

Neighborhoods and Education: What Can Housing Mobility Accomplish?

Stefanie DeLuca

How Might Neighborhoods Matter?

- School quality and other institutional resources
- Role models
- Occupational opportunity
- Violence
 - Parenting practices and effects on parents (isolation out of fear of violence, stress)
 - Direct effects of exposure to violence (stress or trauma responses)

The Stakes Are High

- Growing up in a neighborhood of concentrated disadvantage reduces the verbal cognitive score of African-American children by 4 points, the equivalent of missing 1 year of schooling
- The negative effects of living in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty accrue over time and can have devastating effects on the odds of graduating from high school
- Concentrated disadvantage decreases cognitive ability, part of this is likely through exposure to violence
- This matters more for black youth

Policy Alternatives?

- Despite high levels of mobility, poor minority families rarely end up in better social environments
 ▮ their children remain trapped in poor schools
- Mixed results from school choice and school reform efforts
 - Supreme Court limits plans to integrate schools on the basis of student race
 - Charter schools, magnet, NCLB
- Mobility programs: Gautreaux and MTO
 - Gautreaux showed improvements in school quality and self reported academic achievement
 - MTO's story was more mixed

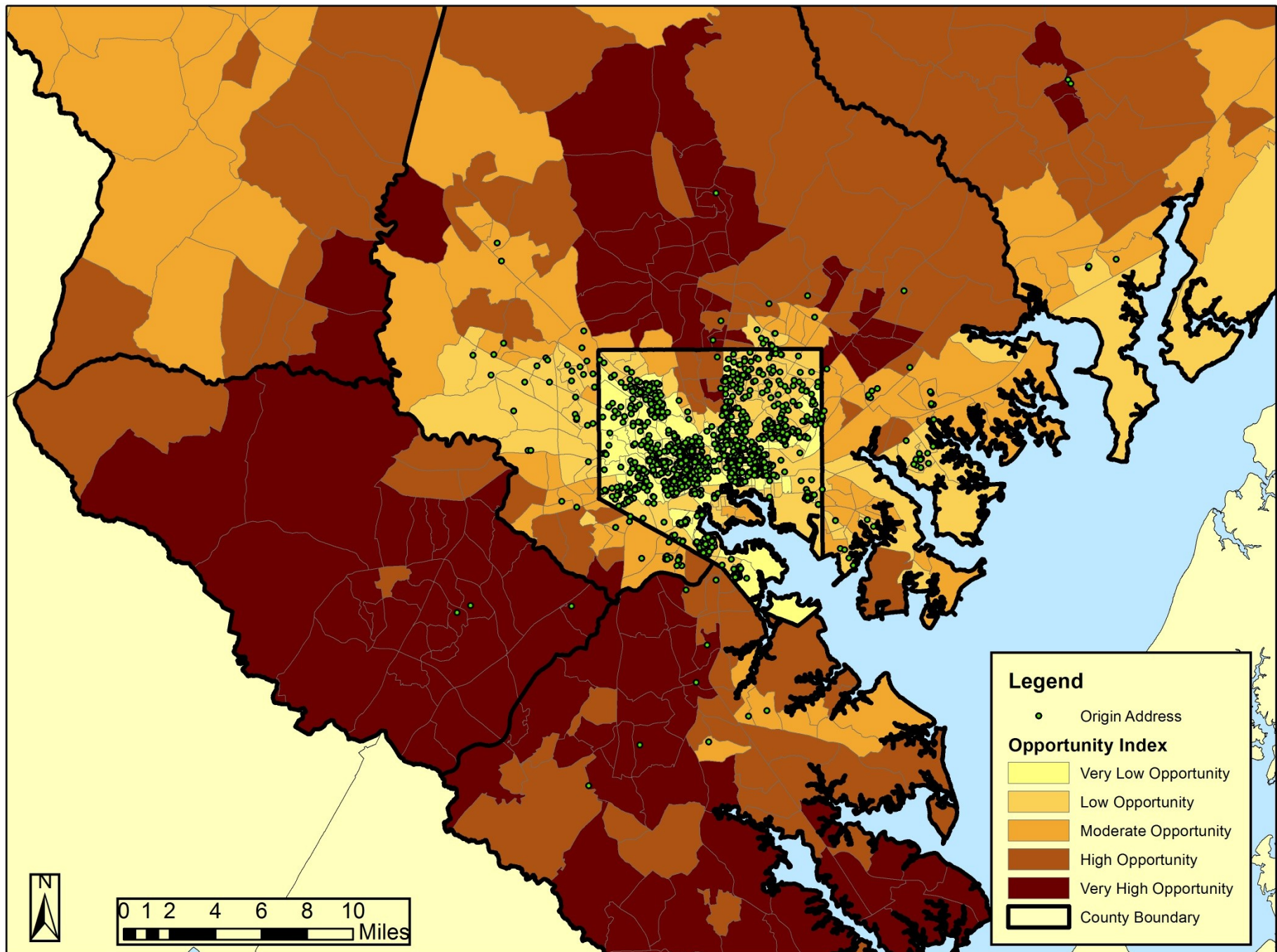
Baltimore Mobility Program

- 1995 class action lawsuit
- Current and former public housing families
- Voucher to move to a census tract that is
 - <=10% Poverty
 - <=30% African-American
 - <=5% sub housing
- Choice within tract, with housing counseling

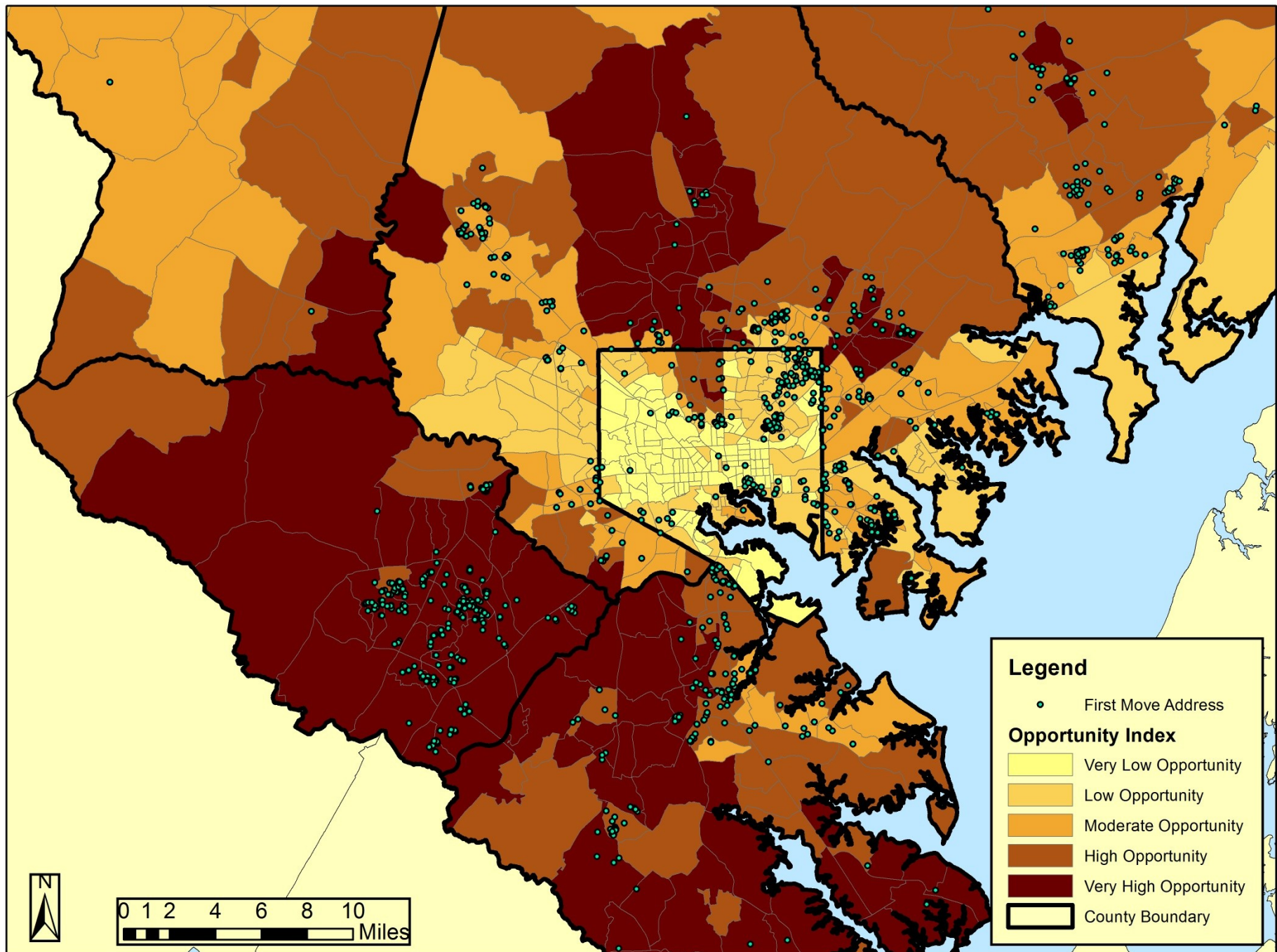
How Program Works

- Pre-Move Counseling
 - Informational Briefings
 - Credit counseling, family needs referrals
 - Move readiness and preparation for private rental market
 - Suburban neighborhood tours and education about housing options
- Landlord Outreach in Suburban Neighborhoods
- Post-Placement Counseling
 - Multiple visits within first year to make sure families are adjusting
- Second Move Counseling
- Counseling on School Choices in New Neighborhoods
 - Parents are shown how schools compare across neighborhoods
 - Staff work with parents to negotiate new school settings

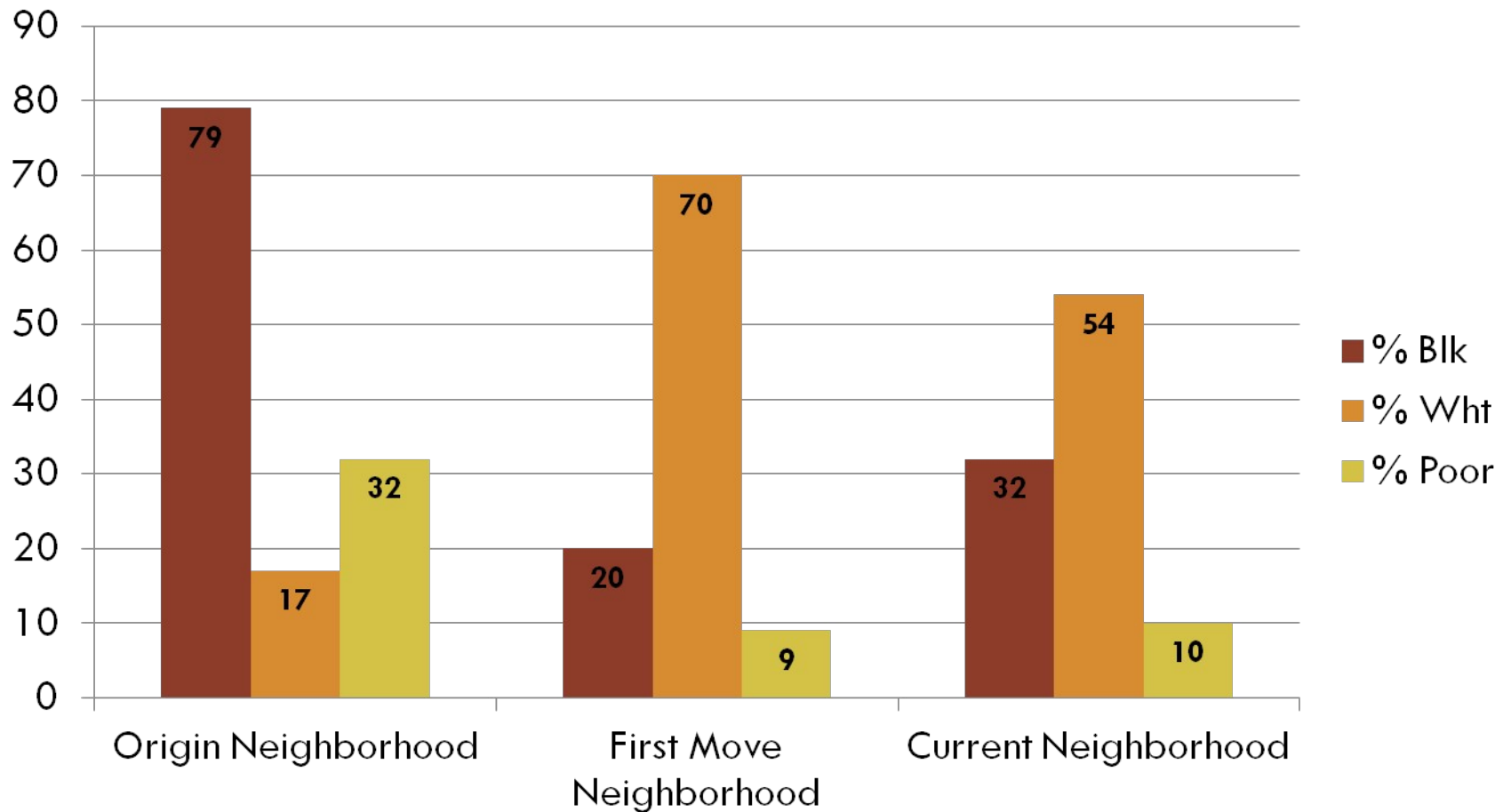
Baltimore Mobility Program: Origin Address



Baltimore Mobility Program: First Move Address



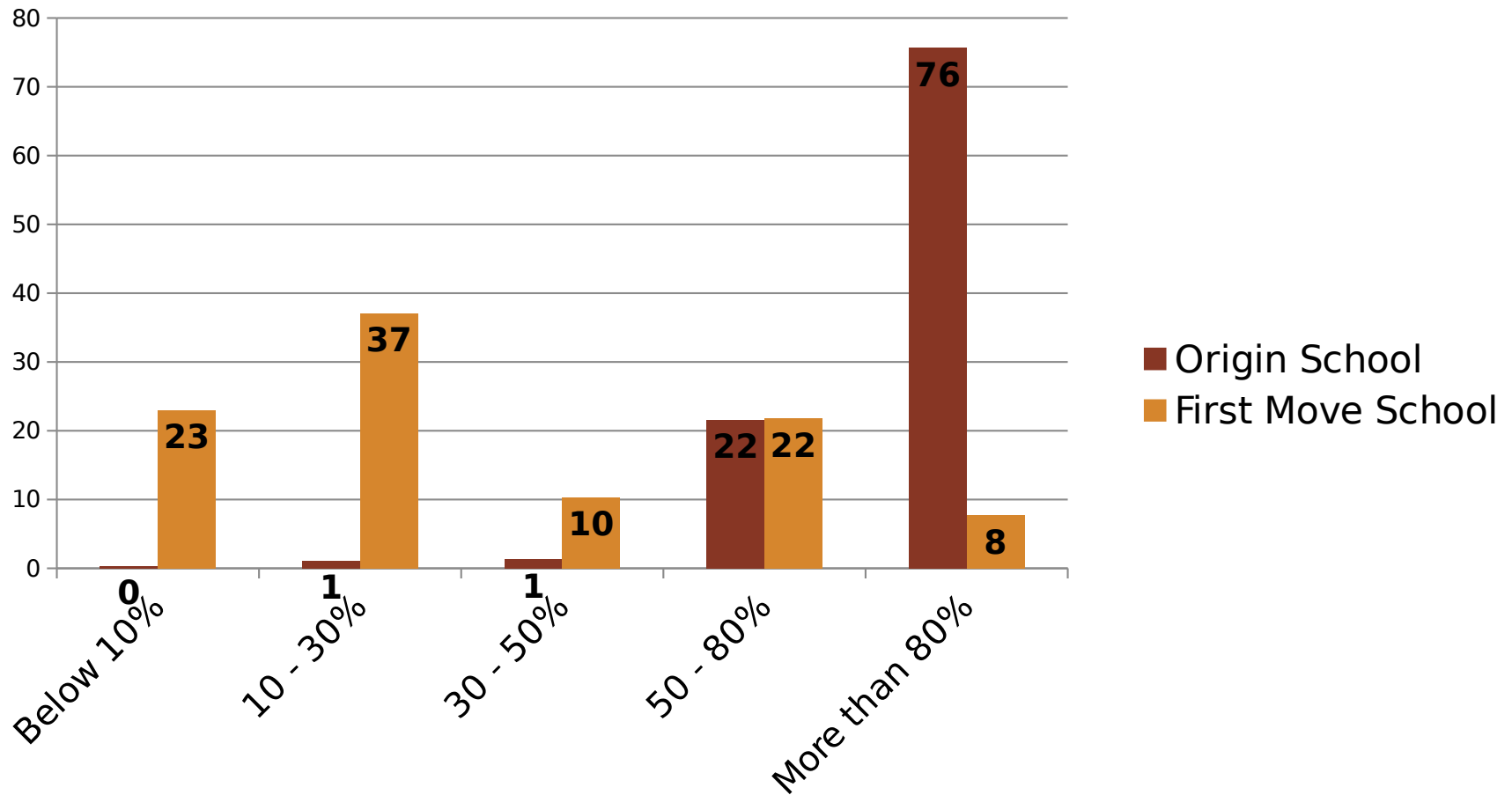
Origin, First Move, Current Neighborhood



Local Elementary School:

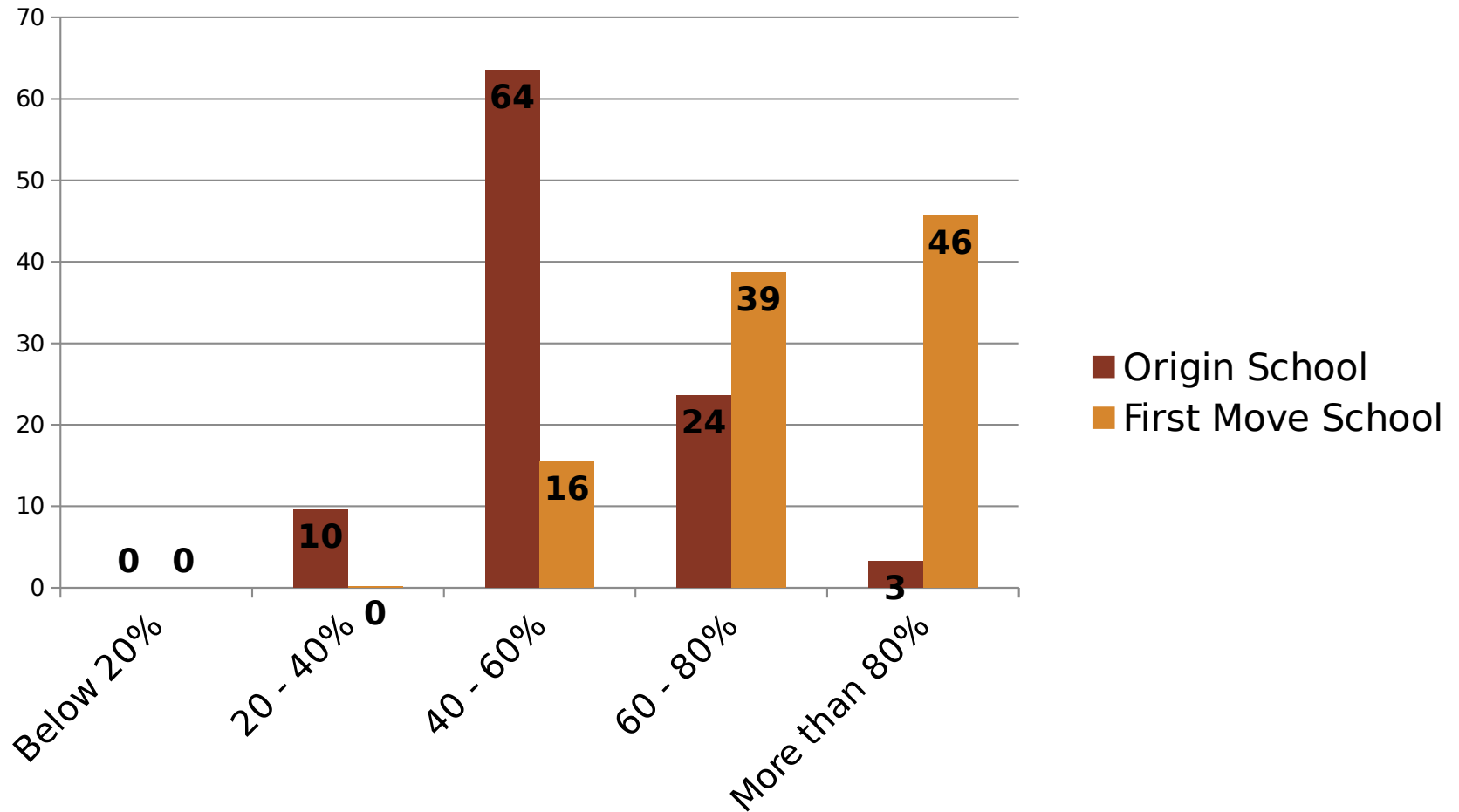
Percent of Student Body Eligible for Free or Reduced Price

Lunch



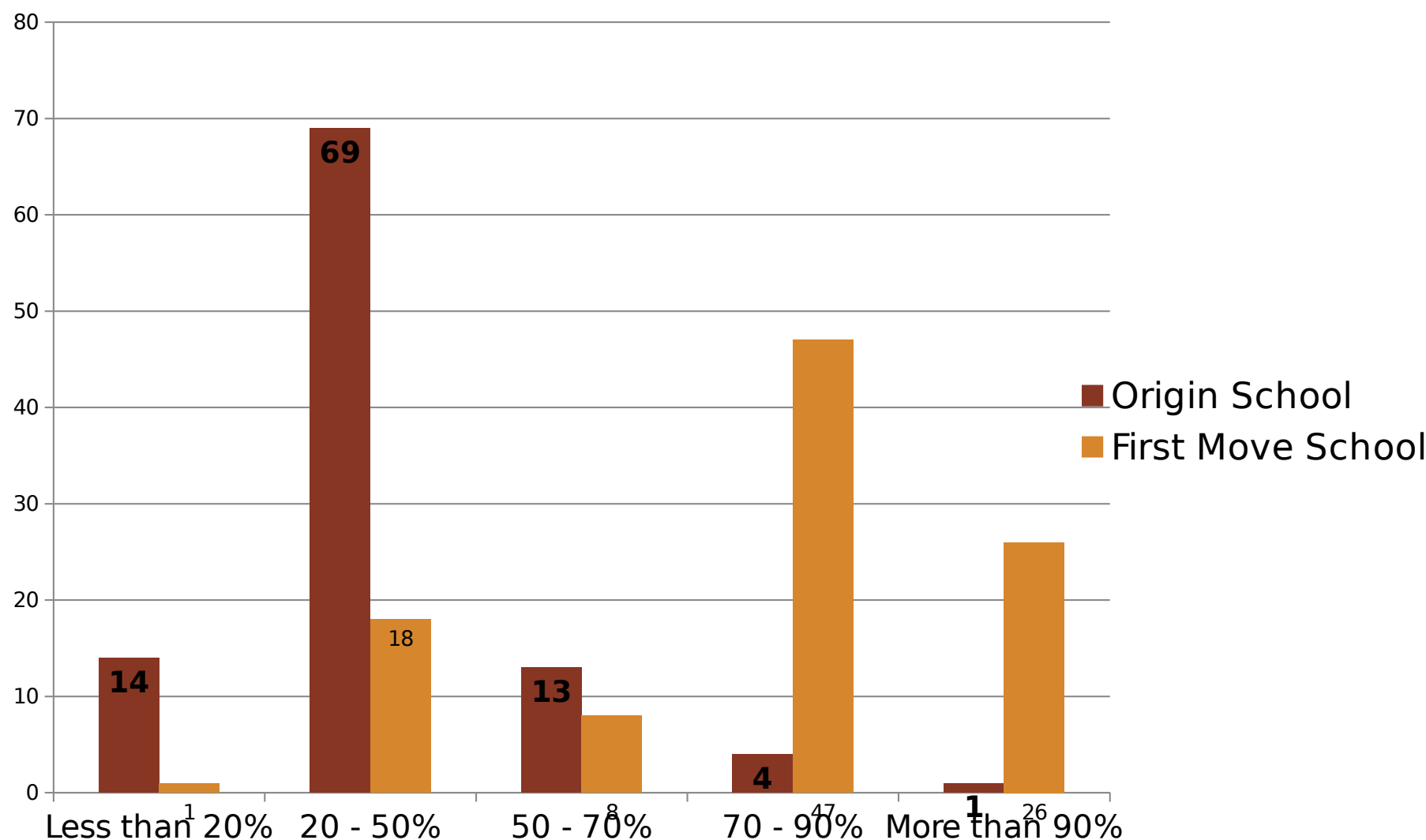
Local Elementary School:

Percent of Student Body Proficient in Reading



Local Elementary School:

Percent of Classes taught by Qualified Teachers



Change in School Quality For Movers

| | Adv Math (MSA) | Adv Reading (MSA) | Adv/Pr of Math (MSA) | Adv/Pr of Readin g (MSA) | Perce nt Black | Perce nt FARMS |
|---|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Mover, pre-move | 0.08 | 0.11 | 0.50 | 0.60 | 0.89 | 0.81 |
| First move to Baltimore County | | | | | | |
| In Baltimore County school | 0.25 | 0.30 | 0.77 | 0.82 | 0.38 | 0.45 |
| First move to other counties | | | | | | |
| In county schools | 0.29 | 0.34 | 0.80 | 0.84 | 0.33 | 0.35 |
| <i>Middle and elementary school data only.</i> | | | | | | |

Low Expectations for Schools

“All the schools are the same, they have guns at their school, they have found drugs at their school, all of ‘em the same. Kids still fightin.”
–Red Gal, Mobile

Some of the other schools over there, like them fightin and shootin and stuff. And that’s why I chose not to send her to that elementary school... They have their problems but it’s not as bad as some of the other ones. –Shawn, Mobile

I just don’t care for that school much, but...if you go up there and you’re willing to learn, then you’re gonna learn. If you ain’t willin to do nothin, then you’re gonna do nothin. —Kim, Baltimore

That was the worst experience that I ever experienced, living

Change of Scenery

I wanted to stay within this zip code **because of the school**. -*Alias, Baltimore*

You move into an area that has so much more, it **pushes you to get where they at**. I want to have so much more like they had . . . what you're around is what you are. . . -*Miss Smith, Baltimore*

When we first moved they didn't like it because it was so quiet . . . and then one of [the children] woke up and said, "**we slept good**. We don't hear the ambulance, we don't hear police cars, we don't hear nothing." And I said, "I know." You get to sleep, don't have to jump up every time you hear . . . pop, pop, BANG, BANG, BANG! —*Marie, Baltimore*

I came to Howard County and never looked back. I mean and I am not ashamed of where I come from, but **living here has changed my whole perspective on the opportunities that my kids have**.—*Mary Jones, Baltimore*

Lola and Max

Lola immediately saw the transformation in her kids, told us that when 12 year old Max started school in the county,

“He was happy to go to school, he was excited; came home to do his homework; wasn’t getting in no trouble; *cried* to go to school. . . Everything was great when we moved here. The move was just like a breakthrough for everybody; a change for everybody.”

Tasha's Transformation

In her old neighborhood, Tasha “had to basically barricade myself in my home... I couldn't go sit out my backyard because I didn't have one. . . I'm not going to sit on my front porch cause you had so much going on in front of you, that I choose not to want to see... I didn't have bars I could still come and go as I please, but I still felt like I was in jail. So that was the difference.”

And [now] I'm ready to try to get myself back into some type of program and things, and I'm more focused here. Because living there [in public housing] I was like on track, off-track, on track, off-track because it is so much that was going on around me. . .I was so more focusing on praying to get out of there, that I really couldn't focus on too much else. Of course I'm focusing on my kids, but for the things that I wanted to do for myself, I couldn't stay focused. So now I'm somewhere where it's peace and quiet, and now I can stay more focused...I love the transformation.

Brittney and Rhonda

Brittney's newfound appreciation for diversity trickled down to her younger son: "Randall, he likes the diversity. He likes being in schools with different [races]."

Rhonda also described how much her children love their neighborhood how the diversity benefitted her children, and told us, "We've grown a lot just being out here...seeing the different way I'm living...My kids never really was around different types of people until we moved out here. It's like they fell right in. This has been a good experience, and I've learned a lot."

We Can Do Better

- Reducing neighborhood poverty improves mental and physical health of moms
- Evidence from Montgomery County suggests schools can reduce achievement gap
- Baltimore Mobility Program shows large increases in school quality, neighborhood quality, changes in parent's decision making

Future Research

□ **National Science Foundation Mixed Methods Study**

- How do children and youth manage the transitions to higher quality schools? Are there age differences?
- What are the social processes behind neighborhood and school influences?

□ **Abell Foundation Achievement Outcomes Study**

- How do children perform after attending affluent, non-segregated schools?
- How do changes in family characteristics, neighborhood and school quality predict student achievement across different communities?

Sample and Design

□ **Ethnographic Interview Study (N=150)**

- 108 Families from Baltimore City, Baltimore, Anne Arundel, Harford, Howard, Carroll Counties
- 26 “Not Yet” Mover Families
- Parent, child interviews (9-14, 15-19 yrs old)
- Repeat Follow Up into School Year

□ **Longitudinal School Outcomes Study**

- Over 3000 children moved with Thompson
- Records on all schools attended 2003-2011
- Comparisons with peers in original city schools, new county schools
- Quasi-experimental design for causal inference

Assisted Mobility Programs

| | GAUTREAU | MTO | Baltimore Mobility Program |
|--------------------|---|---|---|
| Site | Chicago, 1970s-1980s | Chicago, NY, Boston, LA, Baltimore, 1990s | Baltimore, 2000s |
| Origin | Lawsuit | Federally funded demonstration | Lawsuit |
| Number | 7000 | 1729 Exp; 1209 Sect 8; 1310 Controls=4248 | 2000 vouchers 1800 moves to date |
| Criteria and Moves | <=30% African American residents in tract ASSIGNED UNIT | <=10% poverty rate CHOICE WITHIN TRACT | <=10% Poverty <=30% Af-Am <=5% sub hous. CHOICE WITHIN TRACT |
| Outcomes | Economic Self-Sufficiency, less criminal justice involvement (males) | Positive Health Outcomes, No Educational or Employment differences | Neighborhood-level outcomes |
| Follow Up | Up to 20 years | 10-15 years | 1-7 years |