight counties could be a **starting point** for expanding the Choice Program
 - Allow new Choice Districts in the eight counties and surrounding counties;
 - Allow expansion of choice seats in the eight counties and surrounding counties;
 - Prioritize and provide incentives for schools in Essex, Middlesex, Mercer, and Monmouth Counties to become Choice Districts; and
- Any “highly segregated” Choice District **in any** county should be permitted to expand seats.