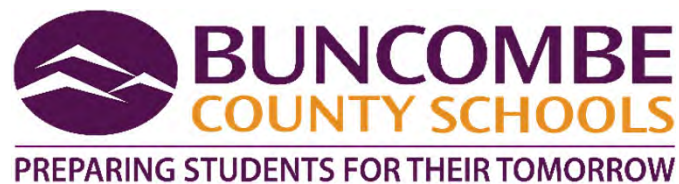




ASHEVILLE CITY SCHOOLS

Learn. Discover. Thrive.



Asheville / Buncombe Consolidation Feasibility Study

January 16, 2025





The Project

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.**”



Prismatic's Work

Project Team

Consultants



Project Management & Analysts



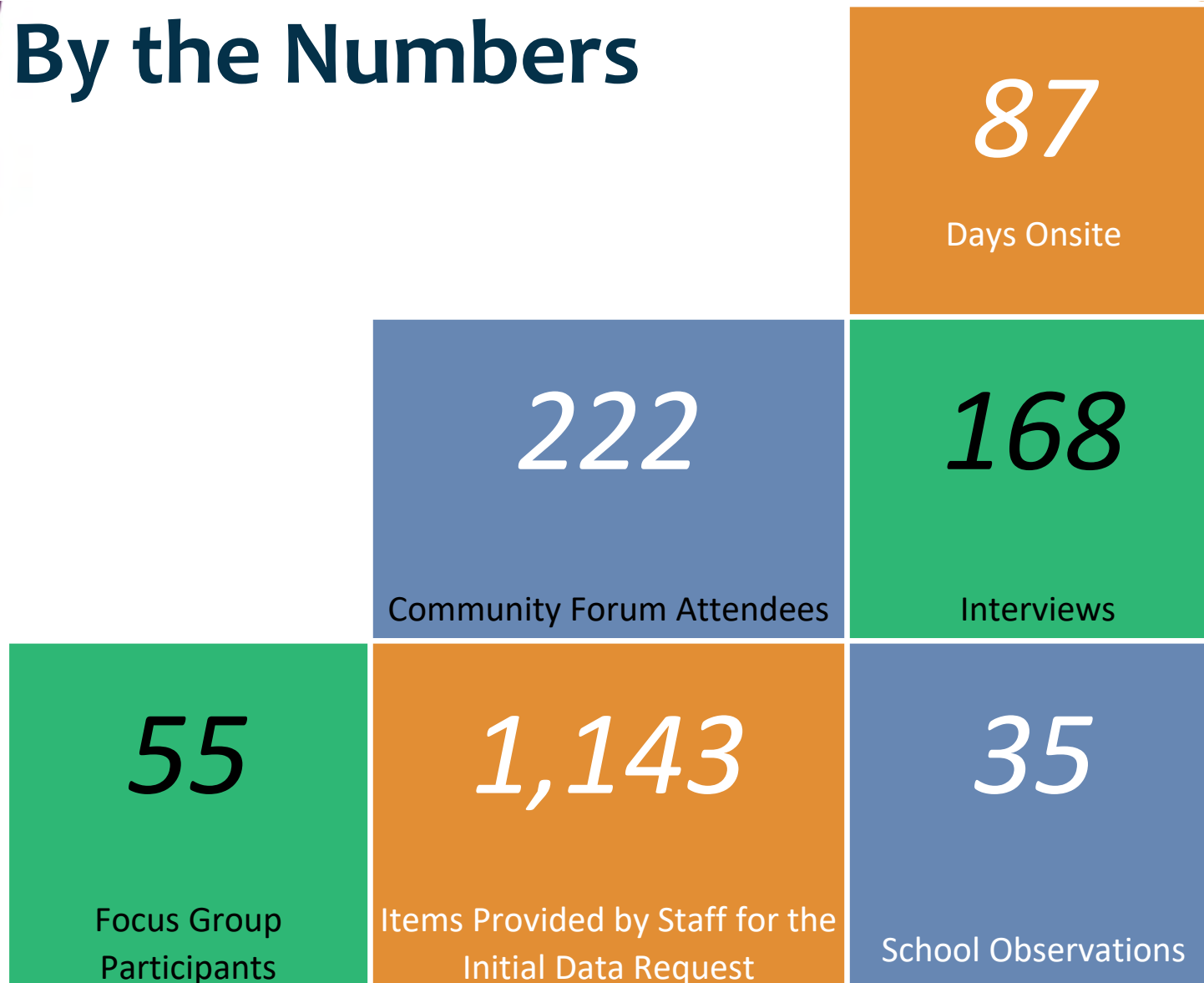
Study Areas

- Governance, Policy, Procedures
- Educational Outcomes
- Student Well-being
- Instructional and Programmatic Offerings
- Student Enrollment
- Facilities
- Business Operations/Fiscal Impacts
- Management, Personnel, and Communications
- Child Nutrition
- Transportation

Project Framing

- What does the research say?
- What do constituents want?
- Would consolidation improve things?

By the Numbers



Constituent Input Details

Constituent Group	Participation Method	Time Frame	# Participants/ Responses
ACS, BCS, County, Community Organizations, Elected Officials	Interviews	MAY – SEP24	124
Business/Foundation	Focus Group	AUG24	7
Community/Student Supports			26
Health/Behavioral Health			10
Homeschool, Charter, Private Schools			4
Secondary/Postsecondary			8
Any interested community member	10 Community Meetings	SEP24	222
High School Students	Online Survey	SEP24	3,091
Parents			2,560
ACS and BCS Staff			1,286
Community Members without students			308



Prismatic's Conclusions and Recommendation

What Does Research Say?

- Results were split in the Buncombe-specific studies
- Size does matter, but generally only when moving from “tiny” to “small”
- Economies of scale tend to be small
- NC-specific research on consolidation does not show positive changes in academic outcomes and only little cost savings

What Do Constituents Want?

Go for consolidation if it will improve:

	Interviews	Focus Groups	Forums	Student Survey	Parent Survey	Staff Survey	Community Survey
Student Success	✓	✓					
Student Well-Being	✓						
Academic/ Education Quality			✓	69%	85%	80%	86%
Academic Course/ Education Options			✓	59%	67%		69%
School Life for Students				71%	81%	73%	69%
Or retains staff positions					55%	75%	

Would Consolidation Improve Things?

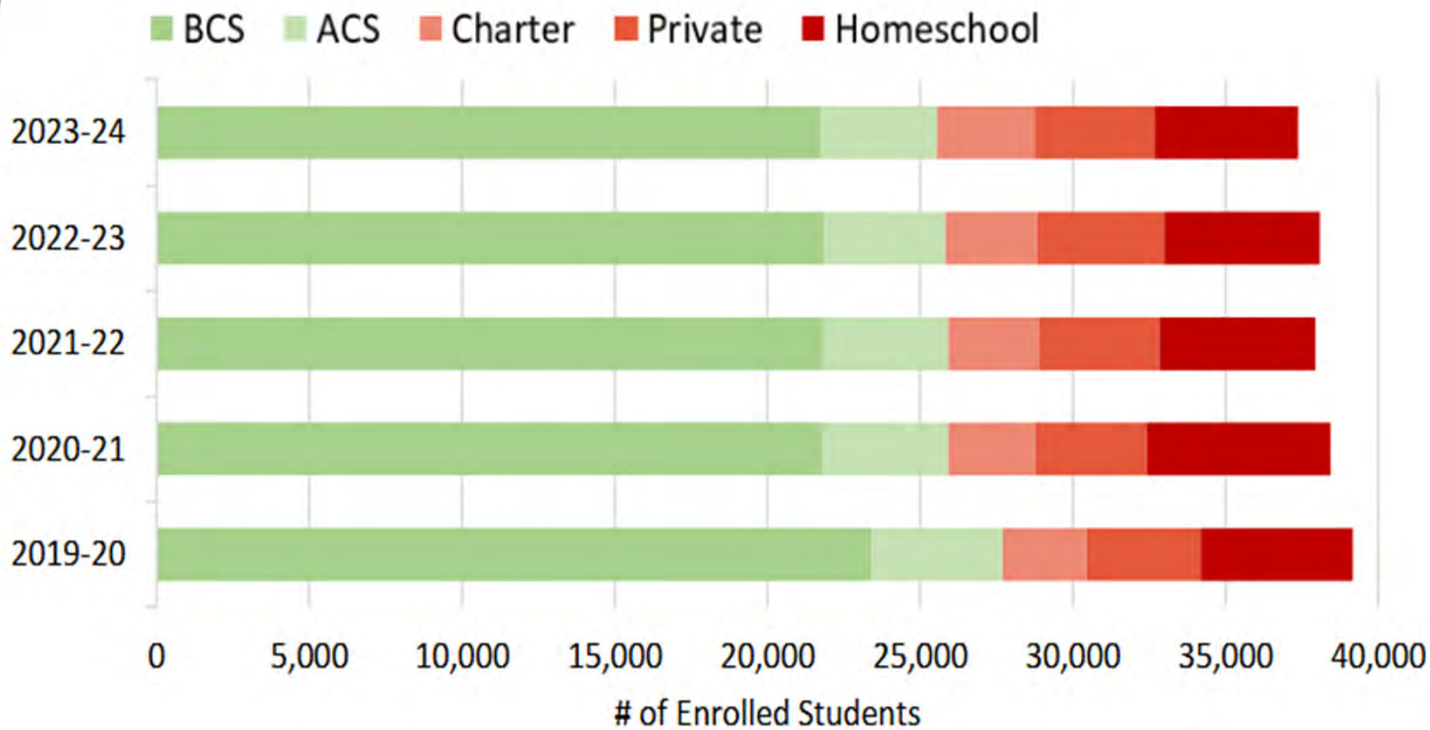
- *Comparing ACS and BCS, are the programs/systems/facilities equitable?*
- *Would there be financial, operational, or equity benefits to consolidation in this area?*
- *+some more specific questions in each area*

Would Consolidation Improve Things?

- Neither ACS nor BCS is far outpacing the other or state averages on EOCs, EOGs, or graduation rates.
- Both ACS and BCS are struggling with achievement gaps.
- Prismatic found ACS and BCS to NOT be overstaffed in their central offices.
- Consolidation would require a consistent approach to salaries and supplements.

Would Consolidation Improve Things?

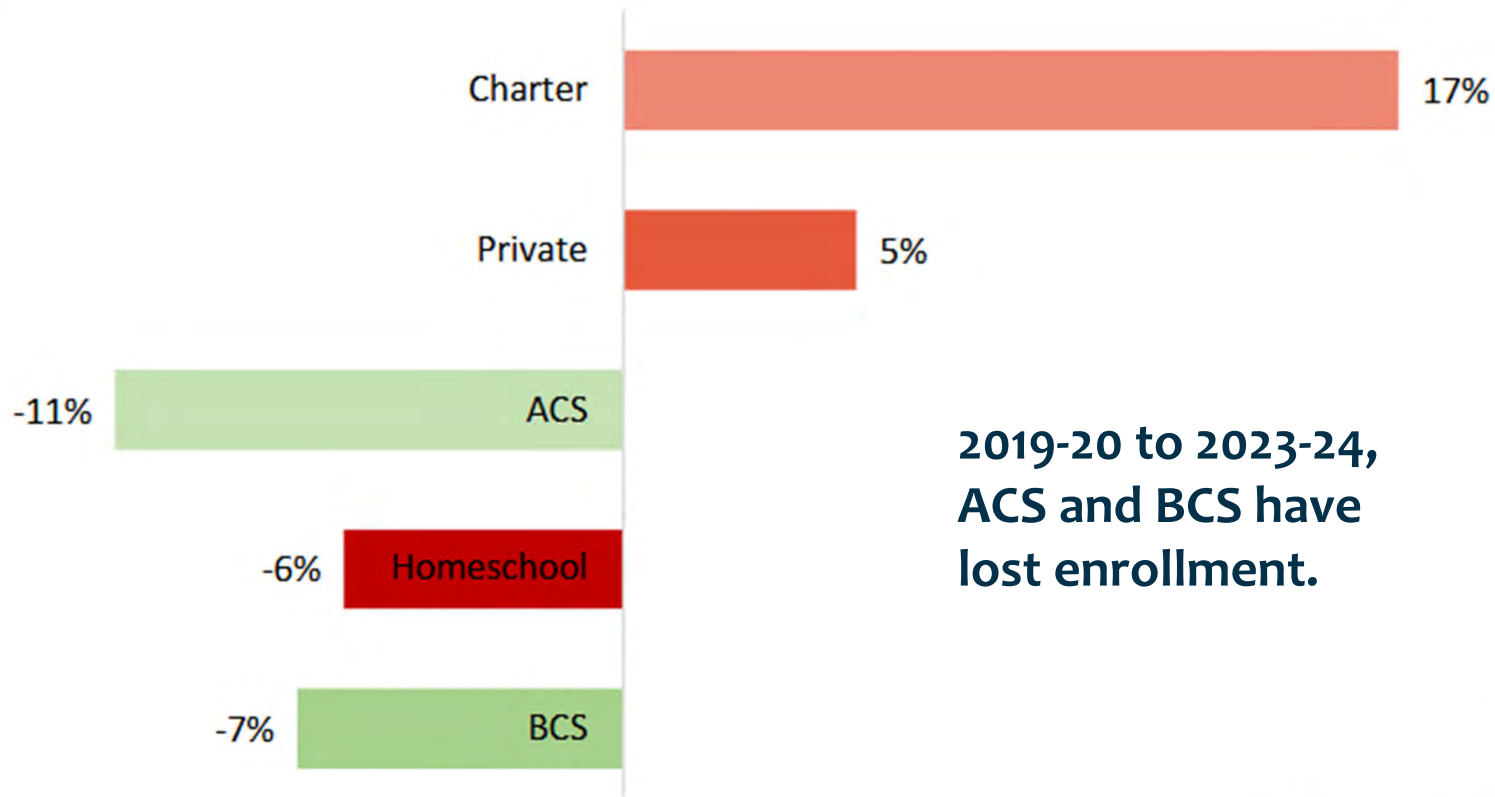
Environmental Considerations - Enrollment



Overall, K-12 enrollment is down 5% across Buncombe County.

Would Consolidation Improve Things?

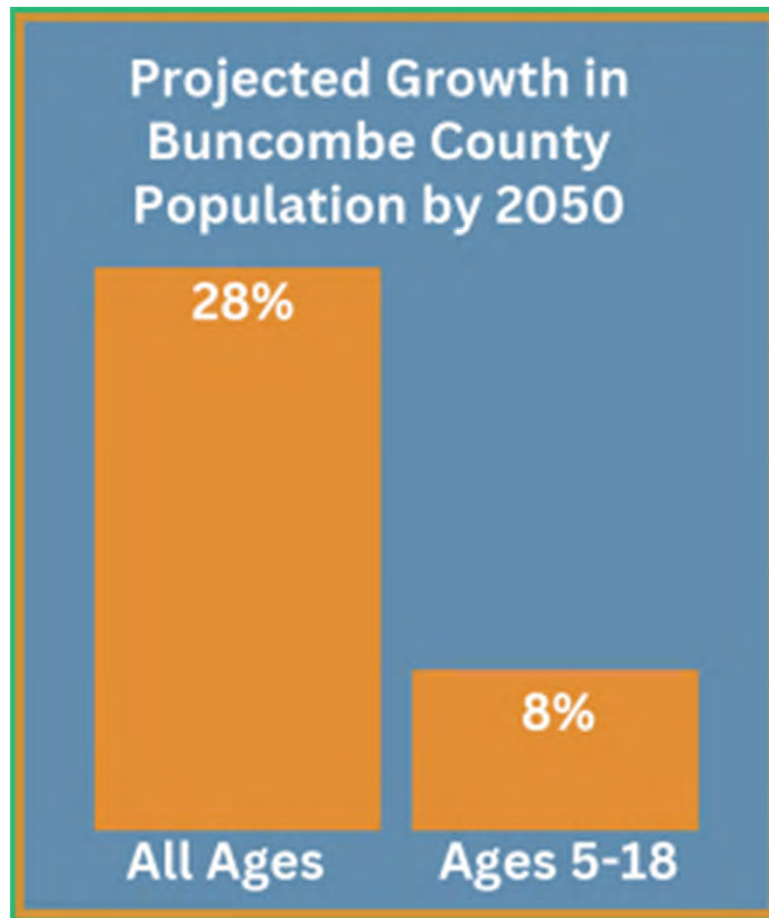
Environmental Considerations - Enrollment



2019-20 to 2023-24,
ACS and BCS have
lost enrollment.

Would Consolidation Improve Things?

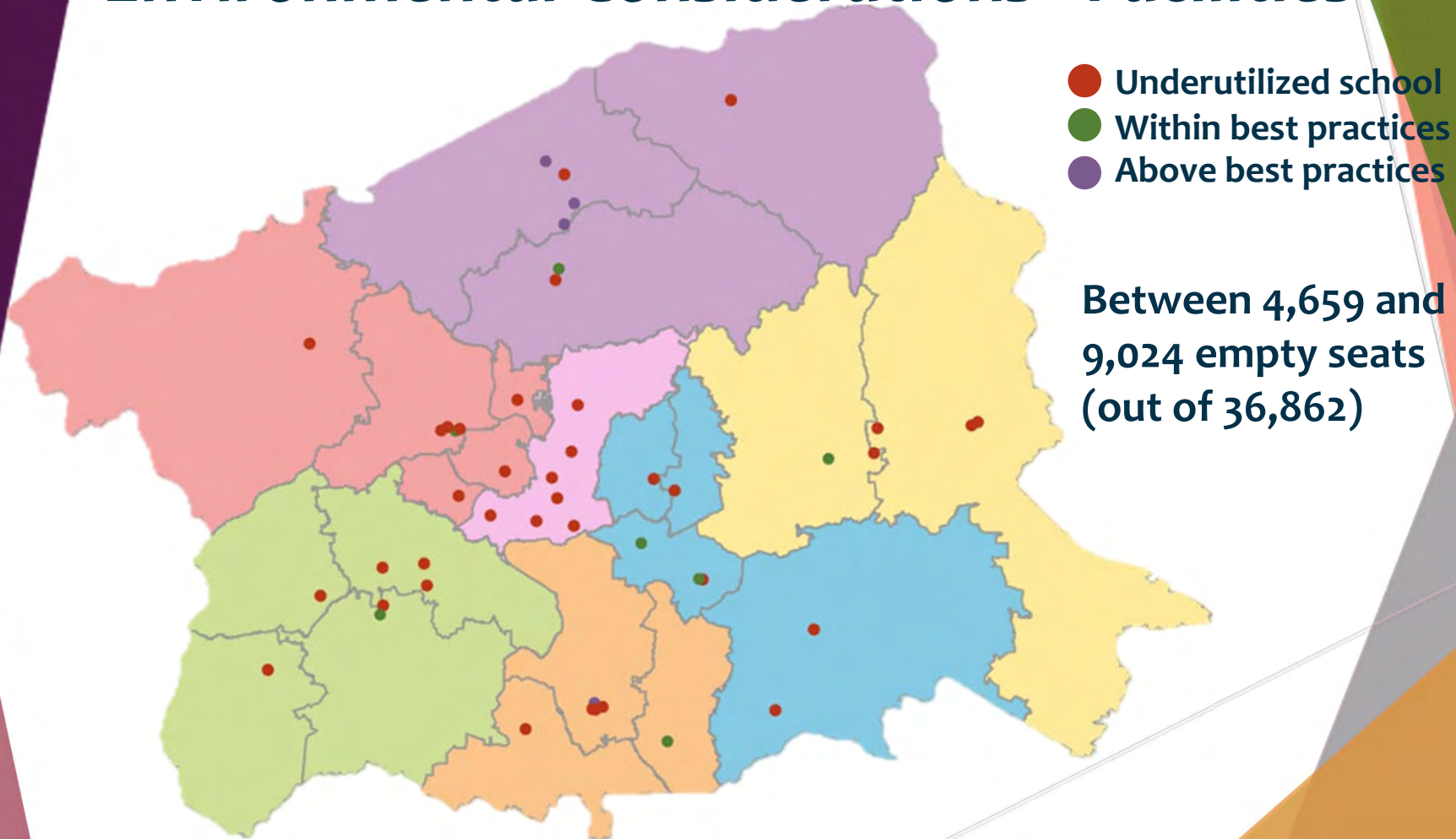
Environmental Considerations - Population



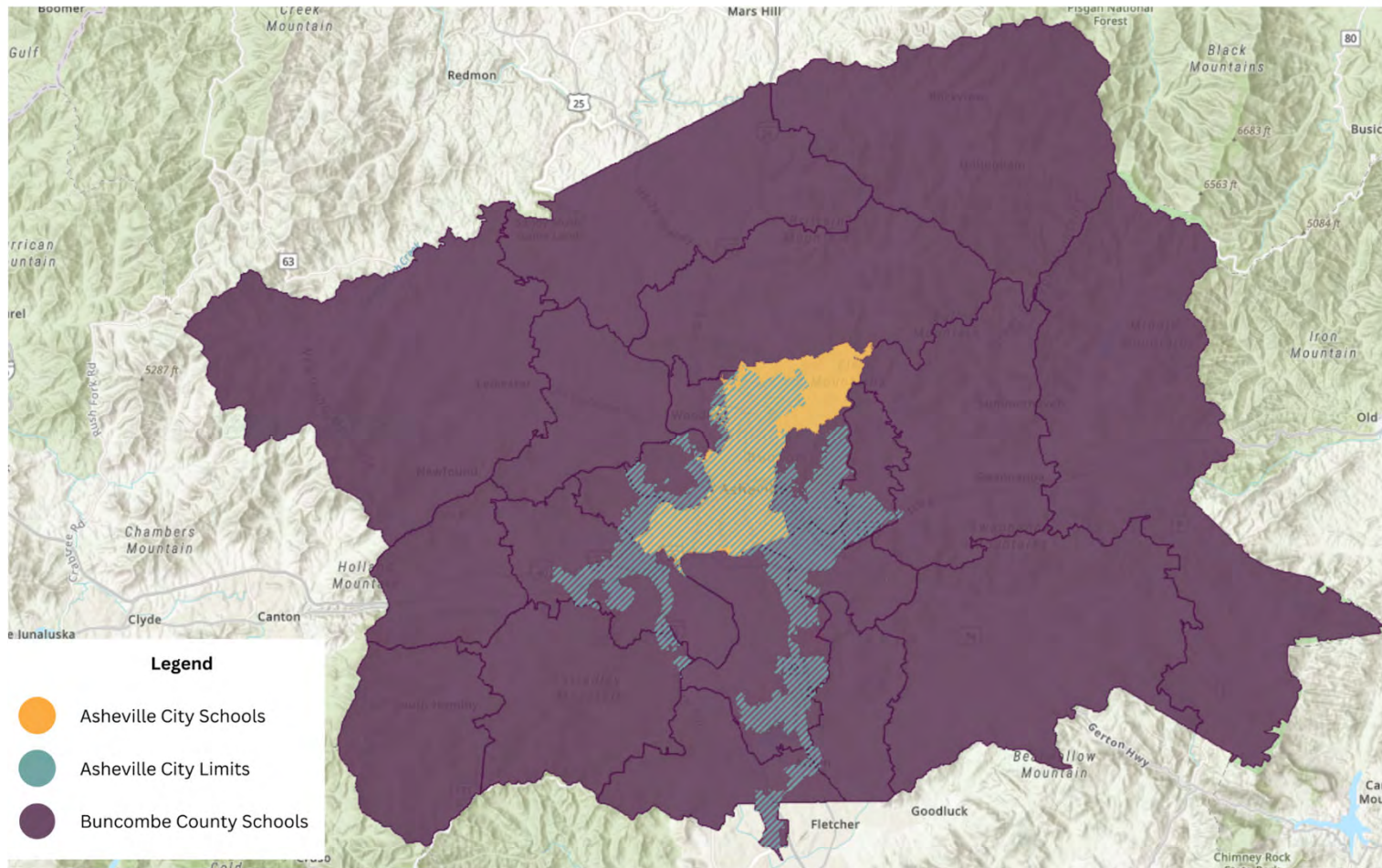
Roughly, this means 115 new students per year through 2050, countywide.

Would Consolidation Improve Things?

Environmental Considerations - Facilities



Would Consolidation Improve Things? Environmental Considerations - Boundaries



Would Consolidation Improve Things? Environmental Considerations - Boundaries



Conclusions

- Neither ACS nor BCS is in a financial or other crisis.
- No compelling evidence consolidation would improve student performance.
- No compelling evidence consolidation would substantially reduce costs.
- Little current collaboration between ACS and BCS.
- Strong local perceptions of “culture” differences that would need to be overcome in consolidation.
- Little local support for consolidation.

Recommendation

Prismatic does not recommend consolidation of ACS and BCS.



Questions?