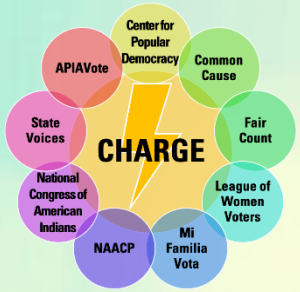
Evaluating and Analyzing District Maps

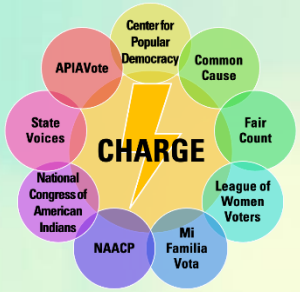
For Advocacy



Evaluating Maps: What you will learn

In this session, we will cover:

- How do we use district map evaluations to advocate for change?
- What kinds of evaluation or analysis can we do?
- What tools are out there to help us? Do we need specialized help?



Evaluating Maps: What you will learn

After the presentations, we will have breakouts:

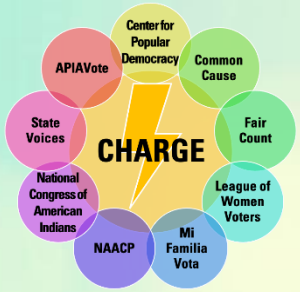
- Choose a platform, learn how they can help to evaluate maps, ask questions.
- Learn to map or analyze your community on a free app:

DRA 2020

DistrictR

representable

PlanScore
A PROJECT OF CAMPAIGN LEGAL CENTER



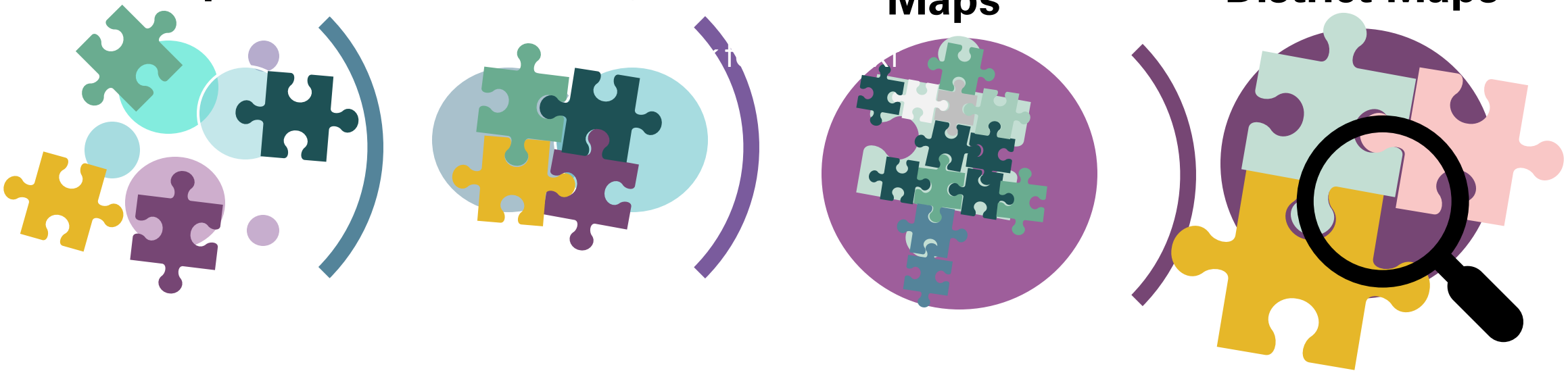
Evaluating Maps: Where does it fit into redistricting?

Drawing Community Maps

Coalition building

Drawing District/Unity Maps

Evaluating District Maps



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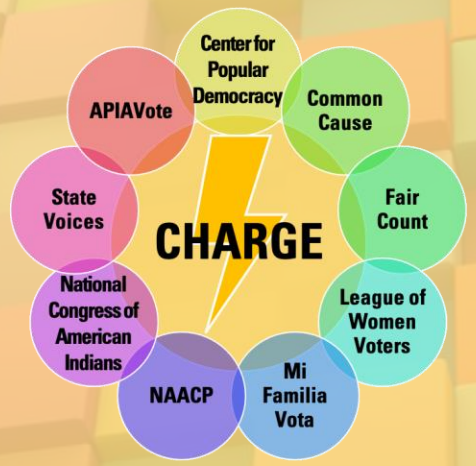
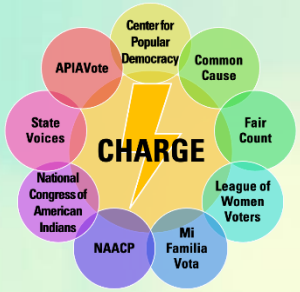


How can you use map evaluations in advocacy

- Evaluate District Maps for how they impact your Communities
- Help the Media report our stories: Do the maps help / hurt communities of color?
  - Remember: Compelling community stories shift narrative from politicians and parties to **everyday people**.
- Use the Evaluations to build a case for changes to proposed District Maps to **Lawmakers** or **commissioners**
- Build a case for **courts** to consider



District Map Evaluation

STEP 1: Collect the data and the lines

- Ask the mapmakers for the DATA:
  - Precinct shapes
  - Election data
- Ask them for the "SHAPE FILES"
  - Shape files of precincts
  - Shape files of the proposed District Maps

This may be part of an ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

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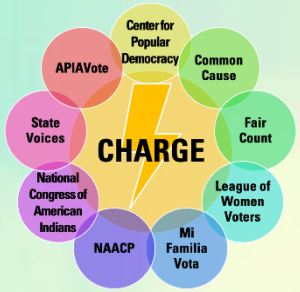

District Map Evaluation

STEP 2: Find people who can help with the evaluation and analysis

- Consider help from local colleges or universities
  - Political Science, GIS, Urban Planning, Ethnic Studies
  - Other ideas: Environmental Sciences, Economics, Public Affairs
  - Professors, grad students
- Additional people to think about…
  - People who work for local government planning departments
  - People who are math-forward
  - People who are good at translating numbers into key points, storytelling

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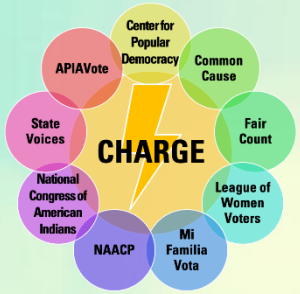

District Map Evaluation

STEP 3: Here are some of the criteria used to evaluate district maps

- Do the districts have **equal numbers** of people?
- Is there a **Voting Rights Act** problem?
- Are **Communities of Interest** respected? Do the district lines make it hard for Communities to get representation / resources /response on real issues?
- Are districts gerrymandered to help an **incumbent**?
  - To hurt a community that might support a challenger?
- Are the districts drawn as an **unfair partisan gerrymanders**?
- Are **Cities and Counties Split**?
- Are the districts **Compact**?

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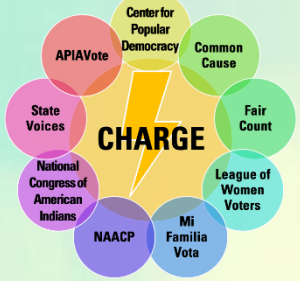


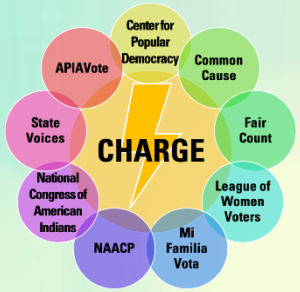
District Map Evaluation

STEP 3: Decide what criteria you want to evaluate

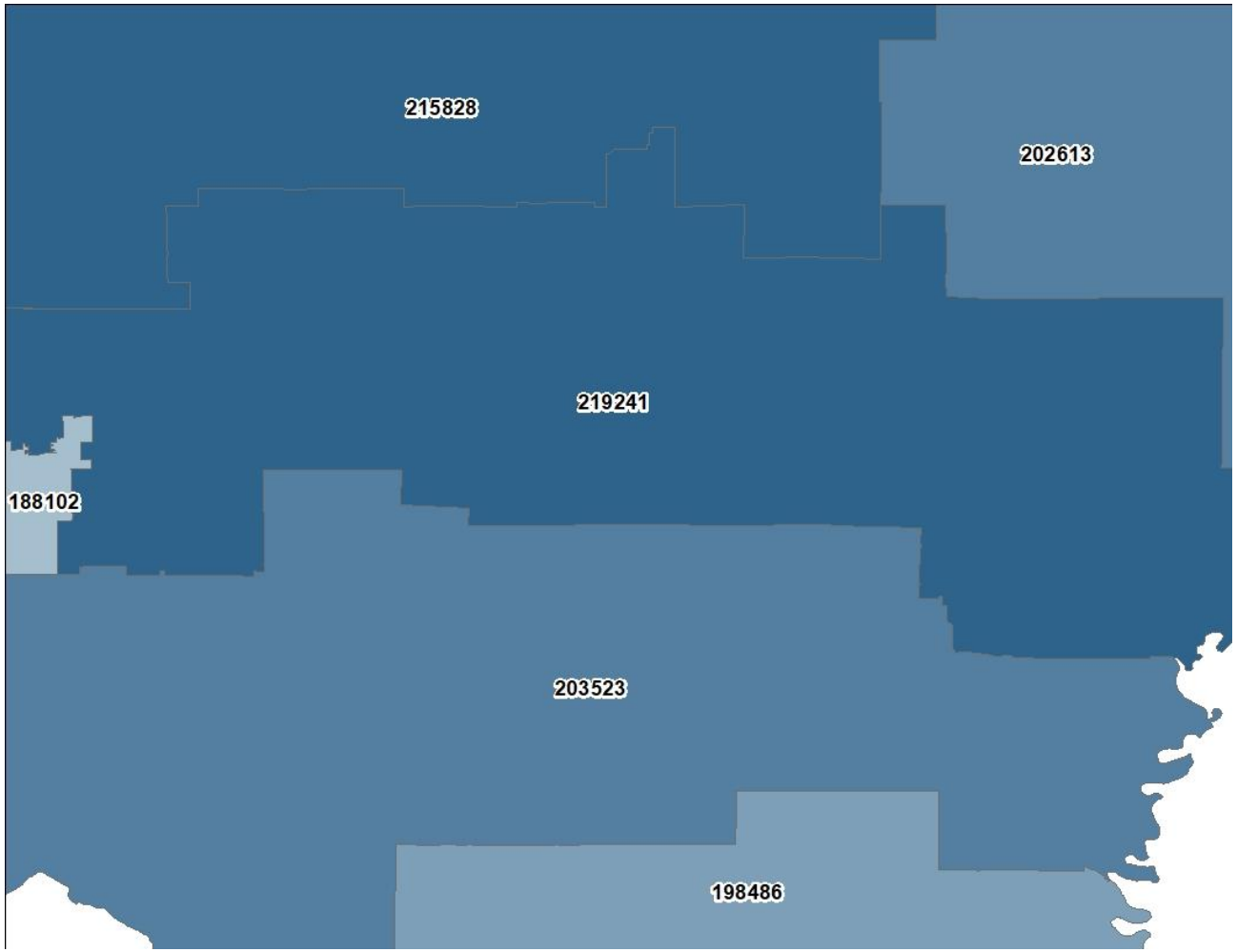
Equal population – Each district should have (nearly) the same number of people as other districts.

Look at the total population of each district.

- Are they equal or close to equal?
  - Congressional maps need to be nearly exact equal population.
  - State legislative and local district maps can be less exact.



Map Evaluation – Illinois



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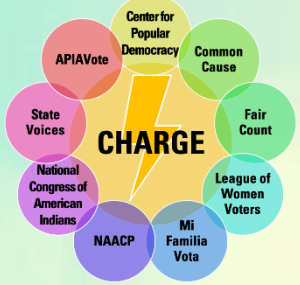

District Map Evaluation: STEP 4

STEP 3: Decide what criteria you want to evaluate

Community Map Evaluation

Look at the community maps you have drawn (and others have drawn) with an overlay of the proposed District Maps.

- Are there community splits?
- Are communities put into districts that dilute their voice?
- What changes to the lines would you advocate for to increase a community's voice?

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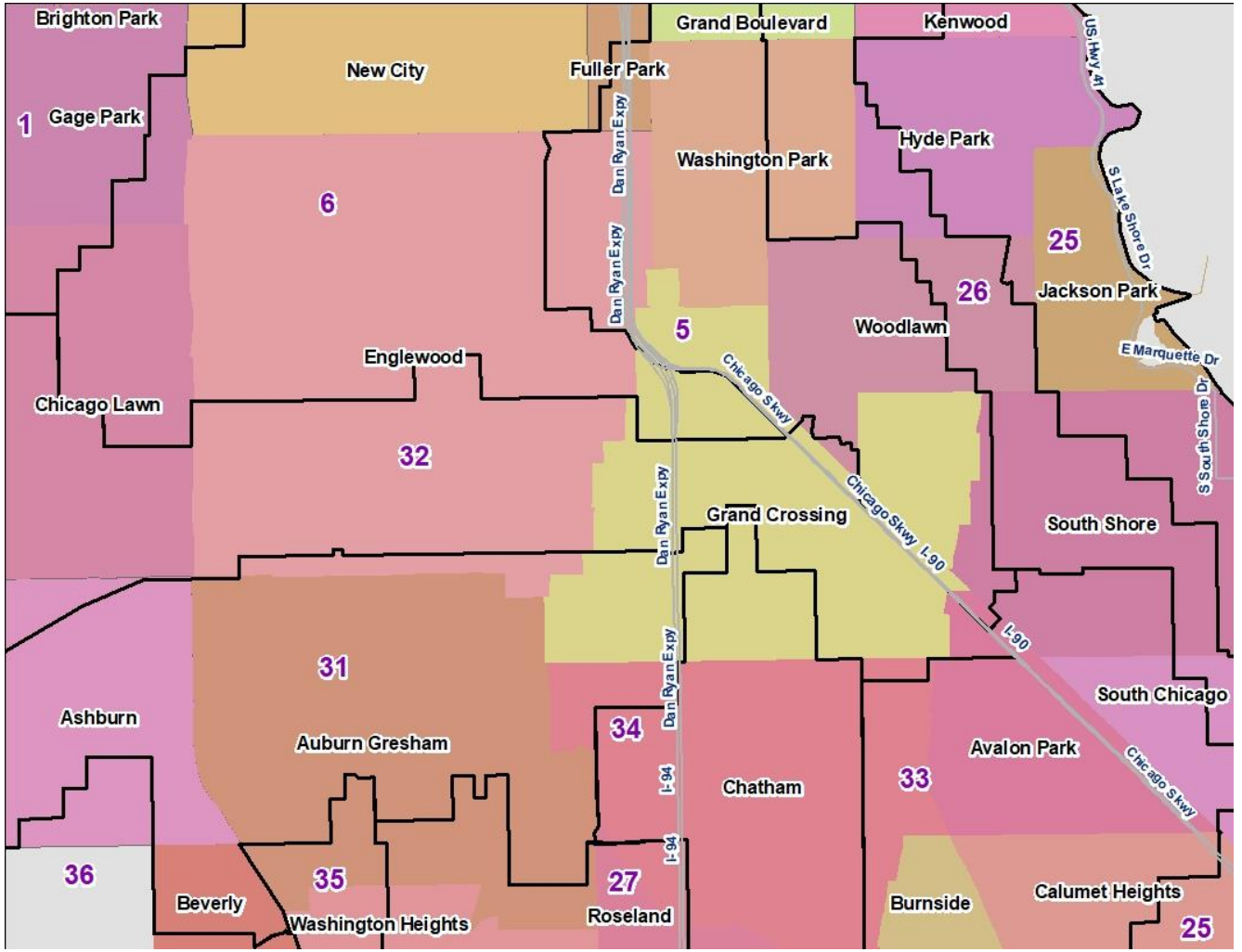
Map Evaluation – Chicago, Illinois



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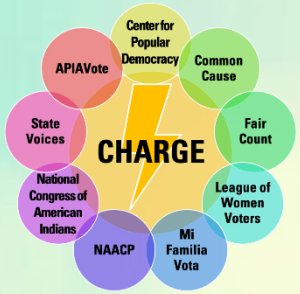

District Map Evaluation

STEP 4: Use the Map Evaluations to Advocate for Change

- Highlight the places where the current or proposed lines do harm
  - Connect your advocacy to Communities, Concerns and Counts
  - If you have alternative maps, be specific about how they are different
  - If you don't have alternative maps, be specific about what needs to change. Remember to refer to streets and places - things that can be found on a map.
- Use all the tools in the toolbox
  - Demand transparency – Make data and maps available for public scrutiny
  - Talk to media (tell compelling stories of impact, hold up maps)
  - Demand hearings for public input to proposed maps. Mobilize people to testify

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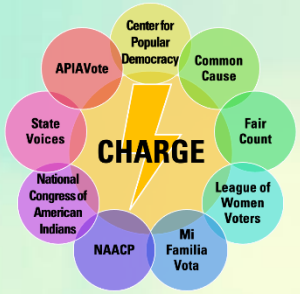

How do we evaluate District Maps?

- Allison Riggs
- Kate Donovan

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CHARGE Hub Training:

Working with lawyers and community members to secure fair redistricting plans

ALLISON RIGGS

CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PROGRAMS

CHIEF COUNSEL FOR VOTING RIGHTS

SOUTHERN COALITION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

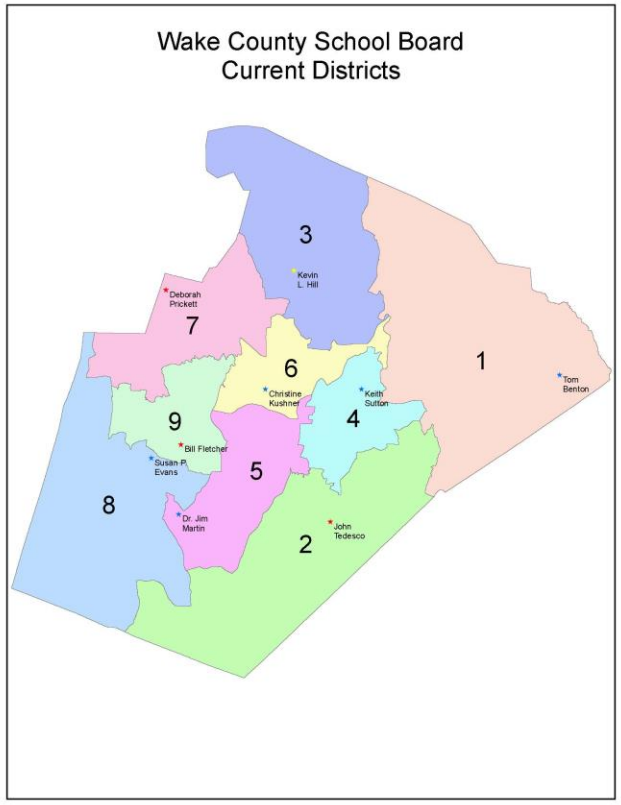
Helping Community Groups NOW

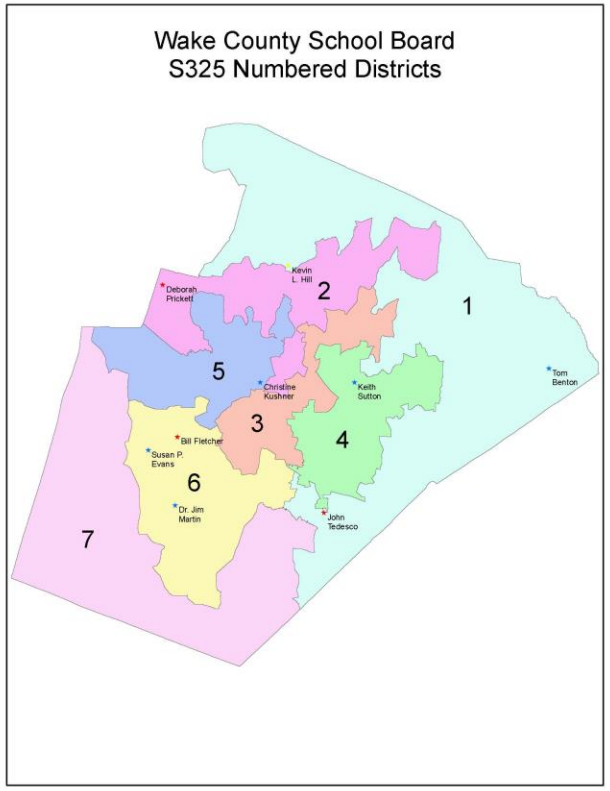
- Obtain shapefiles for existing district lines
  - Provide communities with data on their existing districts (all levels)
  - Learn from community expertise
    - Find out who is elected from current districts
    - Find out who has NOT been elected from current districts
    - What is working and not working about the current districts
  - What are the rules of redistricting in a community that I'm working with?
- Look at population changes
  - Where are the areas at risk for loss and where are opportunities for gain?

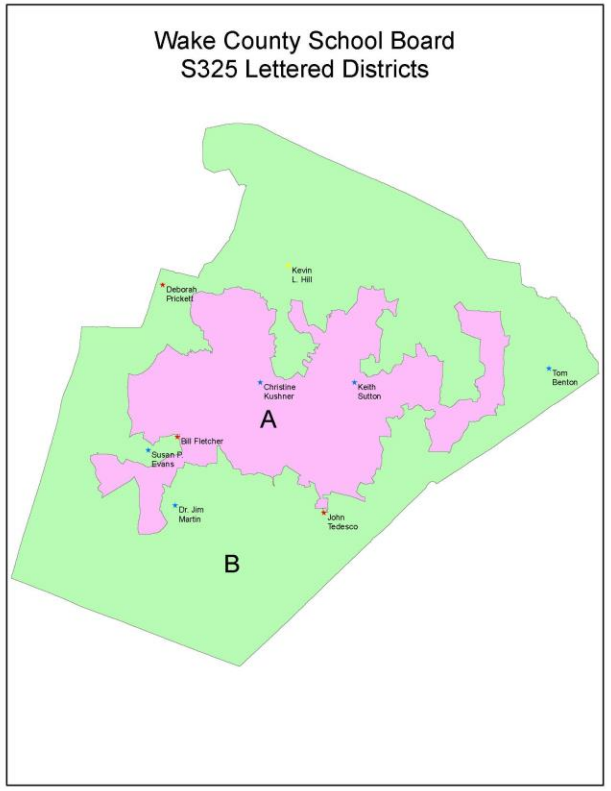
Assessing Maps

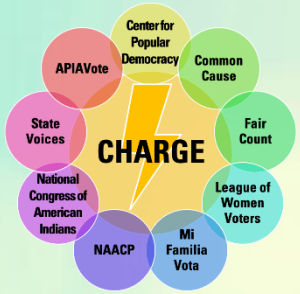
- Identifying packing and cracking of communities of color and politically aligned voters
  - Look for Split precincts/VTDs
  - Look for irregularly shaped/non-compact districts – but not always a beauty contest!
  - Look for demographic percentages that are far above what is required to elect a representative of choice
  - Representation does not reflect demographics of the jurisdiction
- Population deviations pushing the limits
  - Overpopulating minority districts or districts with politically aligned voters to dilute voting power
- VRA compliance - race-blind redistricting is NOT the answer
  - Has racially polarized voting gotten worse?
  - E.g., how to Black-supported candidates fair in majority white precincts
- Pairing incumbents of the same race or party as a political/discriminatory tool
- When the maps don't match the population trends
- Other criteria – how to eyeball compliance?

Example of Assessing Maps – Last Cycle









Q & A

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Evaluating District Maps: Breakout sessions

Choose a breakout room to try one of the free platforms:

1. **Break-Out Room #1: Dave's Redistricting App**– DRA 2020 is a free web app to create, view, analyze and share redistricting maps for all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Join this breakout room if you are interested in learning more about how to analyze maps for proportionality, competitiveness, compactness, and splitting.

2. **Break-Out Room #2: DistrictR.org**– DistrictR is a free, public web tool for districting and community identification. Join this breakout room if you are interested in learning more about how to create and analyze district plans using Voting Age Population (VAP), election results, and/or race & ethnicity demographic data.

3. **Break-Out Room #3: Representable.org**– Representable is a platform for creating, aggregating, and analyzing Community of Interest maps. Join this breakout room if you are interested in learning more about how to interpret or create district plans as they relate to community representation.

4. **Break-Out Room #4: PlanScore-** PlanScore is a platform that scores and publishes district plans for all 50 states on an easy-to-use website. Join this breakout room if you are interested in learning more about how to analyze and interpret proposed and historical district maps.

Evaluating District Maps: Breakout sessions

How to choose a breakout room on Zoom:

1. Click on break-out room button
2. Hover on number on right-hand side; join room of your choice.