

Board of Education Meeting

APRIL 22, 2025



ZION-BENTON
TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT **126**
COMMITTED TO EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

ZB *Pride Awards*

**Thank you, Board Members, Dr. Ciera McNeal,
and Mr. Marvin Scott, for your dedicated
service!**



ZION-BENTON
TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT **126**
COMMITTED TO EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Board President Statement

District 126 is committed to an equitable, respectful learning environment where bullying, harassment, racism, sexism, and hate speech have no place; please partner with us in fostering a positive community.



ZION-BENTON
TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT **126**
COMMITTED TO EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Public Comment



ZION-BENTON
TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT **126**
COMMITTED TO EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Agenda

- Conclusion of Old Business
- Canvas Election Results
- Oath of Office
- Adjourn of Meeting- Sine Die
- Board Pro Tem Appointments
- Open Meeting with New Board
- Election of Board Officers
- Organization of Board Committees



ZION-BENTON
TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT **126**
COMMITTED TO EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Superintendent Report



ZION-BENTON
TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT **126**
COMMITTED TO EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

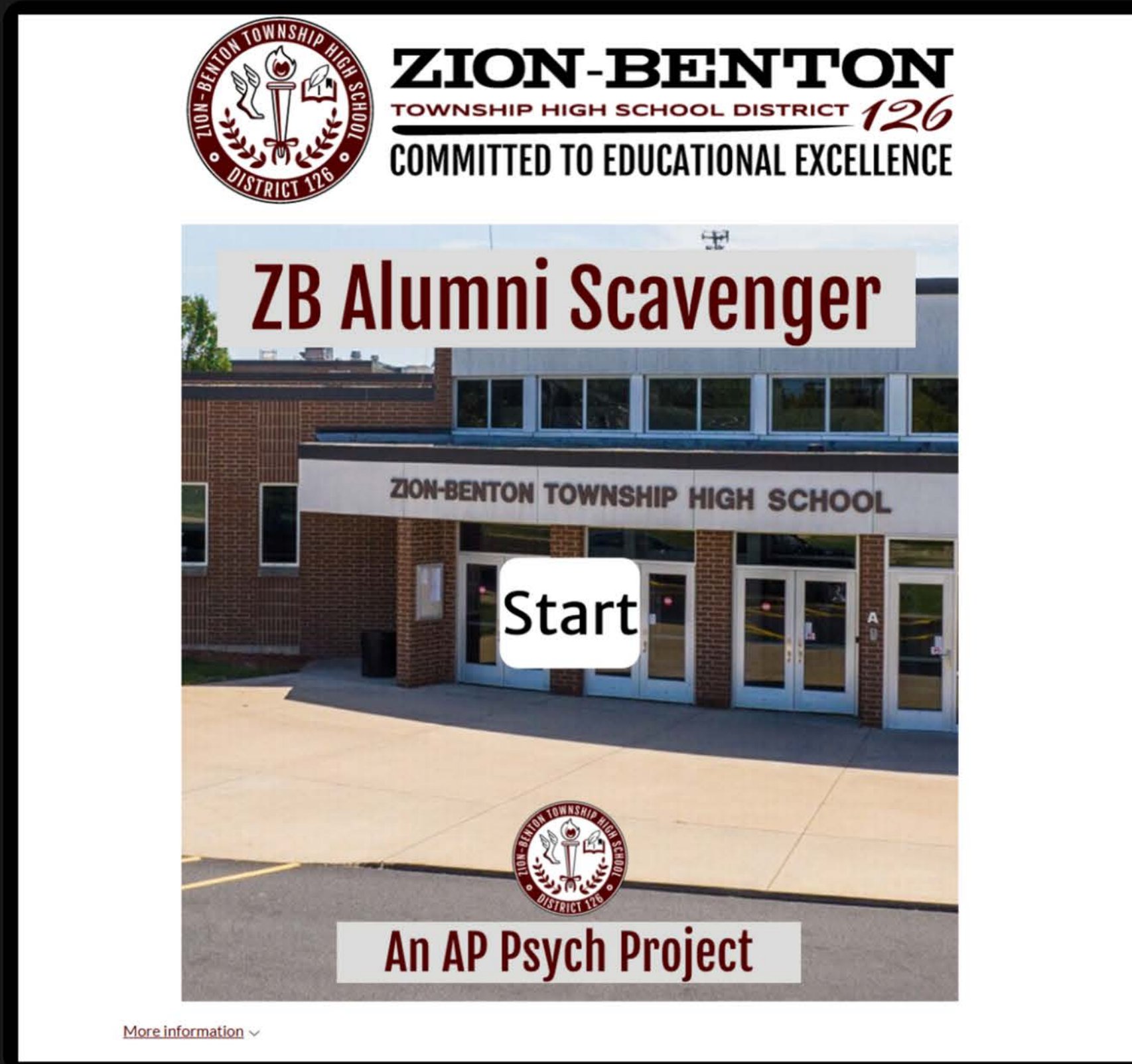


EMPOWERMENT - EQUITY - EXCELLENCE

**COMMITTED TO
EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE**

LEADERSHIP - LEARNING - RESEARCH - SERVICE

ZB ALUMNI SCAVENGER HUNT TOUR

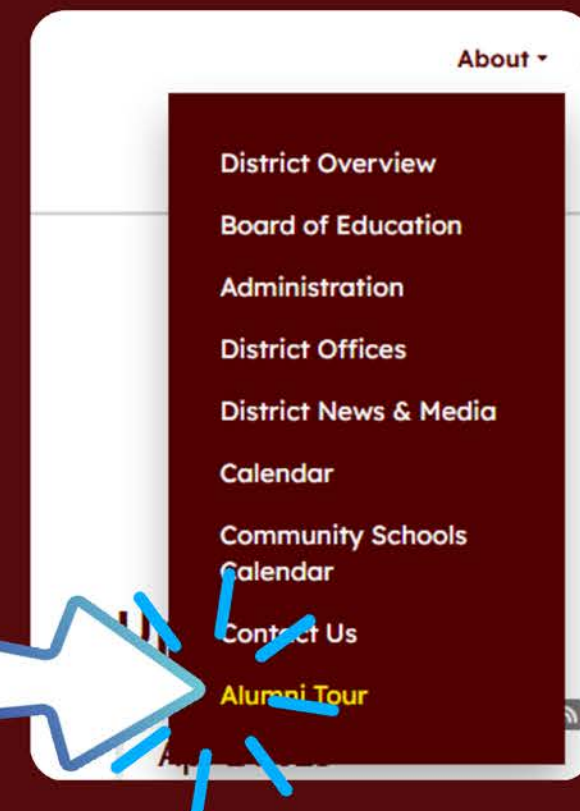


Check out this amazing AP Psychology project created by one of our talented students, Xania C.!

She coded and launched an interactive Alumni Tour on the web, bringing this project to life with her skills and creativity.

Xania Correa

Explore her work
and see innovation
in action!



BAND FESTIVAL



At the Chicagoland High School Band Festival hosted by Hersey High School. Our bands will perform throughout the day and receive two types of feedback, as well as a clinic following their performance. Here's our intermediate band.

SPANISH CULTURE & CUISINE

A celebration of Spanish culture and cuisine in Ms. Casado-Parejo's Spanish Heritage class!



FIRST RESPONDER BREAKFAST



Healthy YOUTh Students!
April 17, from 7:30-8:30 am, they
hosted a breakfast for our First
Responders.

Dr. Bridge, Mr. Hernandez, and
Principal Felske fostered strong,
positive connections with our local
first responders.



This powerful experience brought
learning, support, and unity to both
students and adults alike. Moments
like these build trust, community, and
lasting impact, which support our idea
of communication, compassion and
consistency.

MVP FAIR

Marijuana & Vaping
Prevention Fair by
Healthy YOUTh--- over 703
students visited.

The students worked hard
to create interactive
activities that teach other
students about the
effects of marijuana and
other drugs.



MULTILINGUAL RESOURCE CENTER



Students
utilizing our
Multilingual
Resource Center

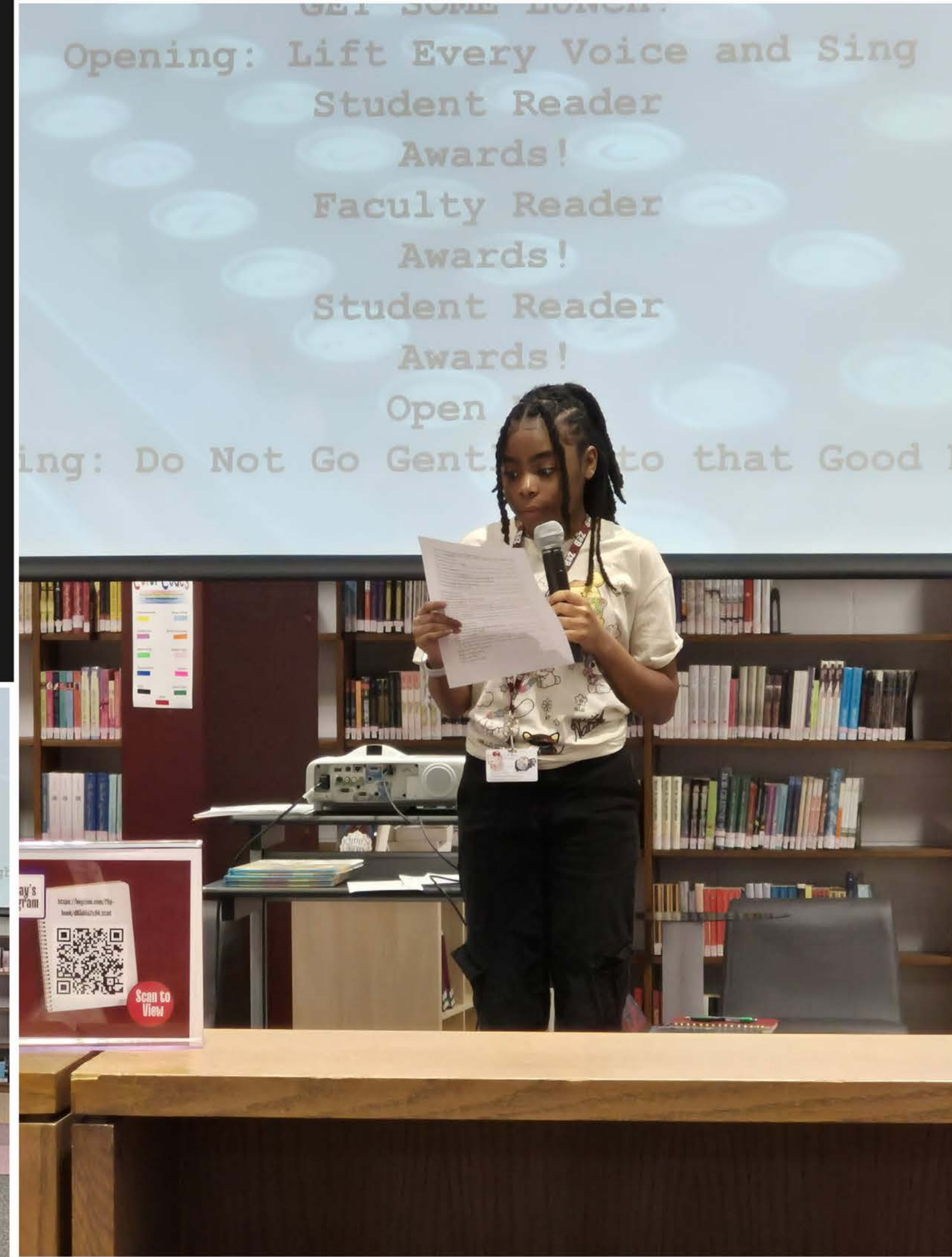
FOOD PANTRY

ZB seniors doing
community
service at North
Point Food Pantry



WRITING AWARDS

The English Department has revived its annual Poetry Slam this year (April is National Poetry Month) to include awards for our Most Improved Writers and our Best Essays, Poems, and Stories in our English classes. Students read original poems or recited poems you love during the lunch periods on



KIWANIS PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Kiwanis provides thousands of dollars for student scholarships and CTE awards. It was a very well attended community event that included ZB student volunteers.



ART CONNECTED SENIOR SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION



Allison Bradbury

Allison Bradbury has been selected as a top portfolio winner for the ArtConnectedEd Senior Scholarship Competition and will have her work featured at the Bridgeport Art Center in Chicago.

This is an incredible accomplishment, as over 130 high schools across the state participate in this exhibition, with more than 300 portfolios submitted for review each year.

Allison has already received \$324,000 in scholarship offers from Millikin University, Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design, Illinois Wesleyan University, Art Academy of Cincinnati, Iowa State University College of Design, and the College for Creative Studies.

SEAL OF BILITERACY

MARCH 18 & 19, 2025




Dr. Kolarik supervised over 90 seniors taking the AAPPL test for second language proficiency toward earning the Seal of Biliteracy today.

Academic proficiency in multiple languages is an incredible skill/asset.

SOCIAL MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

MARCH 21-29


ZeeBees in NYC!



Zion-Benton D126
Published by Hootsuite

March 23 at 9:01AM

For those who missed it—our Zee Bees are in NYC! 🗽 ✨ The **ZBTHS Choir** is having an unforgettable experience in the Big Apple, exploring iconic landmarks, performing in le... [See more](#)



See insights and ads

Boost post

👍❤️


50

💬

Comment

➦

Share



Author

Zion-Benton D126
On behalf of the BOE and Administration, I am proud and honored to serve and be part of this amazing opportunity for our students and district.
Congratulutions to our talented choir students and the dedicated faculty and staff who made it possible. Th... [See more](#)

1w

Like

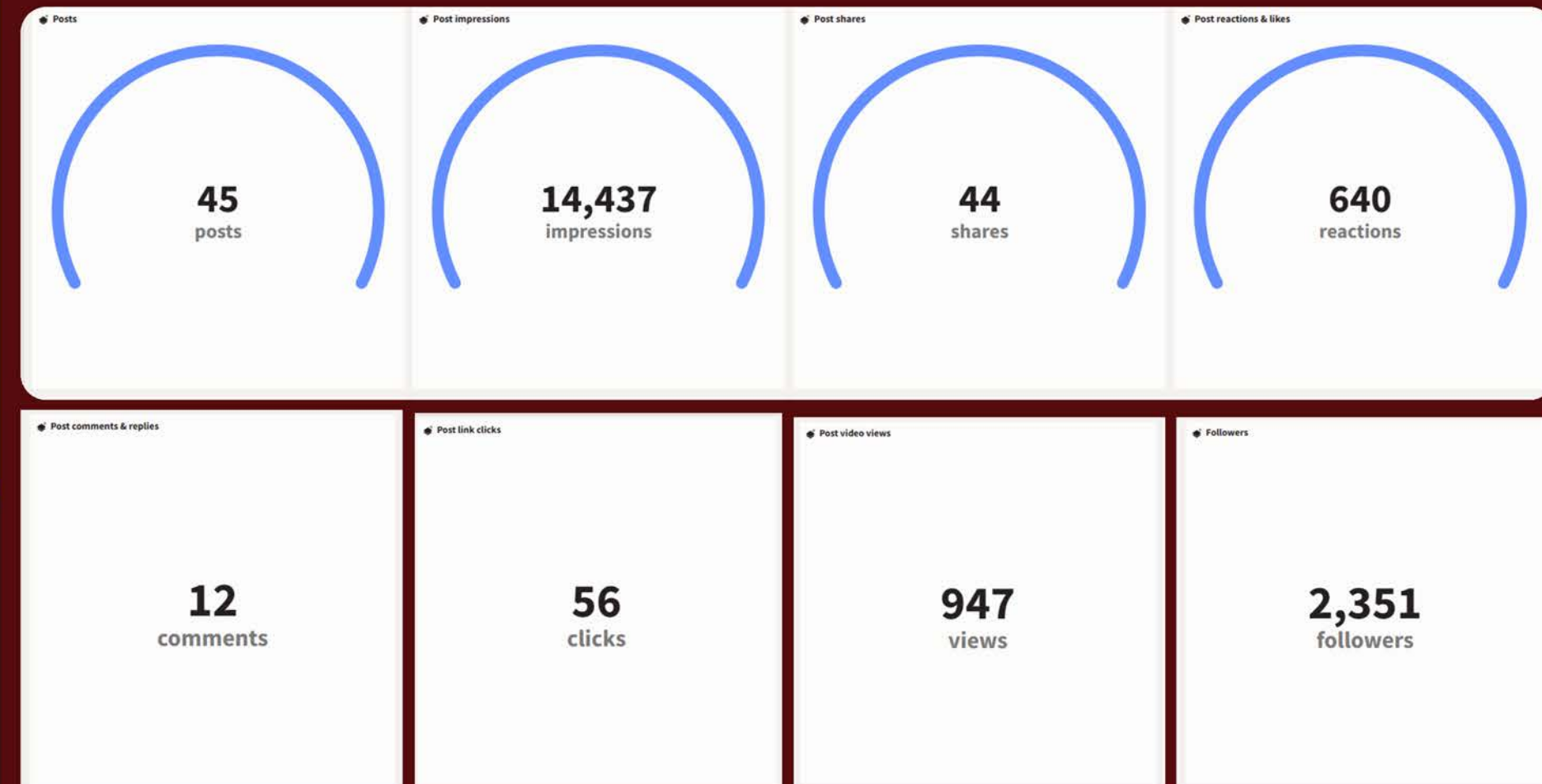
Reply

3

👍❤️

1806 Read the post
463 Video Views
53 Interactions

1180 Read the post
483 Video Views
62 Interactions



NJROTC COMPETITION

4/2- 4/6



NJROTC rifle team students competed at the CMP Regional Championship in Camp Perry Ohio.



Over Spring Break, several of our incredible FBLA members traveled to Springfield, IL to represent ZBTHS at the State Leadership Conference—and they did not disappoint!

We had multiple students place in the top 10 of their competitive events, and we are excited to announce that **THREE** of them have qualified for the FBLA National Leadership Conference this summer in Anaheim, California.

Please join me in congratulating our National Qualifiers:
Noah Colson (2x National Qualifier) – 2nd Place, Journalism
Keegan Cook – 2nd Place, Insurance & Risk Management
Jacob Smith (ZBE) – 2nd Place, Business Management





STUDENT
STOPPING DOWN
TO SING HAPPY
BIRTHDAY

ZBTHS

Artist of the Month

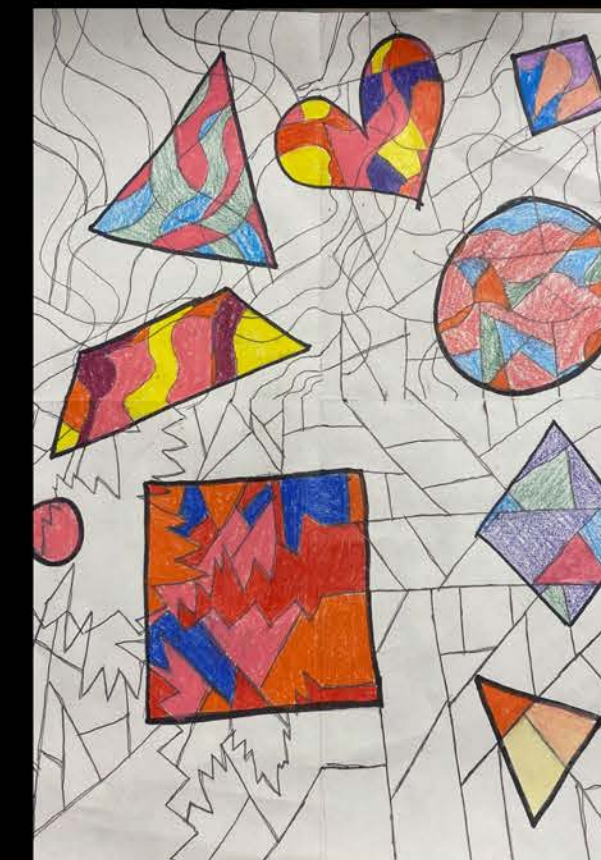
Ceramics: Victoria Mirkowicz



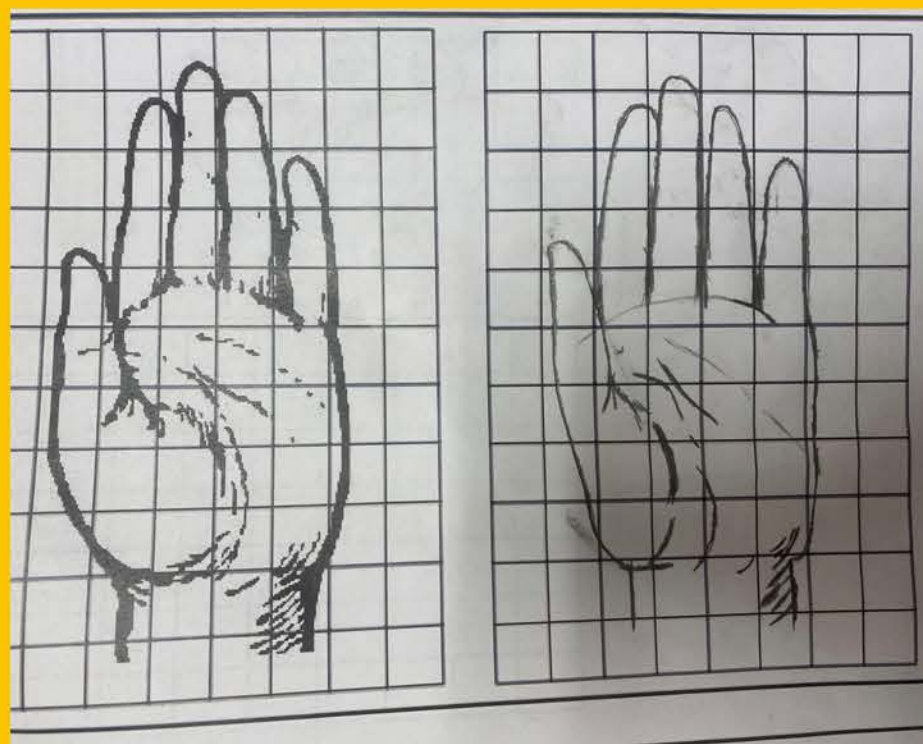
Jewelry:
Britany Trevino



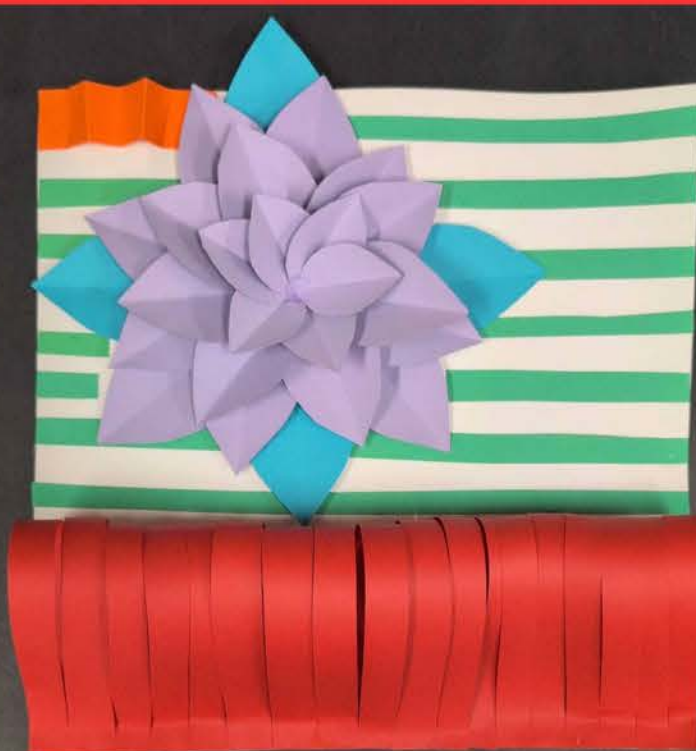
Painting:
Cecilia McCarthy



Intro to Art:
Matilda Pedraza



Drawing: Javion Young Delk



3D Sculpture: Zoriah Cabell

Great ZB showing at
the NSC Art Show! So
much talent!



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

 April 2025

AGENDA

01 FY26 Budget Outlook

02 Tier 2 Pension Reform

03 104th Procedures

04 Bills, Bills, Bills

05 Vision 2030 Update

06 Questions?



FY26 BUDGET OUTLOOK

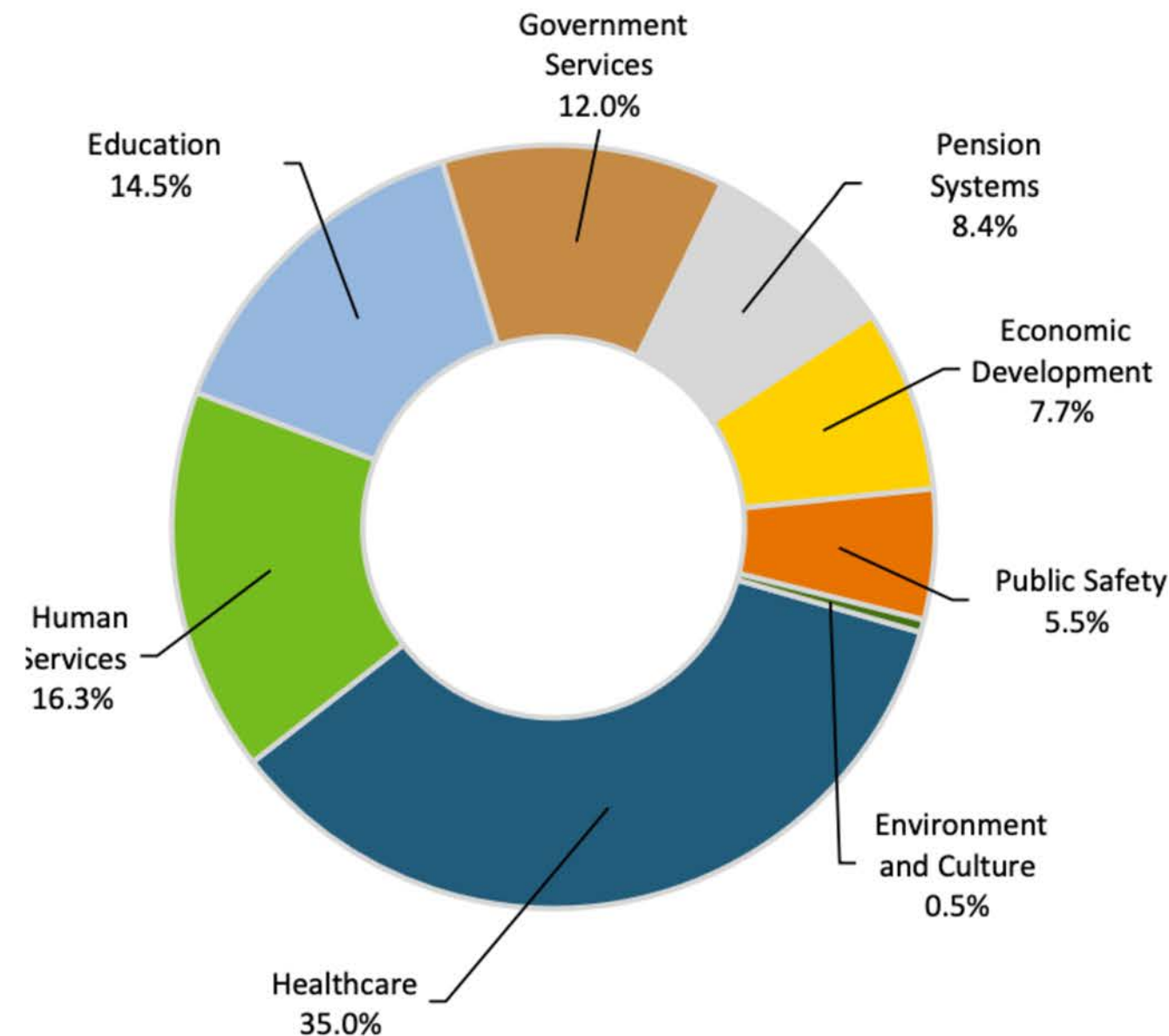


FY26 Proposed Operating Budget

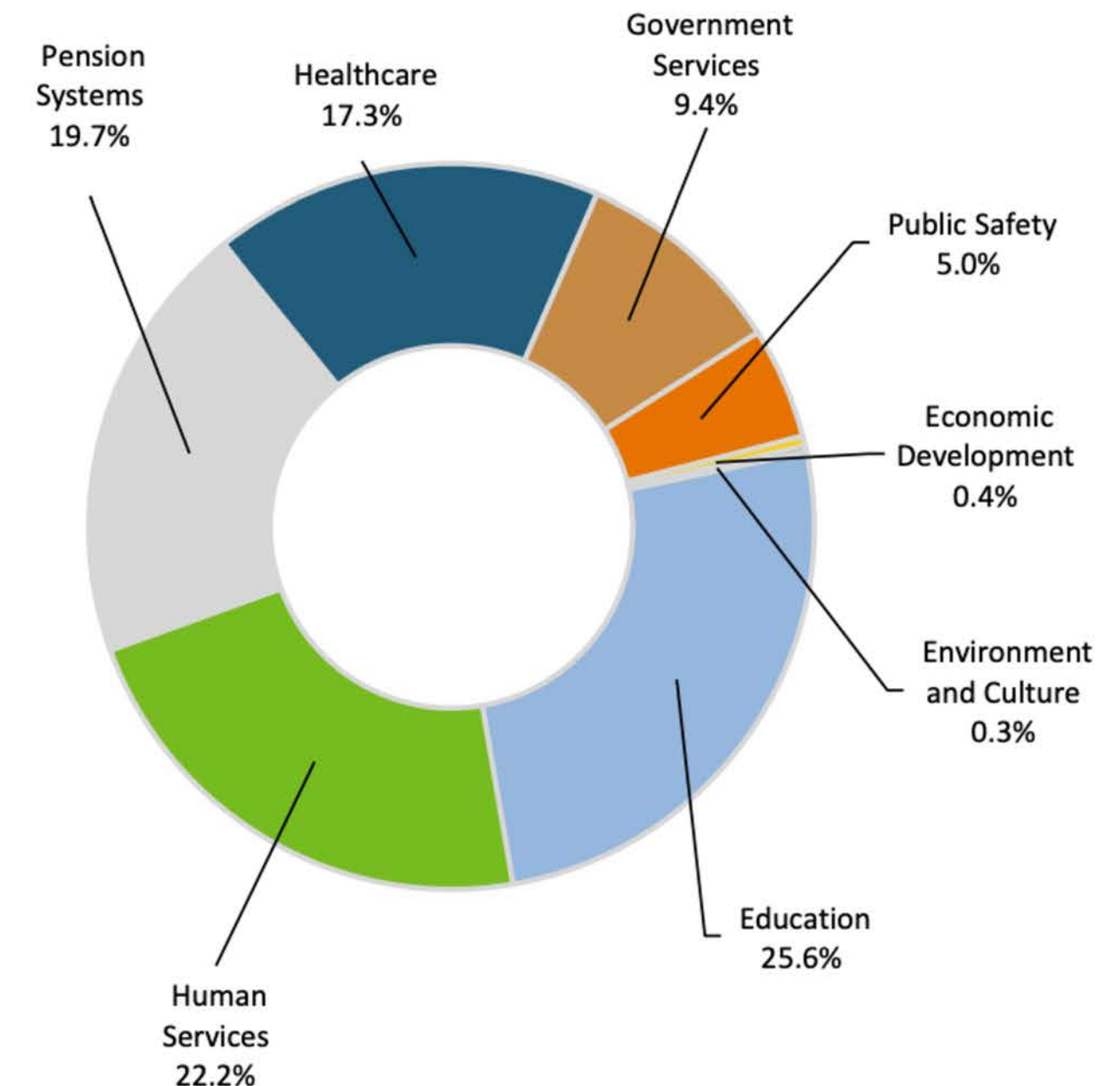
**Estimated
Revenues:
\$55.4 B**

**Estimated
Expenses:
\$55.2 B**

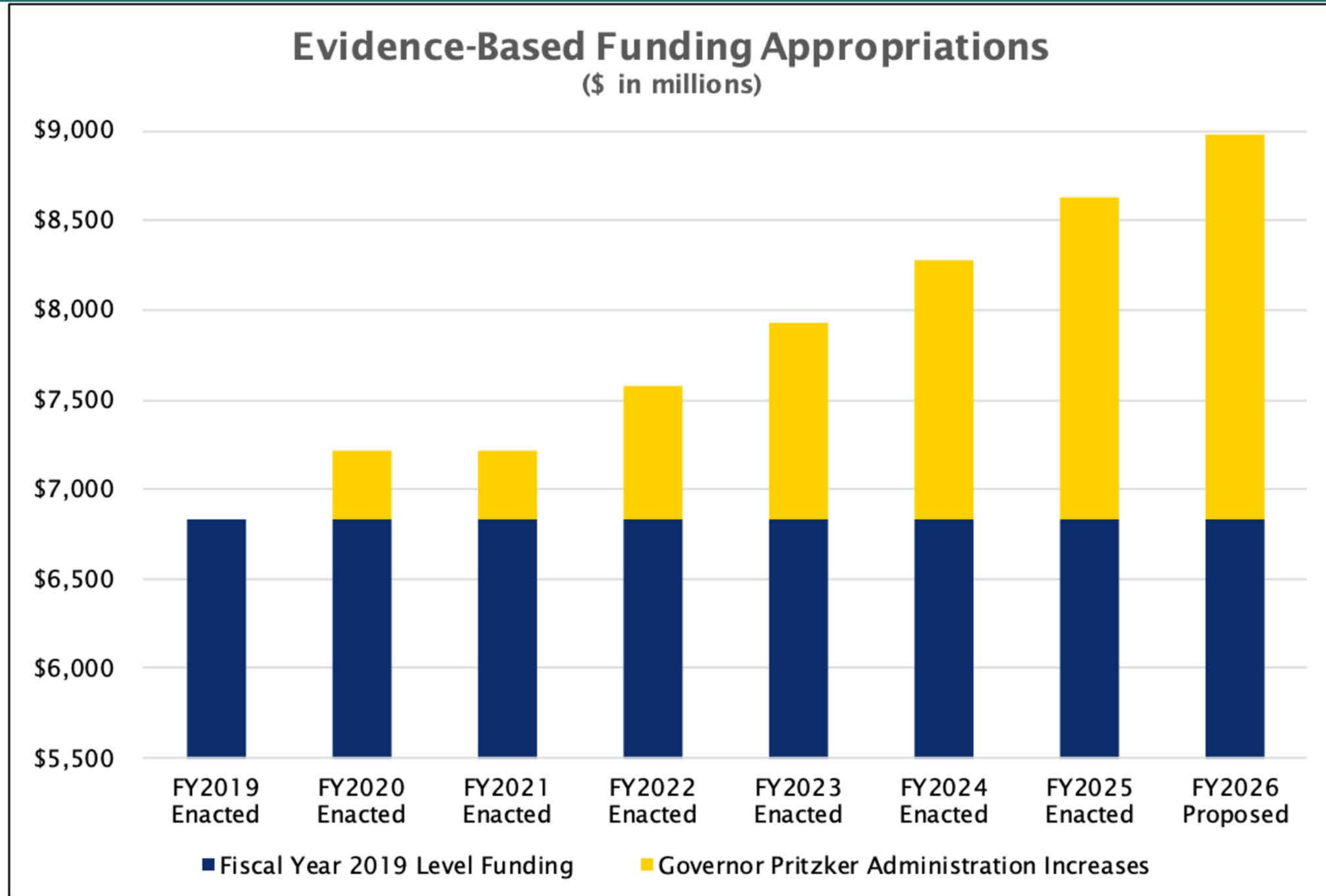
All Funds:
\$129.4 Billion



General Funds:
\$53.9 Billion



FY26 BUDGET OUTLOOK



VISION 2030

01

Future-Focused Learning

HB 3515/SB 1960 Dual Credit

*HB 2503/SB 1556 AI Task Force

*SB 28 Principal/Teacher Evaluation

HB 2451 Foreign Language Exemption

02

Shared Accountability

New Assessment Cut Scores (Oct 2025)

New Accountability System (Oct 2026)

myISBE (FY26)

*HB 1869/SB 1583 ROEs as Learning Partners

*SB 1740 Mandate Reform Committee

HB 3503 Curriculum Mandate Review

03

Predictable Funding

*HB 1830/SB 80 PRP Review of EBF Impact Bills

SB 2 Tier 2 Pension Reform



THE
JOURNAL

*Technological Horizons
in Education*

Dr. Cheri Bridge

*Executive Director of Technology and
Innovation,*

**Check out her article in the April 24,
2025 edition of T.H.E. Journal,
Technological Horizons in
Education, a nationally recognized
publication focused on educational
technology.**

Dr. Bridge's article, "Navigating the First Year as a Female Technology Director: A Journey of Leadership and Empowerment," reflects on the transformational leadership experiences from her first year in the role.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

WIABE: 46th Annual Conference

Administrators Institute

April 25, 2025

VOICES THAT BUILT ME

*Honoring the Educators Who
Inspired My Journey*

DR. JESSE J. RODRIGUEZ





TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN MULTILINGUAL SYSTEMS

Presented by

Ms. Yaribel Rodriguez

Dr. Jesse J. Rodriguez





Update Facilities Master Plan



DISTRICT-WIDE FACILITY MASTER PLAN Facility Master Plan Recommendation

ALIGNMENT WITH VISION 2030



FUTURE FOCUSED
LEARNING



SHARED
ACCOUNTABILITY



PREDICTABLE
FUNDING

BOARD LEADER RECOGNITION



2024

 IASB

Established BOARD LEADER

Patricia Stephen


Kimberly A. Small, J.D.
Executive Director


Mark Harms
President

 Illinois Association
of School Boards
Lighting the Way to Excellence in School Governance

**Board Leader ★
Recognition Program**



2024

 IASB

Established BOARD LEADER

Jerry Nordstrom


Kimberly A. Small, J.D.
Executive Director



Mark Harms
President

 Illinois Association
of School Boards
Lighting the Way to Excellence in School Governance


**Board Leader ★
Recognition Program**

UPCOMING EVENTS

BATTLE AT BOWEN




VS



ZION-BENTON **WAUKEGAN**

"THROW FOR DOUGH" CONTEST
50/50 RAFFLE
CONCESSIONS
T-SHIRT SALES

ALL PROCEEDS SUPPORT
CANCER RESEARCH



Varsity Game @ 6PM

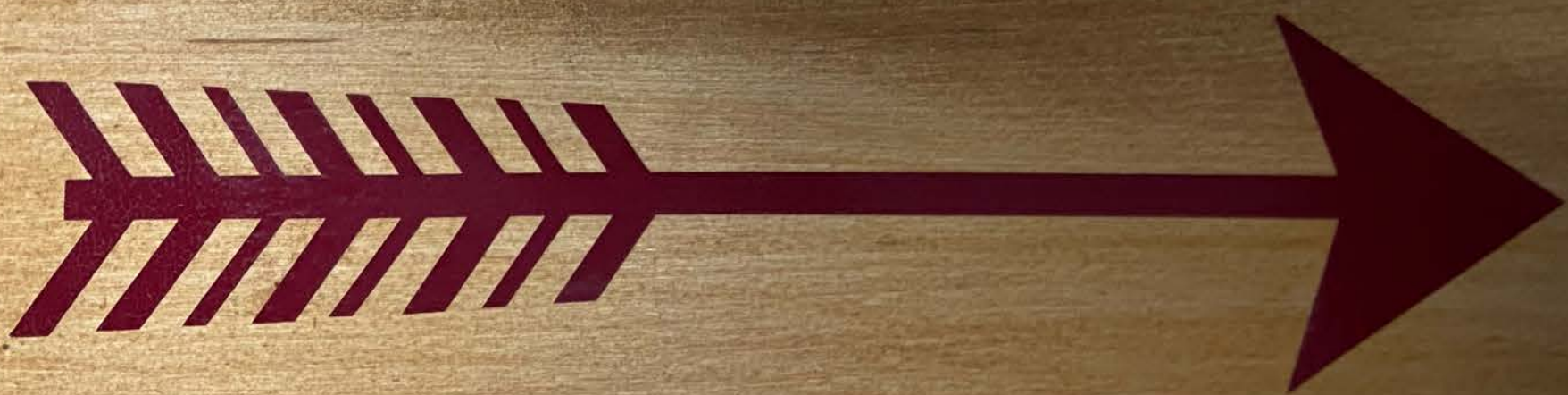
\$3 Student with ID
\$5 Adults

4/24 4/25	Spring Musical	7:00 PM	ZBTHS PAC
4/26	Spring Musical	3:00 PM	ZBTHS PAC
4/30	D126 Senior Academic Honors Banquet	6:00 PM	ZBTHS PAC/South Commons
5/6	D126 Community Scholarship Program	7:00 PM	ZBTHS PAC
5/8	Spring Choral Concert	7:00 PM	ZBTHS PAC
5/13	CTE-Kiwanis Awards	7:00	ZBTHS PAC
5/14	Jazz Night	7:00 PM	ZBTHS PAC
5/18	ZBE Graduation	12:00 PM	Field or Café
5/18	ZB Graduation	3:00 PM	FB Field or Main Gym



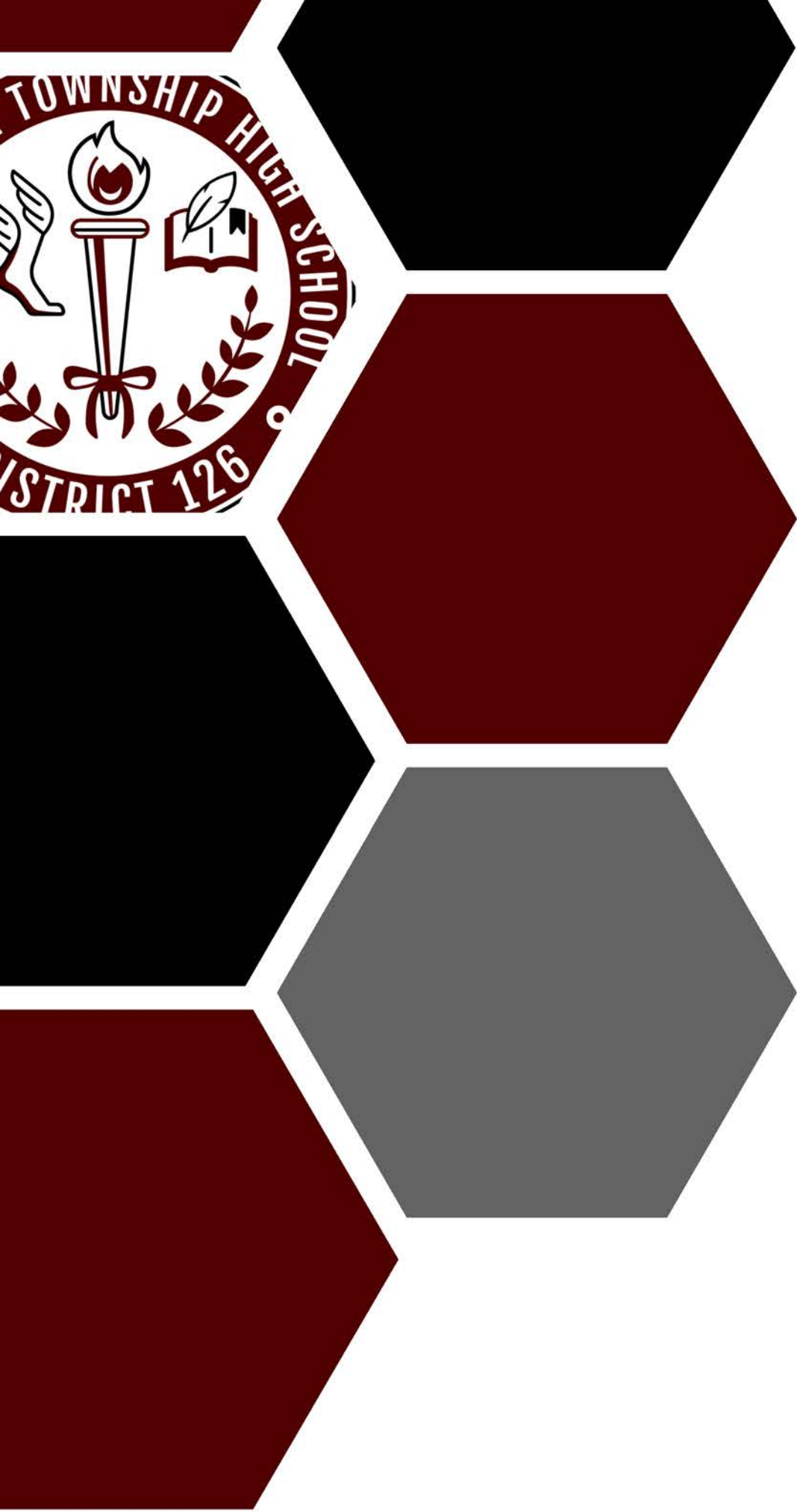
Hold The Vision

Trust the Process



*Commit to progress and
stay focused on the
goals ahead.*

*Meaningful change
takes time, and each step
forward brings us closer
to lasting success.*



Reports & Discussion



ZION-BENTON
TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT **126**
COMMITTED TO EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE



ZBTHS

Principal's Report



ZION-BENTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

HOME OF THE ZEE BEES
PRINCIPAL REPORT - APRIL 2025

BONNIE FELSKE
ZBTHS PRINCIPAL
bonnie.felske@zbt126.org



Instructional Updates

April was a busy and productive month as we prepared our 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students for the PreACT and ACT. This transition required an "all hands on deck" approach, with every department working collaboratively to create a safe, motivating, and well-organized testing environment.

Beyond the classroom, our staff remained committed to providing engaging, hands-on learning experiences. Fine arts continued to shine throughout the month, with Band students participating in the Chicagoland Invitational Concert Band Festival, as well as preparation for a fantastic production of Shrek the Musical to debut on April 24-26th.

Teachers across multiple departments also continued to find creative ways to connect learning to real-world experiences. For example, Sports and Entertainment Marketing students had the opportunity to visit Wrigley Field, where they met with Chicago Cubs marketing executives before taking in a game at the historic ballpark.

Other Trips or Experiences

- Key Club Members served families at the Kiwanis Pancake Breakfast
- ASL PenPal Trip
- Spring Food Pantry Community Service at The Point Food Pantry

Operational Updates

Operations continue to run smooth as we begin the fourth-and final quarter of the 204-25 school year. The principal and assistant principal's office continue to plan and finalize signature end of the year events such as the Senior Honor's Program, Community Scholarship Program and graduation.

Advisory planning for next year is underway, as activities are being examined to ensure an effective program aligned to the goals of the district strategic plan are in place. This month's advisory activities included, The Countdown to ACT activities with goal-setting and test prep and visits from the Attendance Matters Outreach staff delivering positive messages regarding finishing the year with strong attendance.

In preparation for operational changes at ZBTHS for next school year, the board approved student handbook changes were shared with all staff at the April faculty meeting and shared out to parents in the April Parent

Bulletin new policies will help foster a welcoming, safe school environment while reducing distractions to learning in the classroom.

Celebrations



Instructional Updates



April 15-ACT Testing! Successful and Smooth Operations!

- Extensive planning and coordination across many departments to ensure a well-organized, safe, motivating testing environment was provided
- Adapt and adjust as we navigate new ACT testing format



Expanded Learning and Student Engagement Opportunities Happening at ZB!

- Hands-on experiences for students (fieldtrips, service, leadership, guest speakers)
- Activities aligned to the vision of Future Focused Learning
- Activities aligned with College and Career Indicators = sign of readiness for Day 721!

Fieldtrips:



- ASL; NSSEO DHH program visit; ZB students led activities with students using sign language
- Sports Marketing; Wrigley Field-meet with Chicago Cubs executives before the game
- INCubator-to visit MHUB in Chicago- a business mentorship and resource center

Leadership and Service:



- Lake County My Brother's Keeper Symposium- multi school district conference
- Kiwanis Pancake Breakfast-Key Club student servers
- The Point Food Pantry- student community service



Operational Updates

Effective - Efficient operations continue into 4th quarter providing a safe, stable learning environment!

2025-26 SY Operational and Policy Changes: Phone/ID's/Safety

- Communicate Clear-Consistent Message
- Parents and student messaging campaign underway
- Staff PD plan developed for August Institute Day
 - Student Handbooks- submitted for order
 - Classroom cell phone holders-purchased
 - School-wide signage being developed



Centegix (school-wide alert system)  **CENTEGIX®**

- collaboration to develop plan of operation and Staff PD

Construction (summer/fall)

- plans complete for staff relocations and student traffic

End-of-Year Events

- Planned/ Final preparations
 - Senior Academic Honors Program, Prom, Community Scholarship Program, Graduation, Final Exams-Summer School





ZB Celebrations!



ZEE BEE's in Action- Service and Leadership!

MBK SYMPOSIUM

WEDNESDAY 16 APRIL 2025

ICEBREAKERS: SPEED NETWORKING
10:00 AM - 10:15 AM

OPEN REMARKS
10:15 AM - 10:20 AM

PURPOSE STATEMENT
10:20 AM - 10:25 AM

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: CAREER PATHWAY PANELS
10:25 AM - 11:25 AM

BREAKOUT ROTATIONS: ELEVATOR PITCH COACHING WITH ONE MILLION DEGREES + PROFESSIONAL HEADSHOTS
11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

NETWORKING LUNCH
12:30 PM - 1:25 PM

STUDENT VOICE SESSION
1:30 PM - 1:55 PM

CLOSING REMARKS & SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS
1:55 PM - 2:00 PM

AON



My Brother's Keeper



Food Pantry

Kiwanis Pancake Breakfast





ZBE

Principal's Report

Z·B·E PRINCIPAL'S REPORT



MR. KEVIN WILAND ZION-BENTON EAST PRINCIPAL kevin.wiland@zb126.org

April 22, 2025

Instructional Updates

April 15 was a milestone testing day, with students participating in the statewide ACT. In the weeks leading up to the test, teachers worked diligently to prepare students—incorporating ACT-style questions into instruction, sharing test-taking strategies, supporting goal-setting, and offering resources for extra practice. While official scores are still pending, we're proud of the 93% attendance rate on test day and the smooth, successful implementation of this new testing platform. This achievement was truly a team effort. Special thanks to the Office of Academics led by Dr. DiGangi, Assistant Principal Isaacs, our entire staff, and most importantly, our students for their focus and commitment.

On March 20, our seniors participated in the "Bite of Reality" simulation, hosted by Great Lakes Credit Union. This hands-on event offered a powerful lesson in financial literacy, giving students a realistic look at budgeting and making informed financial decisions. A huge thank you to Ms. Ruggles for bringing this important experience to our students.

On April 8, Ms. Casado-Parejo and her Spanish Heritage classes celebrated Spanish culture and cuisine with student-led presentations and shared dishes that highlighted the cultural and historical significance of various foods. It was a festive and educational celebration of heritage and identity.

Operational Updates

With ACT testing behind us and seniors receiving their caps and gowns, the end of the school year is in sight! Zion-Benton East is excited to celebrate the graduating Class of 2025, gear up for a productive summer, and welcome both the incoming Class of 2029 and the 2025-2026 school year.

Now that the Board of Education has approved new language in the Student Handbook regarding the Personal Electronic Device Policy, staff are engaging in professional development to ensure consistent implementation for the 2025-2026 school year. These conversations also focus on the policy's impact on student behavior, classroom learning, and school climate. Staff are thoughtfully considering how to communicate the "why" behind the policy to help students understand its purpose and encourage cooperation rather than resistance.

Attendance Update / Celebrations

As of April 11, 2025, Zion-Benton East's average daily attendance stands at 92.10%, which aligns with the state average from the previous year. While this is a slight decrease of 1.69% compared to the same time last year, it remains strong overall. Chronic absenteeism currently sits at 17%, up 6% from last year but still significantly below the state average of 26%. ZB East continues to celebrate individual students for excellent attendance or improvement in attendance through weekly videos.

Bite of Reality



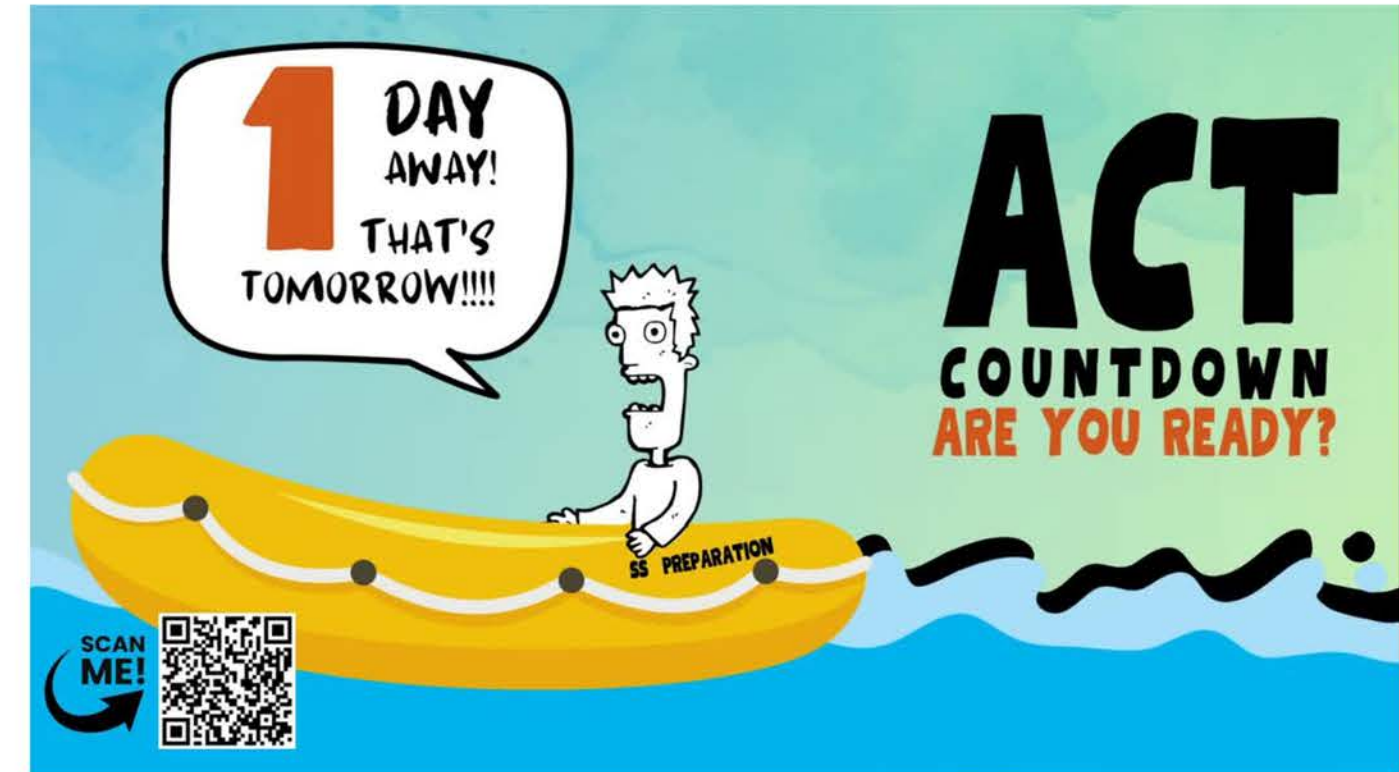
Spanish Heritage



Instructional Updates

April 15 ACT Testing - A group effort created a smooth testing experience!

- Office of Academics - new testing platform
- Staff
- Students and families



SPANISH CULTURE & CUISINE



April 8th Spanish Heritage Celebration

- Student-led presentations
- Shared dishes - highlighting cultural and historical significance of foods
- Celebration of Spanish heritage and identity

Instructional Updates

March 20th Bite of Reality simulation

- Hosted by Great Lakes Credit Union
- Hands-on experience for seniors - powerful lesson in financial literacy
- Realistic look at budgeting and informed financial decisions



About me

My future life as a...

Blogger.

Monthly salary: \$3,082*

Spouse's occupation: Hair Stylist

Spouse's Monthly Salary: \$1,987*

...Comes with obligations

Student Loan Payment: \$200

Medical Insurance Copay: \$150

Credit card debt: \$4,239

Child: Hector, 3 years old

Your Credit Score: 684

*All local, state and federal taxes have been deducted from your salary.

My Income

My monthly salary: \$3,082

+ Spouse's monthly salary: \$1,987

Subtotal \$5,069

- Student Loan Payment: \$200

- Medical Insurance Copay: \$150

Your Credit Score: 684

Total Net Monthly Income

\$4,719

February 26th - Math PD with NCSM Past-President Steve Leinwand

- Focus on deepening students' understanding of math concepts
- Focus on meaningful student discourse and use of relevant and motivating examples
- Recommendations: Regular cumulative review, integration of ACT-style questions throughout the curriculum, emphasis of depth of understanding over breadth of topics

Operational Updates

Summer Happenings at ZBE

- Summer School
- Library Renovation
- New door 3 canopy - student arrival



Policy Implementation

- Personal Electronic Device Policy
- Staff PD focused on consistent implementation
- Emphasis on climate, culture, and student understanding of policy purpose





**ATTENDANCE
MATTERS**



Committee Report

Business, Bid, Finance Committee



ZION-BENTON
TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT **126**
COMMITTED TO EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE



Committee Report

Long Range Planning Committee



ZION-BENTON
TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT **126**
COMMITTED TO EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE



Committee Report

Personnel Committee



ZION-BENTON
TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT **126**
COMMITTED TO EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE



New Business



ZION-BENTON
TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT **126**
COMMITTED TO EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE



Treasurer Appointment & Bond Resolution 2025-2026



Zion-Benton Township High School District 126
Office of Business Services

MEMO

April 22, 2025

To: Board of Education

From: Dr. Jesse Rodriguez, Superintendent
Dr. Jim Woell, CSBO

RE: Appointment of Treasurer and Approval of Treasurer Bond for 2025-2026 (FY26)

Zion-Benton Township High School District 126 has reaped the benefits of relying on an experienced treasurer for the past several years at minimal cost to the District. In previous year's discussions, the importance of the separation of duties for the purpose of controlling risk, maintaining internal controls and financial transparency has been the rationale for having an independent treasurer. Each year a continual surety bond must also be renewed for the treasurer.

It is the recommendation that, for the 2025-2026 school year (FY26), Audrey Liddle be approved to continue as the District 126 Treasurer. While it may be possible to reconsider this in the future, it is the recommendation that for this next year we continue with Audrey as the treasurer. Audrey is amenable to continuing in this position.

Ms. Liddle received a total annual stipend of \$8,500 in the year 2000 and until last year (2024-2025) when her stipend was increased to \$9000. The District's investments have been managed well and we have earned substantial returns on the investments made throughout her tenure as treasurer. We are recommending an increase of \$500 for a stipend total of \$9500 for the 2025-2026 school year.

Recommendation: That the Board of Education Approve the Superintendent's recommendation to approve the appointment of Audrey Liddle as Treasurer, with compensation of \$9500 and approve the renewal of the surety bond for the treasurer for the 2025-2026 school year.



Audit Firm Engagement Letter



Annually, an audit engagement letter is filed to formalize an agreement between an independent auditor and a school district. The letter outlines the scope, responsibilities, and terms of the audit of the district's financial statements, controls and compliance with laws and regulations.



Skyward Financial System Upgrade



Zion-Benton Township High School District 126
Office of Business Services

MEMO

April 22, 2025

To: Board of Education

From: Dr. Jesse Rodriguez, Superintendent
Dr. Jim Woell, CSBO

Re: Skyward Financial System Recommendation

The District has been looking at moving to a new financial data system to replace our current SDS system which is very outdated and not adaptable to the changing technologies required for reporting and compliance.

On March 11, 2025, the Business and Human Resource Office Teams met with representatives from Skyward - Skyward is our current student information system - and participated in a 3 hour demonstration and overview of what Skyward can bring to District 126 on the Financial and Human Resource side of operations.

It is the recommendation that we move forward with Skyward and begin the conversion process with the goal of going live in the new system beginning with the 2026-2027 school year. This will be a long process and we want to ensure that we take the time to do it correctly.

The initial cost for conversion, data migration, training and professional development as well as the first year licensing fee will be \$134,690.00. The annual fee will be \$14,067 after the first year. This is slightly higher but very similar to the cost of our annual licensure with SDS. However, the quality and capability of the Skyward system is far superior to SDS and will have a very positive impact on operational functionality and systems in both the Business and HR Offices. It is also incredibly user friendly for staff.

Recommendation: That the Board of Education Approve the Superintendent's recommendation to approve the change in financial systems to Skyward Qmulative from SDS and the initial investment of \$134,690.



Athletic & School Photography Services Bid Award Recommendations



Zion-Benton Township High School District 126
Office of Business Services

MEMO

April 22, 2025

To: Board of Education

From: Dr. Jesse Rodriguez, Superintendent
Dr. Jim Woell, CSBO

Photography Bid Awards

Following public bid notices published in the Lake County News Sun on February 18, 2025, the Business Office, on March 17, 2025, held two public bid openings for Athletic Photography Services and School Photography Services. Three (3) companies submitted bids: Lifetouch, VIP and the Barksdale Group.

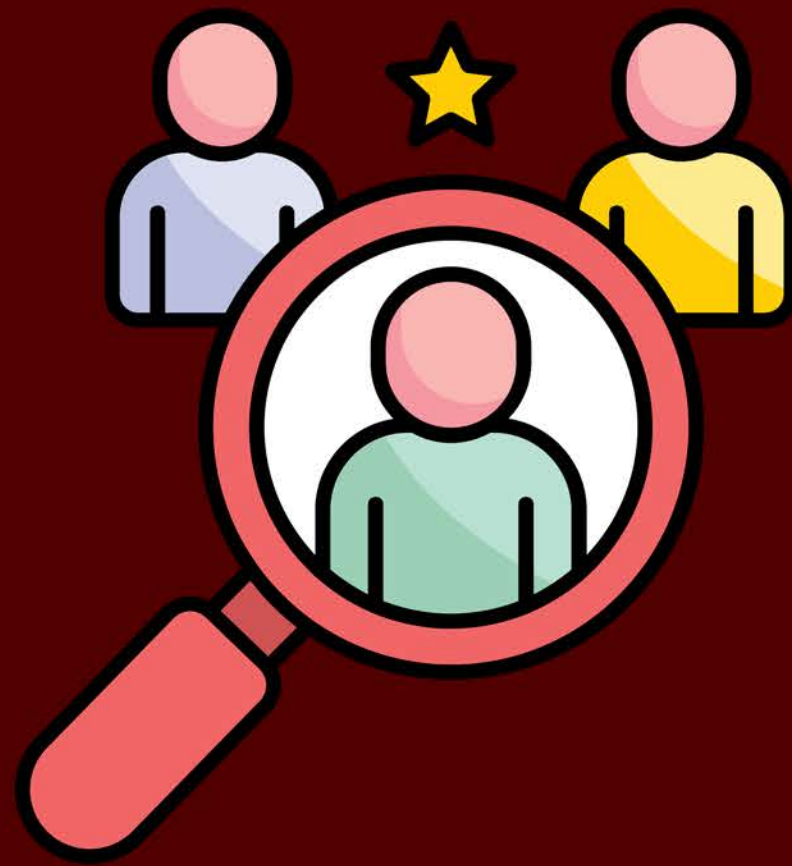
After reviewing the bid packages, checking references and speaking with our building liaisons who work directly with these vendors, it was determined that VIP should be awarded the Athletic Photography bid and that the Barksdale Group (Pictures With Class) be awarded the School Photography bid. Previously, District 126 had been with VIP for athletic photography and Lifetouch for school photography.

Recommendation: That the Board of Education Approve the Superintendent's recommendation to approve the bid awards to VIP (Visual Image Photography) for Athletic Photography services for the 2025-2026, 2026-2027, 2027-2028 and 2028-2029 school years and to the Barksdale Group (Pictures With Class) for School Photography Services for the 2025-2026 school year.



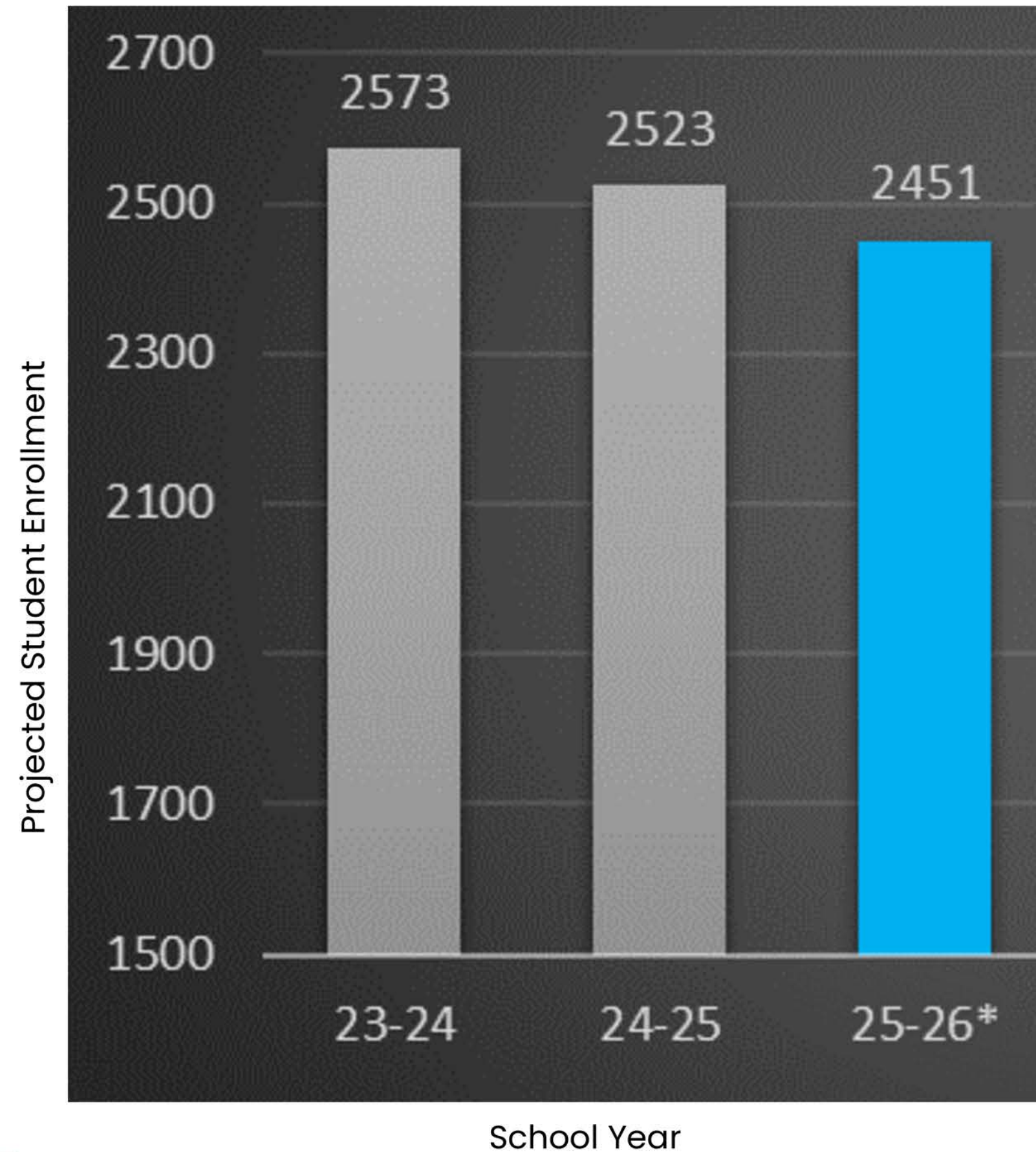
Update

FY26 Staffing Plan



The administration has completed its analysis of the 2025-26 registration data and recommends the current FTE allocations for the FY26 school year. We closely examined student registration, course selection trends, and enrollment data to ensure our staffing supports student success across both campuses

STUDENT ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS



HR SUPPORTS SCHOOL-SPECIFIC ACADEMIC GOALS THROUGH STRATEGIC STAFFING

Intervention – Enrichment – Acceleration

ZBTHS

- Overall, the administration continues to keep most course sections at or below 25 students with few exceptions (excluding PE and music), with our lowest level regular education pathway courses closer to 20 students in what has historically been our most difficult courses for struggling students.
- Investigate the implementation of accelerated coursework (Dual Credit, AP opportunities)

PATHWAY TO PROFICIENCY:

building systems of learning for both students and staff, with technology playing a key role in accelerating progress.

Zion-Benton East

Z·B·E

- Dual credit will continue to be taught in partnership with College of Lake County professors and ZBE teachers
 - Dual Credit core courses taught by ZBE Teachers: Math, History, English, Digital Media and Business. In the fall of 2025, **Communications** will be taught by a ZBE teacher for the first time, rounding out the General Education Core Curriculum (GECC) package
- Maintained student choice in course selection,
 - Choir and Band offerings,
 - Math 2 For Freshmen,
 - Freshman Seminar and Career Exploration,
 - Average class sizes below 20,
 - Tier 1 interventions available for all - M-W-F,
 - Common Advisory – Tuesdays,
 - Tier 2 and 3 interventions during the 9th period,
- Expanding AP opportunities to senior Math students.

FY26 STAFFING RECOMMENDATION

Future-Focused Staffing

Instructional Staffing:

- Technology Integration Coach (1.0 FTE)
- Academic Coach (2.0 FTE)

Operational Staffing:

- Network Systems Manager (1.0 FTE)
- Citywide (Custodial Services 2.0 FTE (1 reallocation and 1 new position)
- District Receiving In-House Maintenance Position (1.0 New FTE)

Job Description Updates:

- Department Heads
- MTSS Coordinator
- Grant Specialist
- Student Engagement Specialist
- School Engagement Specialist

NON-TENURED TEACHERS FOR FY26

Start. Stay. Succeed.





Other Business



ZION-BENTON
TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT **126**
COMMITTED TO EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE



Update

Educator of the Year



We are proud to announce our District 126 nominees for the 2025 Lake County Educator of the Year Awards, which will be held on Wednesday, May 7, 2025, at the Lake County Fairgrounds:

Classroom High School Teacher:

Sarah Haske

Classroom Diverse Learner Teacher (ELL, SPED):

Mark Stave

School Administrator:

Andrew Stout

Student Support Personnel:

Colleen Newton

Educational Service Personnel:

Patricia Vargas

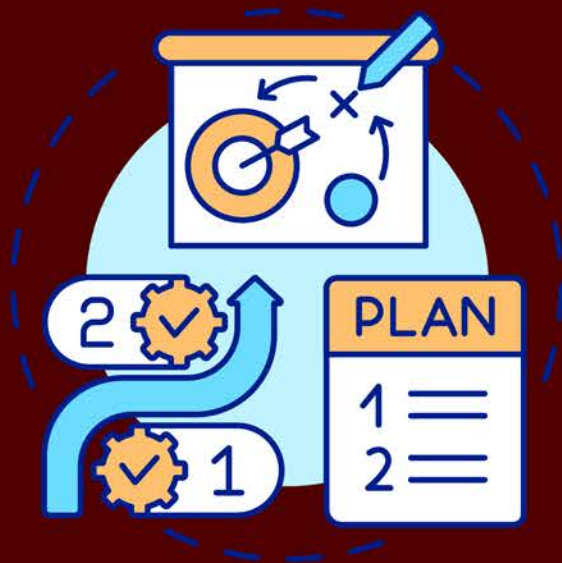
Mental Health Specialist (Student Support):

Robyn Ondo



Update

Vision 2030 Update



The New 5-Year Strategic Plan 2025-2030

*A Foundation for Accelerating District
126 Progress*

Table of Contents



1. Overview

2. Mission and Vision

3. Guiding Principles and Core Beliefs

4. Foundational Pillars

5. Future-Focused Learning

6. Shared Accountability

7. Predictable Funding

Overview



Vision 2030 will guide the Board the Education and superintendent to continuous improvement decisions that will determine future investments through the continuous improvement process as we strive for excellence through 2030

Mission, vision, goals, actions, mobilizing resources, regular measurement and allows for adjustment as needed.

Our District 126 strategic plan must be a living, breathing entity—a force of accountability that guides us through a clear roadmap of purposeful, continuous improvement.

This plan establishes strong alignment to the ISBE's Vision 2030.



Mission...

To promote self-worth, social responsibility & life-long learning in partnership with our community

Vision...

Empower students to thrive in today's global society





Guiding Principles & Core Beliefs

EMPOWERMENT: A safe and supportive learning environment that leads to self-confidence and social responsibility for **all members** of the school community.

EQUITY: Intentional implementation of equitable policies, processes, and practices to ensure students succeed academically, socially, and civically.

EXCELLENCE: Effective, efficient and sustainable fiscal practices to maximize learning and working opportunities for students **and staff** in partnership with the community.

Foundational Pillars



*Future-Focused
Learning*



*Shared
Accountability*



*Predictable
Funding*

Future-Focused Learning

District 126 Priorities & Commitments

- **Clearly define and support multiple measures of college and career readiness for day 721.**
 - Develop a system of learning for adults and students to enhance the Pathway to Proficiency and ensure preparation for and access to college and career learning pathways.
 - Develop an intentional technology integration plan that accelerates student readiness for day 721.
 - Develop a plan that includes tools and resources outlining the opportunities for support students will receive during their journey toward Goal 721.
- **Promote a safe and supportive learning environment**
 - Update the district/school crisis plan with best practices.
 - Ensure efficient operations by utilizing the strengths of our staff and faculty.
 - Implement an incident command post for District 126.
- **Focus on both the recruitment and retention of highly qualified staff**
 - **START**-Partner with higher education programs, ISBE and the Lake County ROE to benefit from alternative recruitment initiatives and alternative licensure pathways.
 - **STAY**-Develop new and enhance employee relations initiatives and celebrations.
 - **SUCCEED** Organize strategies to ensure all staff grow, develop within their roles, and reach their fullest potential.

Shared Accountability

District 126 Priorities & Commitments

- **Implement the District's Community Outreach Plan**
 - Create Opportunities For More Support, Mentorship, and Resources For Students, Staff, and Families.
 - Promote Community Engagement & Education.
 - Promote Public Awareness.
- **A focused partnership with foundational districts**
 - Collaborative Community & Family Engagement.
 - Improved Data Sharing & Intervention Support.
 - Successful Student Transition to High School.
- **Use and integrate the Illinois School Report Card**
 - Maintain a transparent commitment to the expectations of high schools in the state of IL.
 - Focus the district efforts on the growth and proficiency of student academic outcomes.
 - Use data from the report card to drive the district's continuous improvement efforts.

Predictable Funding

District 126 Priorities & Commitments

- **District 126 5-year Financial Plan**

- Revenue & Funding Forecasting.
- Expenditure Planning & Budget Priorities.
- Fiscal Responsibility & Contingency Planning.

- **Implement the 10-year Facilities Master Plan**

- Provide a safe and supportive learning environment that promotes a positive climate and culture for all students and staff.
- Provide future-focused learning environments that incorporate the key elements of 21st learning design.
- Create district environments that are places of pride and opportunity for all students and staff.

- **Establish a District 126 Foundation**

- Establish the essential components of a highly functioning school district foundation.
- Establish a process that directs funding to student-centered support.
- Establish a process that directs funding to teacher & staff support.

Measurable Indicators of Success

3 Key Performance Indicators per pillar

PILLAR 1 FUTURE-FOCUSED LEARNING

- 90% of graduates are college ready, career ready, and/or both
- Implementation of best practices for safety and security
- 90% retention for both certified and classified staff

PILLAR 2 Shared Accountability

- Increase in quality Community Partnerships
- Mutually beneficial collaboration and events with foundational districts
- Annual increase in the summative designation index scores for both high schools

PILLAR 3 Predicable Funding

- Annually maintain the highest bond rating and financial profile possible
- Leverage financial opportunities yearly to fund priorities outlined in the 10-year FMP
- By 2030 the Foundation will have established a \$100,000.00 seed endowment and will be raising an additional \$10,000.00 annually



Update

Capital Improvements



The committee continues to meet on a biweekly basis. We are gearing up for the start of demolition in the library spaces at both campuses beginning May 1. All other spaces will be turned over to Camosy on May 27. We are two weeks away from going out to bid on selected Summer 2026 project components.



Update

New Direction



The New Direction program launched its official integration at Zion Benton Township High School in February following a successful targeted recruitment phase.

The initiative has already served 82 participants, surpassing 50% of our projected enrollment goal. Notably, we exceeded our site capacity in February with 68 participants, which led to a natural reduction to our current 51 engaged students. We are actively seeking to fill the remaining 9 available slots.

INSPIRE

YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

Our approach is non-traditional yet highly effective, centering on consistent relationship-building with students.

Through weekly group mentorship sessions and bi-weekly 1:1 mentorship check-ins, we've created a safe and empowering environment. This structure allows our team to dig deep into each participant's growth areas and provide tailored support.





Core Program Features

-
- 1:1 Bi-weekly Mentorship
 - Weekly Group Sessions
 - Academic & GPA Tracking
 - Peer Tutoring for D/F Students
 - 'Transportation to Inspire Center



Looking Ahead

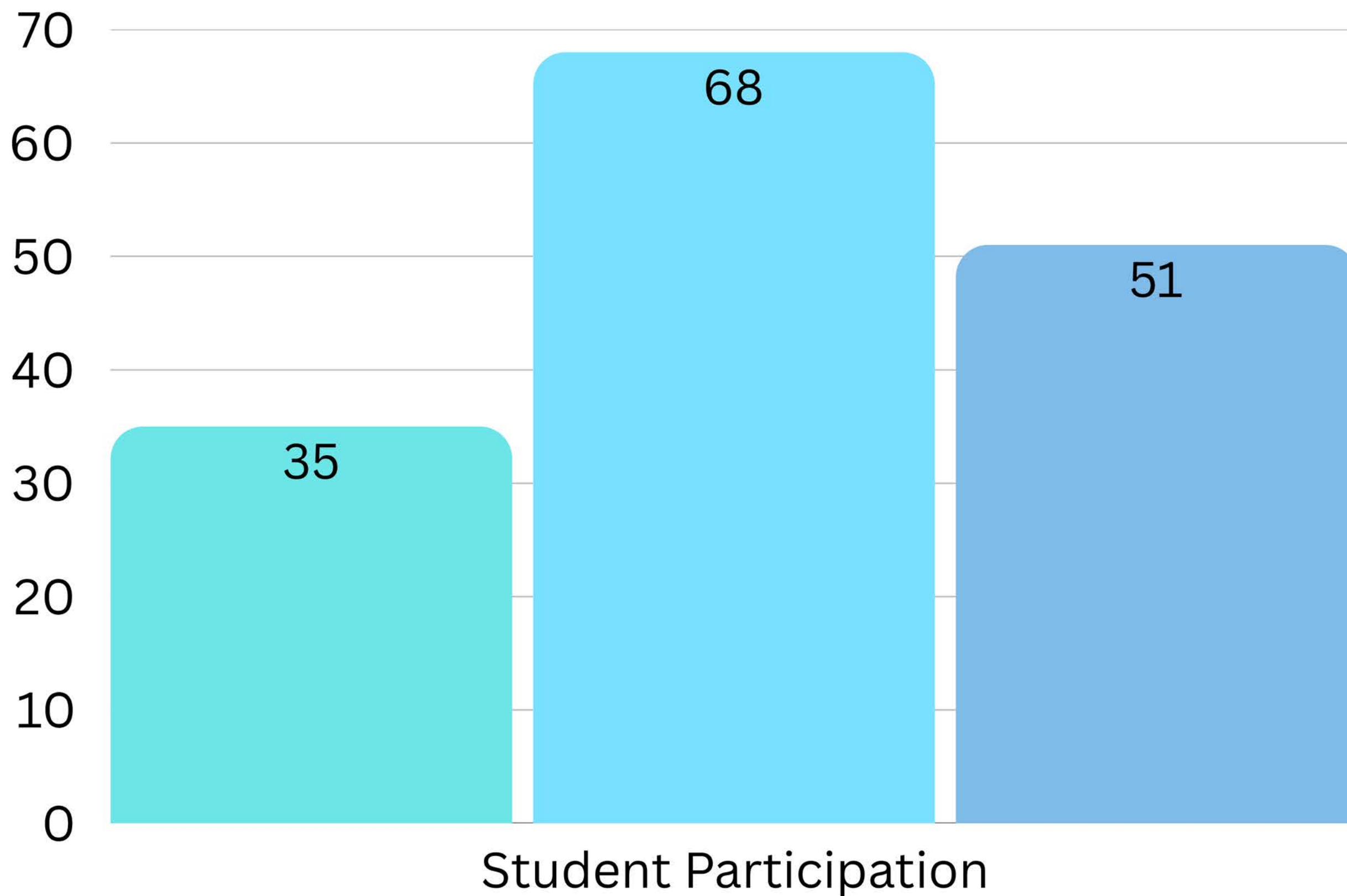
- Fill final 9 spots to reach full capacity
- Integrate New Direction programming into ZB East Campus with adjusted supports for younger students
- Expand tutoring and academic interventions
- Strengthen internal alignment with school services
- Track year-end impact for Q2 report
- Increase student storytelling across media





KEY DATA POINTS INCLUDE:

January February March



ATTENDANCE

FEBRUARY 68%

MARCH 78%

BEHAVIOR INCIDENTS

0%



“



"I didn't think I could catch up, but having people check in on me every week gave me the push I needed."

— Alan Maldonado

”



Update

FY26 Budget
Carousel
Recommendations

BUDGET



District 126

FY26 Original Budget Request

Totaling \$1,295,026

Instructional



Instruction Related Estimated \$78,500

- Volunteer Staffing
- Technology Integration Coach
- Reclassification of certified staffing
- Increase substitution rates
- Read 180 Program
- Community Outreach
- Parent Engagement

Programmatic



Program Related Estimated \$88,800

- Increase Encore Players' Budget
- Flag Football & Bowling Supplies
- Football Helmets
- IHSA State Finals Funding
- Reinstate Event Staffing
- Potential NJROTC Branded Activity Bus
- District Branding

Operational



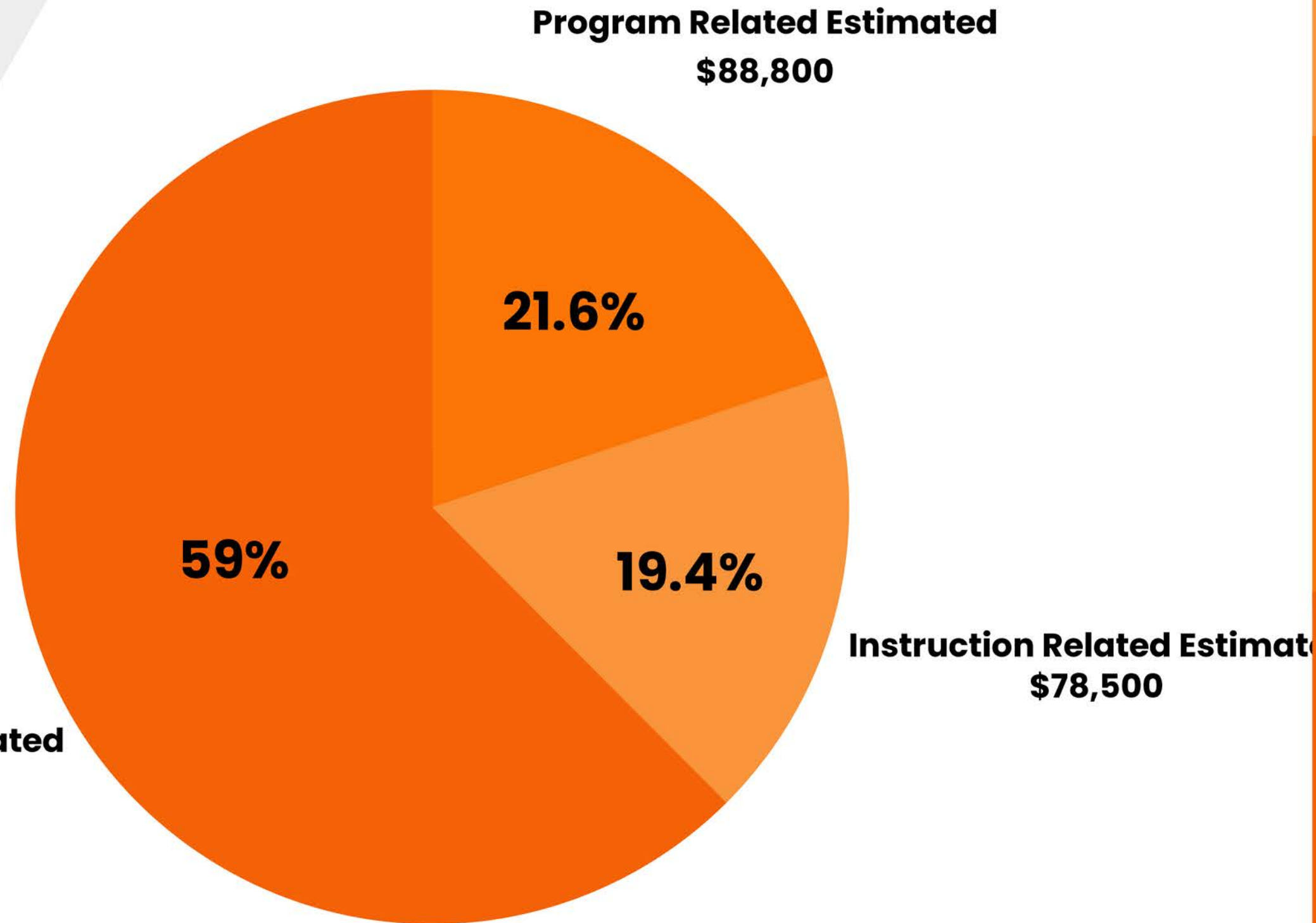
Operations Related Estimated \$278,395

- Cell Phone Lockers
- Culture & Climate Budget
- ZBE Door Safety Enhancement
- Increase Citywide custodial staffing
- Scanning to cloud services
- Skyward Upgrade
- Network Systems Manager
- Receiving Maintenance Position



FY26 Proposed Budget

Estimating \$445,695



Instruction Related Estimated \$78,500

- Volunteer Staffing
- Technology Integration Coach
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- Parent Engagement

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Closed Session



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