



New Jersey Policy Institute



NJ's next governor could inherit school segregation dispute

by Hannah Gross

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New Jersey is delaying a possible resolution to integrate its segregated public school system, advocates and families said in a recent court filing.

The advocates are seeking to bring the matter before an appeals court judge they hope will find the state liable for school segregation. The state wants the matter to remain in a trial court where it is now after the sides failed to reach a settlement during a lengthy mediation, according to recent filings.

This is the latest in the major lawsuit initiated in 2018 by the Latino Action Network, the NAACP and several students and families in segregated school districts. After years of court proceedings and almost a year and a half of mediated settlement talks, a requirement for remedies to segregation could still be far off. As Gov. Phil Murphy nears the end of his second term, the issue could be passed to the next administration

The New Jersey Policy Institute, a nonpartisan think tank, filed a motion asking to join the case as amicus curiae to provide information on why an expansion of the Interdistrict School Choice Program is “the best remedy to diversify schools.” The state objected to the institute’s involvement in the case in an opposition brief.

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The choice program, which allows students to enroll in participating schools in other towns for free, includes 119 of the state’s nearly 600 school districts. No new districts have been added in about a decade, despite demand outpacing the available number of seats.

Wells Winegar, executive director of the New Jersey Policy Institute, said the program is scalable and cost effective, as outlined in the brief. His group hopes to work with the next governor and new state lawmakers to expand the program, Winegar said.

Read the full article [here](#)!

