School Consolidation Feasibility Study

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12/11/2024

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

SESSION 2023 SESSION LAW 2023-128 HOUSE BILL 142 AN ACT TO MODIFY PENALTIES AND DEFINITIONS FOR CERTAIN SEX AGAINST STUDENTS, TO INCREASE THE PENALTIES FOR THE FAILURE OF HOOL ADMINISTRATORS TO REPORT CERTAIN MIS DARD OF EDUCATION, TO STUDENTS IN GRADES SIX THROUGH TWELVE A VIDEO PRODUCED B FORMATION ABOUT SEXUAL ABUSE, AND TO DEFINE ATED TO THE OFFICE OR EMPLOYMENT OF RETIREMENT BENEFITS RTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION; TO CLARIF BUNCOMBE COUNTY TORAL DISTRICTS; AND TO REQUIRE THE BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION OF EDUCATION AND ASHEVILLE CITY BOA RD OF EDUCATIO CHOOL ADM

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

PART I. MODIFY PENALTIES AND DEFINITIONS FOR CERTAIN SEX OFFENSES SECTION 1.(a) G.S. 14-27.32 reads as rewn

SECTION 1.(a) (5.5, 14-27.52 reaus an Invational § 14-27.32. Sexual activity with a student. (a) If a defendant, who is a teacher, school administrator, sp

(i) If a defendant who is it teacher, school administrator, student teacher, school safety officer, or couch at any age, or who is other school personnel, and who is at least four years older than the victim engages in supercourse or a secural at with a victim engages in supercourse of a secural at with a victim engages in supercourse of a secural at with a victim engages in supercourse of a secural at with a victim engages in supercourse of a secural at with a victim engages in supercourse of a secural at with a victim engages in supercourse of a secural at with a victim engages in supercourse of a secural at with a victim engages in supercourse of a secural victim were present together in the defendant is anything the defendant in a supercourse of the engages of the defendant is anything of the defendant is considered with a victim engages of the engages of t ol at which the student is enrolled and the defendant is employed, as

A defendant who is school personnel, other than a teacher, school ad acher, school safety officer, or c coach, and is less than four years old in vaginal intercourse or a sexual act with a victim who

ing for greater punishmer ent is not a defense to a charge



Legislative Mandate

"The Buncombe County Board of Education and the Asheville City Board of Education shall jointly study the feasibility of the merger of the Buncombe County School Administrative Unit and the City of Asheville School Administrative Unit, including the potential economic and educational impact of merging the school units and any other relevant information. 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 elections matters no later than February 15, 2025."

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA SESSION 2023

SESSION LAW 2023-128 HOUSE BILL 142

AN ACT TO MODIFY PENALTIES AND DEFINITIONS FOR CERTAIN SEX OFFENSES AGAINST STUDENTS, TO INCREASE THE PENALTIES FOR THE FAILURE OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS TO REPORT CERTAIN MISCONDUCT TO THE STATE CATION, TO REQUIRE PUBLIC BOARD OF ELOCATION, 10 REQUIRE FORLY STRAND, UNITS TO SHOW STUDENTS IN GRADES SIX THROUGH TWELVE A VIDEO PRODUCED BY THE CENTER FOR SAFER SCHOOLS CONTAINING AGE APPROPRIATE TION ABOUT SEXUAL ABUSE, AND TO DEFINE O OFFICE OR EMPLOYMENT OF RETIREMENT BENEFITS RTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION; TO CLARIFY THE BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION TO ELECTORAL DISTRICTS, AND TO REQUIRE THE BUNCON OF EDUCATION AND ASHEVILLE CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION TO STUDY THE BUNCOMBE COUNTY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT ANI IE CITY OF ASHEVILLE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

PART I. MODIFY PENALTIES AND DEFINITIONS FOR CERTAIN SEX OFFENS

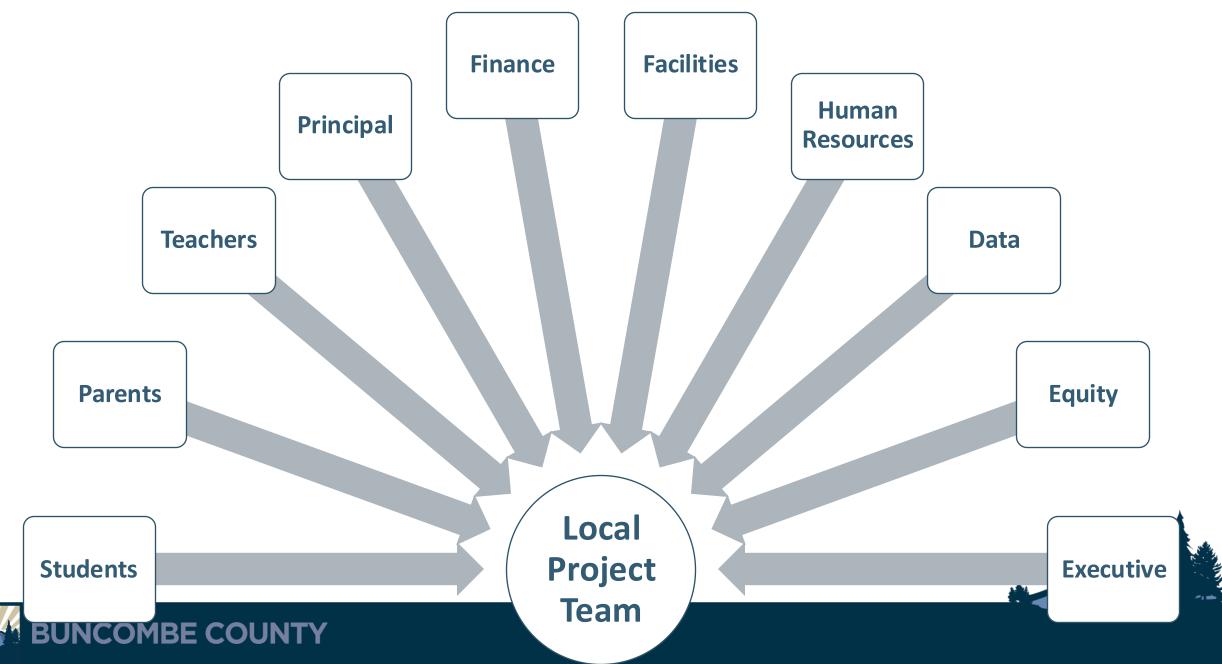
PART I. MODEFY PERMITTES AND DEFINITIONS FOR CERTAIN SEA OFFENSES AGAINST STUDENTS SECTION 1(a) (5, 14-27.3) reads as rewritter: "\$14-23.2, Swall activity with a student (a) If a defendant, who is a student on different erocuts, at any age, or while is other school of administrator, student teacher, school safety officient erocuts, at any age, or while is other school of a whole and the is at least four years older they be vicinit engages in vaginal intercourse of arrownel, and who is at student, at any and the school of the defendant and your at with a vicinity who is a student, at who is a field of the defendant and your act with a vicinity of a Class G federay. y one owing to any use one or original and vicini were present togener in the sam hool, but before the victim ceases to be a student, the defendant is guilty of a Class G felon chool, out octore me victim ceases to or a student, the detendant is guility of a Class-incept when the defendant is lawfully married to the student. The term "same school" sool at which the student is enrolled and the defendant is employed, assigned A defendant who is school personnel, other than a teacher, school adr ent teacher, school safety officer, or coach, and is less than four years older

f engages in vaginal intercourse or a sexual act y ling for greater

Consent is not a defense to a



24-member project team, appointed by County Manager & School Superintendents (8 each):



Roles

Local Project	 Design solicitation and review criteria 	
Team	Review submissions, recommend vendor	
	 Provide ongoing guidance & feedback 	
Buncombe	Coordinate project	
County	Issue solicitation & select firm	
	 Identify funding, Issue and oversee contract 	
School	 Jointly contribute to the study, including data & input to 	
Systems	inform the study	
Community	 Provide input to inform the study 	
Contracted	Conduct the study	
vendor	 Provide a report of findings & recommendations 	



Vendor Scope of Work



- 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
- Provide a comprehensive report including description of research method, summary of activities, findings, risks/benefits of consolidation, recommendations, and implementation considerations as applicable





Work Conducted So Far

- 87 Days on site
- 1,143 data request items, such as:
 - Academics
 - Budget & finance
 - Facilities, maintenance & custodial
 - Food Services
 - Security
 - Special education
 - Technology
 - Transportation
- 55 Focus Group Participants

- 168 interviews with personnel such as: teacher; principal; communications; custodial; equity; finance; human resources; nutrition; operations; student services; technology; testing
- 10 Community Forums
- 7,245 Surveys Completed
- 35 school observations
 - Including facilities, school nutrition & transportation

Community Input

• 10 Community Input Forums

- 9 in person and 1 virtual
 - Owen Middle School
 - East Asheville Library
 - Cane Creek Middle School
 - Weaverville Community Center
 - Isaac Dickson Elementary
 - Erwin High School
 - Enka Intermediate School
 - Hall Fletcher Elementary
 - Skyland/South Buncombe Library
 - Online
- 222 persons attended the forums

Surveys completed

- 308 Community Surveys
- 2,560 Parent Surveys
- 1,286 Staff Surveys
- 3,091 Student Surveys

Input Gathered

- Deciding factors (e.g. costs, education quality, efficiencies, academic life, student opportunities)
- Satisfaction with school services (e.g. curriculum, instruction, nutrition, transportation, extracurricular)
- Priorities & concerns





Project Timeline to Date

Legislative Mandate	September 2023
Project Team Formed	October 2023
Request for Proposals Process	November 2023 – February 2024
Vendor Conducts Study	April 2024 – December 2024





Next Steps

Status Updates to County Commissioners & School Boards (presented by County Staff)	December 2024
Report Received	No later than December 31, 2024
Presentation of Findings & Recommendations to County Commissioners & School Boards (presented by County Staff)	January 16, 2025
Findings & Recommendations due to General Assembly	No later than February 15, 2025
Endorsements of and/or Comments by County Commissioners & School Boards	Not required



12/11/2024