



Mount Zion Baptist
Church of Pleasantville





School Segregation in New Jersey

A pandemic of inequality & lost opportunity

Friday, September 24 • 10:00 am to 3:00 pm

The Conference Center at Mercer

Segregation is Sin

- It thwarts opportunity, harms our economy, divides our politics, & cuts short lives.
- *Integration* is simply the *absence* of segregation – absence of a structure of “external containment”.
- It is rooted in discrimination, subjugation, oppression & exploitation.
- It is not a choice made by the segregated. It is a set of immoral laws & policies upheld by the powerful that limit opportunity & life outcomes for the powerless.
- But immoral laws & policies can be changed by moral courage, a determined people & organized power.

Framework for a
Legislative Approach to
Ending School Segregation
in New Jersey
in Our Time

1. Must Involve Everyone

- *All districts bear some responsibility.
All have a role to play.*
 - Shut off all doors to “flight”
 - Small scale pilot projects will not work.
 - Must engage whole regions
 - Must be implemented statewide.

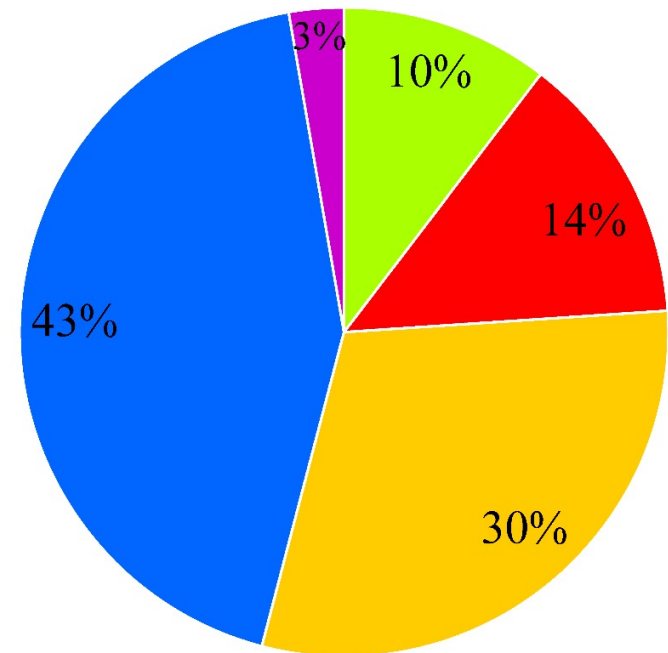
2. Set Achievable, Fair Goals for Inclusion & Integration

New Jersey Public School Students in 2020

■ Asian ■ Black ■ Hispanic ■ White ■ Other

The state's aim should be

- to support, incentivize & push all districts, all schools, all faculty & all classrooms
- to better reflect the diversity of their regions & the state.



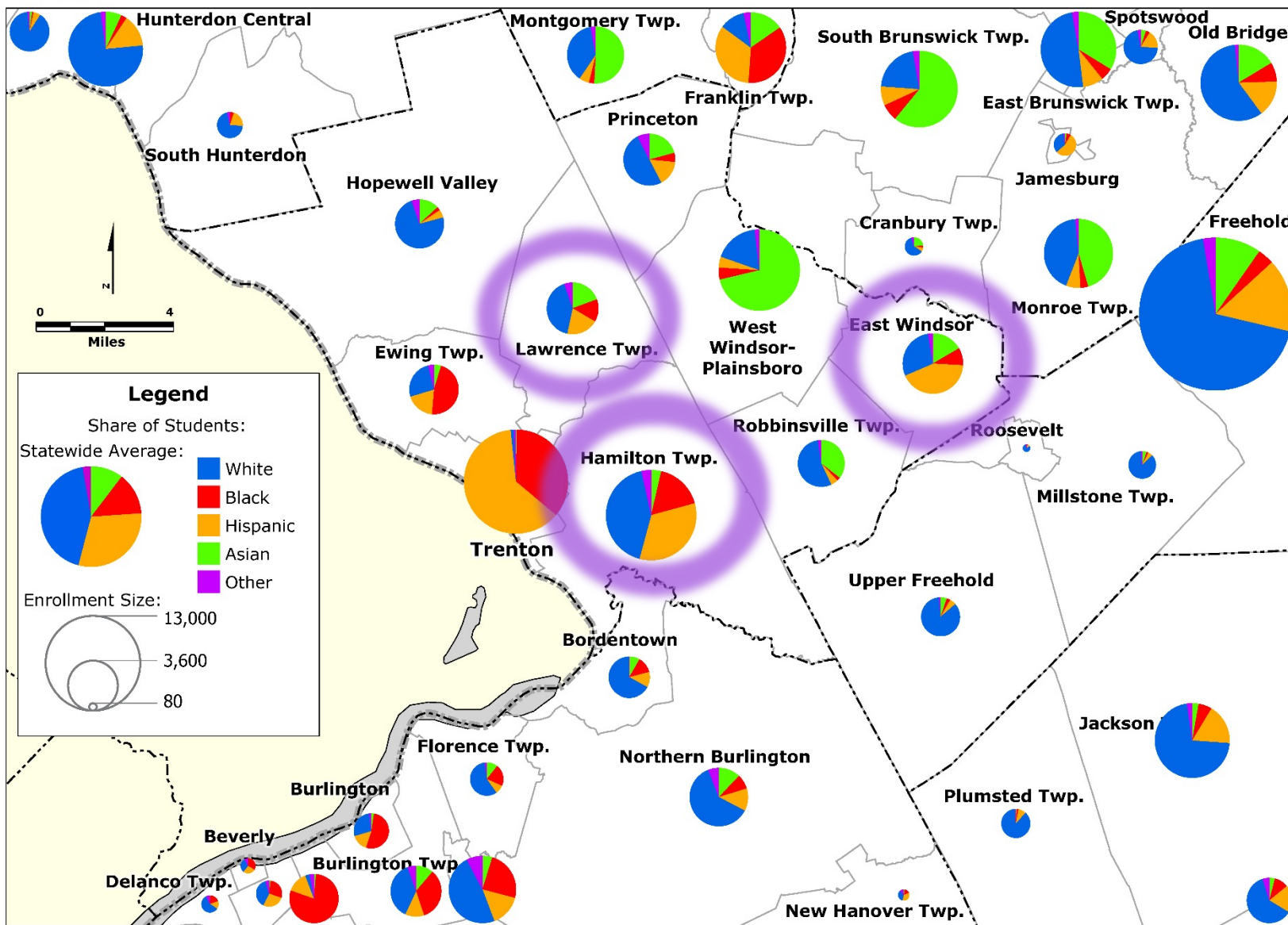
The following maps show how school districts compare to the state demographics

Note districts that most closely *mirror* the state's diversity:

- ***Trenton area*** - Hamilton & Lawrence Twp.
- ***Camden area*** - Black Horse Pike (Gloucester Twp.) & Deptford
- ***Atlantic City area*** - Egg Harbor & Greater Egg Harbor (Galloway Twp.).
- ***Newark area*** - Montclair, South Orange-Maplewood, Morristown, Woodbridge

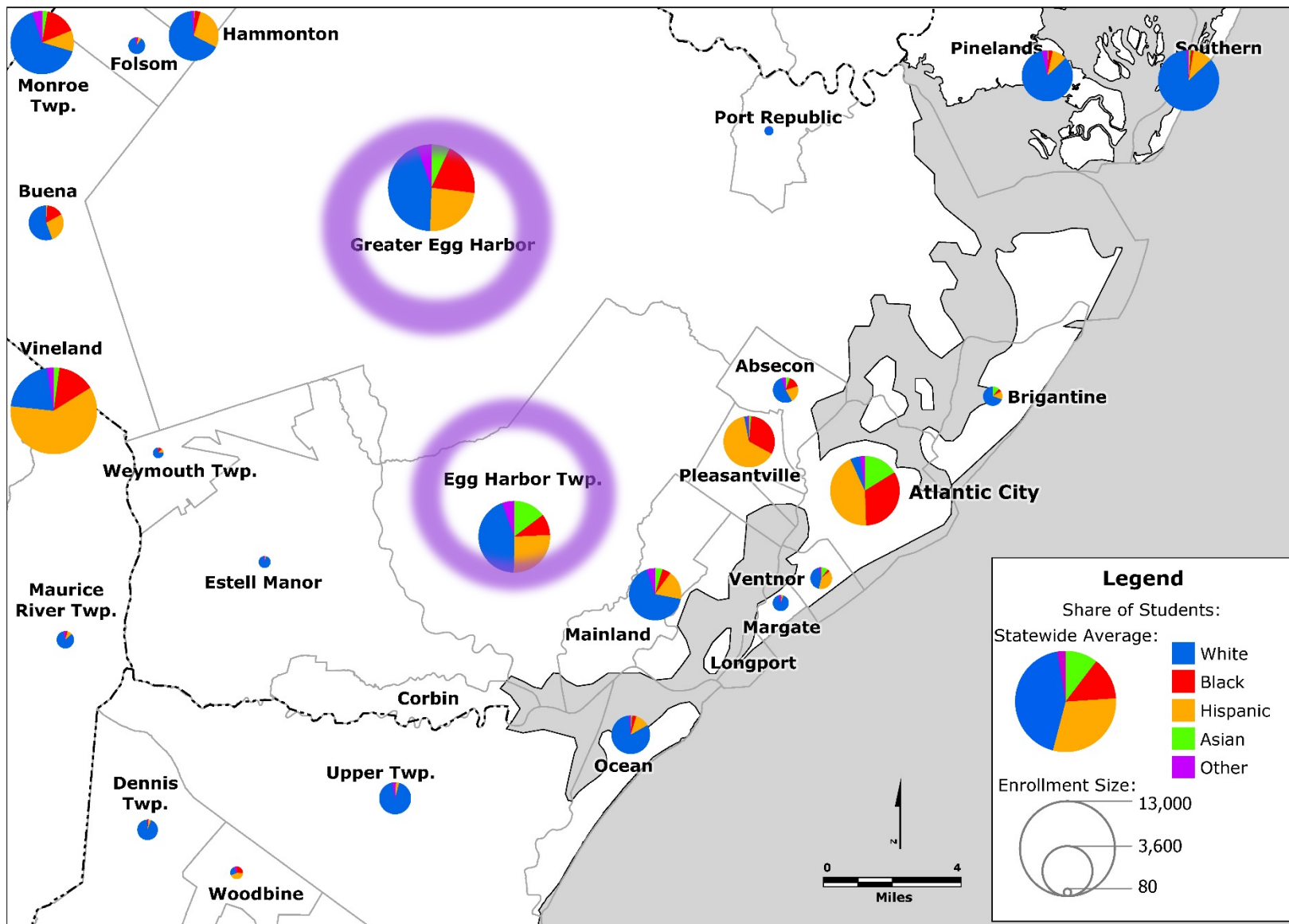
An effective plan will help *all* districts look more like these diverse places *AND* help the diverse districts do a better job with integration & inclusion.

TRENTON, NEW JERSEY AREA Race of Public School Students by School Districts in 2019-2020



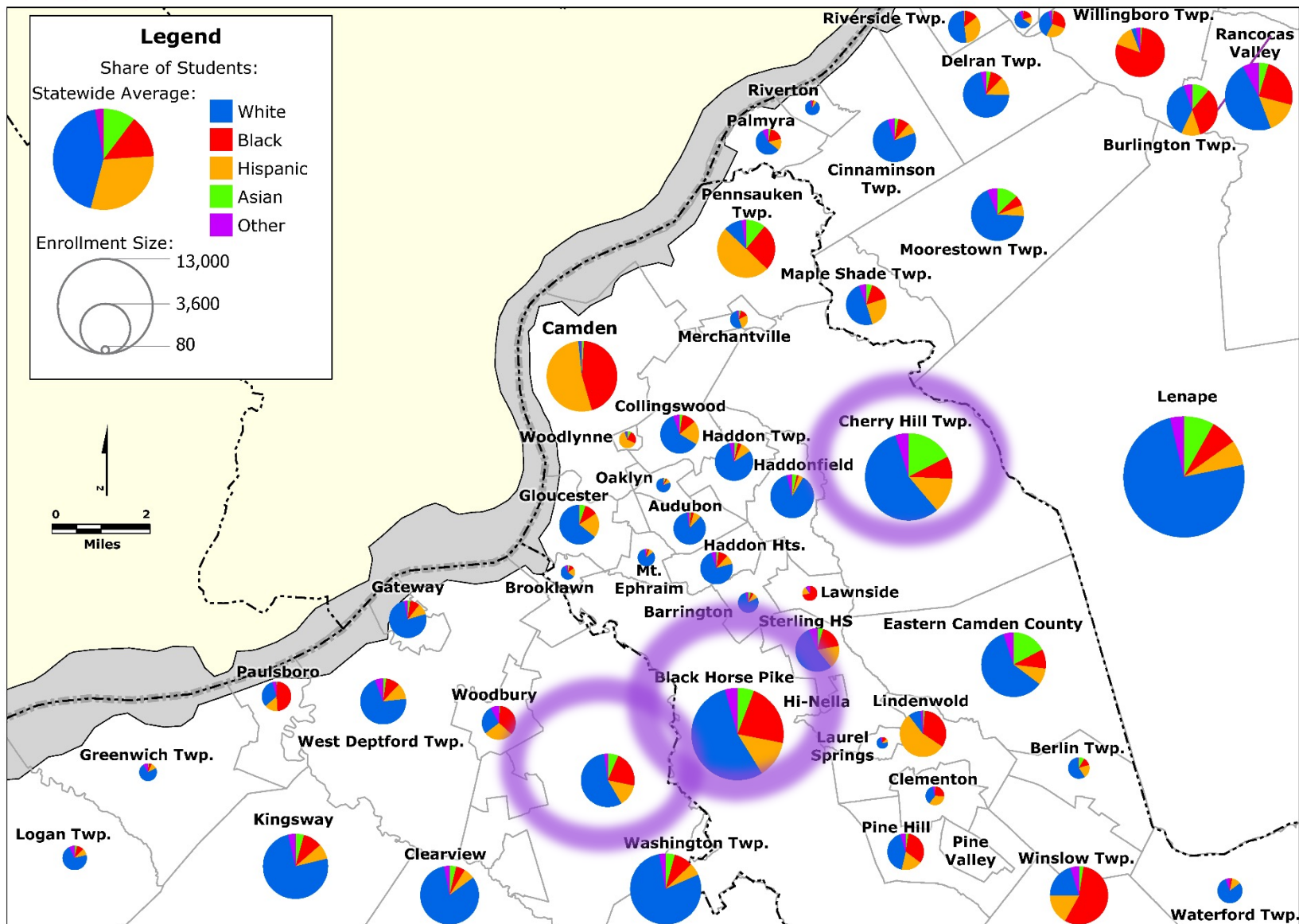
ATLANTIC CITY, NEW JERSEY AREA

Race of Public School Students by School Districts in 2019-2020

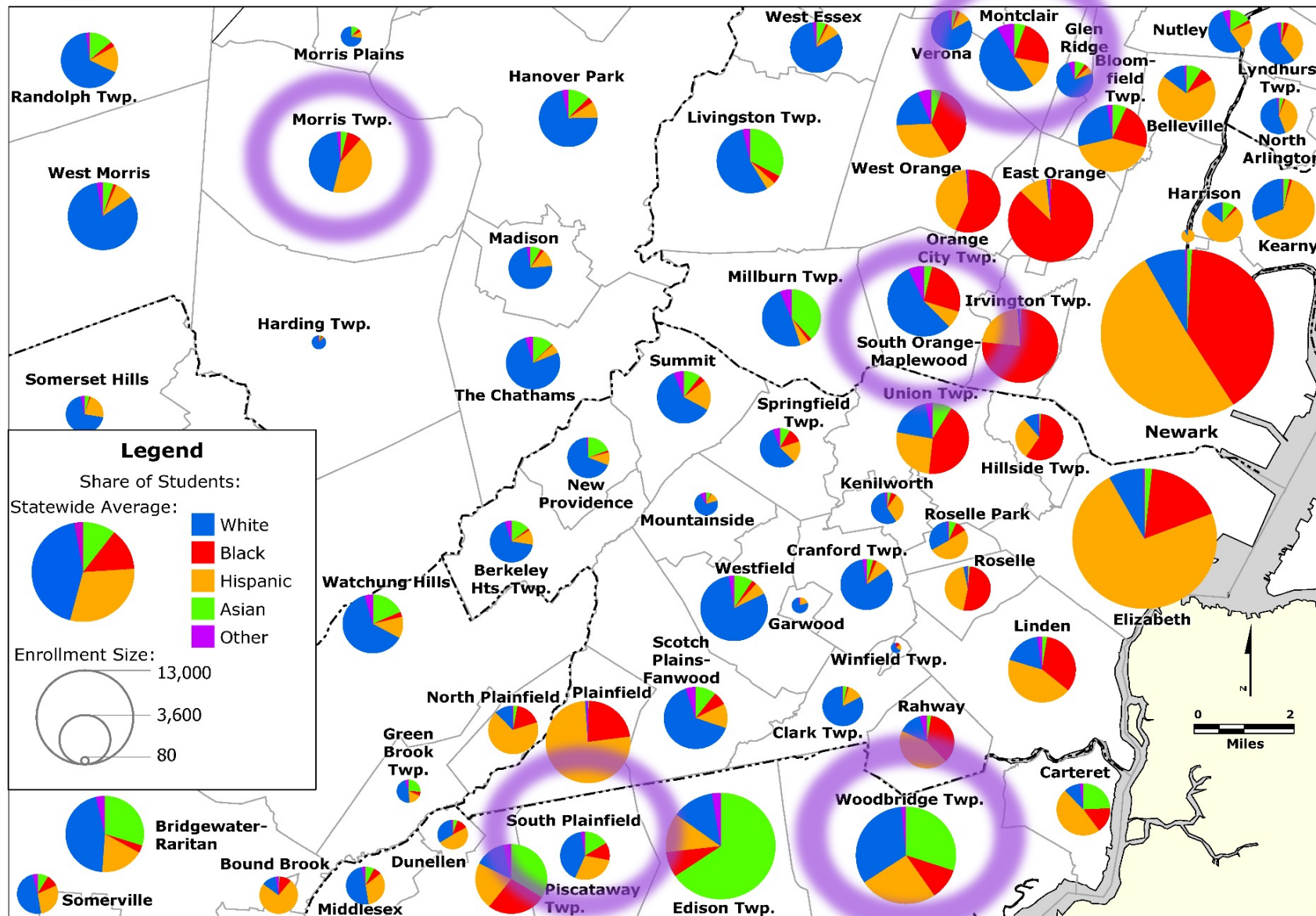


CAMDEN, NEW JERSEY AREA

Race of Public School Students by School Districts in 2019-2020



NEWARK- NORTH NEW JERSEY AREA Race of Public School Students by School Districts in 2019-2020



3. Goals must be based on *Opportunity* as well as race

Opportunity is defined by social & economic factors such as income, wealth, quality schools, jobs & tax base.

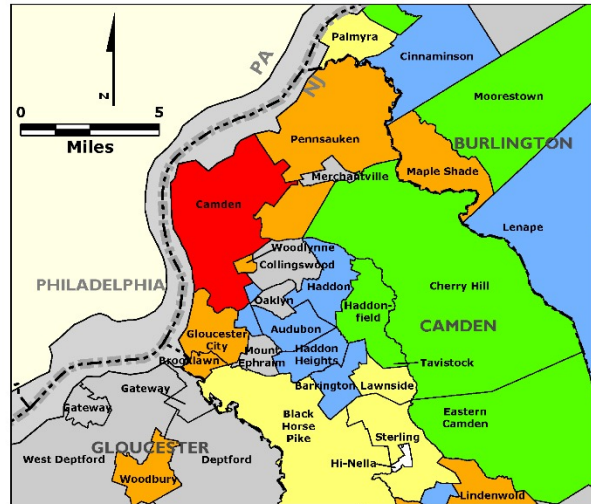
Next map: *Opportunity* factors by school district

Green & **Blue** are *Highest Opportunity districts*

- Fewest low-income students
 - Best test scores
 - Highest Ratable Tax Base
- *These districts should have the greatest obligation to meet regional inclusion & integration goals.*

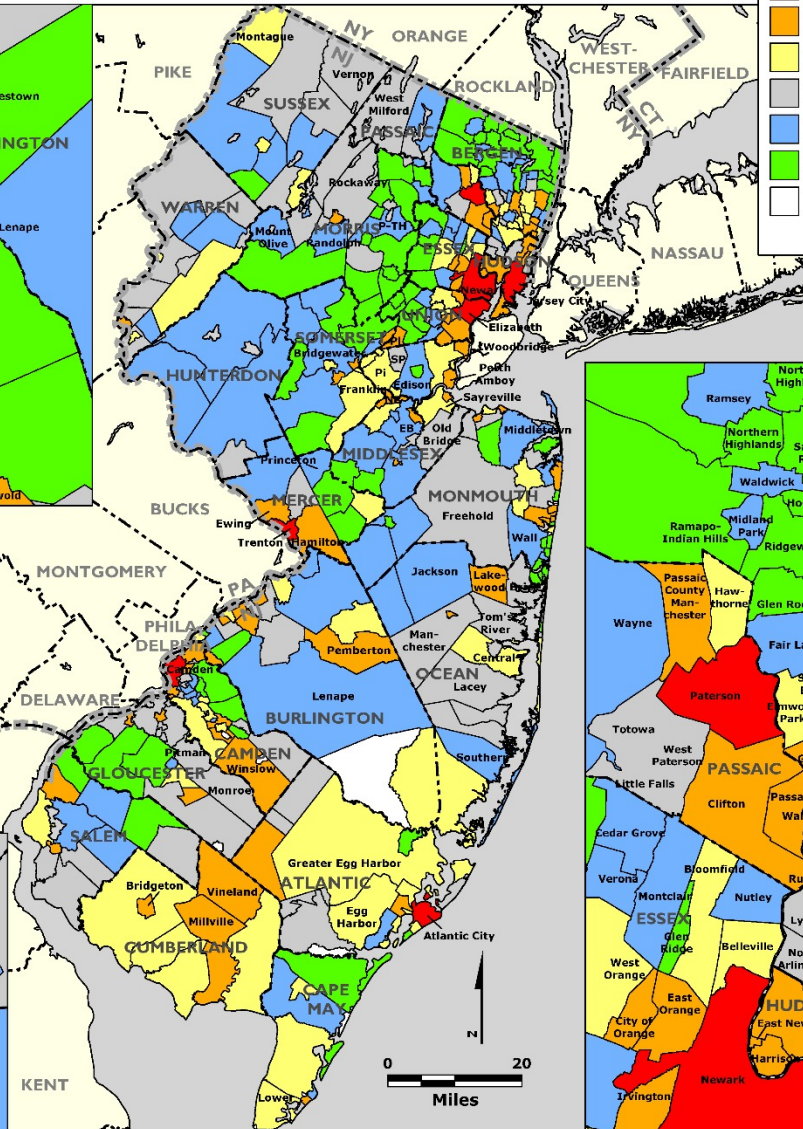
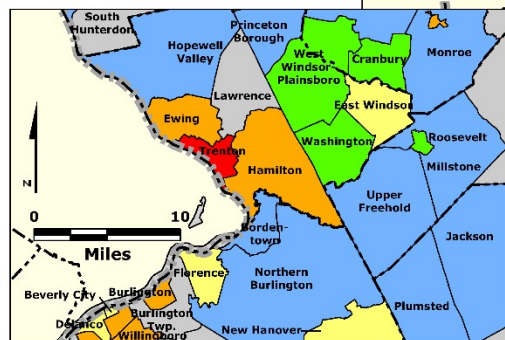
NEW JERSEY Opportunity Types of School Districts in 2020

Camden Area



EB East Brunswick
NB New Brunswick
P-TH Parsippany-Troy Hills
Pi Piscataway
PI Plainfield
SP South Plainfield

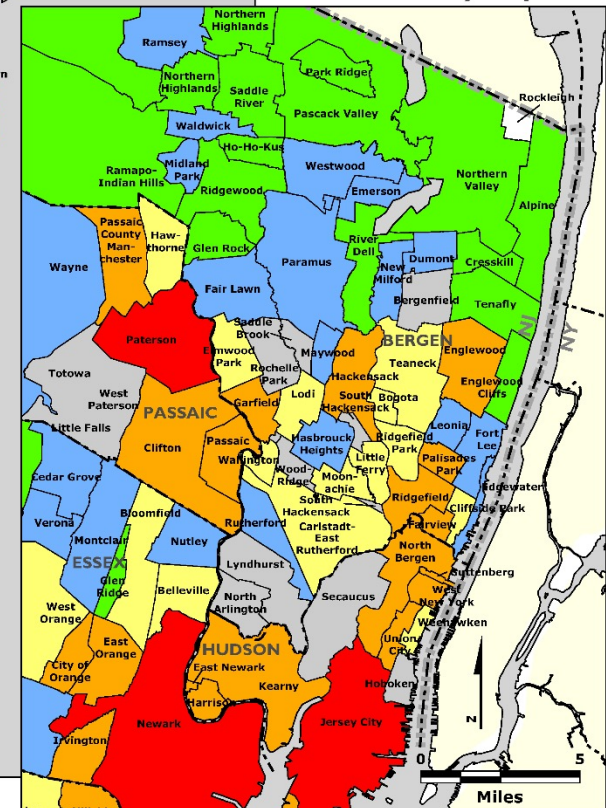
Trenton Area



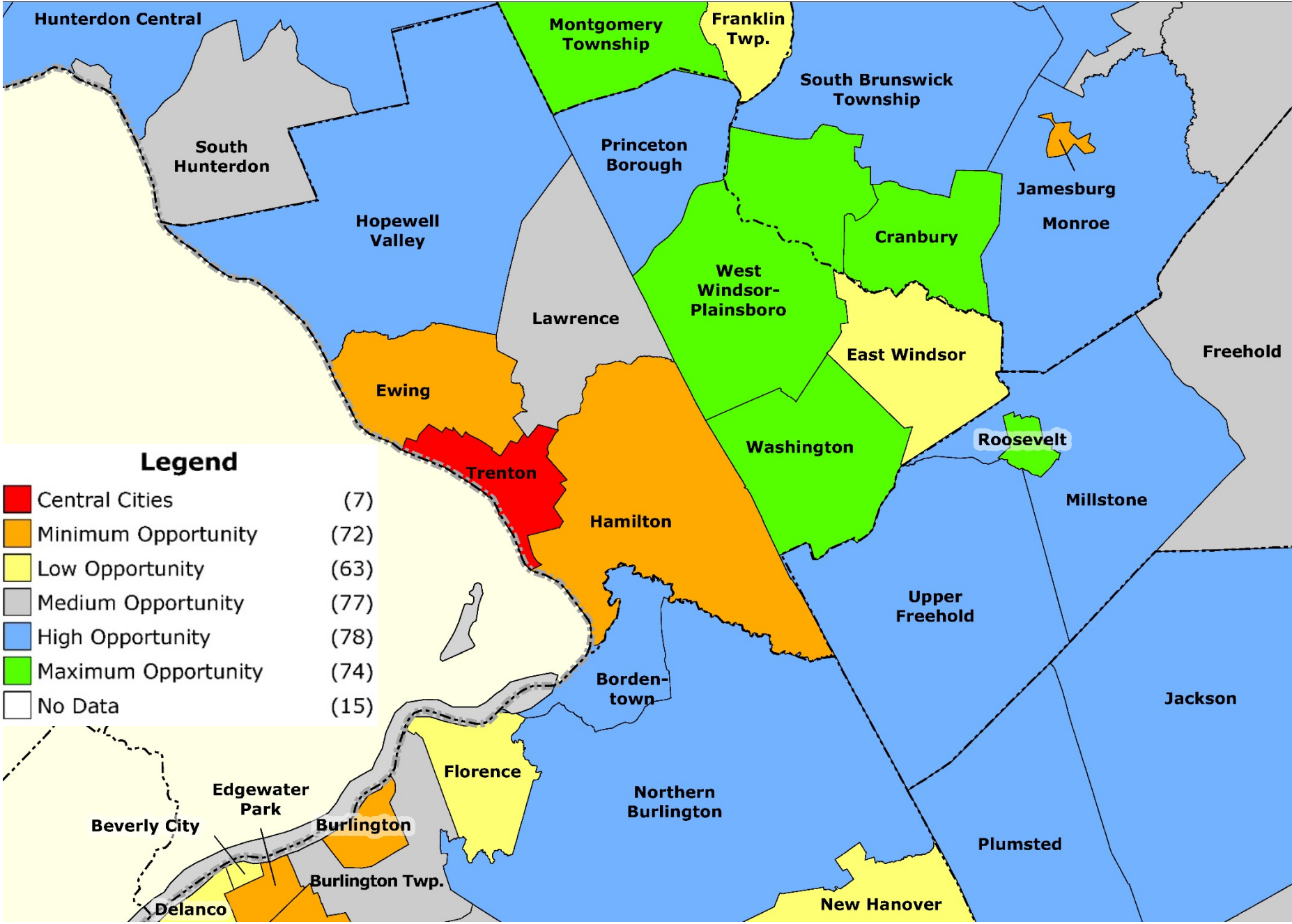
Legend

Central Cities	(7)
Minimum Opportunity	(72)
Low Opportunity	(63)
Medium Opportunity	(77)
High Opportunity	(78)
Maximum Opportunity	(74)
No Data	(15)

Newark- Jersey City Area



Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics,
New Jersey Department of Community Affairs.



4. Have a Combined Approach.

Using a **Diversity and Opportunity** analysis, the state can employ multiple policy tools for meeting inclusion goals for every district, school & classroom.

Most already exist in NJ law. But need reform:

- Strengthen school funding formula
- Reform intra-district choice program
- Pro-integration magnet & county school program
- District & classroom level strategies and best practices
- Use Fair Housing goals & obligations
- Reform School Consolidation bill
- Strengthen the Civil Rights capacity of the DOE

The School Funding Reform Act of 2008

This system (when fully funded) does much to incentivize diversity & inclusion.

But it can do more.

- State aid should prioritize & advantage diverse districts.
- Funding should support strategies that foster inclusion *within* districts, schools & classrooms.
- High poverty districts should not be penalized.
- Funding should only support high opportunity districts as they diversify.

Inter-District Public School Choice

This program, in its current form, does **NOT** promote integration.

But it can if it is reformed.

- Make it mandatory for *high opportunity* districts that fall short of regional integration goals.
- Spaces in these districts can be *prioritized* for students from the most segregated, high poverty districts.

County School System & Magnet Schools

County technical, trade & vocational schools often already serve as regional, more integrated, alternatives.

- *Should require regional goals for economic & racial balance.*
- Enact legislation to create & support **pro-integration regional magnet schools** in urban areas.
- Legislation must require charters to also meet *regional* integration goals.

Reform School Consolidation bill

The new school consolidation bill **must be amended to:**

- **prohibit** withdrawal, separation or dissolution as a part of any proposed consolidation plan.
- Require an *affirmative* obligation to create racially & socioeconomically integrated districts.

Fair Housing is part of the answer

- Include Affordable Housing in goals for school & classroom integration.
- Strengthen the *Fair Housing Act* to better promote inclusive schools.
- Affluent districts who think they are too “far flung” to integrate can be required to deepen their affordable housing obligation.

Bolster/Reform Department of Education's Civil Rights Capacity

None of these measures can succeed without a strong state mandate & resources directed toward the achievement of integration goals

- Enact legislation to strengthen the Department of Education's Civil Rights capacity & enforcement so it is charged *with* & capable *of* carrying out school desegregation goals.
- DOE must have the capacity to conduct an ***Opportunity Analysis*** to develop inclusion goals for each district.

Caveats

1. **Avoid Short-Term Quick-Fixes** *Especially ones that settle for costly expenditures instead of true inclusion.*
2. **Don't Blame the Victim** - *NJ's high poverty & racially isolated districts did not create segregation. Their students did not choose it. They should not be asked to bear the burden of fixing it.*
3. **Not all Suburban & Urban Districts are the Same** - *Recognize that districts in New Jersey are more than just white or black; rich or poor; urban or suburban.*
4. **Do No Harm** - *The best intentions often bring unintended but harmful consequences.*
 - **County consolidation** will not capture a diverse enough area to stop *white flight*.
 - Simply **removing district boundaries** would accelerate *white flight* & deepen segregation.
 - **Magnet & vocational schools** should not create a new layer of exclusivity & exclusion.
 - **Magnets**, as well as **charters**, must meet meaningful goals for reflecting the economic & racial mix of their *region*.

School Integration Will Not Fix All Problems

- School Integration is not a substitute for ending residential segregation, economic inequality & racial discrimination

But it is a *part* of the problem & a part we can do something about.

**This is a
beginning
framework.**

**A starting point
for advancing a
policy agenda
in the next
legislative
session.**

We call on our
members, allies &
policy makers to join us
in turning these ideas
into bold &
transformative
legislation that will
promote and sustain
racial & economic
opportunity for all
families, children &
communities.

Summary

- ***Opportunity Analysis.***
 - A desegregation plan must be based on a thorough analysis of racial as well as economic & social factors that define *opportunity*.
 - Develop integration & inclusion goals based on *opportunity & diversity*.
- **Legislation is needed**
 - To reform & strengthen the Department of Education's civil rights capacity & enforcement.
 - Strengthen state funding formula to advantage & incentivize diverse & integrated schools.
 - Direct and increase funding to local **integration & desegregation best practices** where diversity already exists.
 - Reform ***Interdistrict Public School Choice*** program to advance integration within regions based on opportunity analysis.
 - Reform legislation to **require charters to advance integration** - not promote segregation.
 - Support **pro-integration magnet schools** in urban areas and for **county schools**.
 - Amend school consolidation bill to **prohibit secession** and Require **affirmative obligation** to create integrated districts.
 - Increase & **enforce Mount Laurel** obligations on “far flung” high opportunity communities with exclusionary schools.