



School Consolidation Feasibility Study

Presented by

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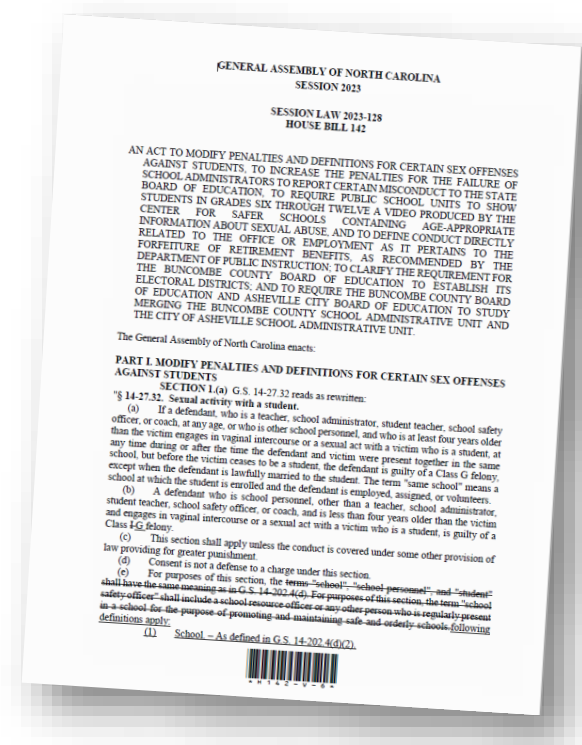
February 20, 2024

Board of Commissioners Briefing Meeting



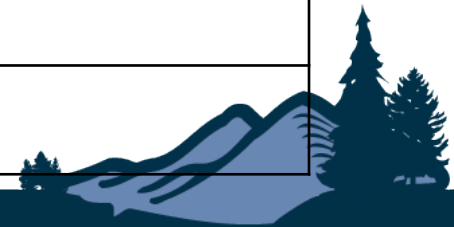
Project Background

- North Carolina General Assembly mandated that the Asheville City and Buncombe County school systems jointly study the feasibility of a merger
- House Bill 142 / SL 2023-128 was signed by the Governor on September 29, 2023
- Asheville City Board of Education & Buncombe County Board of Education voted to designate Buncombe County Government as the lead entity for the project
- Buncombe County Commissioners accepted lead role on October 17, 2023

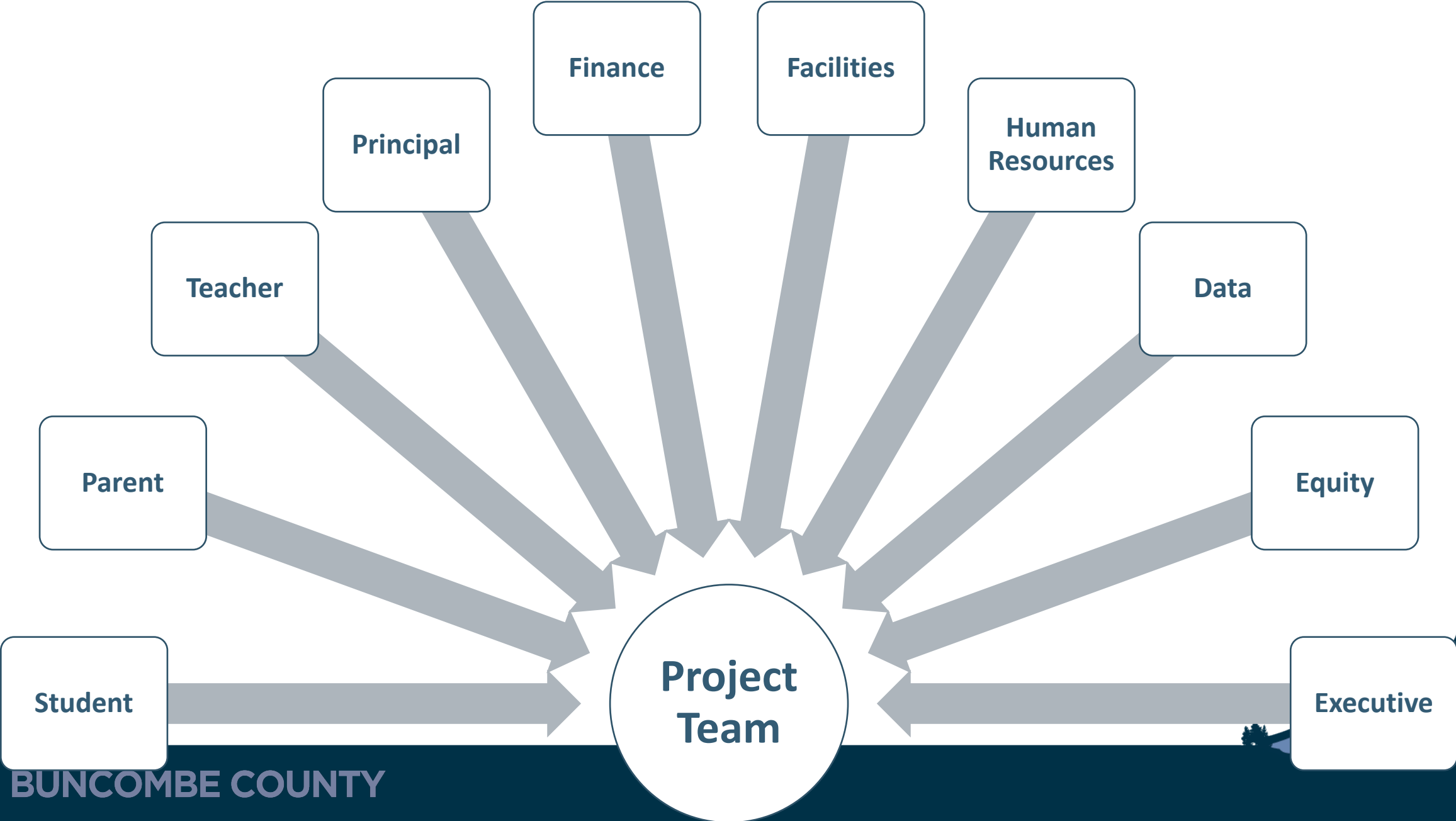


Roles

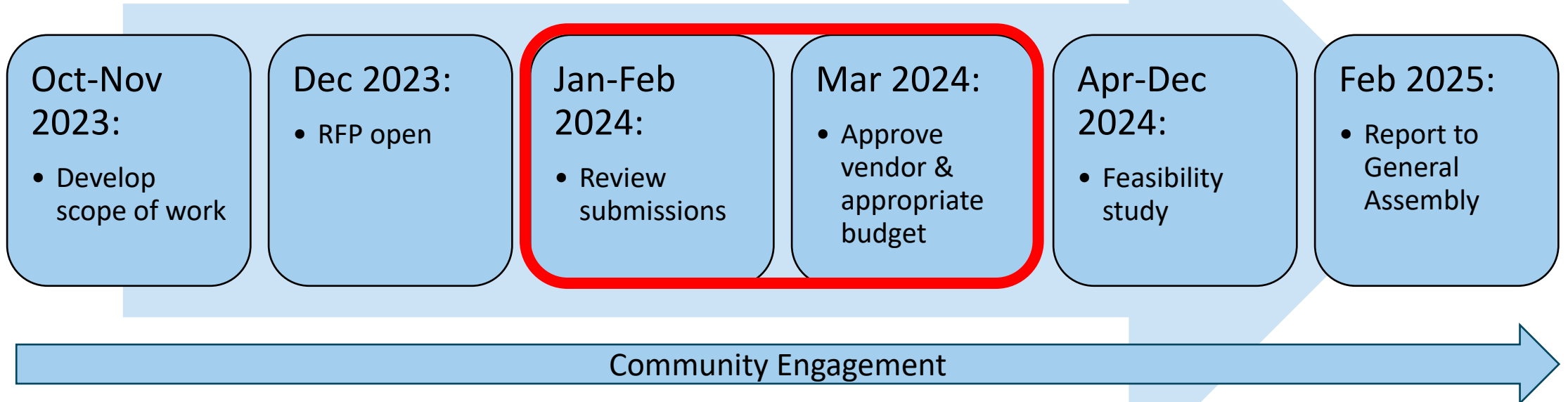
Buncombe County	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coordinate project• Issue solicitation• Select firm• Identify funding• Issue and oversee contract
Project Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design solicitation and review criteria• Review submissions, recommend vendor
School Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jointly contribute to the study, including data & input to inform the study
The Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide input to inform the study



24-member project team, including representatives of county government and both school systems:



Timeline



“The Buncombe County Board of Education and the Asheville City Board of Education shall **report findings and recommendations** to the standing committees of the General Assembly hearing election matters **no later than February 15, 2025.**”



Request for Proposals (RFP)

- Buncombe County issued request for proposals for professional consulting services from highly skilled, experienced, and diverse vendor(s) to provide a feasibility study for the consolidation of the two public school systems within the boundaries of Buncombe County
- RFP opened December 1, 2023
- 11 vendors attended pre-submittal meeting
- Proposals were due January 18, 2024
- 7 vendors submitted proposals



Requirements of Selected Vendor

- Utilize a rigorous approach in the completion of the study, including assessment of comprehensive factors - **Student membership, Academic, Student wellbeing, Policy & procedure, Operational, Facilities, Personnel, Governance, Financial, Partnerships, Geographical, Community, Historical & Contextual**
- Incorporate **equity** analysis for all elements within the study
- Center stakeholder and **community engagement**, including opportunities for impacted individuals to contribute to the study/learn about the findings & results
- Include qualitative & quantitative sources of **data** to accurately identify the feasibility of a consolidation
- Identify significant similarities & differences between school systems
- Include short- and long-term impacts as well as projections & scenarios



Vendor Deliverables

Selected vendor will be expected to provide:

- A comprehensive report including description of research method, summary of activities, findings, risks/benefits of consolidation, recommendations, and implementation considerations as applicable
- A summary of key information from the report in a concise, accessible format
- A slide deck summarizing the report
- Presentation of findings in public meetings, to include both Boards of Education and the Board of Commissioners



Review Criteria

Review criteria developed by the project team, including:

- **Philosophy** - Reflective of expressed priorities - engagement, equity & data
- **Approach** - Well-developed, rigorous methodology, inclusive of all required elements
- **Project plan** - Detailed and clear activities likely to yield high quality deliverables
- **Project timeline** - Reasonable timeframes for planning, implementation & delivery
- **Vendor/staff qualifications** - Expertise, organizational structure, similarity of past work, staff qualifications
- **Cost** - Clear, detailed and reasonable project cost & value



Review & Award Process

- Reviews completed by a 9-member subgroup of the project team, including 3 representatives appointed by each entity
- Finalist interviews & additional diligence underway
- Recommendation to be presented to Board of Commissioners in March
- Request for board action will be to consider approval of the award and associated budget
- Vendor anticipated to begin work April 1

