

FACILITIES ASSESSMENT

OBION COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

FOR OBION COUNTY GOVERNMENT

January 14, 2026

LEWIS GROUP ARCHITECTS

Obion County Schools District Facilities Assessment

Obion County Government

January 14, 2026

LEWIS GROUP ARCHITECTS

***“We shape our
buildings;
thereafter, they
shape us.”***

Sir Winston Churchill

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Image Source: Discover Obion County

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INTRODUCTION TO ASSESSMENT

PURPOSE

In April of 2025, Obion County School District commissioned Lewis Group Architects (LGA) to undertake a Facilities Assessment and future capital planning analysis intended to help them understand the overall condition of their school system. The assessment includes county and system-wide research and comparisons. Together, all the information allows us to present a comprehensive look at the system that will allow Obion County Special Schools to prioritize and strategize long-term management of the facilities in the system and future capital planning.

SCOPE

The seven facilities include one Pre-K through 5th grade school, four Kindergarten through 8th grade schools, one 6th through 12th grade school, and one 9th through 12th grade school. LGA conducted research on the county and gathered information about the context of these facilities. This context includes geography, population trends, enrollment trends, and current zoning boundaries. LGA collected data from the school system and other resources like the US Census Bureau, the State of Tennessee, and the Obion County Chamber of Commerce, among others.

PROCESS

In September of 2025, LGA visited each of the seven facilities. During our visit, visual observations were made, photographs were taken, and data and research collected. Each facility visit was conducted in the company of the Director of Schools, a school administrator (principal or maintenance/ custodial staff), and/or a representative from the Mayor's office to provide site-specific information. The demographic and capacity information was then organized and represented through a variety of charts and illustrations; the information and findings are presented in this document in six (6) parts.

- PART I: OVERVIEW
- PART II: FACILITY OBSERVATIONS
- PART III: COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS
- PART IV: SCHOOLS RESEARCH + DATA
- PART V: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS
- PART VI: COMPARISON + ANALYSIS

GUIDE TO READING THE ASSESSMENT

The assessment has been presented for review and use in a manner consistent with the way in which the assessment was performed. In this document, you will find the record of the individual facility assessment visits first, followed by research, data, and illustrations that aim at a broader, comparative look at the system as a whole. This assessment does not include detailed analysis of transportation studies, personnel, curriculum, or instructional resources.

Part II: Facility Observations

Each facility is documented with the following:

- Aerial Photograph: Image of facility and immediate surroundings taken from Google Earth with north oriented towards the top of the page. Images maintain relative proportion but lack an absolute scale.
- “At a Glance” Sheet: A collection of basic information including:
 - Location
 - Front elevation
 - Latest enrollment and functional capacity
 - Utilization rate of facility (comparison of current enrollment and functional capacity)
 - Number of grades
 - Size of floor area
 - Number of classrooms
 - Number of stories
 - Construction history (school axonometric diagram coordinates with the timeline below)



Part III: County Demographics

Contains information about the population trends and patterns found in the county. This information, in conjunction with the enrollment data for the school system, can be valuable in the strategic management of facilities.

Part IV: Schools Research + Data

Compares information on each school in the system, including explanations of methods and illustrations.

Part V: Summary of Findings

While the school system leadership should review this assessment and draw its own conclusions, LGA has identified some key findings and potential high priorities for Obion County Schools to increase the efficiency of the school system and better serve its teachers, students, and other staff members.

Part VI: Comparison + Analysis

Based on what were identified as key challenges, LGA has provided Obion County Schools the comparison and analysis of four strategic planning options that address the challenges throughout the assessment.

DEFINITIONS

Capacity

The recommended number of students that can be appropriately accommodated within a given space for its intended instructional purpose.

Functional Capacity

The number of students who can be appropriately accommodated in a facility while ensuring that adequate space remains available to deliver educational programs and services aligned with state content standards. Because this measure involves subjective judgment, a utilization factor is applied to the weighted maximum capacity average:

- + 90% for elementary and middle schools
- + 80% for high schools

Utilization Rate

The ratio of current enrollment to functional capacity, expressed as a percentage.

Capacity-Generating Rooms

Capacity-generating classrooms are designated for instructional use by a single group of students during a scheduled instructional period. Classrooms with attached, dedicated labs that are assigned to one or more specific classes—and therefore unavailable for use by other groups—are not considered capacity-generating rooms.

K-8 Capacity-Generating Classrooms:

- + K-3 classrooms = 20 students each
- + Grades 4-5 classrooms = 25 students each
- + Grade 6 academic classrooms (Language Arts, Social Studies, Math, Science) = 25 students each
- + Grades 7-8 academic classrooms (Language Arts, Social Studies, Math, Science) = 30 students each
- + Grades 6-8 vocational classrooms = 20 students each
- + Self-contained special education classrooms = 12 students each

K-8 Non-Capacity-Generating Rooms:

- + Gymnasium, library, art room, music room, band room, STEM room, guidance room, and science/computer labs.

BEP Class Size Averages

Established under Tennessee's Education Improvement Act of 1992:

Grade Level	Average	Maximum
+ K-3	20	25
+ 4-6	25	30
+ 7-12	30	35
+ Vocational	20	25

DEFINITIONS

Special Education Class Size

Tennessee State Board of Education Policy 3.206 states that “self-contained special education class size shall not exceed the limits specified for average class size pursuant to TCA 49-1-104(a).” For this study, LGA recommends a more realistic average of 12 students per class.

Day Care / Pre-School Class Size

Per the Tennessee Department of Human Services, the maximum group size for children ages 3-5 is 20, with the correct adult-to-child ratio. Tennessee State Board Policy 0520-12-01-.06 further establishes a maximum of 20 students for four-year-olds (with a 1:12 adult/child ratio). For this study, the Day Care/Pre-School class size is considered 20 students.

Weighted Maximum Capacity Average

A calculated measure that reflects the weighted classroom average of all capacity-generating rooms. It is derived by multiplying the number of each classroom type (General, Vocational, SPED, or Pre-School) by its BEP average class size, summing the totals, and dividing by the total number of classrooms. This metric ensures that school capacity is not affected each time a classroom is redesignated for another instructional use.



PART II : FACILITY OBSERVATIONS



SOUTH FULTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

LEWIS GROUP ARCHITECTS



South Fulton Elementary School

1302 John C Jones Parkway, South Fulton, TN 38257

OVERVIEW

Located in South Fulton, Tennessee, South Fulton Elementary School functions as a PreK-5 facility serving the northernmost region of Obion County. The school currently reports an enrollment of approximately 293 students. The facility maintains a recorded functional capacity of 537, resulting in a utilization rate of roughly 54%. This capacity profile indicates significant surplus space within the existing footprint, offering substantial flexibility to accommodate potential enrollment increases or future programmatic expansion. The physical plant is characterized by sizable instructional areas and modernized core service spaces designed to support early childhood and elementary curriculum requirements. With an accessible campus layout, the facility operates as the primary educational infrastructure for the local community, serving as a key anchor for the student population in the northern sector of the district.

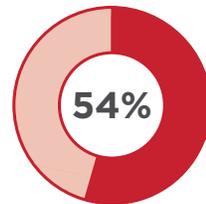


UTILIZATION

CURRENT ENROLLMENT: 293

FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY: 537

UTILIZATION RATE: 54%



SPECIFICATIONS

GRADES: PreK-5

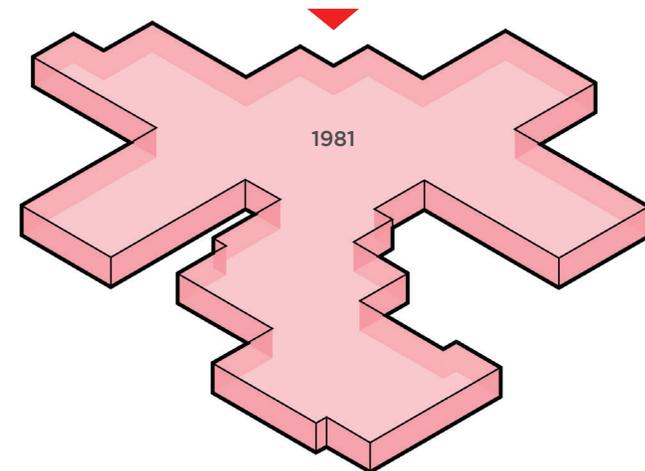
NO. CLASSROOMS: 26

NO. STORIES: 1

TOTAL AREA: 56,082 s.f.

CONSTRUCTION HISTORY

1981 Original Construction





BLACK OAK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

LEWIS GROUP ARCHITECTS



Black Oak Elementary School

365 N Shawtown Road, Hornbeak, TN 38232

OVERVIEW

The Black Oak Elementary School facility is located in Hornbeak, Tennessee, and historically served the student population in the western portion of Obion County. The building was designed to accommodate a functional capacity of 486 students. In the years leading up to its closure, the facility experienced sustained enrollment decline, resulting in significant underutilization of both instructional and core spaces. Following a district-wide review of facilities and operational efficiency, the Obion County Board of Education approved a plan to reorganize capacity, leading to the closure of the Black Oak facility effective June 30, 2025. This action supports the strategic goal of long-term capacity balancing and improved operational efficiency across the district's portfolio. The student population previously served by this site has been rezoned for absorption into the existing infrastructures of Hillcrest Elementary School and Lake Road Elementary School.

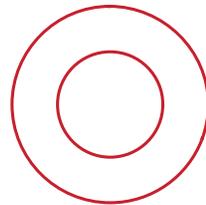


UTILIZATION

CURRENT ENROLLMENT: NA

FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY: 486

UTILIZATION RATE: NA



SPECIFICATIONS

GRADES: PreK-8

NO. CLASSROOMS: NA

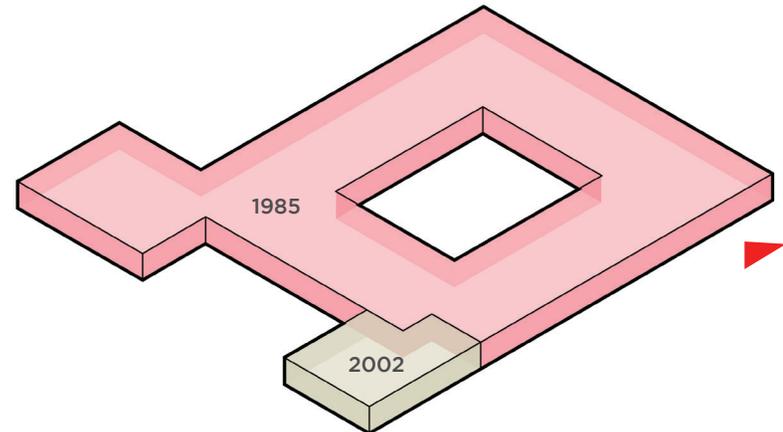
NO. STORIES: NA

TOTAL AREA: 64,106 s.f.

CONSTRUCTION HISTORY

1985 Original Construction

2002 Addition: Classroom





HILLCREST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

LEWIS GROUP ARCHITECTS



Hillcrest Elementary School

605 S Main Street, Troy, TN 38260

OVERVIEW

Located in Troy, Tennessee, Hillcrest Elementary School is a centralized PreK-8 facility primarily serving the communities of Troy, Obion, and the central portion of Obion County. The school's current enrollment stands at approximately 697 students. The building's official functional capacity is 748, indicating a near-capacity utilization level of roughly 93%. The majority of the recent growth has been the absorption of students from Black Oak Elementary School. This utilization rate positions Hillcrest as a highly important and fully utilized elementary facility within the district's overall infrastructure portfolio. The physical building includes recently updated instructional areas, modernized core service spaces, and efficient administrative suites. Furthermore, the overall campus design and organization are structured to securely and effectively support the school's large and active student population. Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, it will convert to a PreK-5 facility, as 6-8 grades students will transition to Obion County Middle School.

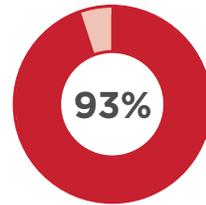


UTILIZATION

CURRENT ENROLLMENT: 697

FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY: 748

UTILIZATION RATE: 93%



SPECIFICATIONS

GRADES: PreK-8

NO. CLASSROOMS: 37

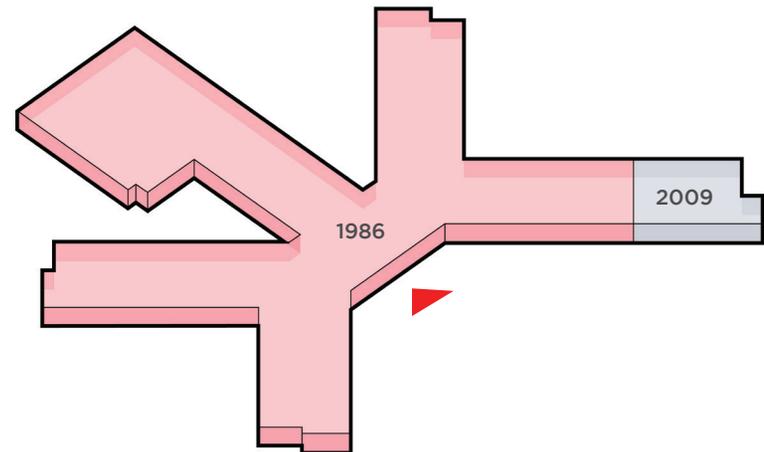
NO. STORIES: 1

TOTAL AREA: 79,769 s.f.

CONSTRUCTION HISTORY

1986 Original Construction

2009 Addition: Classroom





LAKE ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

LEWIS GROUP ARCHITECTS



Lake Road Elementary School

1130 E TN-22, Union City, TN 38261

OVERVIEW

Located in Union City, Tennessee, Lake Road Elementary School is a comprehensive PreK-8 facility structured to serve the northern region of Obion County. The school currently reports an enrollment of approximately 559 students. The building has a substantial functional capacity of 932, resulting in a utilization rate of approximately 60%. This capacity profile indicates significant space available for future student growth, program expansion, or internal facility repurposing. The physical plant features a large campus layout, including versatile instructional spaces and modernized core facilities. The grounds incorporate dedicated outdoor areas designed to support hands-on learning activities and community-related functions. Lake Road Elementary is a well-established facility that functions as a key educational anchor for the families residing across northern Obion County, providing adaptable infrastructure to support its current and future population. Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, it will convert to a PreK-5 facility, as 6-8 grades students will transition to Obion County Middle School.

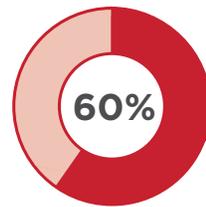


UTILIZATION

CURRENT ENROLLMENT: 559

FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY: 932

UTILIZATION RATE: 60%



SPECIFICATIONS

GRADES: PreK-8

NO. CLASSROOMS: 46

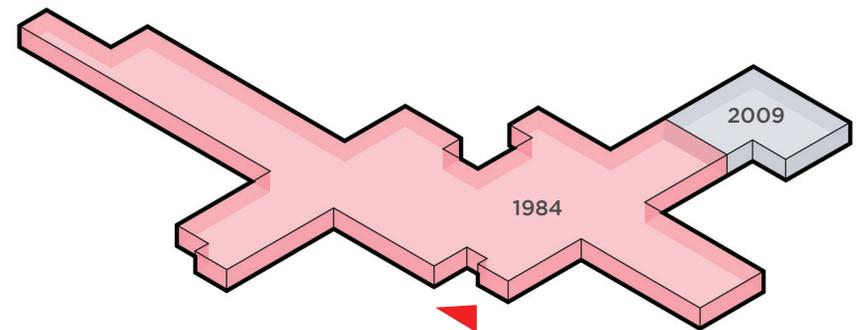
NO. STORIES: 1

TOTAL AREA: 76,901 s.f.

CONSTRUCTION HISTORY

1984 Original Construction

2009 Addition: Classroom





RIDGEMONT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

LEWIS GROUP ARCHITECTS



Ridgemont Elementary School

1285 N Highway 45 W, Union City, TN 38261

OVERVIEW

Located on the North Highway 45 Bypass in Union City, Tennessee, Ridgemont Elementary School currently functions as a PreK-8 campus serving the central and northern portions of Obion County. The school's enrollment is approximately 369 students. The facility has a recorded functional capacity of 669, resulting in a utilization rate of roughly 55%. This usage level suggests ample capacity within the existing infrastructure. The physical plant includes flexible learning areas and updated core spaces, situated on a site layout suitable for varied educational programming. Significant strategic changes are planned for this facility. Following the conclusion of the 2025-26 academic year, the current elementary configuration will cease operations. The facility is designated to reopen for the 2026-27 term as the district's dedicated Middle School, serving students in grades 6 through 8.

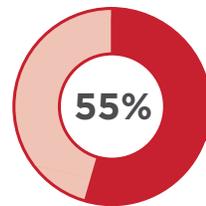


UTILIZATION

CURRENT ENROLLMENT: 369

FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY: 669

UTILIZATION RATE: 55%



SPECIFICATIONS

GRADES: PreK-8

NO. CLASSROOMS: 33

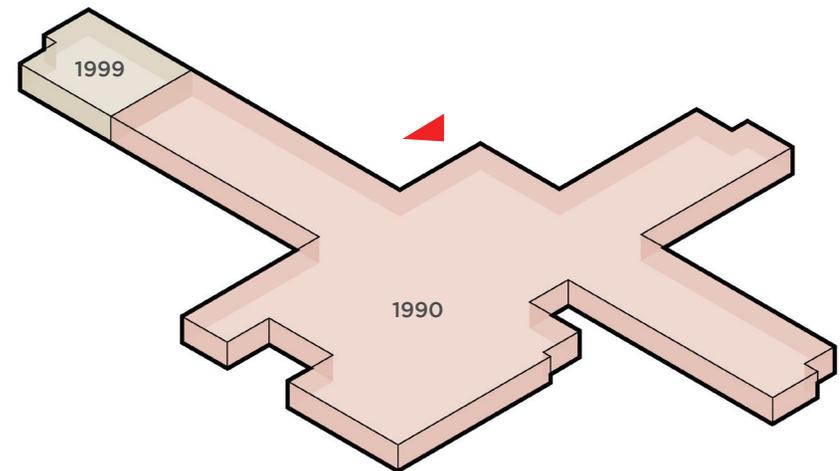
NO. STORIES: 1

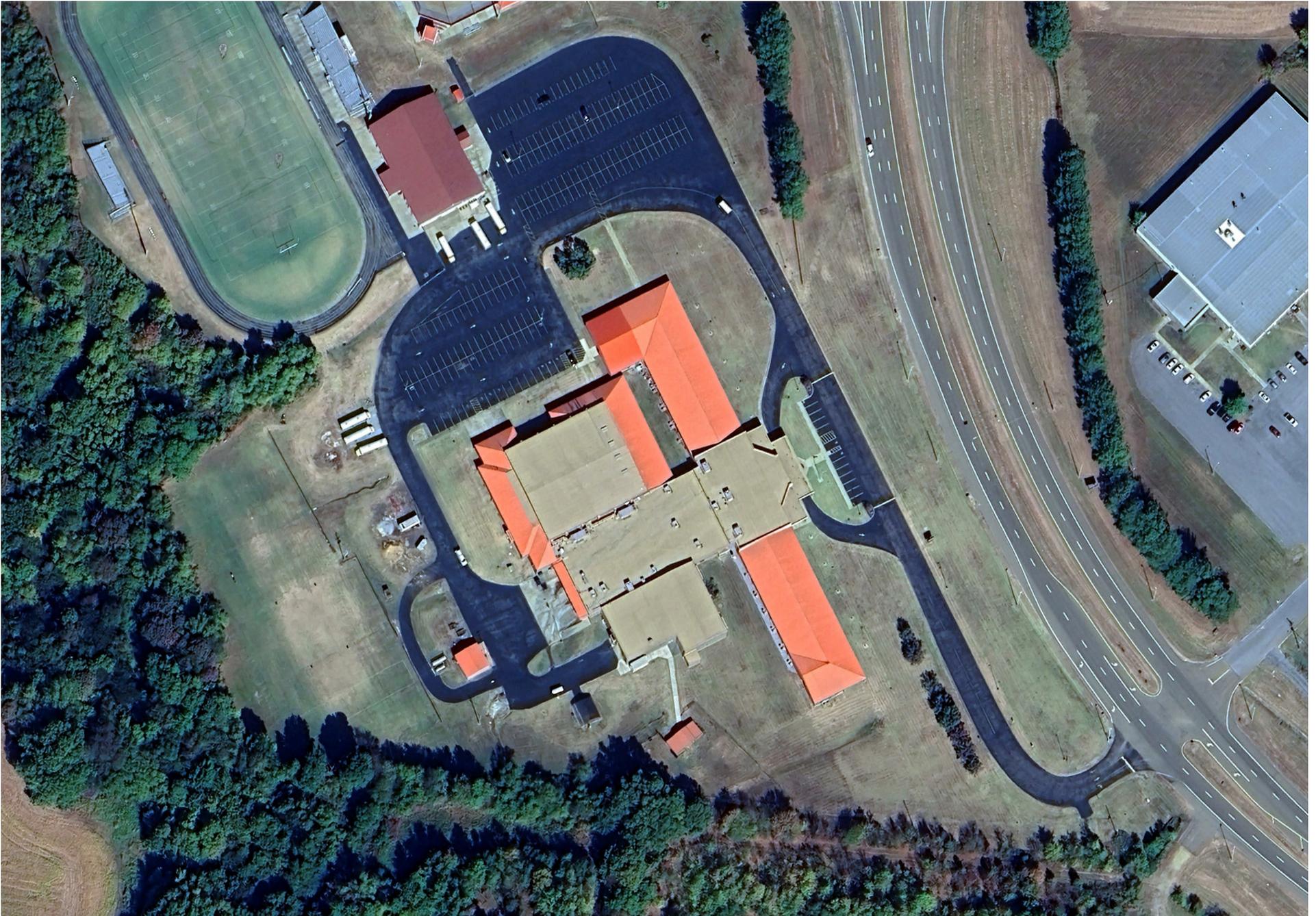
TOTAL AREA: 76,186 s.f.

CONSTRUCTION HISTORY

1990 Original Construction

1999 Addition: Classroom





SOUTH FULTON MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

LEWIS GROUP ARCHITECTS



South Fulton Middle and High School

209 John C Jones Parkway, South Fulton, TN 38257

OVERVIEW

Located in South Fulton, Tennessee, South Fulton Middle and High School operates as a combined Grades 6–12 secondary campus, serving the community in the southernmost portion of the county. The school currently enrolls approximately 319 students. The facility is designed to accommodate a functional capacity of up to 660 students, resulting in a current utilization rate of roughly 48%. This capacity profile indicates significant surplus space available for future enrollment growth or the development of new academic and extracurricular programs. The campus provides a cohesive secondary educational environment, featuring dedicated academic spaces, Career and Technical classrooms, shops, labs, updated core facilities, and infrastructure specifically configured to support a full range of athletic and extracurricular activities. The facility serves as the primary centralized hub for the local South Fulton community, providing the essential infrastructure for its full secondary student population.

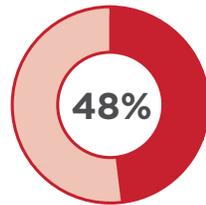


UTILIZATION

CURRENT ENROLLMENT: 319

FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY: 660

UTILIZATION RATE: 48%



SPECIFICATIONS

GRADES: 6-12

NO. CLASSROOMS: 33

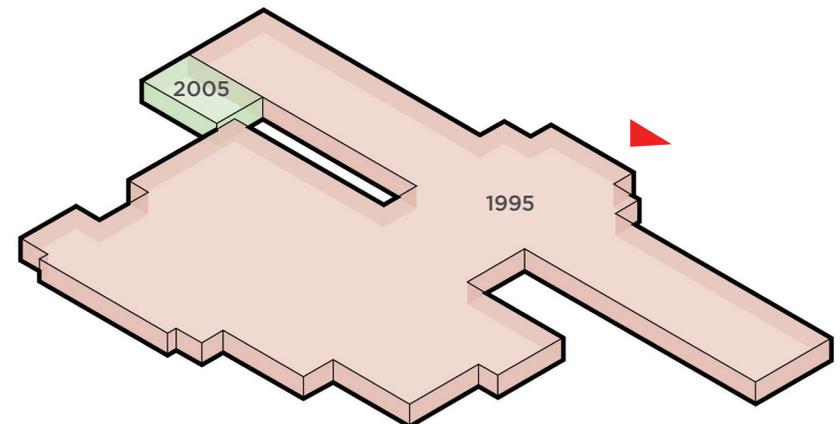
NO. STORIES: 1

TOTAL AREA: 118,822 s.f.

CONSTRUCTION HISTORY

1995 Original Construction

2005 Addition: Classroom





OBION COUNTY CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

LEWIS GROUP ARCHITECTS



Obion County Central High School

528 US-51, Troy, TN 38260

OVERVIEW

Located at 528 Highway 51 North in Troy, Tennessee, Obion County Central High School is a comprehensive secondary campus serving the middle and northern regions of the county. The school presently enrolls approximately 652 students in grades 9-12. With a recorded functional capacity of 1,299, the facility operates at a utilization rate of roughly 50%. This capacity profile indicates substantial available space to accommodate future enrollment growth or programmatic expansion without requiring new construction. The expansive physical plant features extensive instructional wings, recently updated athletic infrastructure, and specialized core areas configured to support a diverse secondary and Career and Technical curriculum. As a centralized hub for the district, the campus provides the essential adaptable infrastructure for a full range of academic and extracurricular activities, functioning as a primary high school asset within Obion County's educational portfolio.

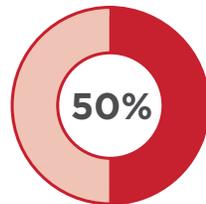


UTILIZATION

CURRENT ENROLLMENT: 652

FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY: 1299

UTILIZATION RATE: 50%



SPECIFICATIONS

GRADES: 9-12

NO. CLASSROOMS: 52

NO. STORIES: 2

TOTAL AREA: 268,303 s.f.

CONSTRUCTION HISTORY

2006 Original Construction

2010 Addition

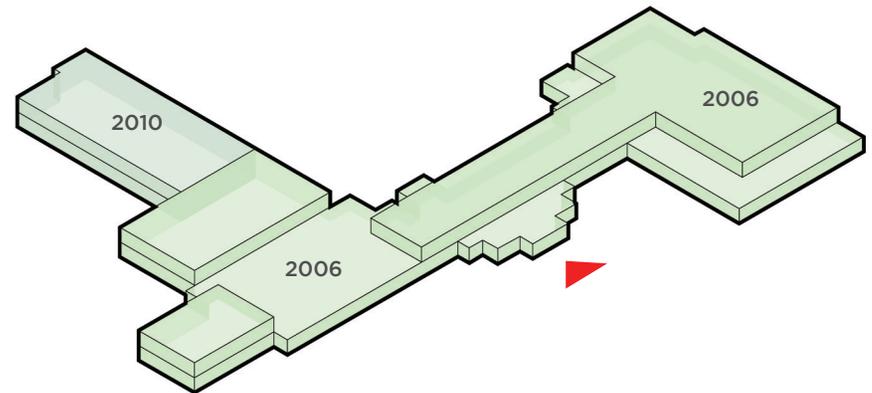
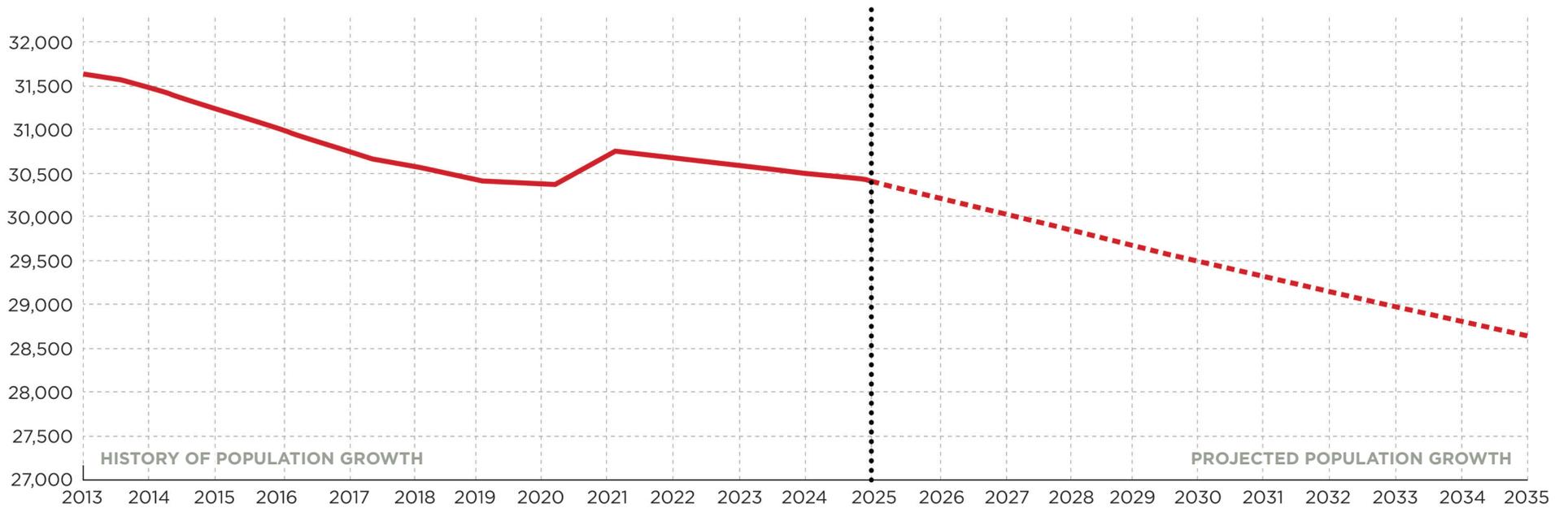




Image Source: Discover Obion County

PART III : COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS

OBION COUNTY POPULATION CHANGES



-0.57%

**AVERAGE GROWTH RATE
BETWEEN 2013 AND 2023**

(Applied to determine the
projected county population growth)

-3.26%

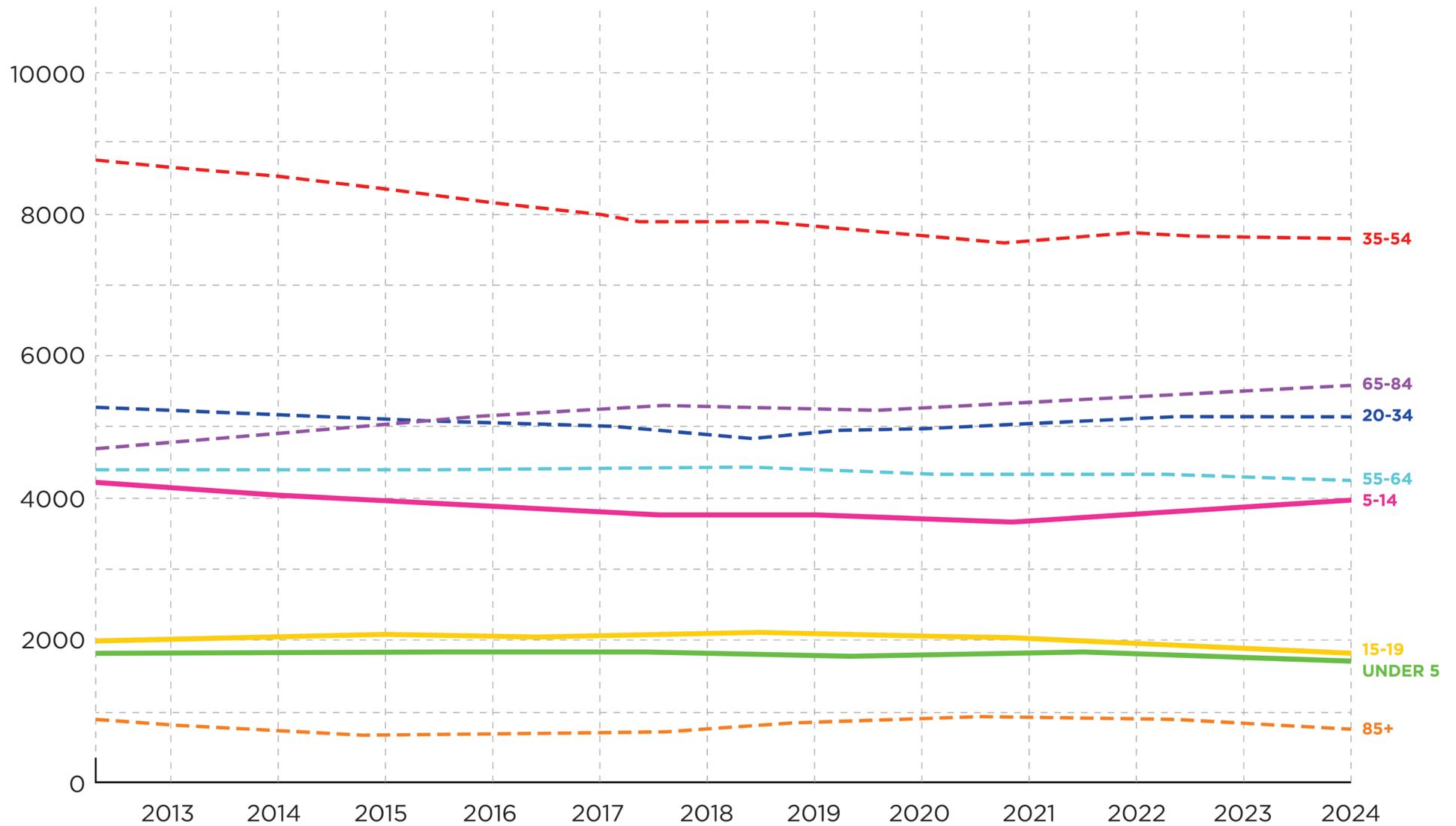
**OVERALL COUNTY
POPULATION GROWTH
BETWEEN 2013 AND 2023**

-9.06%

**OVERALL PROJECTED COUNTY
POPULATION GROWTH
BETWEEN 2013 AND 2035**

Source: US Census Data

GROWTH BY AGE

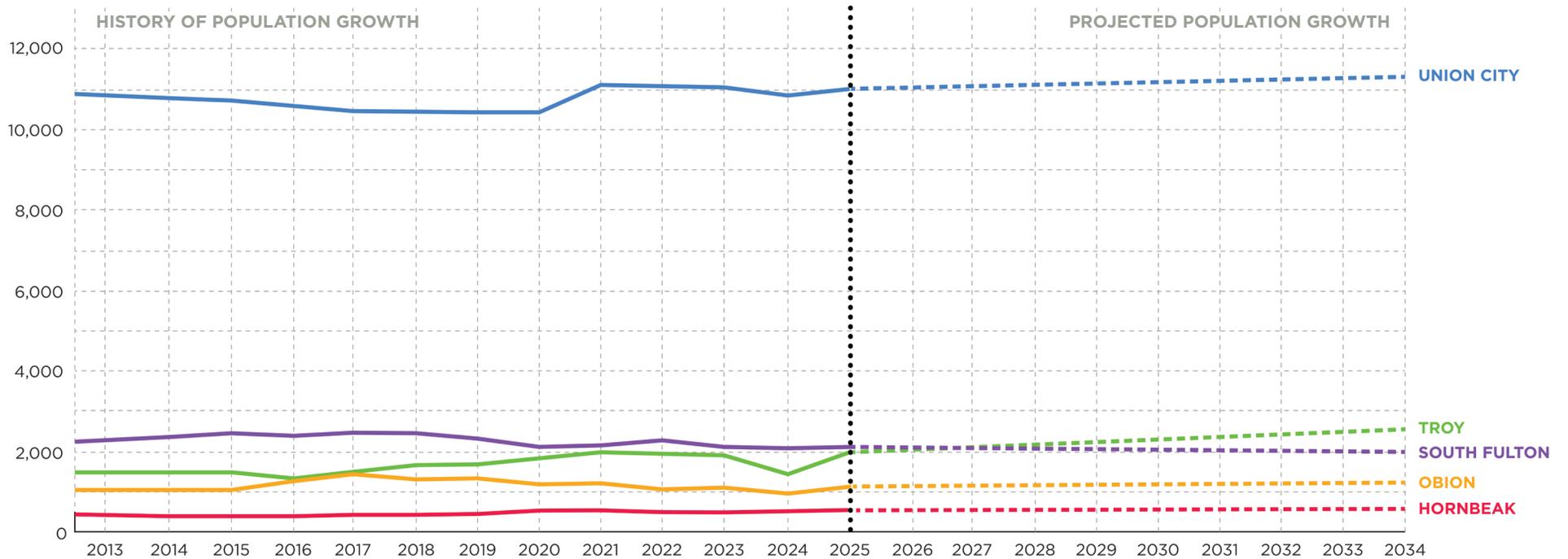


GROWTH BY AGE ANALYSIS

Obion County is experiencing slight fluctuations in the population of school aged children with no major changes. The most significant change is the decrease in the 35-54 range which makes up the largest portion of the population. The 85+ range is the lowest percentage of the county population.

- School Age Ranges
- - - Other Age Ranges

POPULATION CHANGES IN AREAS OF CONCENTRATION

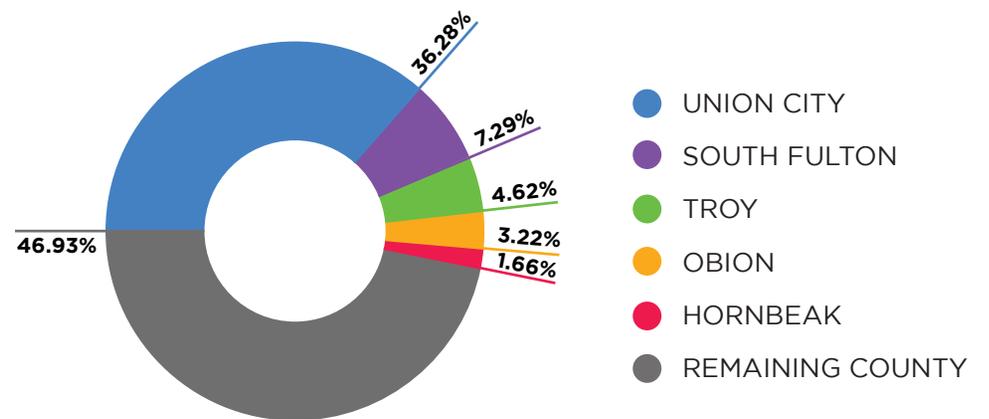


POPULATION AND PROJECTED GROWTH ANALYSIS

The population of Obion County’s areas of concentration, or major cities, has remained fairly consistent with slight fluctuation in Union City, Troy, and Obion. Union City’s population is significantly greater than the other cities of Obion County due to its role as a cultural and industrial hub and attractions, including the Discovery Park of America.

OVERALL POPULATION CHANGE (2013-2025)

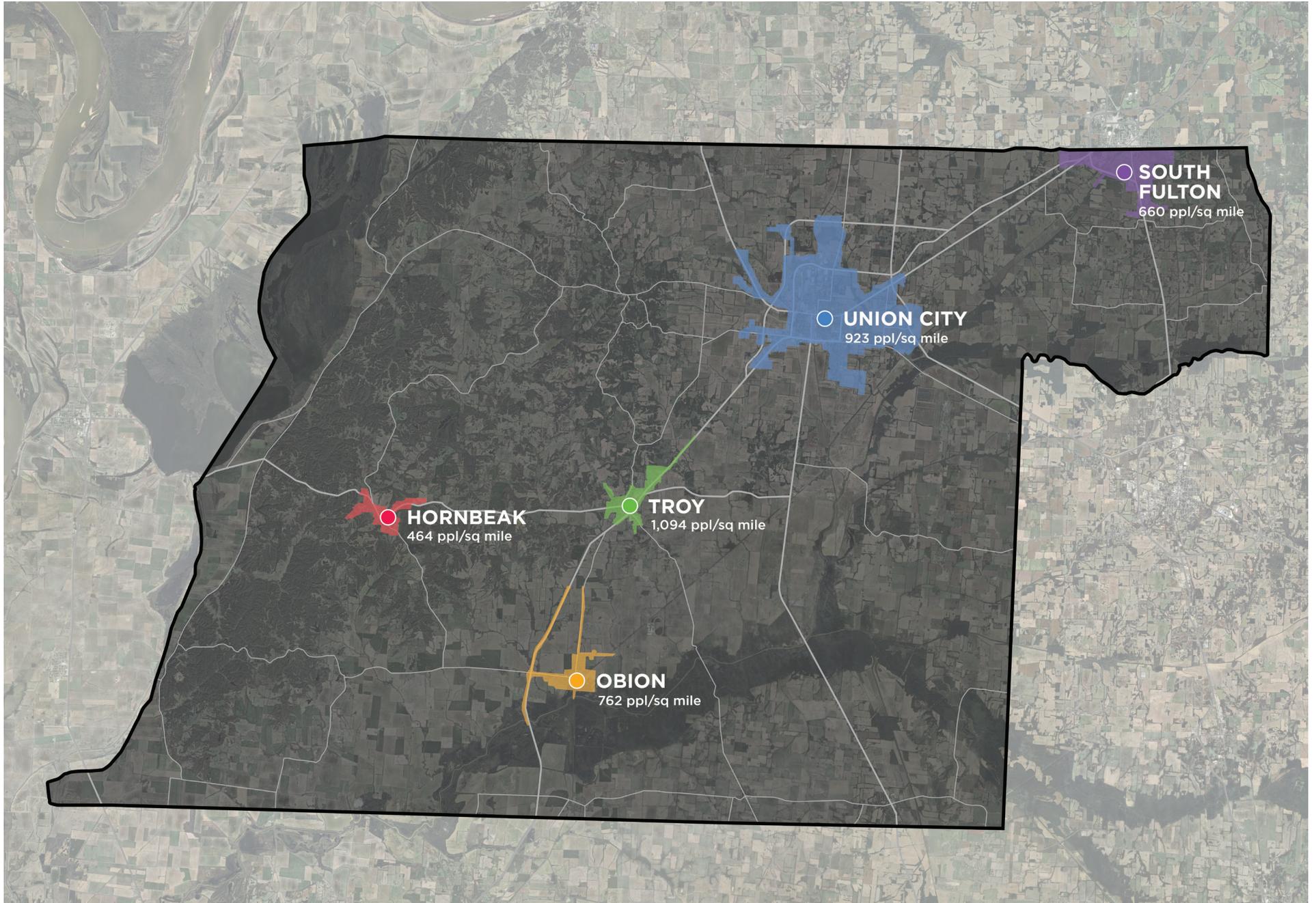
- +1.69%** UNION CITY
- 7.8%** SOUTH FULTON
- +30.2%** TROY
- +6.15%** OBION
- +9.21%** HORNBEAK



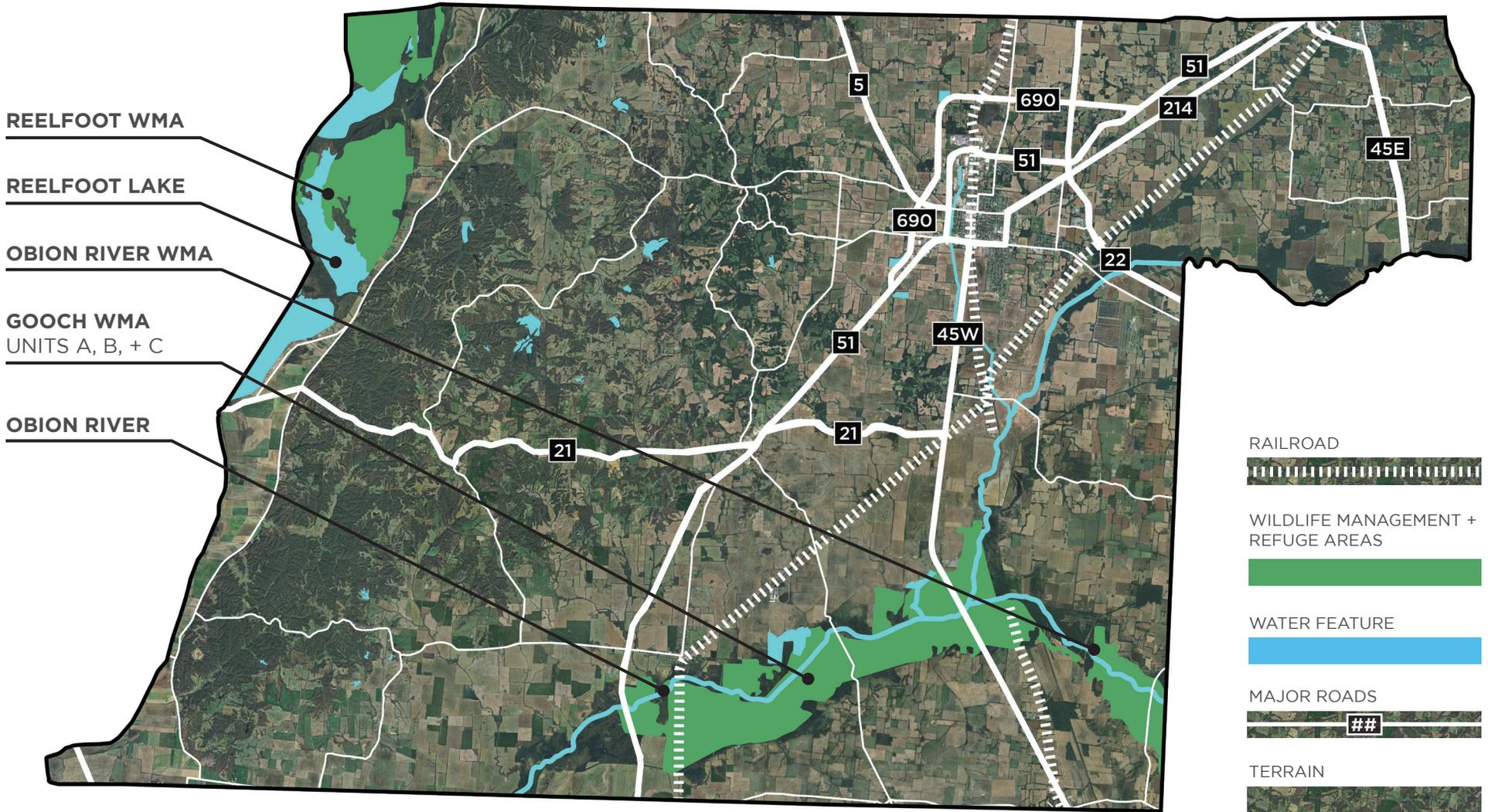
COUNTY POPULATION PERCENTAGES

Source: US Census Data

POPULATION DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION



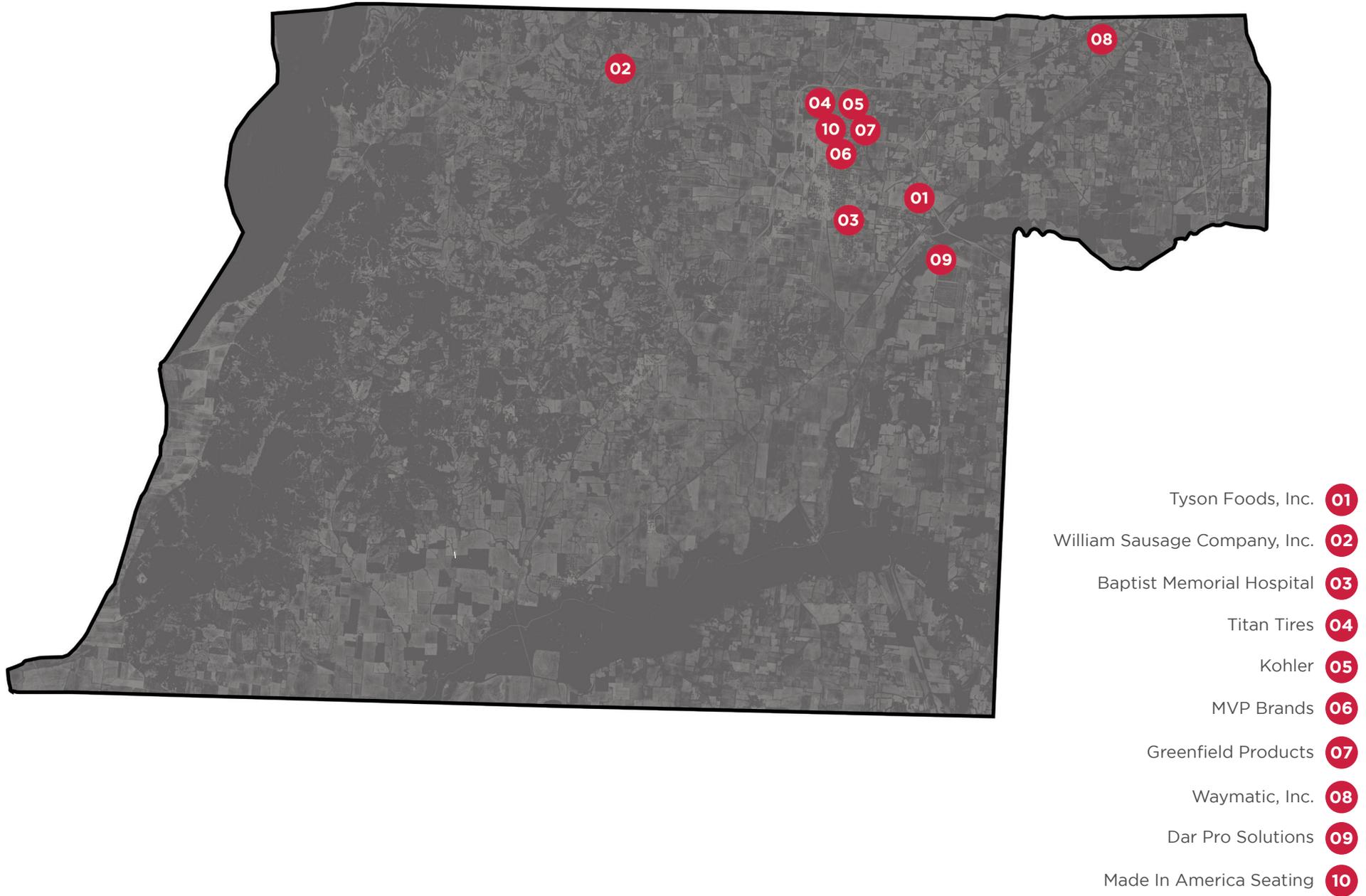
GEOGRAPHY OF THE COUNTY



MAIN IMPACT OF GEOGRAPHY

The majority of the county consists of gently rolling hills or flat land that is ideal for farming and agriculture, primarily corn. There are also a few areas of wetlands and forests, including the Reelfoot Lakes and the stemming streams that connect to the larger body of water. The population is more concentrated in Union City, as the city hosts the most intersections of major roadways. There are various wildlife management and refuge areas along the Obion River.

MAJOR EMPLOYER LOCATIONS

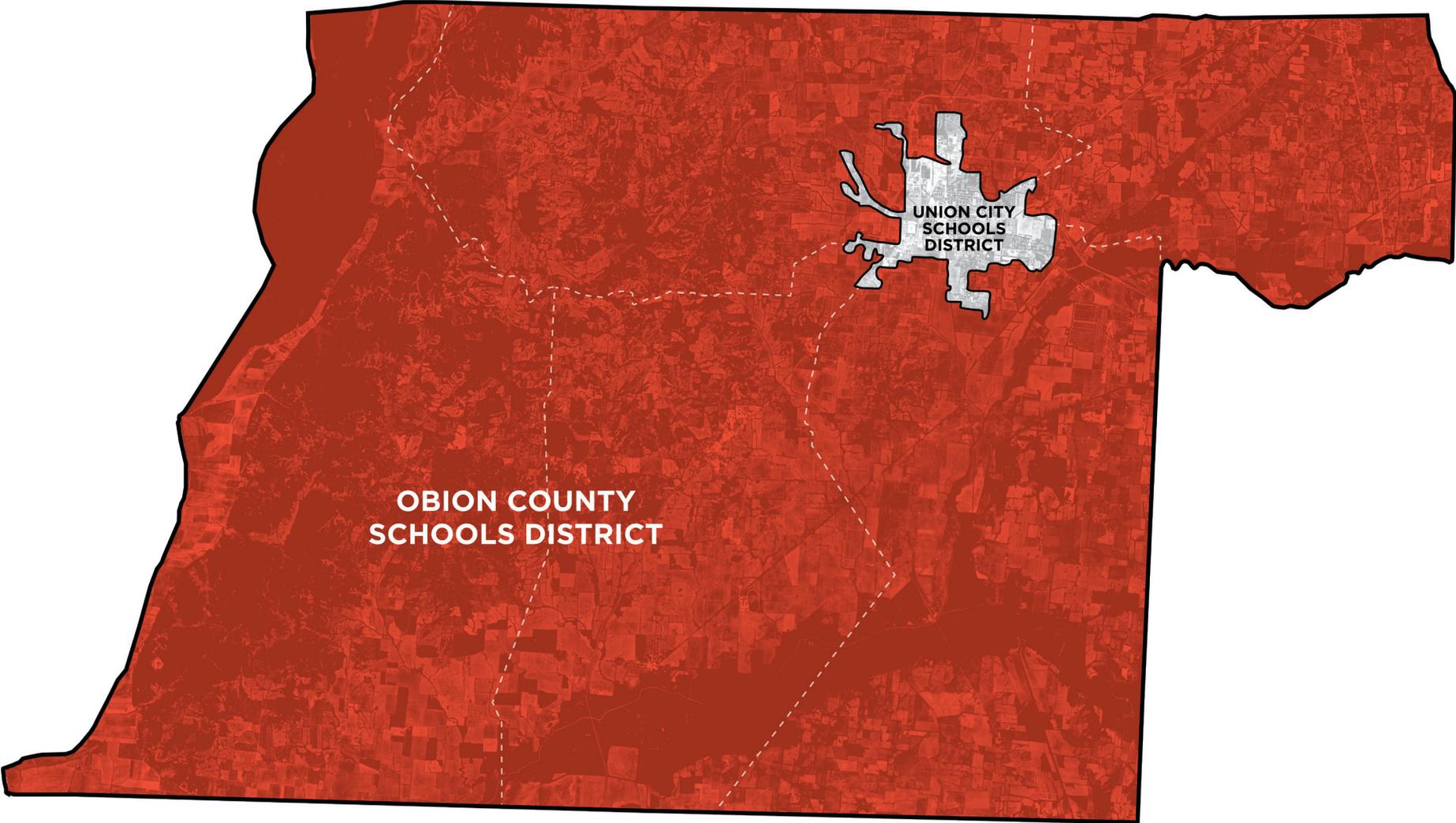


Source: Obion County Chamber of Commerce

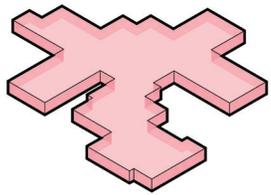


Image Source: Discover Obion County

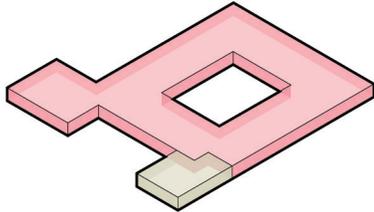
SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF THE COUNTY



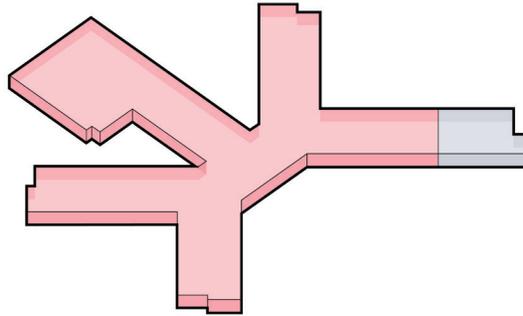
AGE OF EXISTING FACILITIES



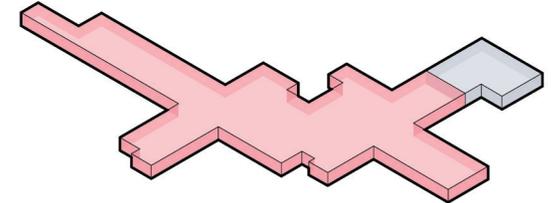
SOUTH FULTON
ELEMENTARY



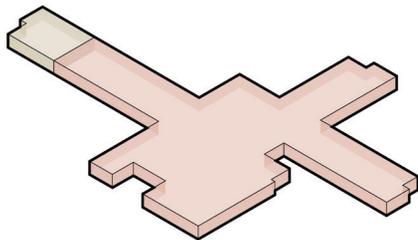
BLACK OAK
ELEMENTARY



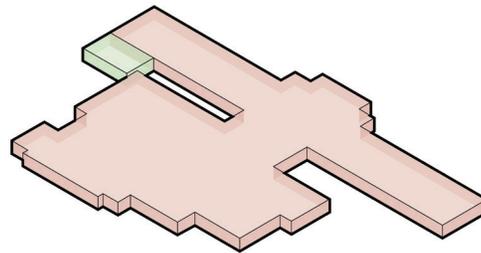
HILLCREST
ELEMENTARY



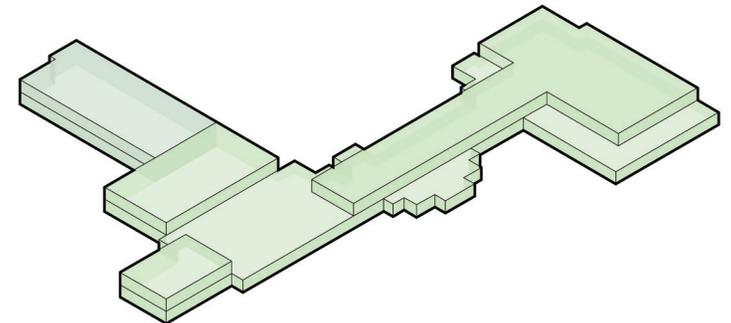
LAKE ROAD
ELEMENTARY



RIDGEMONT
ELEMENTARY



SOUTH FULTON
MIDDLE + HIGH

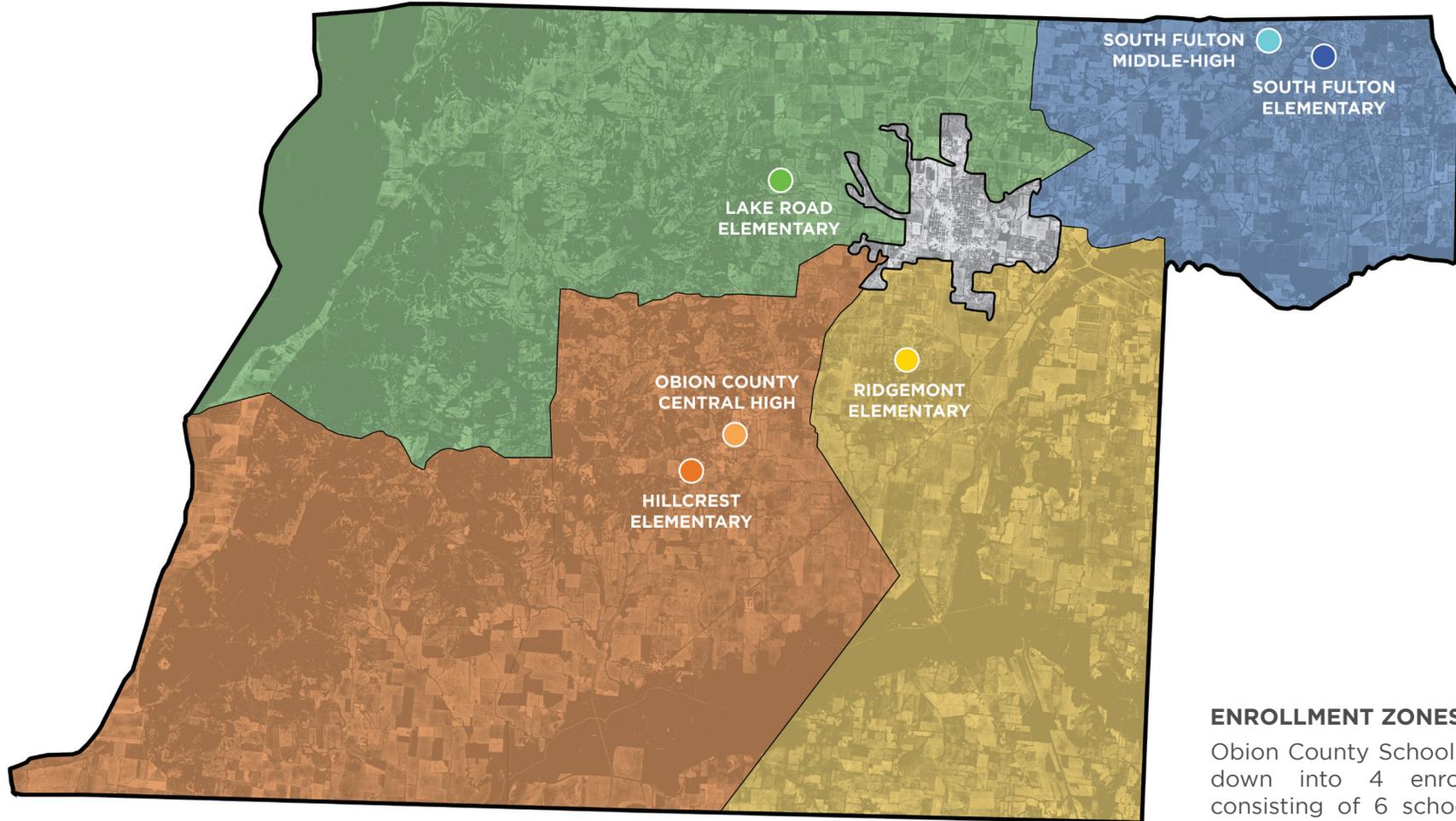


OBION COUNTY
CENTRAL HIGH

NOTE: AGE OF EXISTING FACILITIES school diagrams are represented at the same scale for size and age comparison.



EXISTING ENROLLMENT ZONES AND SCHOOL LOCATIONS

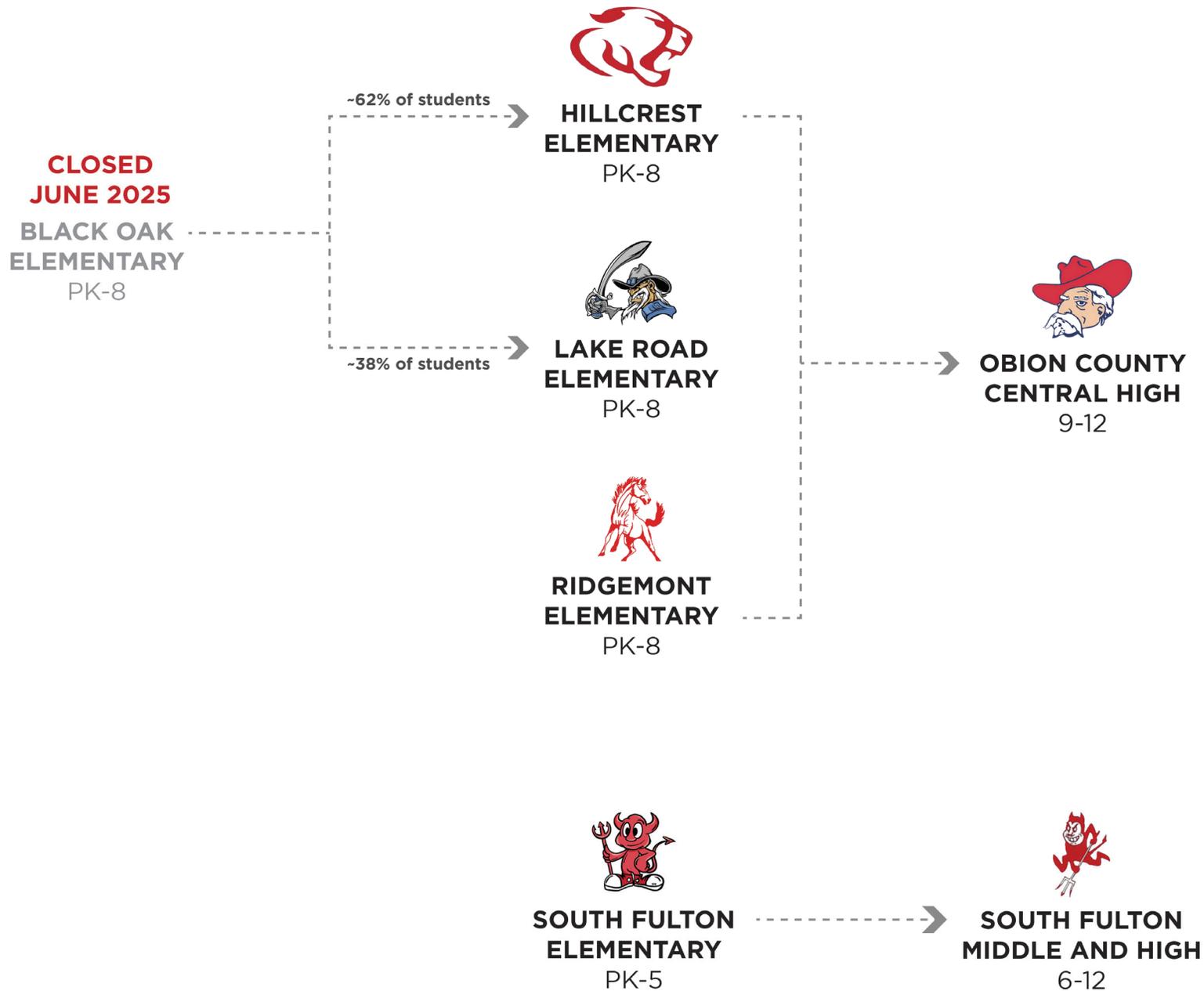


ENROLLMENT ZONES

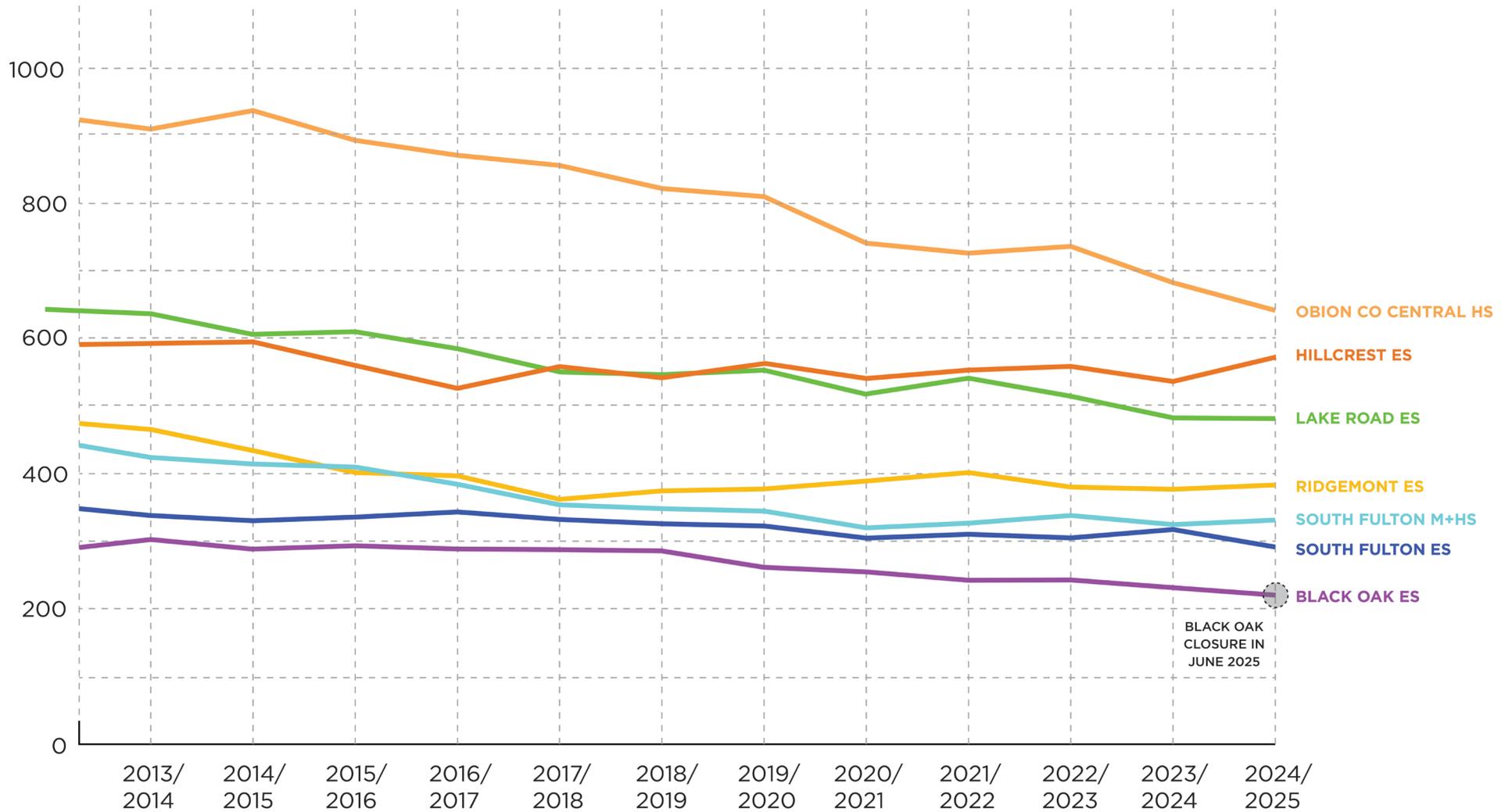
Obion County School District breaks down into 4 enrollment zones, consisting of 6 schools total (after the closure of Black Oak Elementary).

- 1 PreK-5 Elementary School
- 3 K-8 Elementary/Middle Schools
- 1 6-12 Middle/High School
- 1 9-12 High Schools

OBION COUNTY SCHOOLS EXISTING FEEDER SYSTEM



GROWTH BY SCHOOL



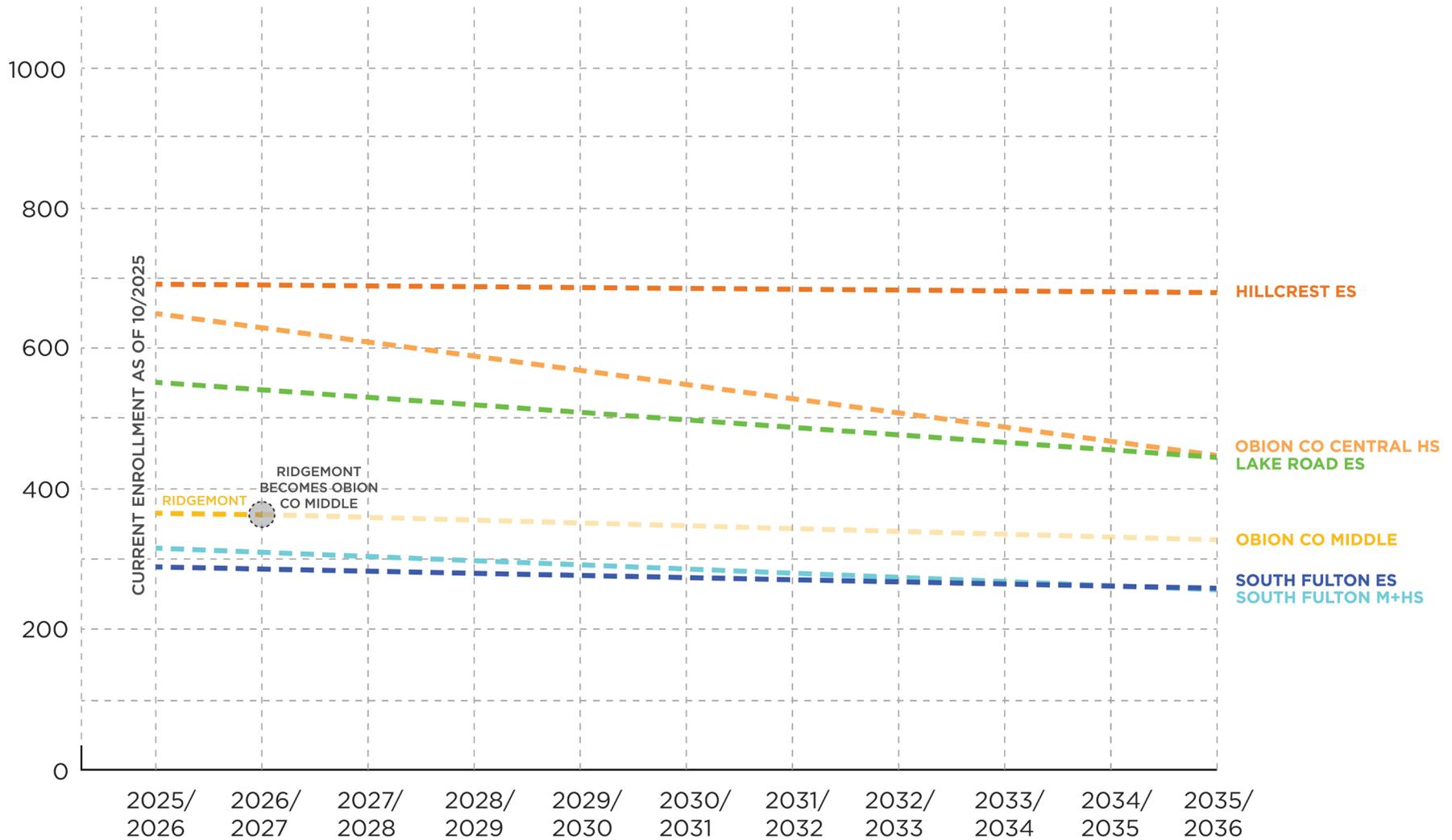
GROWTH BY SCHOOL ANALYSIS

While there was some fluctuation across the 11 years, all of the schools in the Obion County School District experienced an overall enrollment decrease from the 2013/2014 to 2024/2025 school year. Based on the precedented rates of growth for each

school, Obion is projected to experience a decrease in enrollment at the greatest rate in the next 10 years. Despite Hillcrest's lower rate of growth, because it is a positive change, it will surpass Obion County Central High School in enrollment.

NOTE: All enrollments provided by Obion County School District

PROJECTED GROWTH BY SCHOOL



NOTE: In the Obion County Board of Education's 26/27 Plan (A), Ridgemont Elementary facility becomes Obion County Middle.

NOTE: Projected school enrollment calculated using the respective school's precedented average growth rate.

AVERAGE GROWTH RATE PER SCHOOL

- 0.24% HILLCREST ES
- 3.69% OBION CO CENTRAL HS
- 2.22% LAKE ROAD ES
- 1.22% RIDGEMONT ES
- 2.10% SOUTH FULTON M+HS
- 1.19% SOUTH FULTON ES

OVERALL GROWTH PER SCHOOL FROM 2014-2025

- 3.52% HILLCREST ES
- 31.7% OBION CO CENTRAL HS
- 20.7% LAKE ROAD ES
- 12.4% RIDGEMONT ES
- 19.8% SOUTH FULTON M+HS
- 11.8% SOUTH FULTON ES

UTILIZATION RATE ANALYSIS

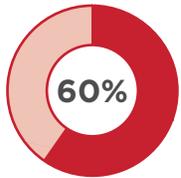
ENROLLED **FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY**

* Black Oak Elementary functional capacity not included in Obion Co Schools or Elementary-Middle Schools Capacity number

NOTE: 2025-2026 current enrollment numbers received 10/2025

NOTE: Ideal Utilization Range = 80% to 85%

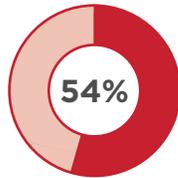
OBION COUNTY SCHOOLS



ENROLLMENT: 2,889
* CAPACITY: 4,845

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

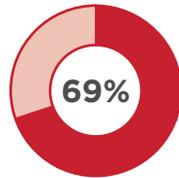
Pre-K - 5



ENROLLMENT: 293
CAPACITY: 537

ELEMENTARY-MIDDLE SCHOOLS

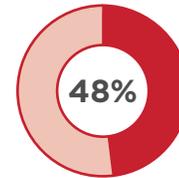
Pre-K - 8



ENROLLMENT: 1,625
* CAPACITY: 2,349

MIDDLE-HIGH SCHOOLS

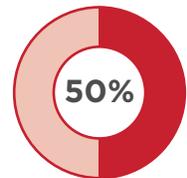
6 - 12



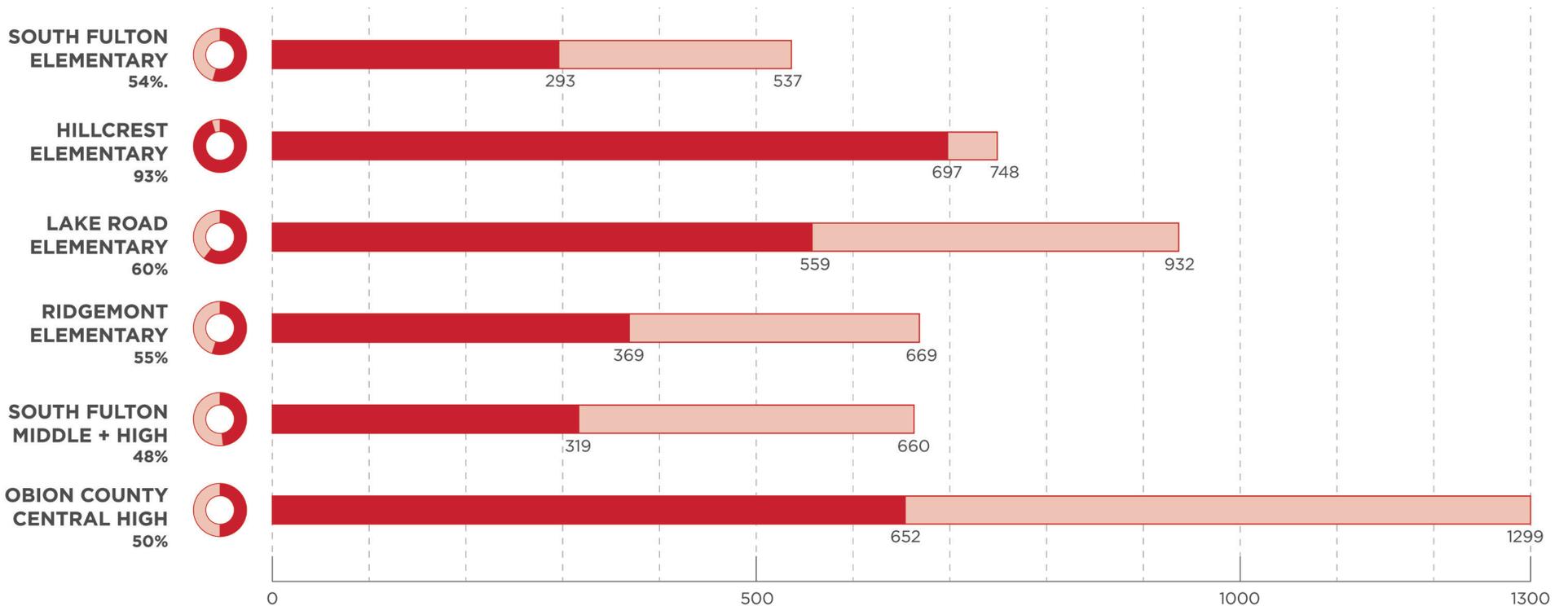
ENROLLMENT: 319
CAPACITY: 660

HIGH SCHOOLS

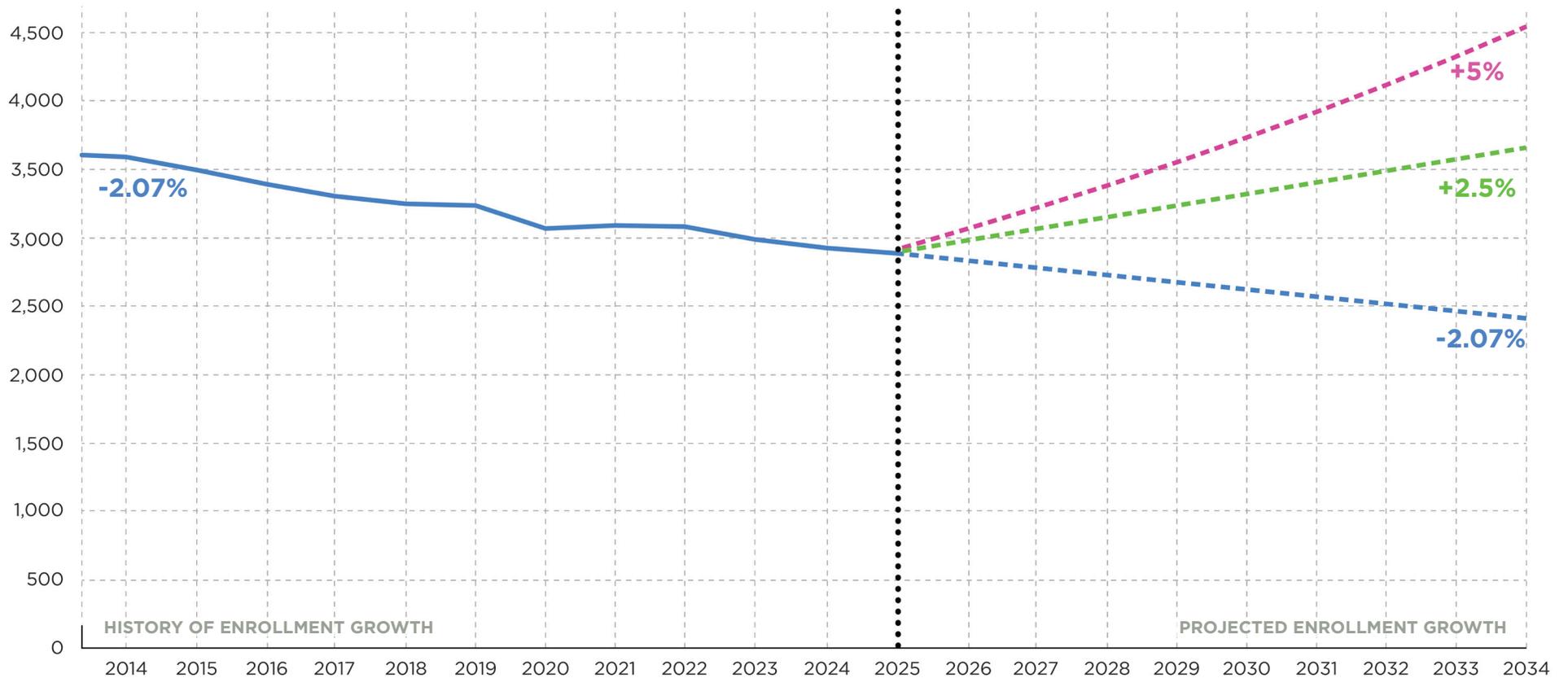
9 - 12



ENROLLMENT: 652
CAPACITY: 1,299



POTENTIAL GROWTH OF OBION COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT



GROWTH OF SCHOOL DISTRICT AND ENROLLMENT PROJECTION ANALYSIS

The graph above shows the history of enrollment growth and three possible scenarios of projected enrollment growth for the Obion County School District. The precededent growth rate is -2.07%. The three projection scenarios include the following: a continuation of the existing growth rate of -2.07%, the population growth that a 2.5% growth rate would yield, and the population growth that a 5% growth rate would yield.

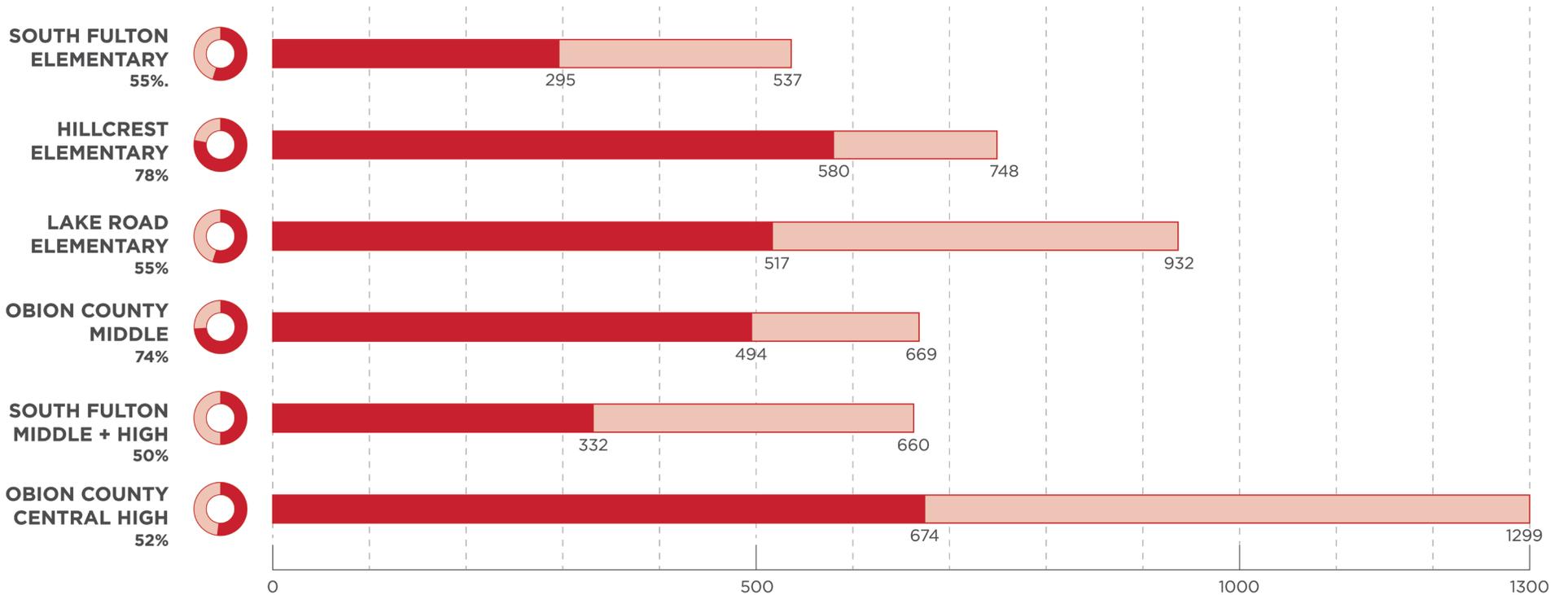
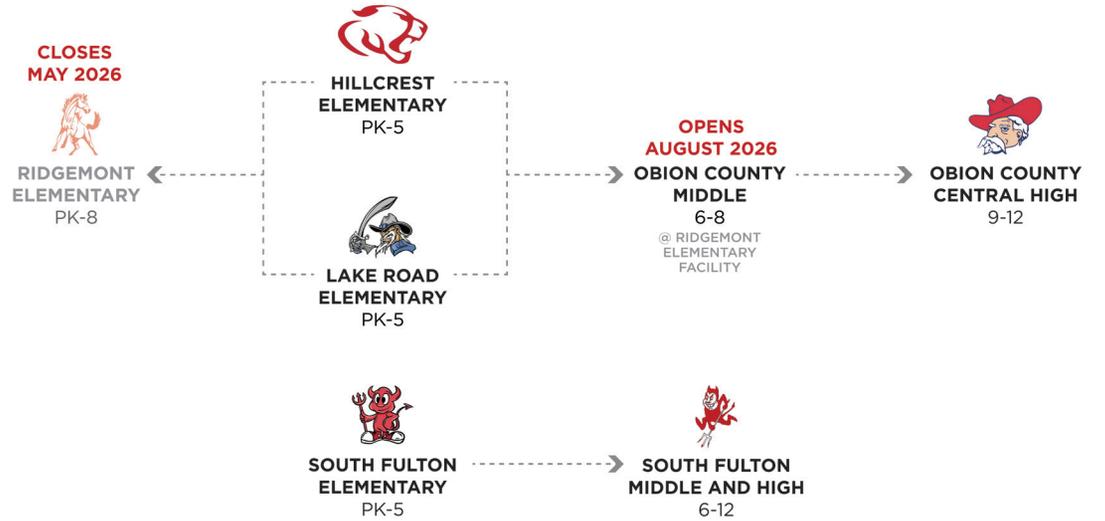
PLAN A - BOARD OF EDUCATION APPROVED (2026-27)

RIDGEMONT ELEMENTARY TO OBION COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL TRANSITION

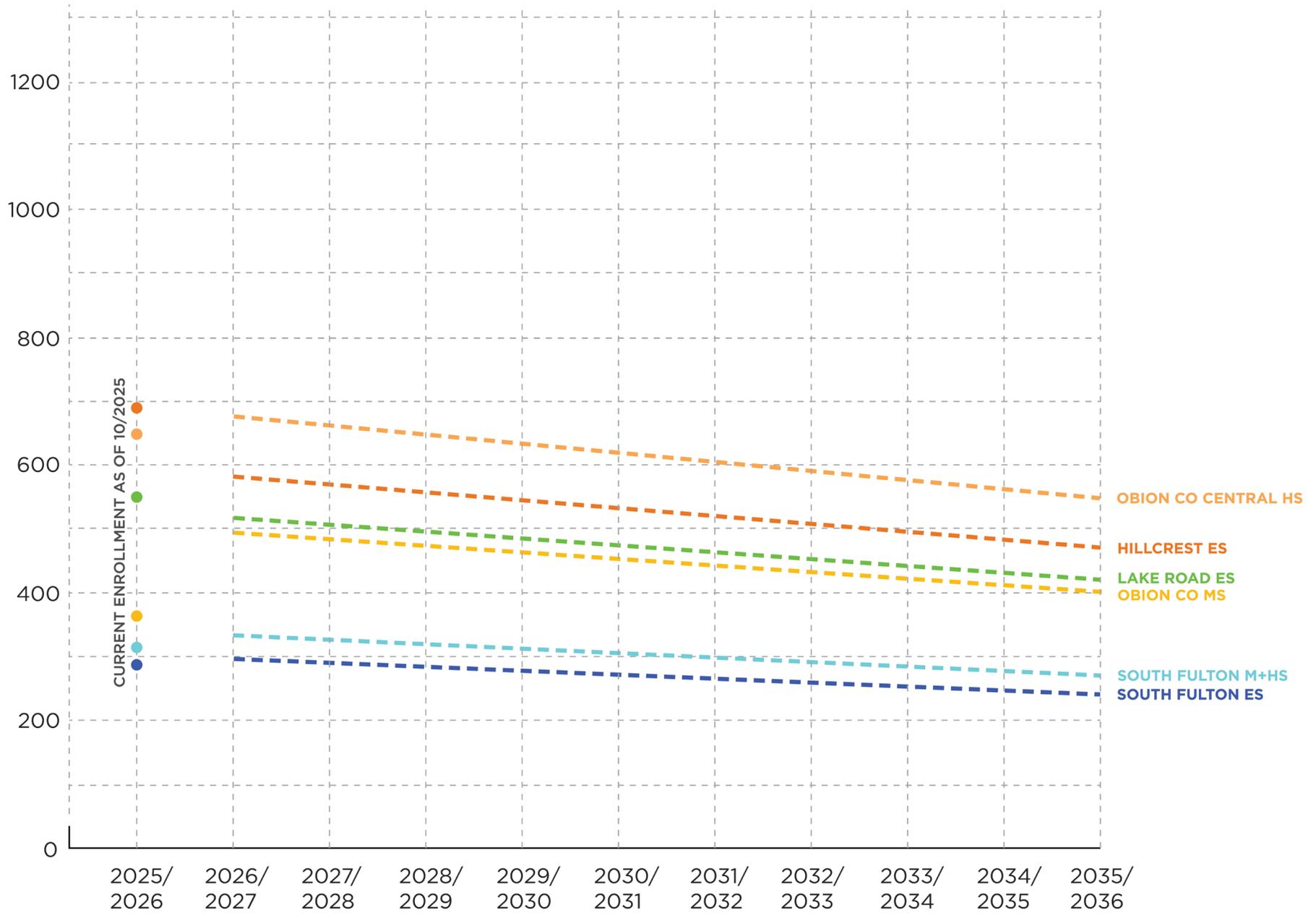
Plan A has been approved by the Board of Education for the 2026-27 school year. Ridgemont Elementary will close at the end of the 2025/2026 school year. The facility will reopen at the beginning of the 2026/2027 school year as Obion County Middle School. Hillcrest Elementary and Lake Road Elementary transition from PreK-8 schools to PreK-5 schools. Students then attend Obion County Middle for 6th through 8th grade. South Fulton Elementary and South Fulton Middle and High School remain as they are currently. The utilization diagram below shows the distribution of students after the reconfiguration occurs.

NOTE: Ideal Utilization Range = 80% to 85%

NOTE: Projected enrollment provided by Obion County Board of Education

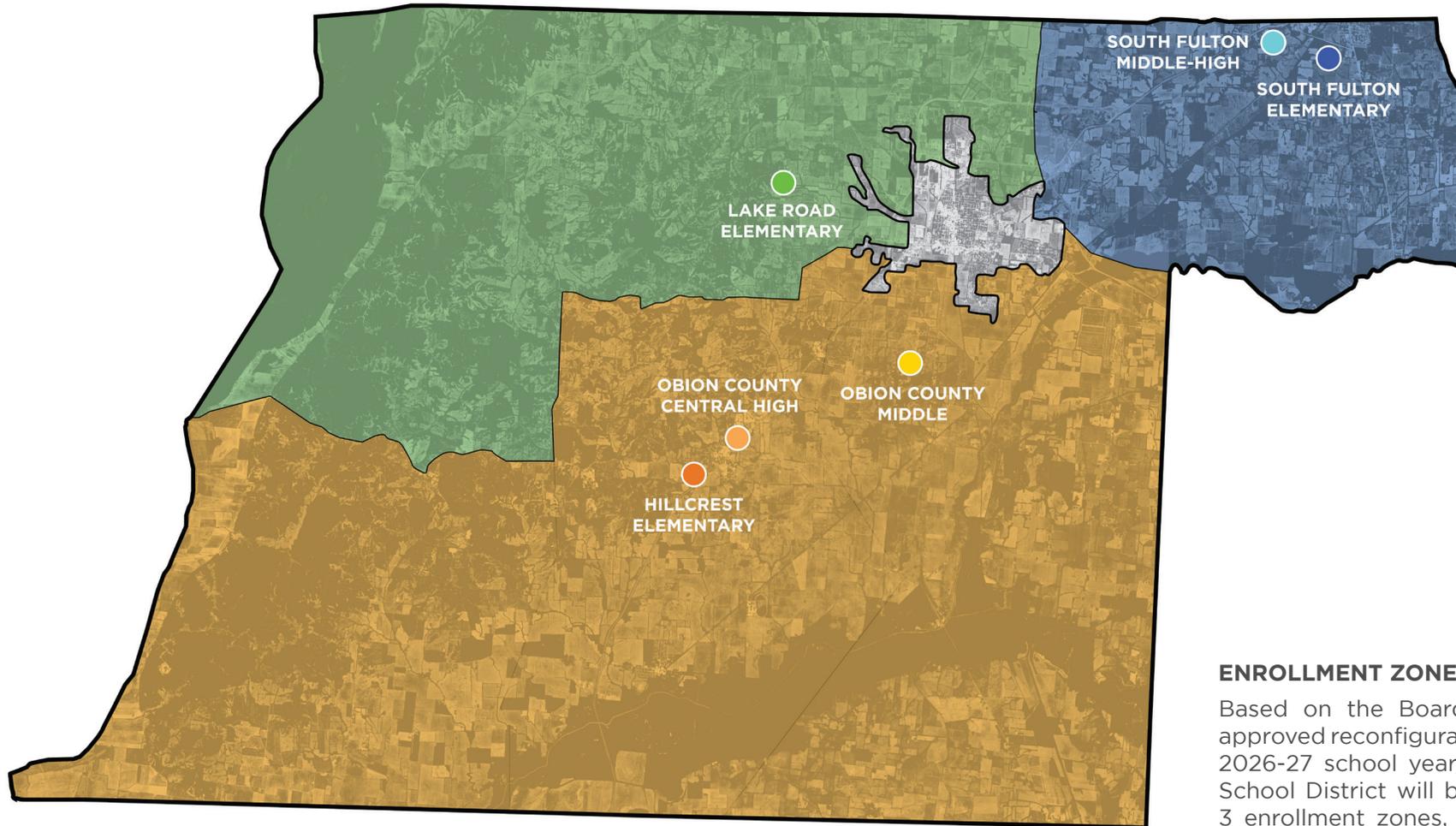


PROJECTED GROWTH BASED ON RECONFIGURATION



NOTE: Reconfiguration projected school enrollment calculated using the Obion County School District average growth rate of -2.07%

PROJECTED GROWTH BASED ON PLAN A FOR 2026-27



ENROLLMENT ZONES

Based on the Board of Education approved reconfiguration plan for the 2026-27 school year, Obion County School District will break down into 3 enrollment zones, consisting of 6 schools total.

- 3 PreK-5 Elementary School
- 1 6-8 Middle School
- 1 6-12 Middle/High School
- 1 9-12 High School

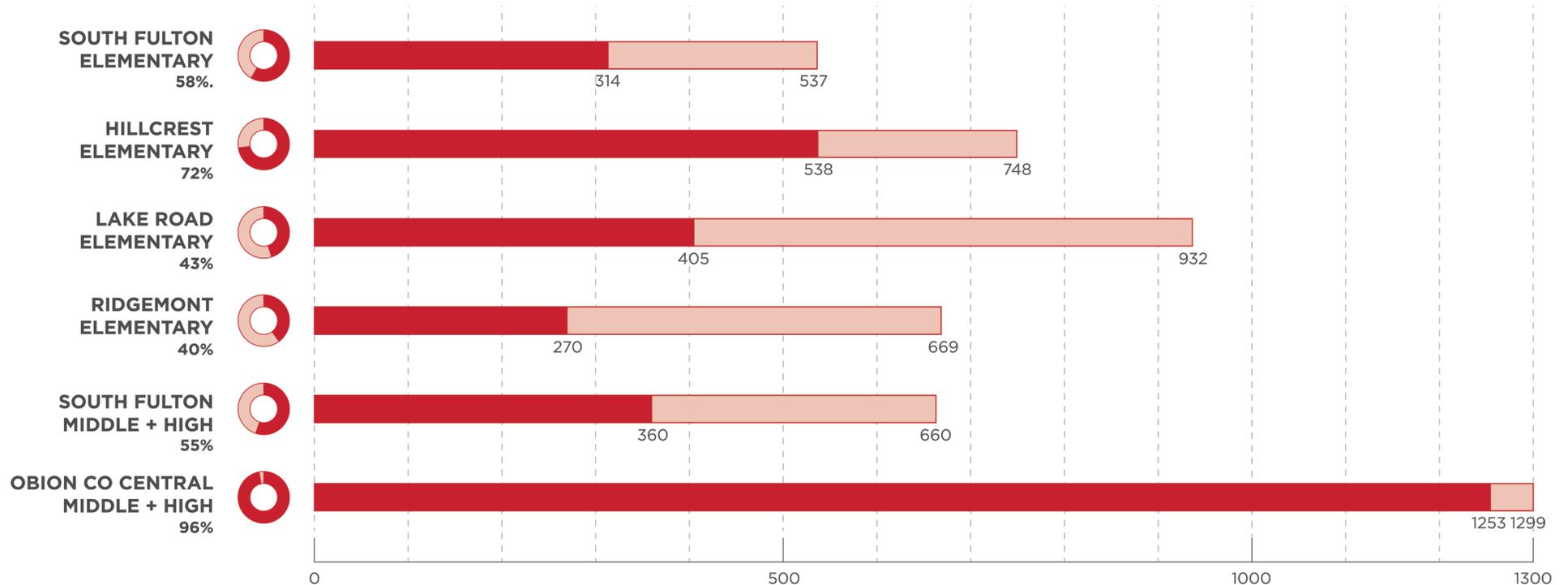
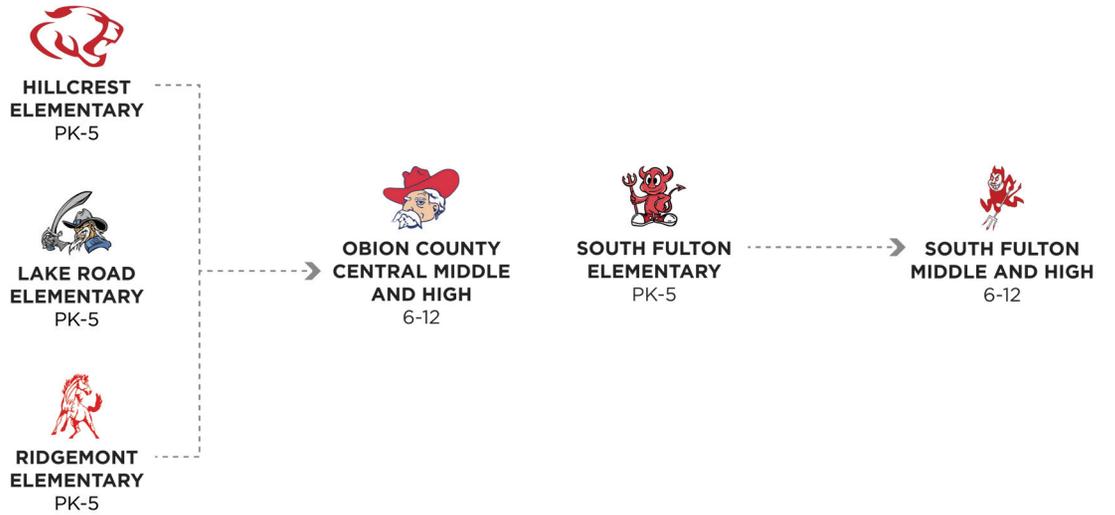
PLAN B

CREATION OF A 6-12 CAMPUS AT OBION COUNTY CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

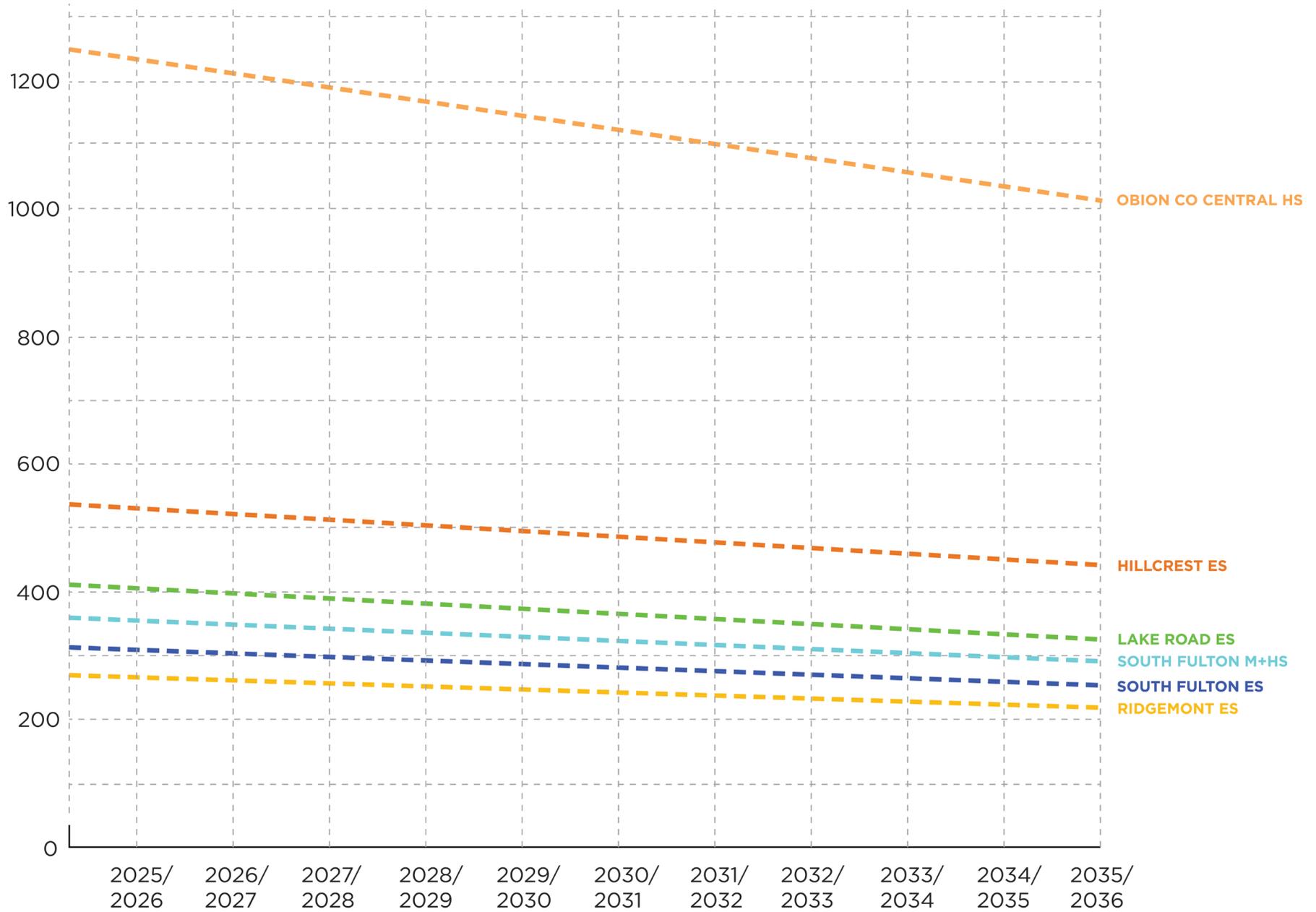
In Plan B, Obion County Central High School transitions from a 9-12th grade school to a 6-12th grade middle and high school. Hillcrest Elementary, Lake Road Elementary, and Ridgemont Elementary all transition from PreK-8 schools to PreK-5 schools and send their 6-8 grade students to Obion County Central Middle and High School. South Fulton Elementary and South Fulton Middle and High School remain as they are currently.

NOTE: Ideal Utilization Range = 80% to 85%

NOTE: Enrollment by grade and school totals based on 2024-2025 school year



PROJECTED GROWTH BASED ON PLAN B



NOTE: Reconfiguration projected school enrollment calculated using the Obion County School District average growth rate of -2.07%

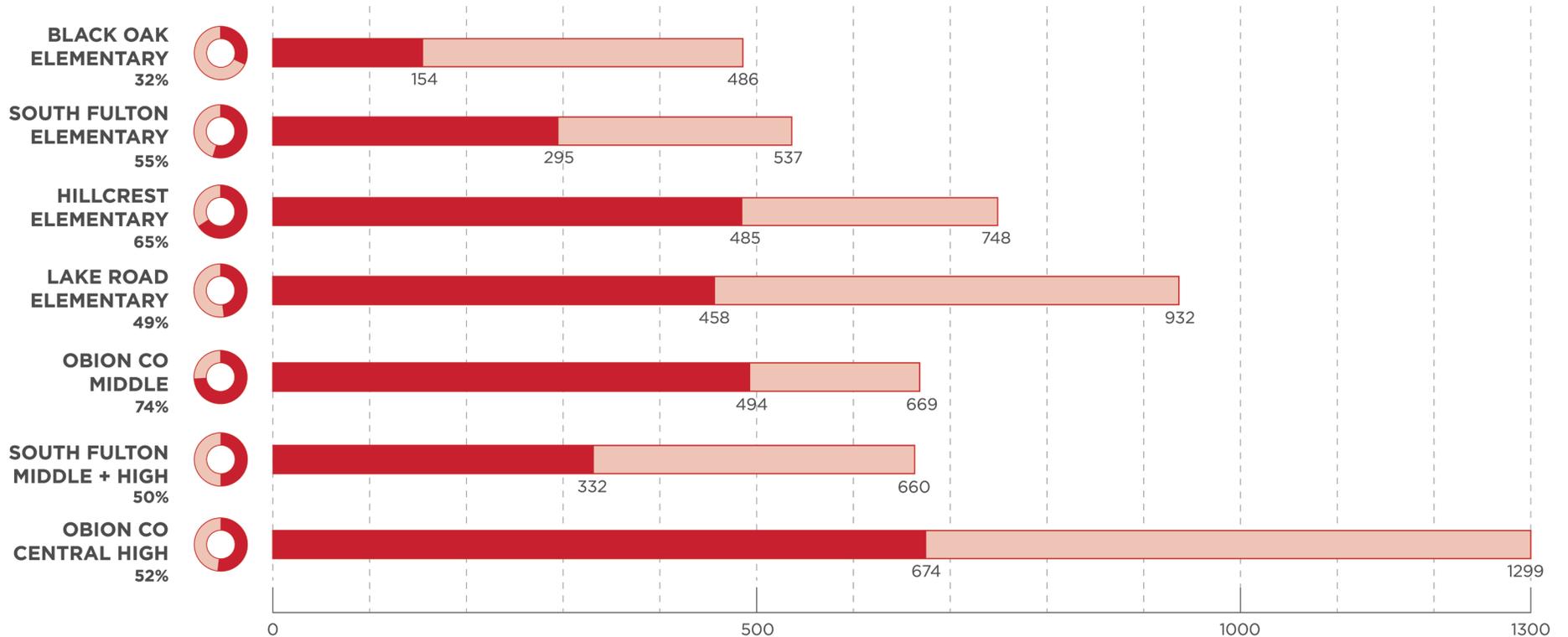
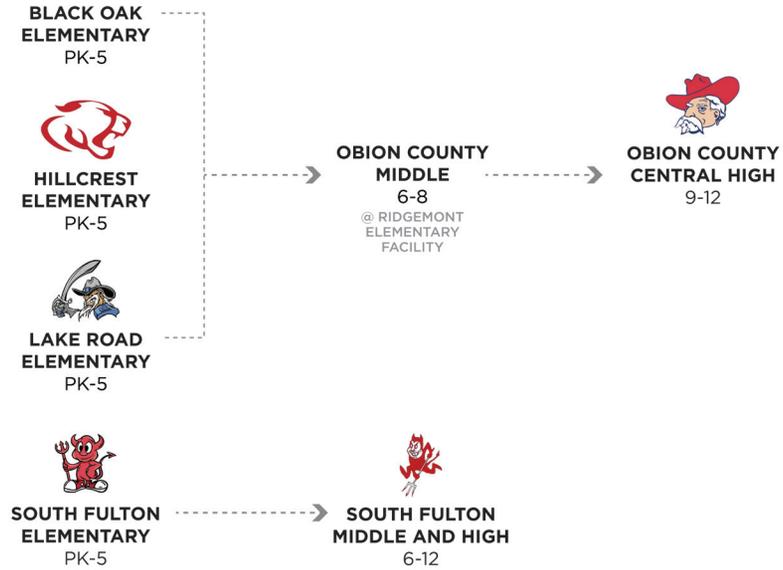
PLAN C

CREATION OF A 6-8 CAMPUS AT RIDGEMONT (PLAN A WITH BLACK OAK)

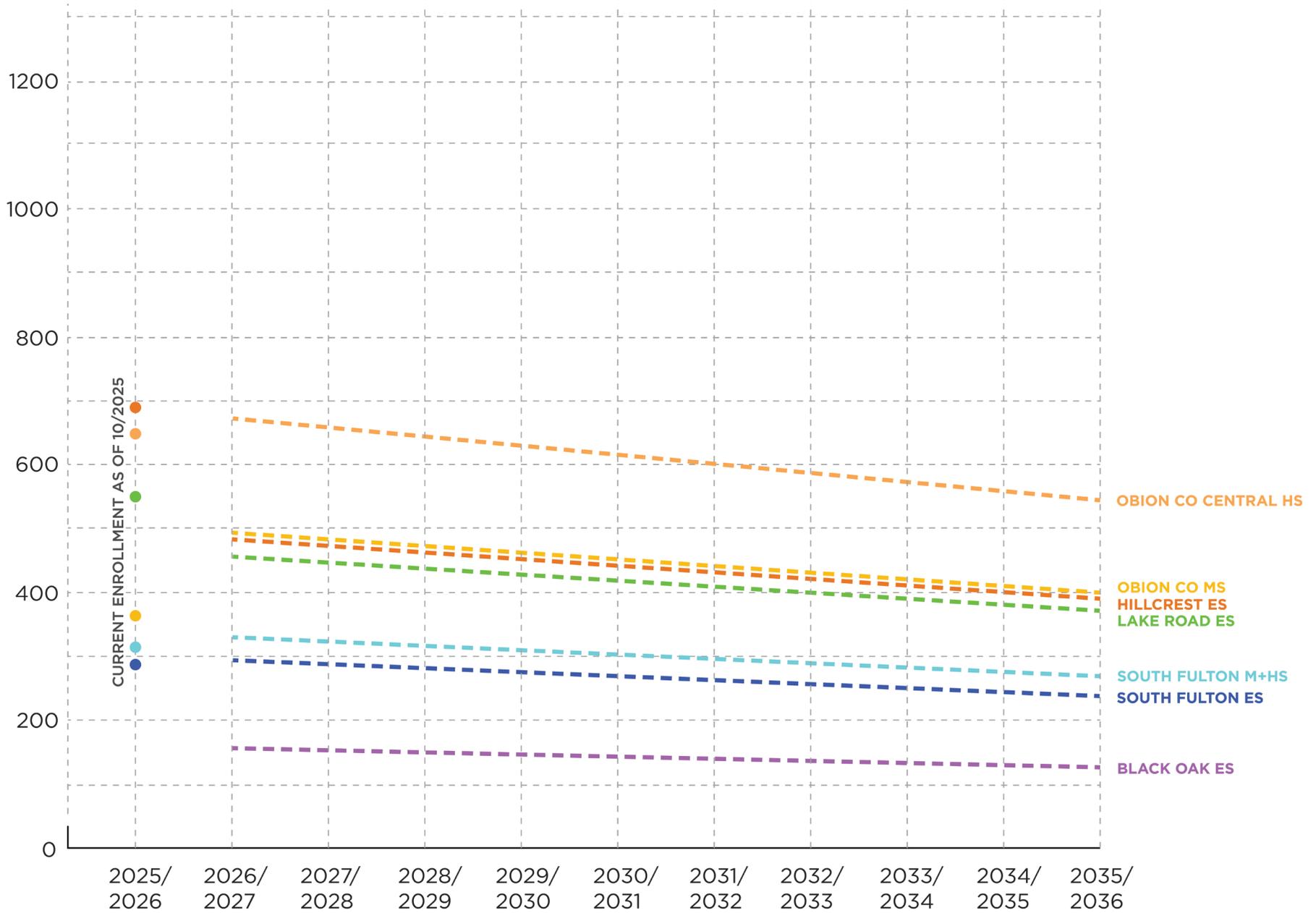
In Plan C, Black Oak Elementary, Hillcrest Elementary, Lake Road Elementary, and Ridgemont Elementary all transition from PreK-8 schools to PreK-5 schools and send their 6-8 grade students to Obion County Middle School - former Ridgemont elementary school. South Fulton Elementary and South Fulton Middle and High School remain as they are currently.

NOTE: Ideal Utilization Range = 80% to 85%

NOTE: Enrollment by grade and school totals based on 2024-2025 school year + 26/27 Projected Enrollment provided by Obion County Board of Education



PROJECTED GROWTH BASED ON PLAN C



NOTE: Reconfiguration projected school enrollment calculated using the Obion County School District average growth rate of -2.07%

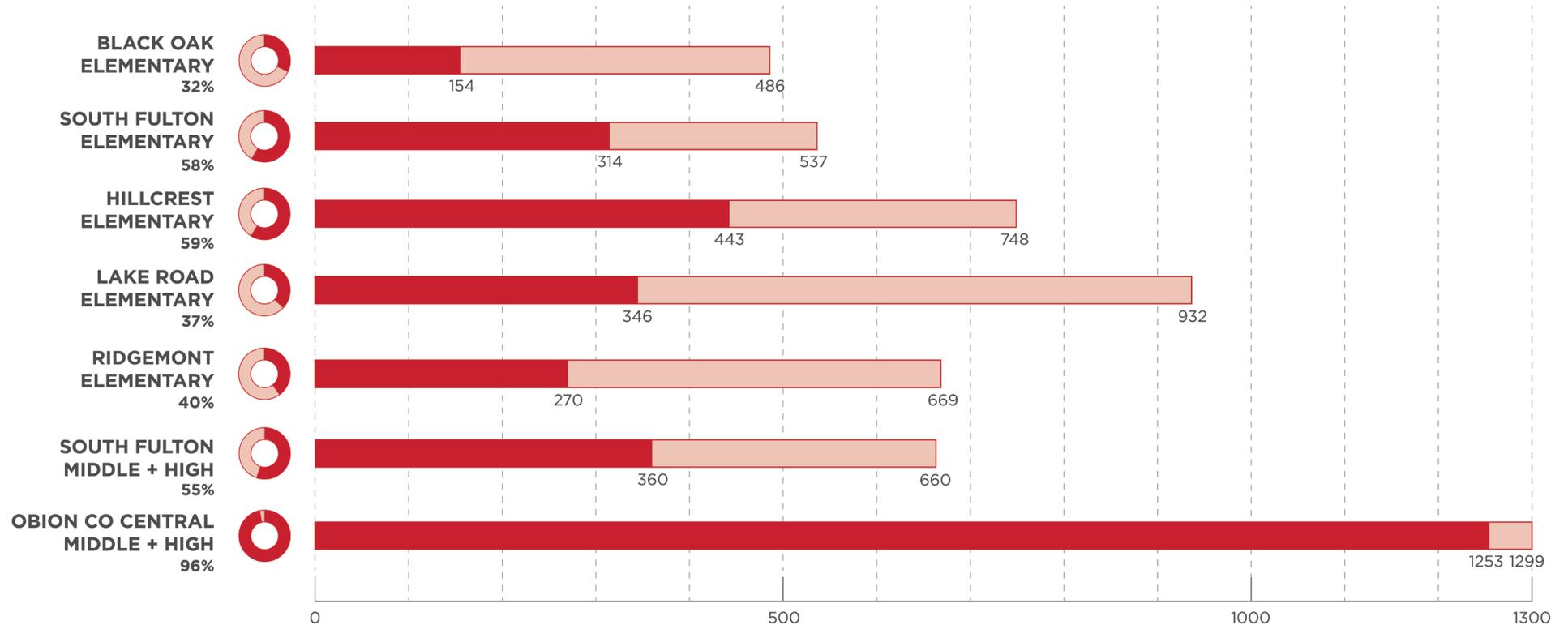
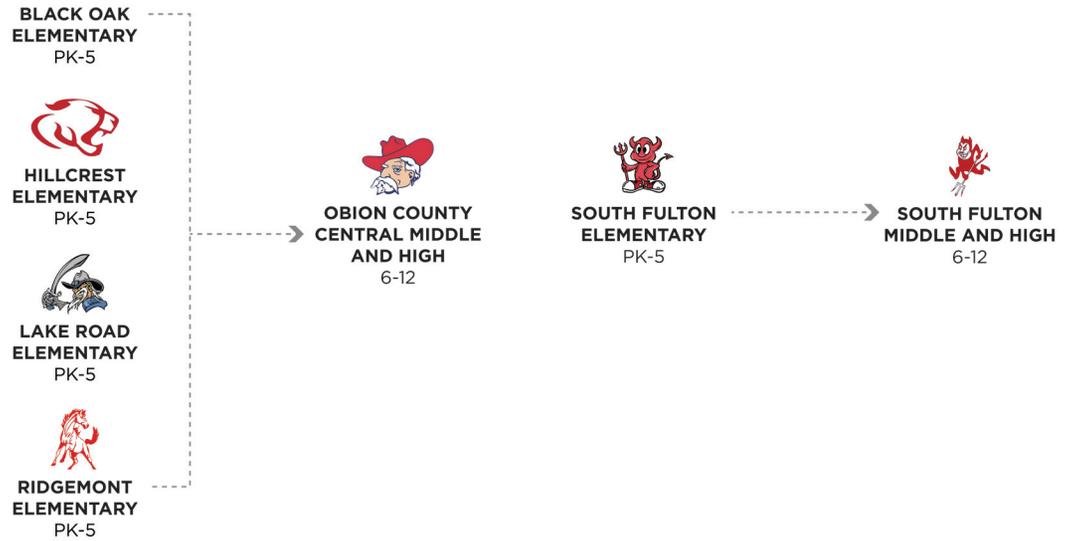
PLAN D

CREATION OF A 6-12 CAMPUS AT OBION COUNTY CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL (PLAN B WITH BLACK OAK)

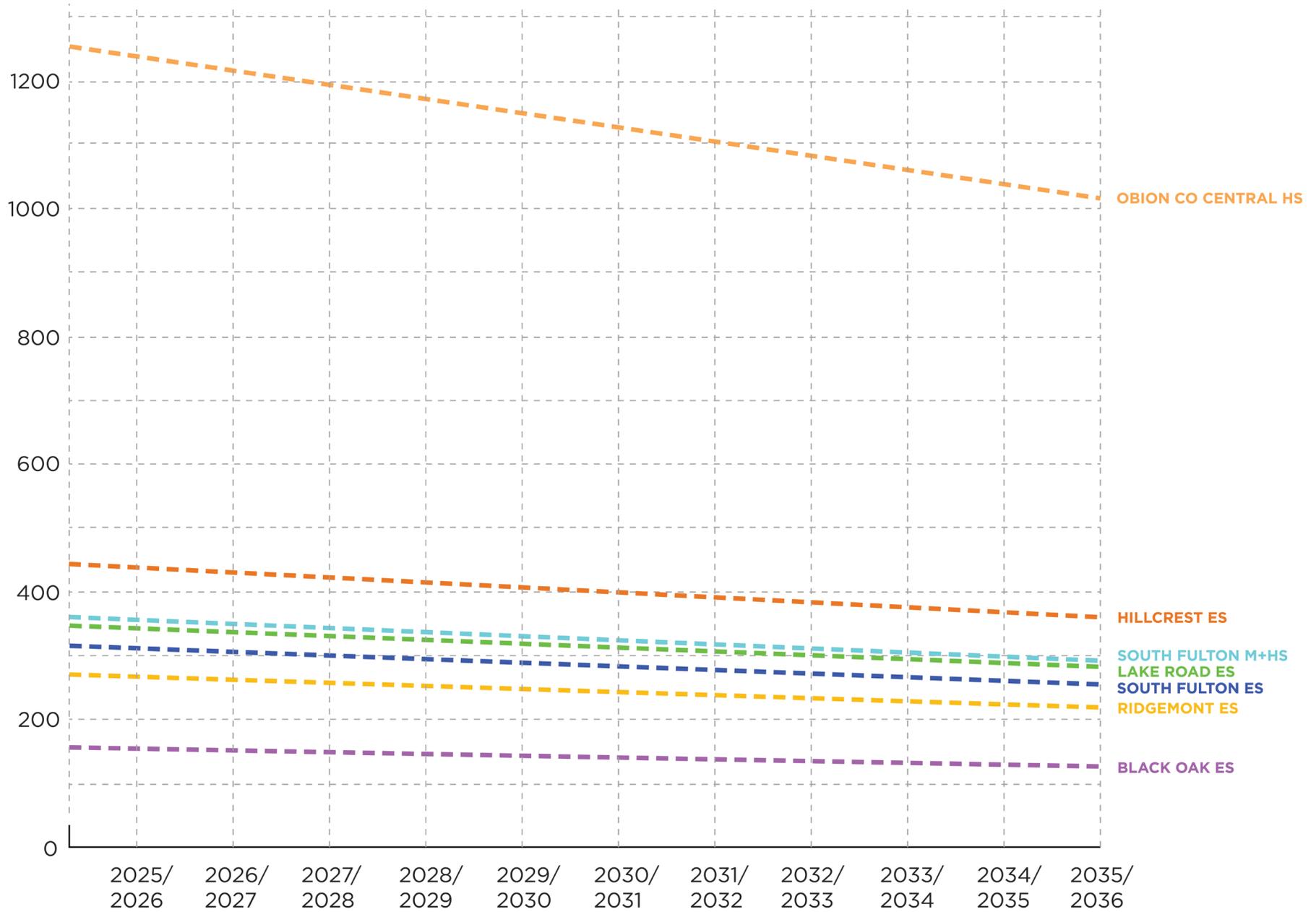
In Plan D, Obion County Central High School transitions from a 9-12th grade school to a 6-12th grade middle and high school. Black Oak Elementary, Hillcrest Elementary, Lake Road Elementary, and Ridgemont Elementary all transition from PreK-8 schools to PreK-5 schools and send their 6-8 grade students to Obion County Central Middle and High School. South Fulton Elementary and South Fulton Middle and High School remain as they are currently.

NOTE: Ideal Utilization Range = 80% to 85%

NOTE: Enrollment by grade and school totals based on 2024-2025 school year



PROJECTED GROWTH BASED ON PLAN D



NOTE: Reconfiguration projected school enrollment calculated using the Obion County School District average growth rate of -2.07%

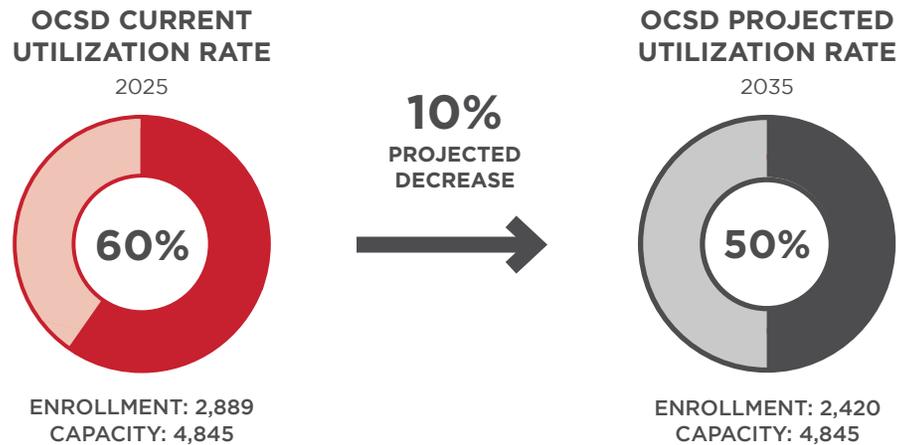


Image Source: Discover Obion County

SUMMARY

The Big Picture: Growth

Overall, both Obion County and the Obion County School system have seen a decrease in rates of growth by less than 3% in the last 10 years. Even if there is an unprecedented 2.5% growth over the next 10 years and no change in capacity, the overall system will still have less than 80% utilization rate. This indicates that Obion County is currently operating more facility space overall than would even be required by 2035.



The Big Picture: Age of Facilities

Most of the facilities in Obion County Schools are more than 30 years old with the exception of Obion County Central High School at 19 years old. In that time, codes and regulations have been updated for life safety and environment and security concerns. All of the schools, besides South Fulton Elementary, have had an addition since their original construction date. The good conditions of the schools can partially be attributed to the district's exceptional job maintaining the facilities.

DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY CONCLUSION

The results of this assessment clearly indicate the average growth rates for the schools and the district as a whole are in a slight decline. The schools are well- maintained and in good condition with none of the schools being older than 45 years old. The conditions of the schools and the system as a whole is supported by the Obion County Board of Education being proactive in addressing enrollment changes. Obion County Government should be commended for their forward thinking and for their willingness to initiate this assessment.



Image Source: Discover Obion County

FINAL ANALYSIS

Following the decision to close Black Oak Elementary, the Obion County School System made the decision to convert Ridgemont Elementary to the Obion County Middle School serving 6-8 grade students in all areas of the county except South Fulton.

This report analyzes the four feasible models:

- **Plan A (Approved by the Obion County Board of Education)**
Establishment of a dedicated Middle School (6-8 grades) at Ridgemont Elementary School; convert Hillcrest Elementary School and Lake Road Elementary Schools to PreK-5 schools – both schools absorb Ridgemont K-5 students)
- **Plan B (Creation of a 6-12 Campus at Obion County Central High School)**
Convert Hillcrest Elementary School, Ridgemont Elementary, and Lake Road Elementary Schools to PreK-5 schools
- **Plan C (Establishment of a dedicated Middle School [6-8th grades] at Ridgemont Elementary):**
Keep Black Oak Elementary open, convert, along with Hillcrest Elementary and Lake Road Elementary to PreK-5
- **Plan D (Creation of a 6-12 Campus at Obion County Central High School)**
Keep Black Oak Elementary open, convert, along with Hillcrest Elementary School, and Lake Road Elementary School, and Ridgemont Elementary Schools to PreK-5

I. The Four Strategic Paths

With the closure of Black Oak Elementary serving as the baseline, the district faced a decision in how to configure its remaining schools:

- Plan A (The “Middle School” Model)
Ridgemont is converted into a dedicated Grades 6–8 Middle School serving the central district. Hillcrest and Lake Road operate as focused PK–5 campuses.
- Plan B (The “6–12” Model)
All Grades 6–8 students are assigned to Obion County Central High School (OCC), creating a combined secondary campus. Hillcrest, Lake Road, and Ridgemont operate as K–5 elementary schools.

FINAL ANALYSIS

- Plan C (The “Middle School” Model + Black Oak Elementary)
Ridgemont is converted into a dedicated Grades 6–8 Middle School serving the central district. Hillcrest, Lake Road and Black Oak operate as focused PK–5 campuses.
- Plan D (The “6-12” Model + Black Oak Elementary)
All Grades 6–8 students are assigned to Obion County Central High School (OCC), creating a combined secondary campus. Hillcrest, Lake Road, Black Oak, and Ridgemont operate as K–5 elementary schools.

II. Capacity + Utilization Analysis

Understanding the “Post-Black Oak” landscape is critical. The absorption of students has created a new utilization reality that drives this decision.

1. THE HILLCREST CONSTRAINT

Regardless of which plan is chosen, Hillcrest Elementary is operating at a critical tipping point.

- Current Reality: Hillcrest is currently operating at 93% utilization (697 students / 748 capacity).
The Implication: This facility has zero margin for error. There is no room for enrollment growth or program expansion.
- Either plan must address capacity issues.
- Strategic Need: Because Hillcrest is at capacity, the district must maximize flexibility in other buildings to act as a release valve.

2. THE RIDGEMONT OPPORTUNITY (PLAN A)

Plan A capitalizes on the specific assets of the Ridgemont campus.

- Ridgemont’s current enrollment and utilization rate are 369 students with a functional capacity of 669, equaling a 55% utilization.
- Projected 1st year enrollment and utilization at Ridgemont after the reorganization to Obion County Middle School is 519 students equaling a 77.5% utilization.
- By converting Ridgemont into a centralized Middle School, the Board of Education achieves a “better fit” scenario: by filling an underutilized building with a specific grade band (6–8).
- Outcome: This “right sizes” the district’s footprint without requiring new construction

FINAL ANALYSIS

- A unified middle school in Obion County would strengthen programs that are currently fragmented and under-resourced by spreading students across multiple small campuses. In athletics, consolidation can create a true vertical alignment with Obion County Central High School. Fine arts benefit significantly by eliminating the itinerant model, placing band and choir directors on-site full-time, achieving the critical mass needed for quality ensembles, and improving long-term retention in high school programs. Career and Technical Education becomes financially viable and instructionally meaningful through economies of scale, allowing the district to invest in high-quality shared labs and offer an exploratory rotation in areas such as agriculture, business, technology, and health science to help students make informed high school pathway decisions.

3. THE HIGH SCHOOL RISK (PLAN B)

Plan B relies on the numerical capacity of Obion County Central High School (OCCHS).

- The “Paper” Reality: OCCHS is at 50% utilization, suggesting it has room for middle schoolers.
- The Functional Reality: While the square footage exists, the functional space is complex. Obion County Schools require students to earn 24 credits to graduate. Students are required to complete:

English	4 credits
Math	4 credits
Science	3 credits
Social Studies	3 credits
Wellness	1 credit
PE	1/2 credit
Personal Finance	1/2 credit
Computer/Technology	1 credit
Electives*	7 credits

*Students must complete 3 credits in the same focus area.

- These courses must be offered regardless of the student enrollment at OCCHS.

FINAL ANALYSIS

- The Obion County School System also offers a wide range of Career and Technical Education programs under an open admissions policy.

Agriculture	Family and Consumer Science	Architecture and Construction
Health Science Education	Law Enforcement Services	Information Technology
Culinary Arts (OCCHS)	Carpentry	Business, Marketing, + Finance
Maintenance and Light Repair - MLR	Cosmetology	Law, Public Safety, Corrections, + Security
Welding	Math and Science	Transportation
Teaching a Profession (OCCHS)	STEM - aviation focus	Work Based Learning
Hospitality Management	Mechatronics	

- Classroom and/or Lab space is a requirement for each program. The State of Tennessee’s maximum CTE classroom size is 25 students, with a mandated average of 20 students per class.
- Housing 6th graders alongside 12th graders requires consideration of separation of office areas, entry points, bell schedules, gymnasiums, locker rooms, restrooms.
- The Inefficiency: Under Plan B, Ridgemont becomes a K–5 school. Without the middle school population, Ridgemont would likely drop to critically low utilization (estimated 270 students – 40% utilization) leaving the Board with a High School approaching maximum capacity but an underutilized Elementary school.

4. THE BLACK OAK ENIGMA (PLAN C + D)

The “Luxury” Trap: Plan C: Politically popular because it “gives many people what they want”—a dedicated Middle School and their local elementary school

- The Reality: It is the most expensive operating model. It requires funding a full administration for the new Middle School without capturing the savings from closing Black Oak. While it has low capital risk (construction), it has severe long-term financial risk because it spreads the budget too thin across too many campuses.

Plan D (6–12 + Keep Black Oak): This option attempts to save Black Oak but places the burden on the High School.

- The Risk: It combines the highest capital risk (retrofitting the High School) with poor operational efficiency (running an under-enrolled Black Oak and Ridgemont). It essentially asks the district to pay for expensive construction at the High School to preserve underutilized buildings at Black Oak and Ridgemont.

FINAL ANALYSIS

III. Financial + Operational Profile

PLAN A: TARGETED + EFFICIENT

- Capital Approach: Investment is “surgery, not construction.” Funds are targeted toward converting Ridgemont classrooms for middle-grade science, teaming, and security.
- Risk Profile: Low-Moderate. The costs are predictable and the facility is already suited for this use.

PLAN B: COMPLEX + VARIABLE

- Capital Approach: Significant investment may be required at OCCHS to create the necessary physical barriers and specialized wings to house younger students.
- Risk Profile: Moderate-High. There is a risk of “overbuilding” elementary capacity (leaving Ridgemont underutilized) while simultaneously straining the operational limits of the High School.

PLAN C: THE CAPITAL RISK

- Ridgemont Conversion: Similar to Plan A, the capital costs here are manageable. Ridgemont is already built to house these students; investment is limited to minor renovations (lockers, science labs, security).
- Black Oak Liability: However, the capital budget remains strained by the need to address ongoing maintenance issues at Black Oak (roofs, HVAC) which are not removed from the ledger.
- Double Administration: This plan adds a new cost center (a standalone Middle School administration and support staff) without removing an old one (Black Oak).
- Staffing Strain: The district must staff a full K-5 program at Black Oak for a shrinking number of students, while also staffing a full 6-8 program at Ridgemont. This dilutes the teacher pool and increases per-pupil spending significantly.

FINAL ANALYSIS

PLAN D: NO EFFICIENCY SAVINGS

- OCCHS Retrofit: Significant funding is required to modify the High School for Grades 6–8. This includes creating physical barriers, distinct administrative suites, and potentially adding modular units or wing expansions to handle the influx of students without the offset of closing a building.
- Deferred Maintenance: The district retains the liability for Black Oak’s aging infrastructure, meaning capital funds are split between new high school renovations and old elementary repairs.
- No Efficiency Savings: Unlike Plan B, this plan does not capture the savings of closing Black Oak. The district continues to pay for administration, cafeteria staff, and utilities for a low-enrollment K–5 Black Oak.
- This plan combines the worst financial elements of all options: the high construction cost of Plan B and the high operating waste of the Status Quo.

IV. Educational Model Comparison

PLAN A + C: IDENTITY + FOCUS

Prioritizes the unique developmental needs of early adolescents but is not without challenges

Potential Positive outcomes for students:

- + Middle School Identity: A dedicated campus allows for a culture focused entirely on Grades 6–8. This includes age- appropriate Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), behavioral supports, and a “middle school” feeling that bridges the gap between elementary and high school.
- + A dedicated middle school is designed for early adolescents—not young children
- + Students are surrounded by peers at similar maturity levels, reducing social mismatch
- + Programs designed specifically for middle school participation
- + Hands-on learning spaces that K–8 buildings often lack

Staffing: It allows the district to concentrate its middle-grades experts under one roof.

- + Teachers are content-area specialists (math, science, ELA, social studies)
- + More access to electives (CTE, band, art, STEM, foreign language)

FINAL ANALYSIS

Challenges of a Middle School Model: The 6–8 middle school model is the most common grade configuration in the United States, yet research and educational psychology suggest it presents specific, distinct challenges for students.

- Students add an additional school transition during the vulnerable and stressful early adolescence age.
- The 6–8 years coincide exactly with the onset of puberty, creating a “perfect storm” of biological and environmental stress.
- Middle school is statistically where bullying is most prevalent. The larger, less supervised social networks of a 6–8 school provide more opportunities for social exclusion and cyberbullying.

Staffing Challenges:

- A middle school teacher may see 120–150 students a day for only 45 minutes each. It is much harder for students to form deep, trusting bonds with adults, leading to feelings of invisibility.
- Without one main set of eyes on a student, subtle changes in behavior (withdrawal, anxiety) can go unnoticed for longer periods.

PLAN B + D: VERTICAL ALIGNMENT

Offers vertical alignment (6–12 curriculum continuity) but removes the protective environment of a middle school

A 6-12 model offers strong academic continuity:

- + Aligned curriculum from early middle grades through high school reduces gaps and repetition.
- + Teachers can plan learning progressions that intentionally prepare students for upper-level coursework.
- + Earlier exposure to high school expectations improves readiness for advanced classes.
- + Eliminates a major school change during a vulnerable developmental period.
- + Qualified teachers, labs, and resources can be shared across grades.
- + Middle school students can access:
 - Algebra, foreign language, STEM labs
 - Career and technical pathways
 - Fine arts and advanced electives

FINAL ANALYSIS

Student Challenges: Protected spaces and age-appropriate schedules

- Social and emotional mismatch
 - Sixth graders are developmentally very different from seniors.
 - Exposure to older student behavior, language, and social dynamics can be overwhelming.
 - Younger students may feel intimidated or pressured to “grow up” too fast.
- Transitions still happen – even without changing schools, students still face:
 - New schedules
 - New grading systems
 - Increased independence

To reduce these challenges, effective 6-12 schools:

- + Create separate wings, lunch periods, and schedules for grades 6–8.
- + Assign advisory programs and strong student advocacy systems.
- + Provide middle-grade-trained teachers and counselors.
- + Intentionally design culture, not assume it will “work itself out.”

FINAL ANALYSIS

V. Final Strategic Synthesis

The table below summarizes the trade-offs between the four operational models.

Plan A: Dedicated Middle School + Consolidation (Close Black Oak)

Plan B: 6-12 Campus + Consolidation (Close Black Oak)

Plan C: Dedicated Middle School (Keep Black Oak)

Plan D: 6-12 Campus (Keep Black Oak)

STRATEGIC FACTOR	PLAN A (MIDDLE SCHOOL PLAN)	PLAN B (6-12 CAMPUS)	PLAN C (MIDDLE SCHOOL + BLACK OAK)	PLAN D (6-12 CAMPUS + BLACK OAK)
CAPACITY BALANCE	Strong. Matches students to space efficiently.	Low. Leaves Ridgemont underutilized and the High School nearing capacity	Moderate/Inefficient. Solves the MS issue, but retains “dead” capacity at Black Oak (low enrollment) which drains resources.	Poor / Inefficient. Maintains surplus space at Black Oak + Ridgemont while crowding the High School.
HILLCREST RELIEF	Strong. Provide relief by transferring 6th-8th grade students to a different facility.	Strong. Provides relief by transferring 6th-8th grade students to a different facility.	Strong. Provides relief by transferring 6th-8th grade students to a different facility.	Strong. Provide relief by transferring 6th-8th grade students to a different facility.
CAPITAL RISK	Lower. Renovations are minor. Ridgemont has existing facilities for 6th-8th grade students.	Higher. Retrofitting OCCHS for 6th-8th grade students can be complex.	Moderate. Low conversion costs for MS, but assumes liability for Black Oak’s future capital needs.	Highest. Requires HS retrofit costs plus long-term capital upkeep of aging Black Oak.
EDUCATIONAL FIT	Strong. Age- appropriate environment.	Moderate. System already has a successful 6-12 school in place- but in a facility designed for 6-12 learning.	Strong. Same developmental risks as Plan A.	Moderate. Same developmental risks as Plan B.
COMMUNITY TRUST	Moderate. Statistically, parents prefer grade separation; however, the system already has successful 6-12 in place.	Moderate. Safety concerns dominate in a facility not specifically designed for 6th-12th grade students.	High. Parents get everything they want (Save Black Oak + Separate MS), ignoring the financial reality.	Mixed. High marks for saving Black Oak; low marks for 6-12 mix in a facility not designed for such.

FINAL ANALYSIS

IV. Conclusion + Recommendation

While Plan B is theoretically feasible based on square footage, it fails the test of functional efficiency. It solves one problem (where to put students) by creating two new ones (an underutilized Ridgemont and a complex high school challenge of housing 6-8 graders in a building not designed for such). Plan A represents the most prudent path forward. It aligns physical assets with educational goals, turning the underutilized Ridgemont campus into a district asset and providing a stable, high-quality environment for middle school students.

Recommendation: Proceed with the implementation of Plan A for the 2026–27 academic year.

Our analysis indicates that Plan A is a better strategic option. It effectively utilizes existing surplus capacity at Ridgemont, preserves age-appropriate educational environments, and minimizes some of the functional risks associated with combining middle and high school populations.

APPENDIX

Programmatic Utilization Option for Underutilized Space at Obion County Central High School

As a result of the Board of Education's approval of Plan A, Ridgemont Middle School will serve as the district's dedicated Grades 6–8 campus beginning in the 2026–27 school year. This reorganization improves facility efficiency and aligns grade configurations with established educational best practices. Concurrently, this action leaves Obion County Central High School operating with some unutilized instructional capacity, based on current enrollment and functional capacity metrics.

The presence of available space at Obion County Central High School presents an opportunity for programmatic utilization that does not require additional construction or facility expansion. One potential option for consideration is the establishment of a Grades 6–8 Career and Technical Innovation STEM Center, housed within existing high school facilities and designed to serve students enrolled at Ridgemont Middle School.

Under this concept, the district would provide scheduled transportation between Ridgemont Middle School and Obion County Central High School for participating students. While transportation would represent an added operational consideration, the potential instructional benefits are notable. The proposed center could focus on early career exploration and foundational skill development in high-demand fields, including:

- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)
- Agricultural Sciences
- Health Sciences
- Other areas of focus for Obion County

Leveraging existing high school infrastructure, specialized instructional spaces, and faculty expertise would allow middle school students to engage in hands-on, applied learning experiences that are often difficult to deliver within a traditional middle school environment. Additionally, this model could support opportunities for students to earn selected high school course credits during their middle school years, strengthening academic pathways and supporting long-term college and career readiness.

This option is presented as a supplemental, programmatic use of existing capacity, not as a modification to the Board-approved grade configuration plan. Inclusion of this concept within the facility assessment appendix is intended to document future-ready opportunities that align demographic trends, facility utilization realities, and workforce development priorities, should the Board wish to explore phased or pilot implementation at a later date.

APPENDIX

COCKE COUNTY INNOVATION CENTER | Newport, Tennessee

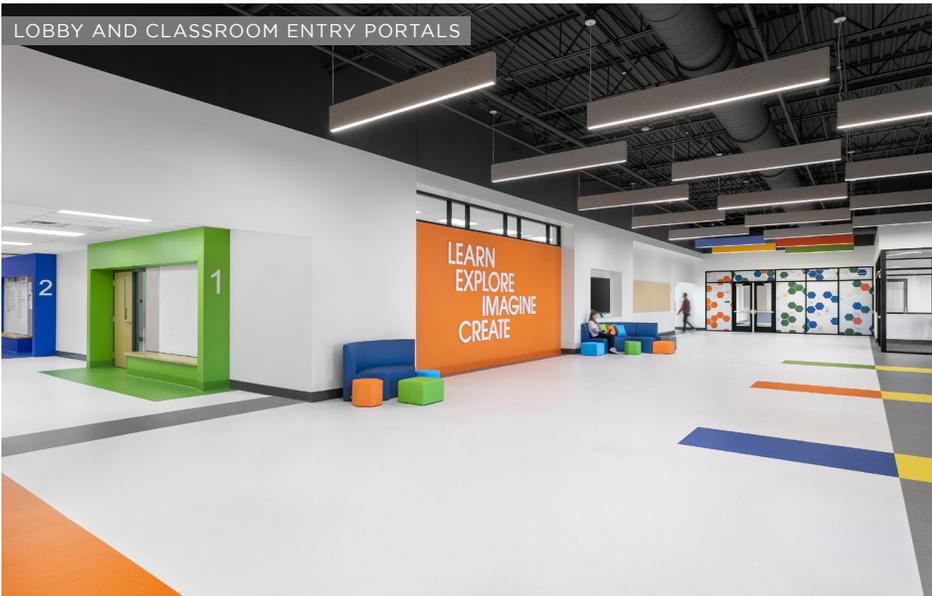
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