

Testing Trends: Radon in Schools

Marc Katz

Speaker

- Marc Katz, MPH
- Planner
- Indoor Air Unit
- Minnesota Department of Health
- 651-201-4604
- marc.katz@state.mn.us







In Minnesota, **2 in 5** homes
have high radon.

Once Every
Five Years



KARE 11

m1



DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH

EPA



Children are a vulnerable group

- Children take in twice the amount of radon compared to adults due to their small lungs and higher respiratory rate
- During the school year, children spend a lot of their time at school



School radon testing is voluntary

- The only way to measure the radon risk is to test the school. If there are high levels of radon, a mitigation system can be installed to reduce radon.
- There is no law in Minnesota that schools need to test for radon. Testing is voluntary.



Radon Testing Current Law

No testing or mitigation requirement

123B.571: Subd. 3. Reporting.

A school district that has tested its school buildings for the presence of radon shall report the results of its tests to the Department of Health in a form and manner prescribed by the commissioner of health. A school district that has tested for the presence of radon shall also report the results of its testing at a school board meeting.

Project Goals

Purpose: determine radon testing patterns for public schools and relationship to equity metrics

Outcomes:

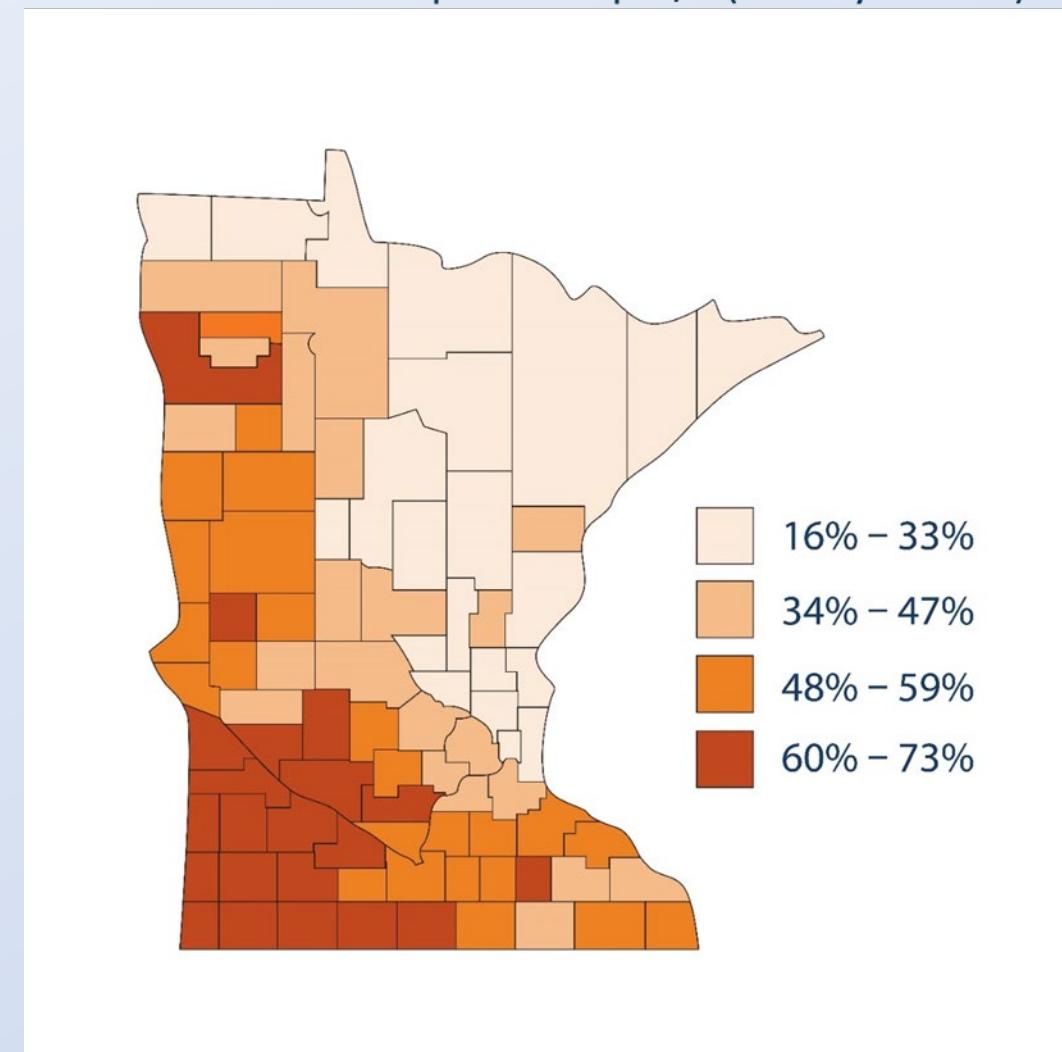
- Determine if there are inequities in radon testing for public schools
- Improve awareness and education on school testing
- Ultimately reduce radon exposure in vulnerable population



Radon in MN Schools

- Homes
 - ~40% of MN homes ≥ 4 pCi/L
- Schools
 - 1% of rooms ≥ 4 pCi/L
 - 16% of public schools ≥ 1 room ≥ 4 pCi/L

Percent of MN Properties 4 pCi/L (mostly homes)



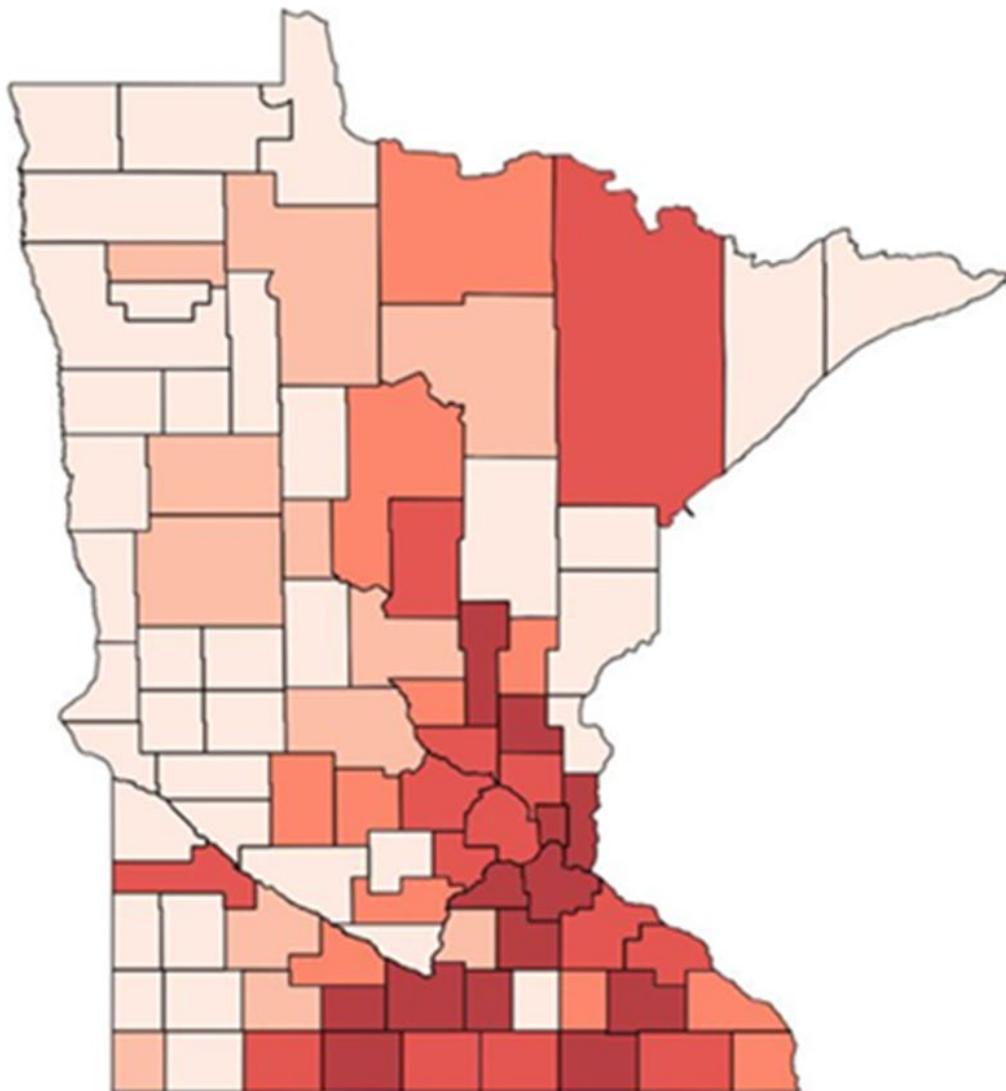
Less than half Minnesota public schools have tested for radon

- **Less than half of (39%)** of schools* had at least one room tested for radon.
- **A quarter (25%)** of school districts had at least one school tested for radon.

Public school radon testing is not evenly distributed throughout Minnesota

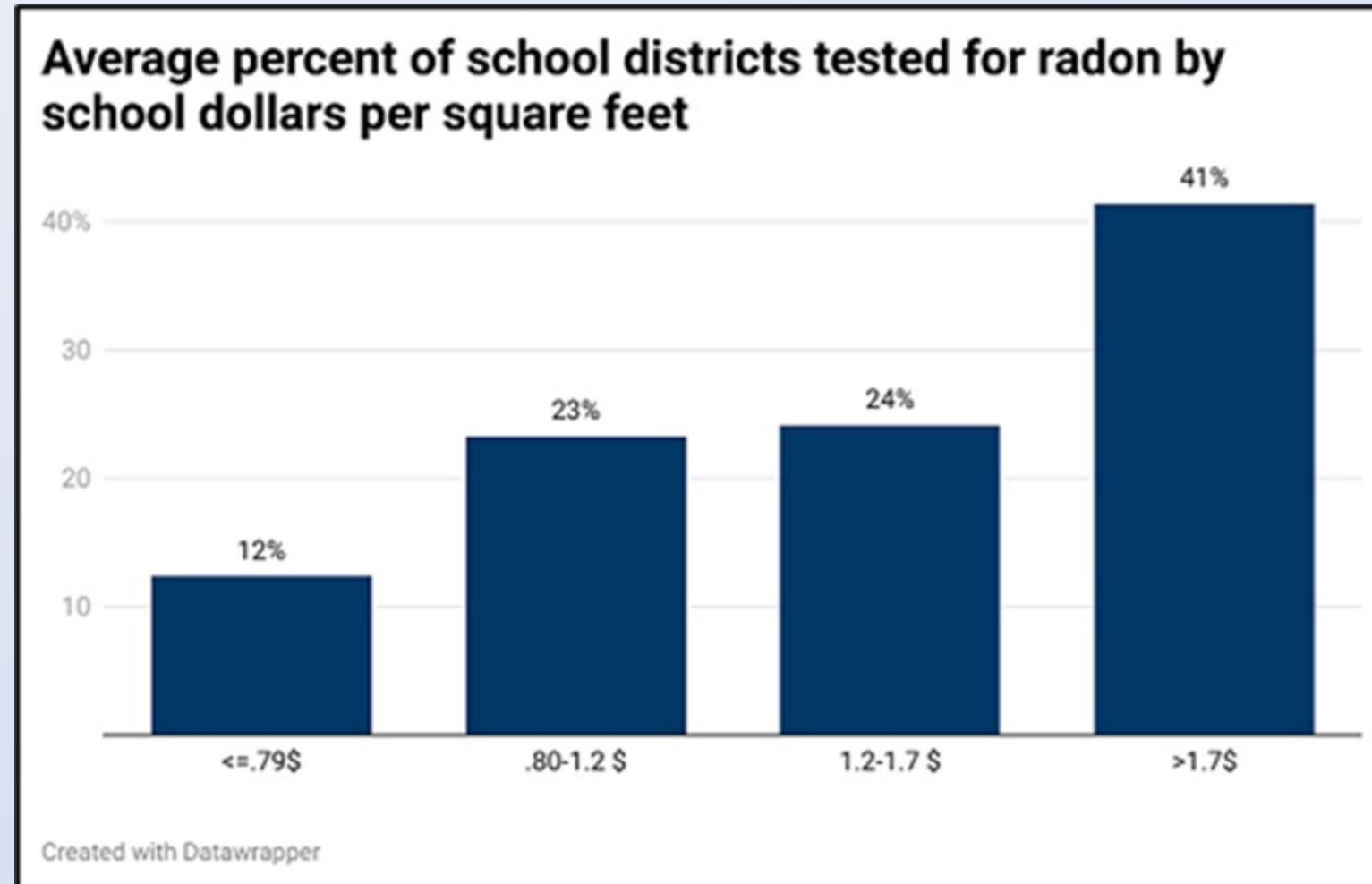
Percent of schools tested in each county

- No testing
- 1-22.1%
- 22.2-33.2%
- 33.3-52.0%
- 52.1-76.9%



Public school districts with less funding were less likely to test for radon

- School districts in the highest funding category had **29%** more schools per district tested for radon than the lowest funding category.



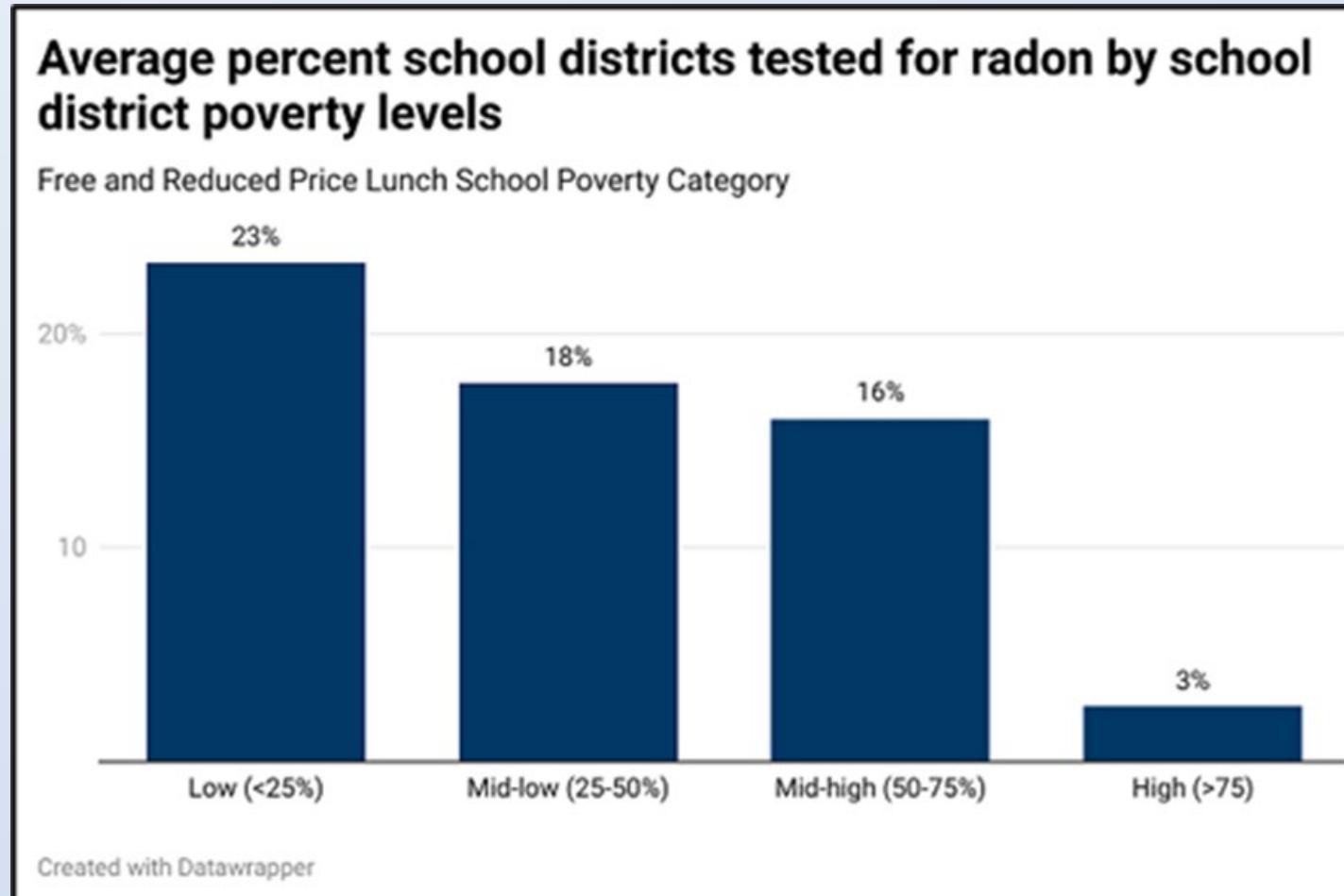
Free and Reduced Priced Lunch (FRPL)

- Public schools report the percent of students in their school that are eligible for FRPL.
- Used as an estimate for the ***concentration of low-income students*** in the school district.



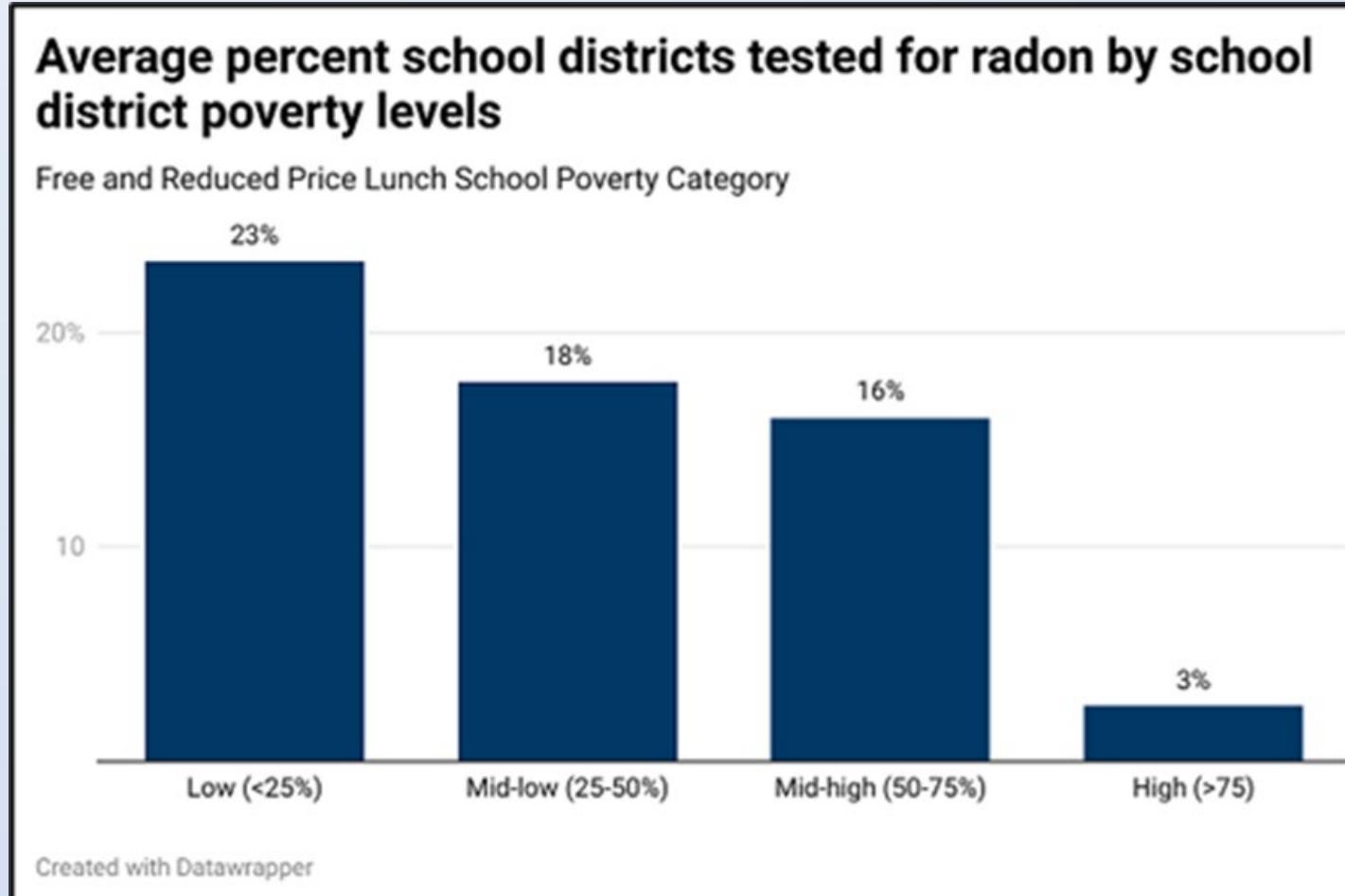
Public school districts with more low-income students were less likely to test for radon

- School districts with the most students eligible for FRPL tested **20%** fewer schools in the district for radon than school districts with the fewest students eligible for FRPL.



Public school districts with more low-income students were less likely to test for radon

- Less testing in districts with higher rates of free or reduced price lunch (FRPL) eligibility



Sharing findings

- Developed data brief
- Two-page handout for school partners meeting
- Presentations
- Press release this January for radon awareness month

Raccoons
are
colorless &
odorless



Thank you for your attention!



Marc Katz, pizza guy