Residential and School Mobility:

Implications for Place Based Initiatives

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Agenda

❑ **Background on place based initiatives**

  ▪ **Key policy goals and assumptions?**

  ▪ **Issue of residential and school mobility?**

❑ **Present results of two studies of residential and school mobility that were done in the context of a place based initiative in 10 cities**

❑ **Conclude with implications for place-based policy and practice**

Policy context for place-based policies

❑ **Poverty concentration effects**
- ~50% of poor in neighborhoods > 20% and ~ 15% in neighborhood >40%
- Strong gradient of negative impact on individuals from 20-40% (Galster et al., 2000)

❑ **System failure**
- Institutional: Public housing, public schools, public welfare
- Social: Collective efficacy, civic engagement, social networks

❑ **Sustainable development**
- Abandonment and sprawl wastes resources
- Regional competitiveness
- Spill over effects.

Policy context (cont.)

❑ **Devolution**

- ▪ Entitlement reform
- ▪ No national policy on territorial equality

❑ **Public-private partnerships**

- ▪ Foundation role
- ▪ Local government
- ▪ Private developers

Types of place based approaches

❑ **Residential mobility programs**

  ▪ Enable poor to move to middle class places

❑ **Mixed income development**

  ▪ Attract middle class to live in poor neighborhoods

❑ **Community building and development initiatives**

  ▪ Empower community to improve neighborhood from within
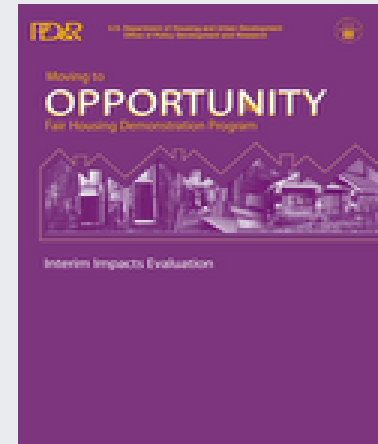
❑ **Neighborhood service delivery models**

  ▪ Better address needs of poor through high quality, responsive and coordinated services

Residential mobility (relocation) initiatives

❑ **Examples**

- Moving To Opportunity experiment
- Guautreux Program (Chicago)
- Housing Choice Vouchers

❑ **Assumptions**

- Poor families will be able to move to better areas
- Social connections there will help them
- Community resources such as schools will be better
- Stress will be lower

Mixed income development

❑ Examples

- Hope VI
- Choice Neighborhoods
- Private mixed-income developers

❑ Assumptions

- Social interaction between classes
- Social mix demands good services
  - E.g. school choices
- Low income units will continue
- Sustained demand for market rate units

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Community building and development initiatives

❑ **Examples**
- Making Connections
- New Communities

❑ **Assumptions**
- Build community capacity for collective efficacy
- Residents demand better services like schools
- Retain successful residents
- Strengthen social networks and access social capital
- Attract housing, business and infrastructure

Community engagement--
Denver Making Connections

Neighborhood-based coordinated service models

❑ **Examples**
- Promise neighborhoods
- Jobs Plus

❑ **Assumptions**
- Cross-sectorial collaboration
- Informal networks support
- Population stable for "dosage"
- Residents stay enrolled in quality programs
- Positive spillover

Harlem Children's Zone Report

# Assumptions about residential and school mobility implicit in place based initiatives

❑ Sufficient dosage--Individuals will get adequate "dose" of improved services or community context.

❑ Retain human capital—Residents with increasing capability will stay and lead

❑ Social processes—Critical mass of participation, positive social influence through informal networks

❑ Community identity/engagement—Residents will experience improvements in place and choose quality programs

But not much is really known about the reality of mobility in these types of places!

Decided to investigate residential and school mobility in Making Connections (MC) Sites

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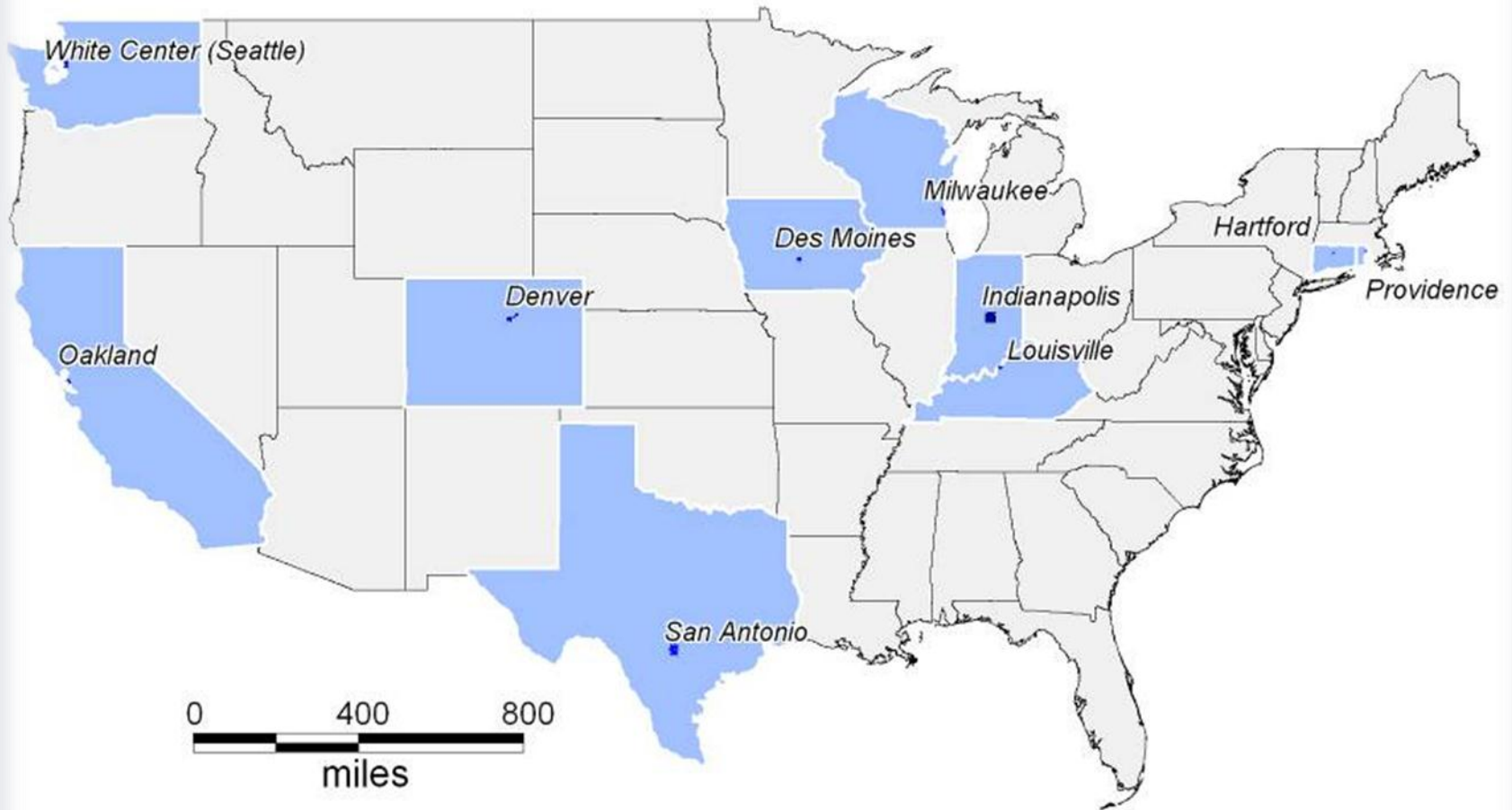
Sites defined target neighborhoods—Areas of high disadvantage
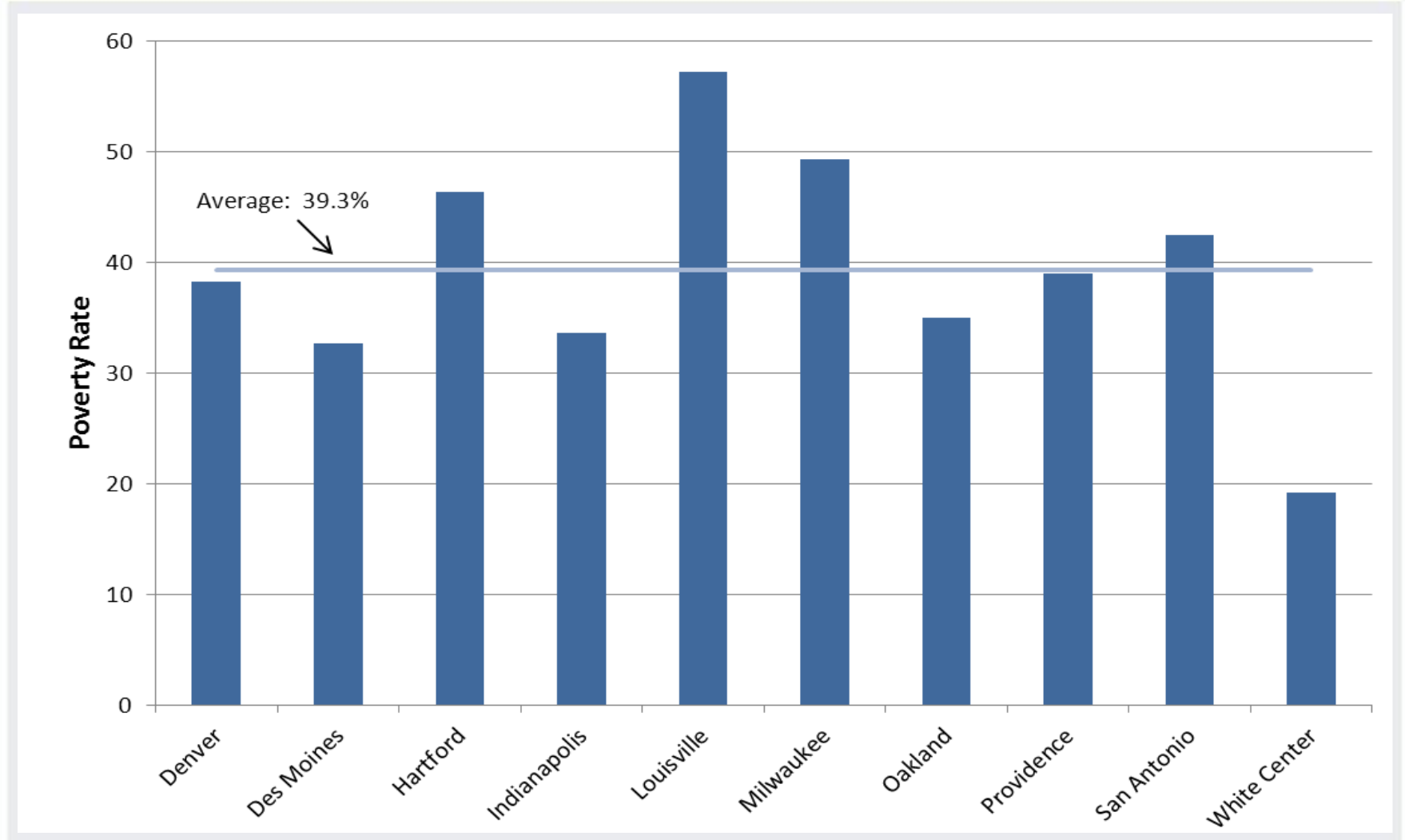
Two studies using MC data: Study questions

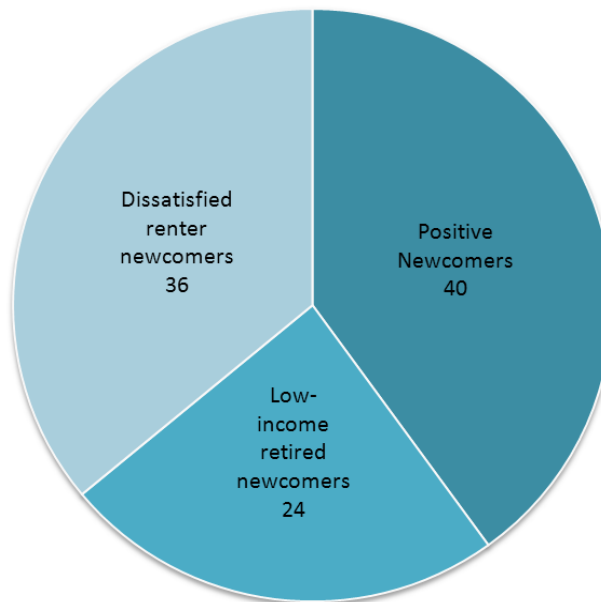| Residential mobility and neighborhood change	Getting to better performing schools
1. What are characteristics of movers, stayers and newcomers?	1. What are initial school conditions for MC neighborhood children?
2. How does mobility change neighborhoods?	2. Does switching schools lead to better educational settings?
3. Can we suggest hypothetical models of how neighborhoods function for residents?	3. What role does residential mobility play in getting to better performing schools?

MC Survey Data

➤ Representative sample of households at Waves I (2002-03) II (2005-06) and III (2008-09)

➤ Panel of housing units and households with children (regardless of whether they remained in target area)--~800 per wave per site

➤ Mobility status: _Stayers_ present in housing unit at two periods, _Movers_ there at period 1 not period2, Newcomers there at period 2, not period 1

➤ School names linked to states' data on test performance—For each school, calculate mean percentile ranking in state on all tests and change in ranking between periods.

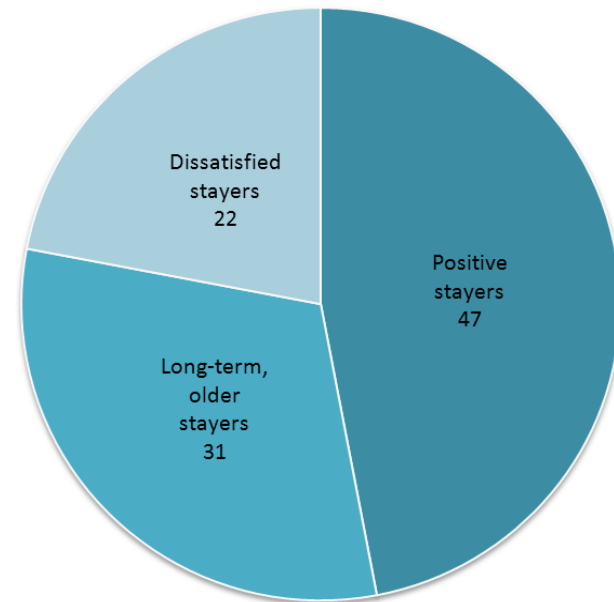# Study 1 Findings: Cluster analysis reveals mobility types

Movers
- Churning movers 46
- Up-and-out movers 30
- Nearby attached movers 24

Newcomers
- Dissatisfied renter newcomers 36
- Positive Newcomers 40
- Low-income retired newcomers 24

Stayers
- Dissatisfied stayers 22
- Positive stayers 47
- Long-term, older stayers 31
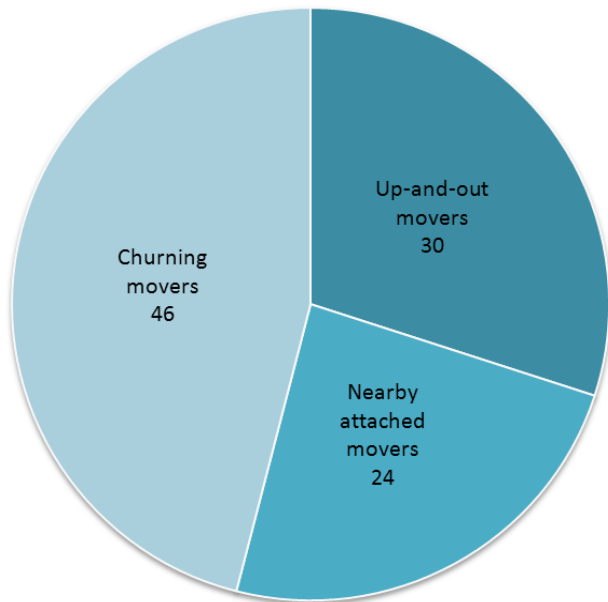
56 % of housing units turned over

Cluster analysis conclusions

- There are positive and negative reasons for moving out, staying put and moving in

- Life stage, in particular older households, is another clustering factor

- Site mix varies considerably—two extremes:

  - Large # of positive newcomers and stayers and little up and out movement

  - Newcomers and stayers disproportionately dissatisfied and movers mostly churning

  - Just a few sites have up and out replaced by satisfied newcomers

Study 1 Findings: Change in site SES mainly due to movement, few saw stayers improvement

Changing Circumstances for Stayers

Wave 1 → Wave 2
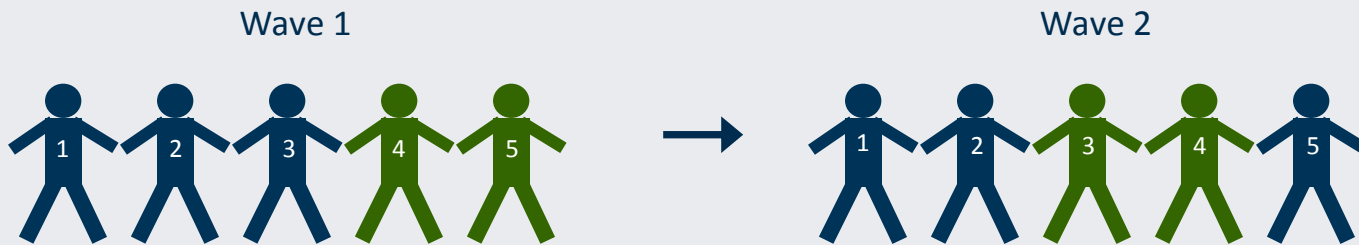
Changes as Out-movers replaced by Newcomers

Wave 1 → Wave 2

Non-poor   Poor
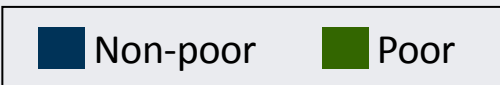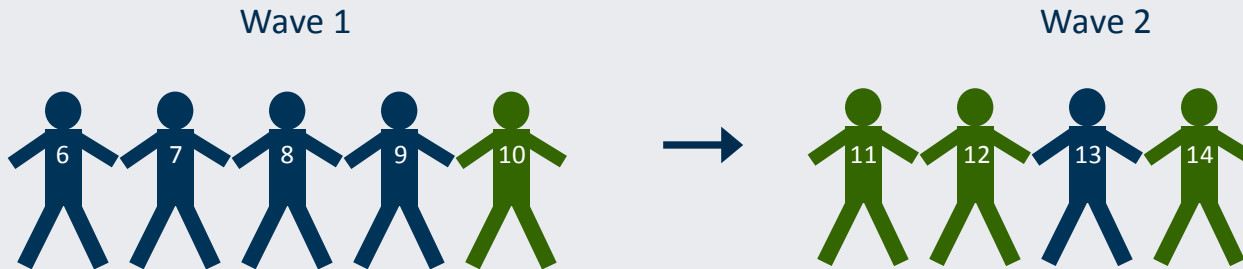
Study 1: Recap

Overall mobility rates or snapshots of changing SES miss variability in reasons for moving and dynamics of change

High level of churning and short distance moves in some places, and varying levels of satisfaction among stayers and newcomers.

Differential mobility changing SES in some neighborhoods, but few show upward trend for stayers, which was a goal of the initiative.

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Study 1: Recap—Hypothetical functions of neighborhoods

Incubator (Seattle)—low up and out movers, newcomers and stayers satisfied, slight rise in SES
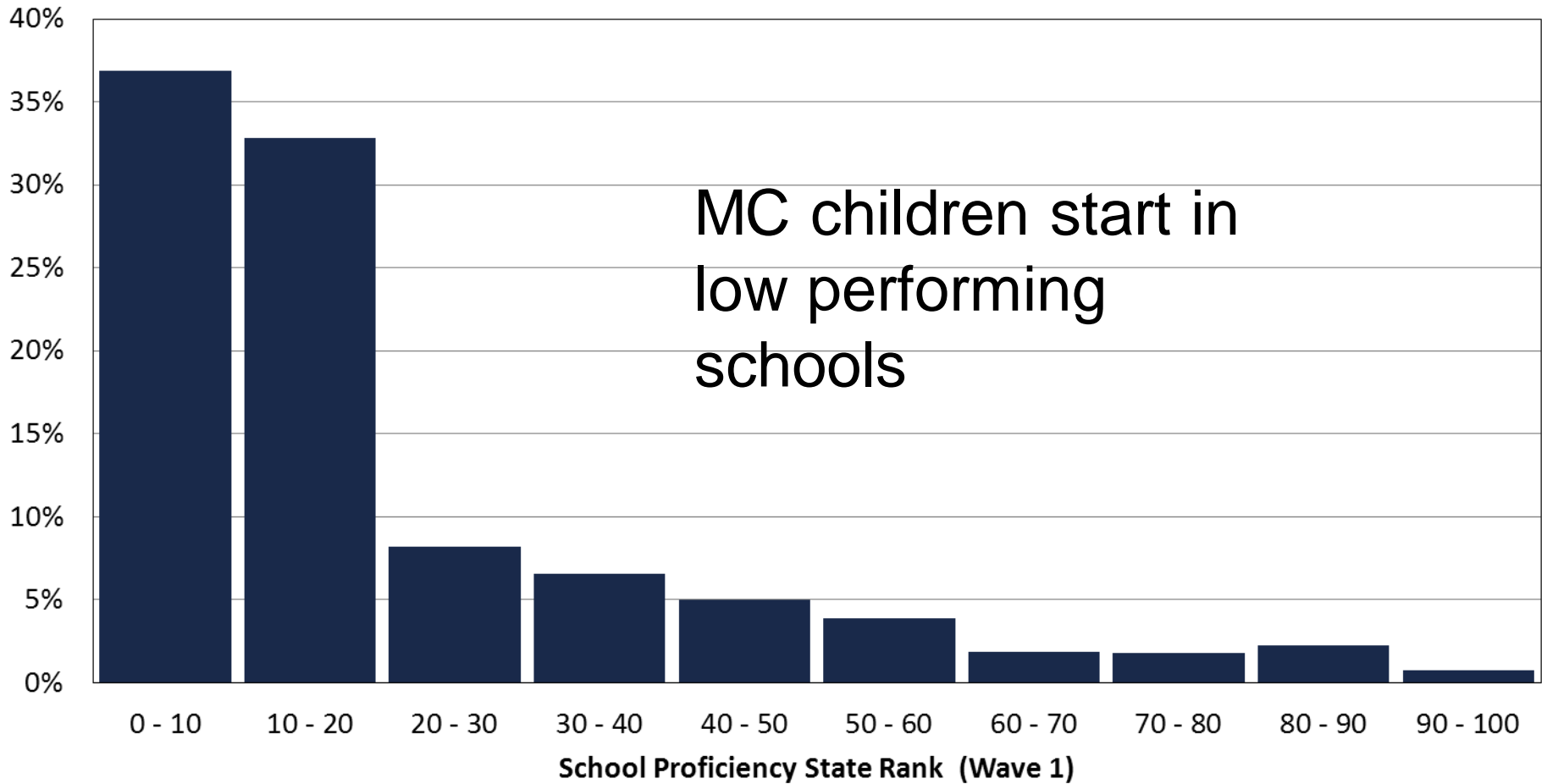
Launch pad (Des Moines)—high up and out, newcomers and stayers satisfied, rising SES

Choice (Denver)—SES rising, newcomers better off than leavers, stayers positive
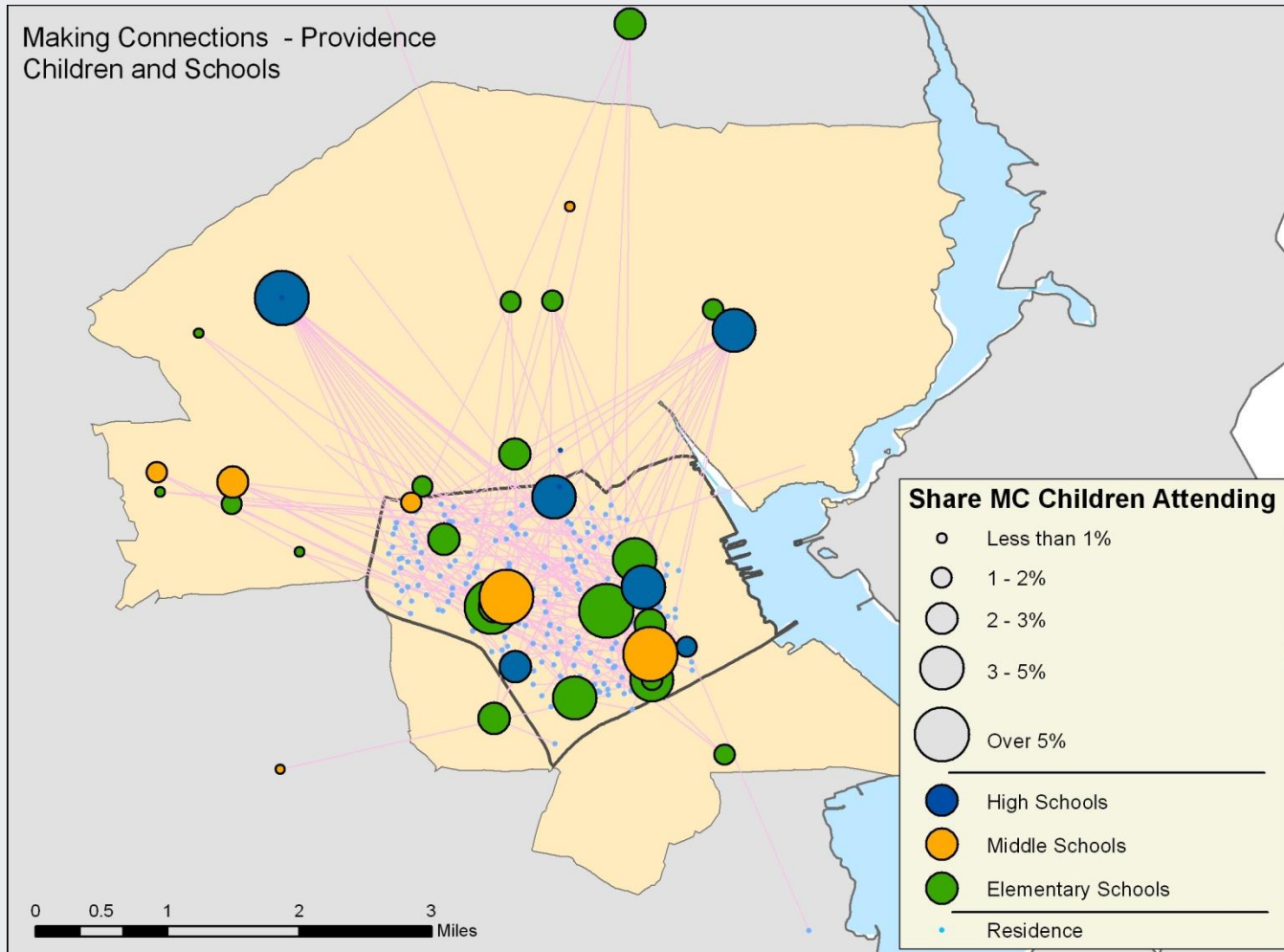
Comfort zone (San Antonio)—SES worsening, newcomers worse off, little up and out, satisfied newcomers and stayers

Trap (Louisville)—movers churning in place, older stayers and newcomers dominate, poverty rate moderating due to displacement of poorest (younger) families who mainly moved to nearby poor areas

Study 2: Descriptive findings:
School mobility and performance

MC children start in
low performing
schools

Making Connections - Providence
Children and Schools

Share MC Children Attending

- Less than 1%
- 1 - 2%
- 2 - 3%
- 3 - 5%
- Over 5%

- High Schools
- Middle Schools
- Elementary Schools
- Residence

0   0.5   1   2   3
Miles

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Wave 2 – Some Families Move, More Children Attend School Outside MC Site

Making Connections - Providence
Children and Schools

Share MC Children Attending

- ○ Less than 1%
- ○ 1 - 2%
- ◯ 2 - 3%
- ◯ 3 - 5%
- ◯ Over 5%

- ● High Schools
- ● Middle Schools
- ● Elementary Schools
- · Residence

0   0.5   1   2   3
Miles

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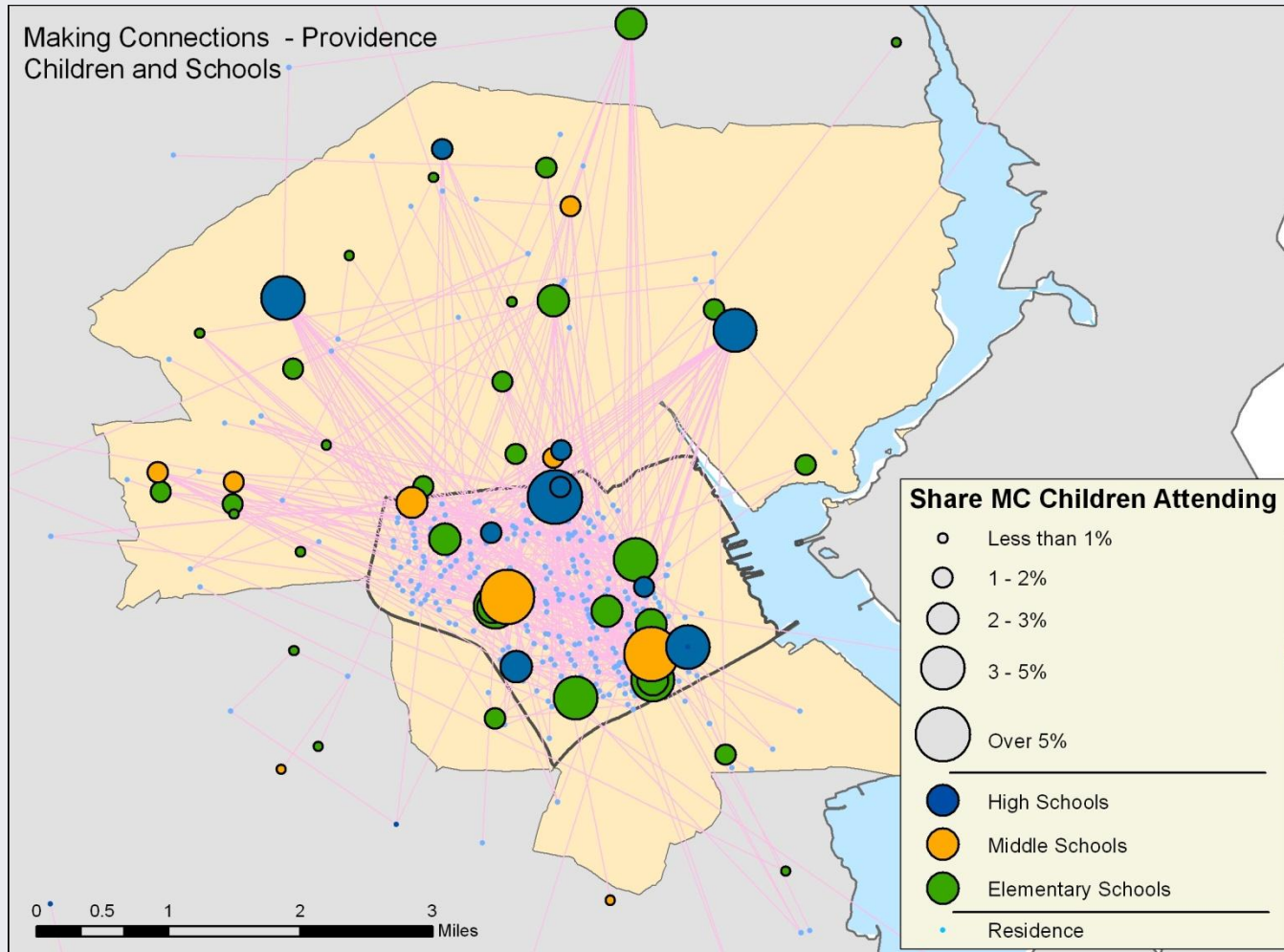
Wave 3 – Many Children Attend Schools Outside MC Site

Making Connections - Providence
Children and Schools

Share MC Children Attending
- o Less than 1%
- ○ 1 - 2%
- ○ 2 - 3%
- ○ 3 - 5%
- ○ Over 5%
- ● High Schools
- ● Middle Schools
- ● Elementary Schools
- · Residence

0   0.5   1   2   3 Miles
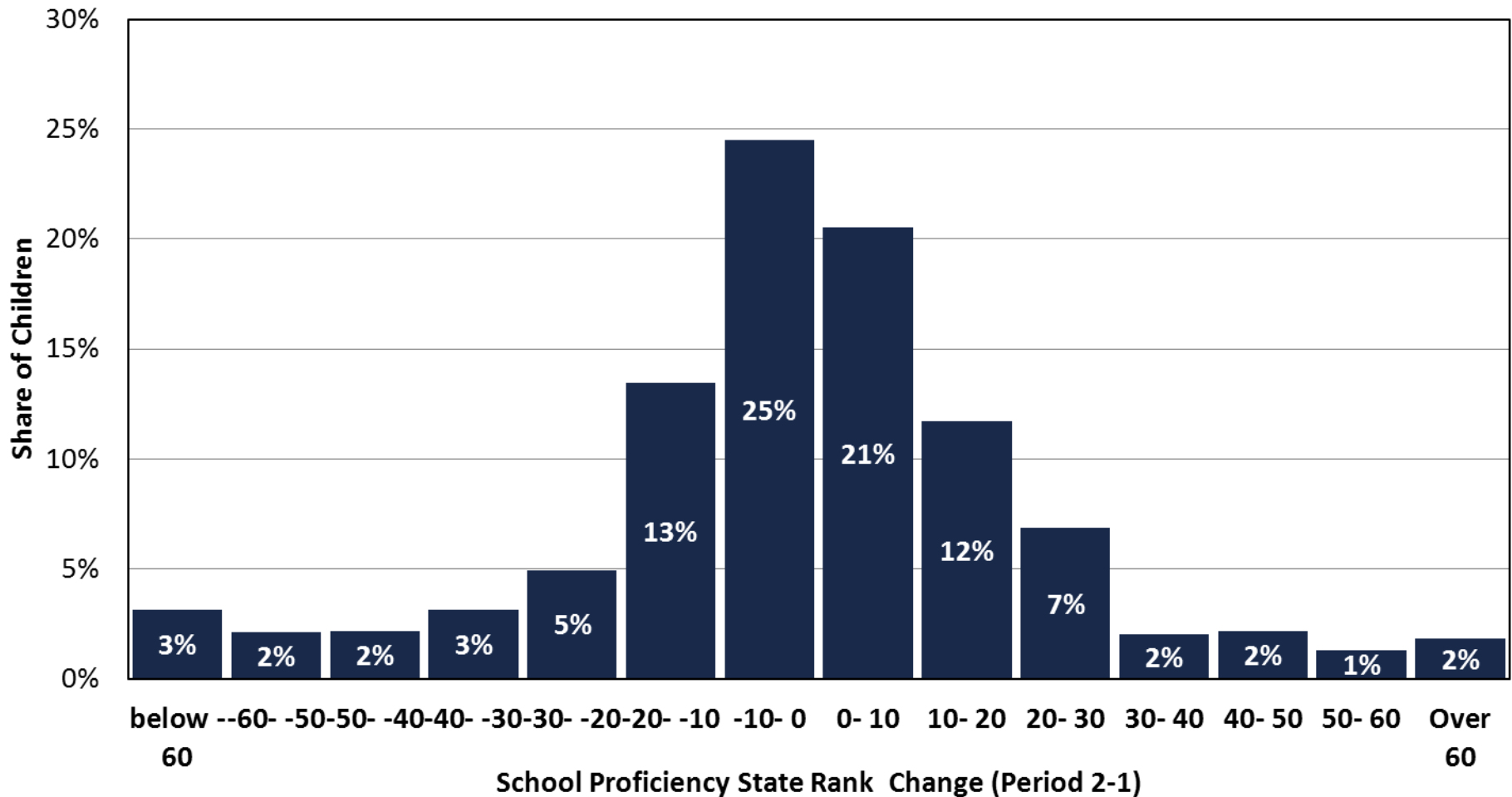
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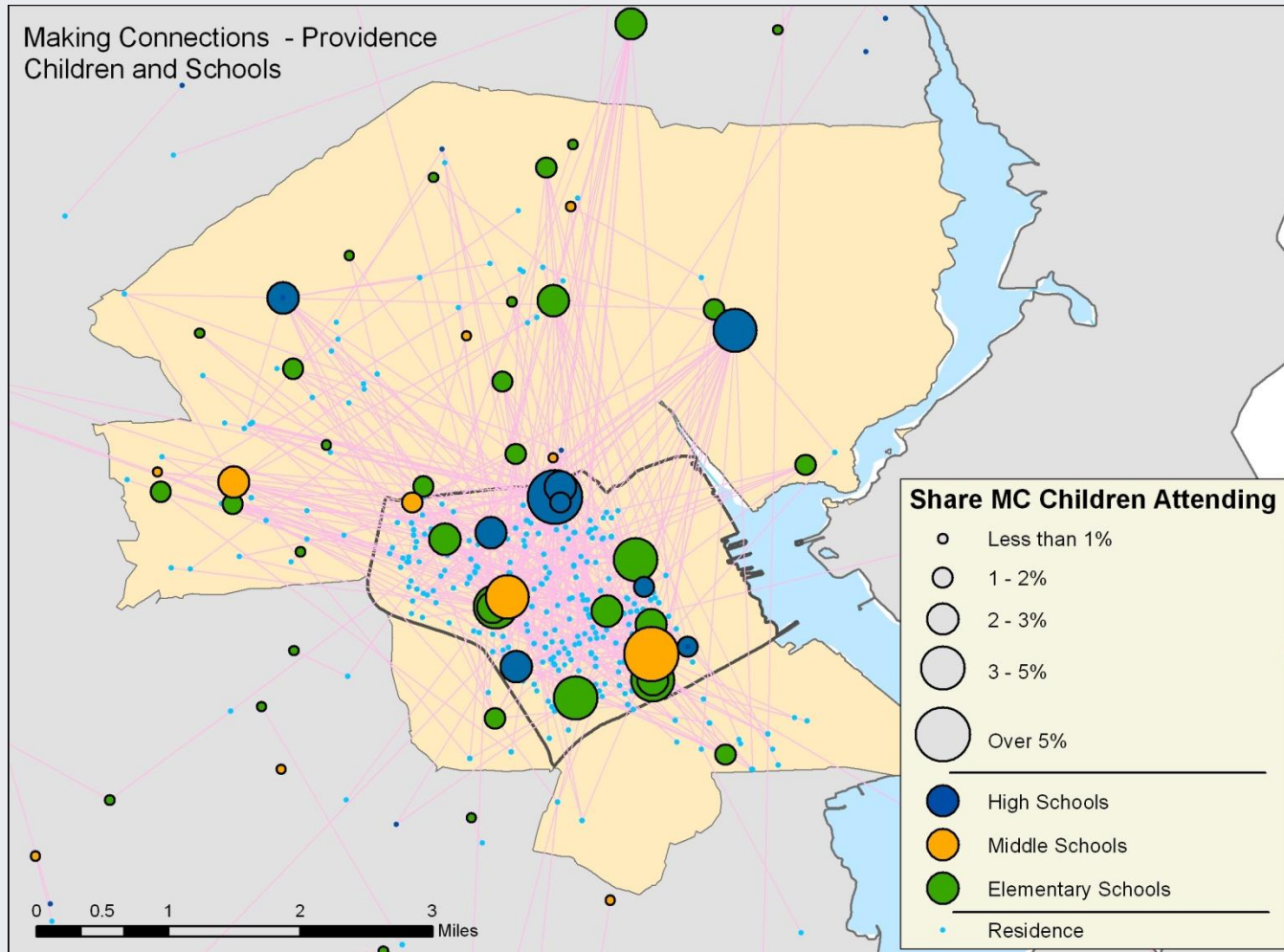
80% of Children Changed Schools in 3 Years, Of Those Who Could Stay, Half Left
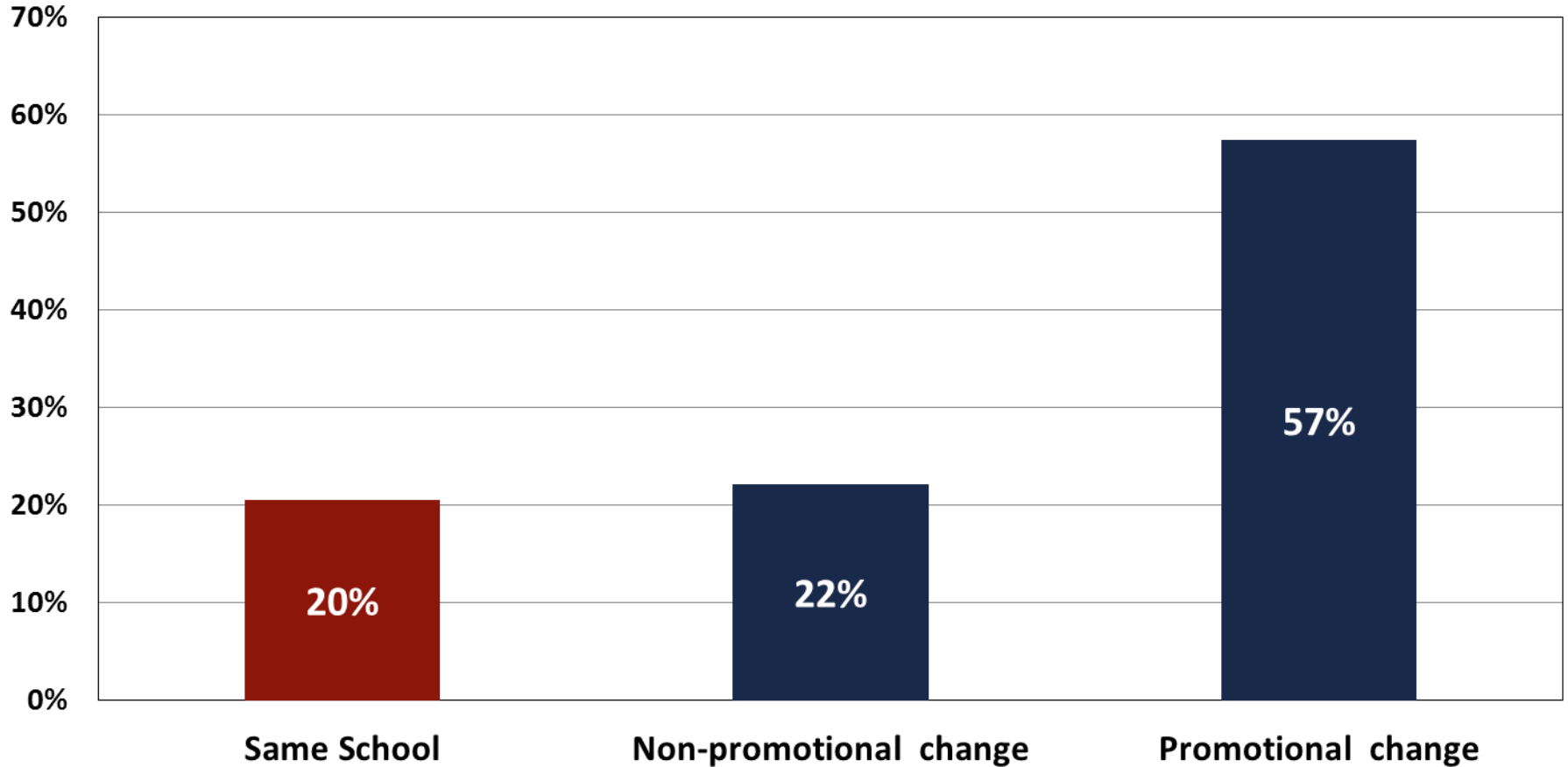
Most Children Making a Non-promotional School Change Move Homes
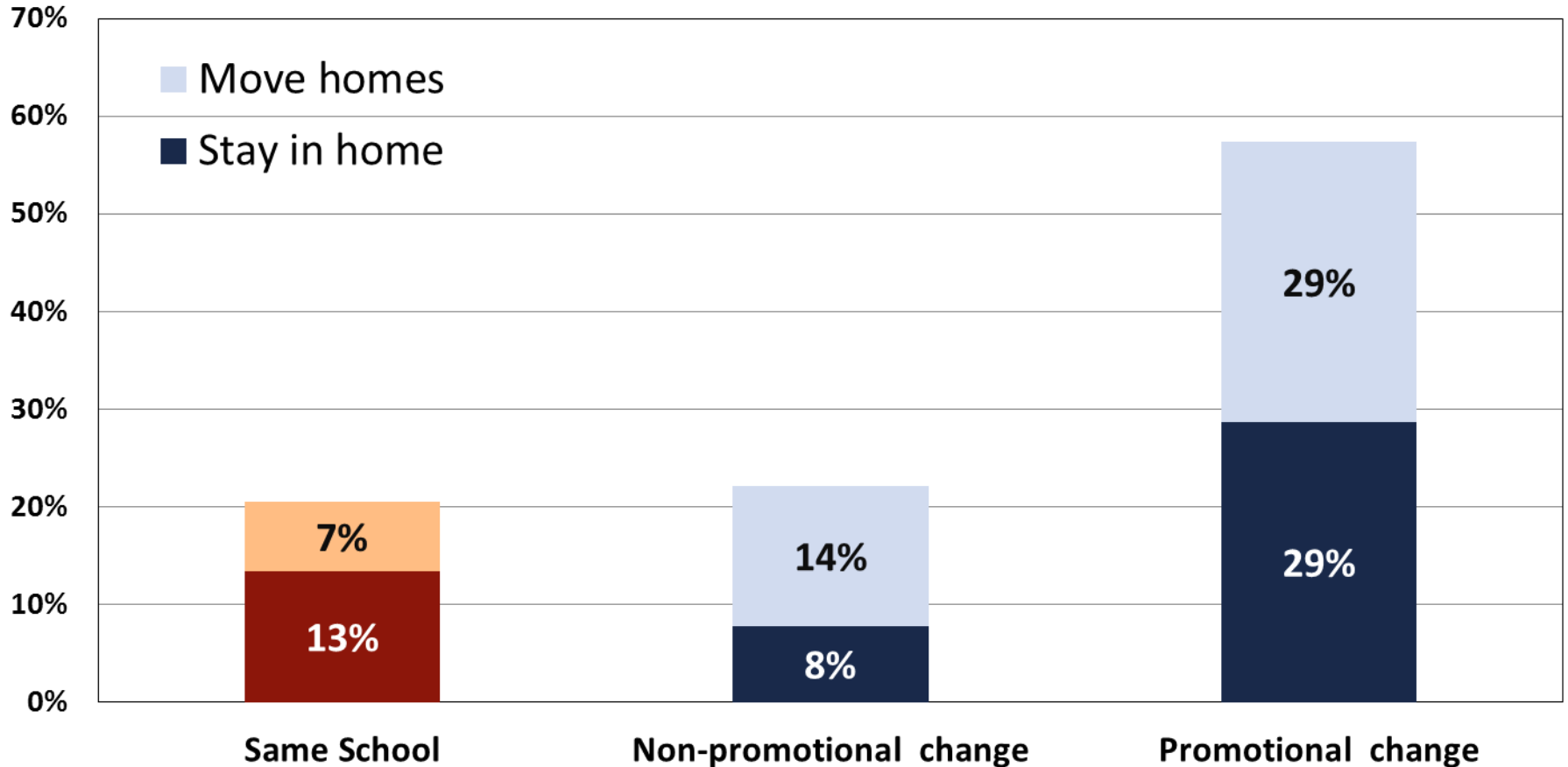
School Performance Change: Losses cancel out gains

Study 2: Multivariate Analysis of change in performance percentile of school

Positive Factors

- Residential move to a new school district
- Higher parental education
- Non-promotional school change (compared with promotional change)
- Longer distance move

Negative factors

- Children with African American or Hispanic parents compared to non-Hispanic white
- Children in families that experience hardship
  - Becoming (or remaining) unable to afford food
  - Shifting from owning to renting

Study 2: Multivariate Analysis of change in performance percentile of school (cont.)

No significant effect

- Age or gender of child

- Parental employment status

- Parental satisfaction with school at time 1

Study 2: Recap

❑ Over 3 years, many target area children switch to schools away from the target area

❑ Switching associated with residential moves, school choice and promotion

❑ Switching schools for children produced little net improvement ... but that average masks a wide variation in experiences

• Making an advantageous residential move (which often means a move to a new district) was the largest predictor of getting to a higher performing school

• Race/ethnic disparities in direction of change

• Parental education matters – role of information gaps?

Implications for Place-based initiatives

Mobility is a challenge to assumptions of place based initiatives:

- Theory of change assumes duration of exposure, but many move before they can benefit
- Moving out could be a sign of "success", but more often it is a move to worse school or similar neighborhood
- Social relationships key element of theory but disrupted by turnover
- Outcome metric such as SES changes, may not reflect improvement for target population
- Services improved in the place may not be the ones that residents use

Implications for Place-based initiatives (cont.)

Place based policies that focus community building and service improvements in small areas must include strategies to manage mobility

Important to focus on the characteristics and needs of households moving through a neighborhood as well as those of longer-term residents

Recognize qualitative differences in the way neighborhoods function-- demonstrates the limitations of point-in-time and one-dimensional metrics

Implications for Place-based initiatives (cont.)

Include strategies to help families avoid residential moves that are due to distress, or that are producing little gain in terms of school performance or neighborhood quality

Need policies that facilitate moves to opportunity neighborhoods, that have better performing schools

Must break down structural barriers that restrict moves to opportunity, especially for African American and Hispanic families

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MC Publications and Data Access

Coulton, C.J., Theodos, B., & Turner, M.A., (2013), Residential mobility and neighborhood change: Real neighborhoods under the microscope. *Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research.*

Coulton, C.J., Jennings, M. Z., & Chan, T. (2012). How big is my neighborhood? Individual and contextual effects on perceptions of neighborhood scale. *American Journal of Community Psychology.*

Coulton, C.J., Chan, T. & Mikelbank, K. (2011). Finding place in community change initiatives: Using GIS to uncover resident perceptions of their neighborhoods. *Journal of Community Practice.* 19:10-28.

Coulton, C.J. & Irwin, M. (2009). Parental and community correlates of participation in out-of-school activities among children living in low income neighborhoods. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 31, 300-308.

Find out about data access at:

http://mcstudy.norc.org/