



April 2, 2025

Board of Education and
Mr. Jim Woell, CFO/CSBO
Zion Benton Township High School District No. 126
3901 W. 21st St.
Zion, IL 60099

Dear Mr. Woell:

The following represents our understanding of the service we will provide Zion Benton Township High School District No. 126.

You have requested that we audit financial statements of the governmental activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information (if any) of Zion Benton Township High School District No. 126, as of June 30, 2025, and for the year then ended and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise Zion Benton Township High School District No. 126's basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents.

In addition, we will audit the District's compliance over major federal award programs for the period ended June 30, 2025. We are pleased to confirm our acceptance and our understanding of this audit engagement by means of this letter.

Our audit will be conducted with the objectives of our expressing an opinion on each opinion unit and an opinion on compliance regarding the District's major federal award programs.

The objectives of our audit of the financial statements are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS) and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* of the Comptroller General of the United States of America will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements, including omissions, can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

The objectives of our compliance audit are to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence to form an opinion and report at the level specified in the governmental audit requirement about whether the District complied in all material respects with the applicable compliance requirements and identify audit and reporting requirements specified in the governmental audit requirement that are supplementary to GAAS and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* of the Comptroller General of the United States of America, if any, and perform procedures to address those requirements.

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America as promulgated by Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) require that management's discussion and analysis (MD&A) and budgetary comparison information be presented to supplement the basic financial statements. Such information, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. As part of our engagement, we will apply certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information (RSI) in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. These limited procedures will consist primarily of inquiries of management regarding their methods of measurement and presentation, and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We will not express an opinion or provide any form of assurance on the RSI. The following RSI is required by generally accepted accounting principles. This RSI will be subject to certain limited procedures but will not be audited:

1. Management's Discussion and Analysis
2. Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund – Schedule of Changes in Employer's Net Pension Liability and Related Ratios
3. Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund – Schedule of Employer Contribution
4. Teachers' Retirement System of the State of Illinois – Schedule of Employer's Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability
5. Teachers' Retirement System of the State of Illinois – Schedule of Employer Contribution
6. THIS Fund – Schedule of Employer's Proportionate Share of the Net OPEB Liability
7. THIS Fund – Schedule of Employer Contribution
8. Other Post-Employment Benefit – Schedule of Changes in the Employer's Net OPEB Liability and Related Ratios
9. Budgetary Comparison Information
10. Notes to Required Supplementary Information

Supplementary information other than RSI will accompany Zion Benton Township High School District No. 126's basic financial statements. We will subject the following supplementary information to the auditing procedures applied in our audit of the basic financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling the supplementary information to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves, and additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. We intend to provide an opinion on the following supplementary information in relation to the basic financial statements as a whole:

1. Combining Balance Sheet – General Fund
2. Combining Schedule of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances – General Fund
3. Budgetary Comparison Statements – Educational, Working Cash, Tort, Debt Service, Capital Projects Funds, and Fire Prevention and Safety Fund
4. Computation of Operating Expense Per Pupil and Per Capita Tuition Charge (except for the average daily attendance figure which will not be subject to the auditing procedures applied in our audit of the financial statements, and for which our auditor's report will disclaim on opinion)
5. Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards

Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards

We will subject the schedule of expenditures of federal awards to the auditing procedures applied in our audit of the basic financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling the schedule to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves, and additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. We intend to provide an opinion on whether the schedule of expenditures of federal awards is presented fairly in all material respects in relation to the financial statements as a whole.

Data Collection Form

Prior to the completion of our engagement, we will complete the sections of the Data Collection Form that are our responsibility. The form will summarize our audit findings, amounts and conclusions. It is management's responsibility to submit a reporting package including financial statements, schedule of expenditure of federal awards, summary schedule of prior audit findings and corrective action plan along with the Data Collection Form to the federal audit clearinghouse. The financial reporting package must be text searchable, unencrypted, and unlocked. Otherwise, the reporting package will not be accepted by the federal audit clearinghouse. We will assist you in the electronic submission and certification. You may request from us copies of our report for you to include with the reporting package submitted to pass-through entities.

The Data Collection Form is required to be submitted within the earlier of 30 days after receipt of our auditors' reports or nine months after the end of the audit period, unless specifically waived by a federal cognizant or oversight agency for audits. Data Collection Forms submitted untimely are one of the factors in assessing programs at a higher risk.

Audit of the Financial Statements

We will conduct our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General, issued by the United States of America, and the audit requirements of Title 2 U.S. Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements of Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance). As part of an audit of financial statements in accordance with GAAS, *Government Auditing Standards*, and the Uniform Guidance, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the District's internal control. However, we will communicate to you in writing concerning any significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in internal control relevant to the audit of the financial statements that we have identified during the audit.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- Conclude, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about Zion Benton Township High School District No. 126's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, together with the inherent limitations of internal control, an unavoidable risk that some material misstatements or noncompliance may not be detected exists, even though the audit is properly planned and performed in accordance with U.S. generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards* of the Comptroller General of the United States of America. Please note that the determination of abuse is subjective and *Government Auditing Standards* does not require auditors to detect abuse.

Our responsibility as auditors is limited to the period covered by our audit and does not extend to any other periods.

Audit of Major Program Compliance

Our audit of Zion Benton Township High School District No. 126's major federal award programs compliance will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Single Audit Act, as amended; and the Uniform Guidance, and will include tests of accounting records, a determination of major programs in accordance with the Uniform Guidance and other procedures we consider necessary to enable us to express such an opinion on major federal award program compliance and to render the required reports. We cannot provide assurance that an unmodified opinion on compliance will be expressed. Circumstances may arise in which it is necessary for us to modify our opinion or withdraw from the engagement.

The Uniform Guidance requires that we also plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether material noncompliance with applicable laws and regulations, the provisions of contracts and grant agreements applicable to major federal award programs, and the applicable compliance requirements occurred, whether due to fraud or error, and express an opinion on the District's compliance based on the audit. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS, *Government Auditing Standards*, and the Uniform Guidance will always detect material noncompliance when it exist. The risk of not detecting material noncompliance resulting from fraud is higher than for that resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Noncompliance with the compliance requirements is considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, it would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user of the report on compliance about the District's compliance with the requirements of the federal programs as a whole.

As part of compliance audit in accordance with GAAS and *Government Auditing Standards*, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also identify and assess the risk of material noncompliance, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks.

Our procedures will consist of determining major federal programs and, performing the applicable procedures described in the U.S. Office of Management and Budget OMB Compliance Supplement for the types of compliance requirements that could have a direct and material effect on each of the District's major programs, and performing such other procedures as we consider necessary in the circumstances. The purpose of those procedures will be to express an opinion on the District's compliance with requirements applicable to each of its major programs in our report on compliance issued pursuant to the Uniform Guidance.

Also, as required by the Uniform Guidance, we will obtain an understanding of the District's internal control over compliance relevant to the audit in order to design and perform tests of controls to evaluate the effectiveness of the design and operation of controls that we consider relevant to preventing or detecting material noncompliance with compliance requirements applicable to each of the District's major federal award programs. Our tests will be less in scope than would be necessary to render an opinion on these controls and, accordingly, no opinion will be expressed in our report. However, we will communicate to you, regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and any significant deficiencies and material weaknesses in internal control over compliance that we have identified during the audit.

We will issue a report on compliance that will include an opinion or disclaimer of opinion regarding the District's major federal award programs, and a report on internal controls over compliance that will report any significant deficiencies and material weaknesses identified; however, such report will not express an opinion on internal control.

Management Responsibilities

Our audit will be conducted on the basis that management and, when appropriate, those charged with governance acknowledge and understand that they have responsibility:

- a. For the preparation and fair presentation of the basic financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.
- b. For the design, implementation, and maintenance of the system of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.
- c. For identifying, in its accounts, all federal awards received and expended during the period and the federal programs under which they were received.
- d. For maintaining records that adequately identify the source and application of funds for federally funded activities.
- e. For preparing the schedule of expenditures of federal awards (including notes and noncash assistance received) in accordance with the Uniform Guidance.
- f. For designing, implementing, and maintaining effective internal control over federal awards that provides reasonable assurance that the District is managing federal awards in compliance with federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the federal awards.
- g. For identifying and ensuring that the District complies with federal laws, statutes, regulations, rules, provisions of contracts or grant agreements, and the terms and conditions of federal award programs and implementing systems designed to achieve compliance with applicable federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of federal award programs.
- h. For disclosing accurately, currently, and completely the financial results of each federal award in accordance with the requirements of the award.
- i. For identifying and providing report copies of previous audits, attestation engagement, or other studies that directly relate to the objectives of the audit, including whether related recommendations have been implemented.
- j. For taking prompt action when instances of noncompliance are identified.
- k. For addressing the findings and recommendations of auditors, for establishing and maintaining a process to track the status of such findings and recommendations and taking corrective action on reported audit findings from prior periods and preparing a summary schedule of prior audit findings.
- l. For following up and taking corrective action on current year audit findings and preparing a corrective action plan for such findings.
- m. For submitting the reporting package and data collection form to the appropriate parties.
- n. For making the auditor aware of any significant contractor relationships where the contractor is responsible for program compliance.
- o. To provide us with:
 - i. Access to all information of which management is aware that is relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements including the disclosures, and relevant to federal award programs, such as records, documentation, and other matters;
 - ii. Additional information that we may request from management for the purpose of the audit;
 - iii. Unrestricted access to persons within the District and others from whom we determine it necessary to obtain audit evidence.
- p. For adjusting the financial statements to correct material misstatements and confirming to us in the management representation letter that the effects of any uncorrected misstatements aggregated by us during the current engagement and pertaining to the current year period under audit are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial statements as a whole.
- q. For acceptance of nonattest services, including identifying the proper party to oversee nonattest work.
- r. For maintaining adequate records, selecting, and applying accounting principles, and safeguarding assets.
- s. For informing us of any known or suspected fraud affecting the District involving management, employees with significant role in the system of internal control and others where fraud could have a material effect on compliance.
- t. For the accuracy and completeness of all information provided
- u. For taking reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable and other sensitive information, and
- v. For confirming your understanding of your responsibilities as defined in this letter to us in your management representation letter.

With regard to the supplementary information referred to above, you acknowledge and understand your responsibility: (a) for the preparation of the supplementary information in accordance with GAAP; (b) to provide us with the appropriate written representations regarding supplementary information; (c) to include our report on the supplementary information in any document that contains the supplementary information and that indicates that we have reported on such supplementary information; and (d) to present the supplementary information with the audited basic financial statements, or if the supplementary information will not be presented with the audited basic financial statements, to make the audited basic financial statements readily available to the intended users of the supplementary information no later than the date of issuance by you of the supplementary information and our report thereon.

With regard to the schedule of expenditures of federal awards referred to above, you acknowledge and understand your responsibility (a) for the preparation of the schedule of expenditures of federal awards in accordance with the Uniform Guidance, (b) to provide us with the appropriate written representations regarding the schedule of expenditures of federal awards, (c) to include our report on the schedule of expenditures of federal awards in any document that contains the schedule of expenditures of federal awards and that indicates that we have reported on such schedule, and (d) to present the schedule of expenditures of federal awards with the audited financial statements, or if the schedule will not be presented with the audited financial statements, to make the audited basic financial statements readily available to the intended users of the schedule of expenditures of federal awards no later than the date of issuance by you of the schedule and our report thereon.

As part of our audit process, we will request from management and, when appropriate, those charged with governance, written confirmation concerning representations made to us in connection with the audit.

Nonattest Services

With respect to any nonattest services we perform, which includes preparation of the financial statements, Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards, related notes, Data Collection Form, Annual Financial Report, and workers' compensation payroll form; maintenance of fixed asset records; calculation of accrual entries, and any other nonattest services, we will not assume management responsibilities on behalf of Zion Benton Township High School District No. 126. However, we will provide advice and recommendations to assist management of Zion Benton Township High School District No. 126 in performing its responsibilities.

Zion Benton Township High School District No. 126's management is responsible for (a) making all management decisions and performing all management functions; (b) assigning a competent individual to oversee the services; (c) evaluating the adequacy of the services performed, (d) evaluating and accepting responsibility for the results of the services performed; and (e) designing, implementing, and maintaining the system of internal controls, including the process used to monitor the system of internal control.

Our responsibilities and limitations of the nonattest services are as follows:

- We will perform the services in accordance with applicable professional standards, including accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.
- The nonattest services are limited to the services noted above previously outlined. Our firm, in its sole professional judgment, reserves the right to refuse to do any procedure or take any action that could be construed as making management decisions or assuming management responsibilities, including determining account coding and approving journal entries.

Reporting

We will issue a written report upon completion of our audit of Zion Benton Township High School District No. 126's basic financial statements. Our report will be addressed to the Board of Education of Zion Benton Township High School District No. 126. Circumstances may arise in which our report may differ

from its expected form and content based on the results of our audit. Depending on the nature of these circumstances, it may be necessary for us to modify our opinions, add an emphasis-of-matter or other-matter paragraphs to our auditor's report, or if necessary, withdraw from the engagement. If our opinions on the basic financial statements are other than unmodified, we will discuss the reasons with you in advance. If, for any reason, we are unable to complete the audit or are unable to form or have not formed opinions, we may decline to express opinions or to issue a report as a result of this engagement.

In accordance with the requirements of *Government Auditing Standards*, we will also issue a written report describing the scope of our testing over internal control over financial reporting and over compliance with laws, regulations, and provisions of grants and contracts, including the results of that testing. However, providing an opinion on internal control and compliance over financial reporting will not be an objective of the audit and, therefore, no such opinion will be expressed.

In accordance with the Illinois Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) we will issue a written In Relation to Opinion on the Consolidated Year-End Financial Report (CYEFR).

Other

We understand that your employees will prepare all confirmations we request and will locate any documents or invoices selected by us for testing.

If you intend to publish or otherwise reproduce the financial statements and make reference to our firm, you agree to provide us with printers' proofs or masters for our review and approval before printing. You also agree to provide us with a copy of the final reproduced material for our approval before it is distributed.

Regarding the electronic dissemination of audited financial statements, including financial statements published electronically on your Internet website, you understand that electronic sites are a means to distribute information and, therefore, we are not required to read the information contained in these sites or to consider the consistency of other information in the electronic site with the original document.

Professional standards prohibit us from being the sole host and/or the sole storage for your financial and non-financial data. As such, it is your responsibility to maintain your original data and records and we cannot be responsible to maintain such original information. By signing this engagement letter, you affirm that you have all the data and records required to make your books and records complete.

Provisions of Engagement Administration, Timing and Fees

During the course of the engagement, we may communicate with you or your personnel via fax, e-mail, or portal, and you should be aware that communication in those mediums contains a risk of misdirected or intercepted communication.

The timing of our audit will be scheduled to begin on a mutually agreeable date.

Kevin Smith is the engagement partner for the audit services specified in this letter. His responsibilities include supervising Eccezion's services performed as part of this engagement and signing or authorizing another qualified firm representative to sign the audit report.

We have agreed that our fee for the audit examination, including the preparation of the financial statements, Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards, related notes, Data Collection Form, Annual Financial Report, and workers' compensation payroll form; maintenance of fixed asset records; calculation of accrual entries; and 'In Relation To' opinion on the Consolidated Year-End Financial Report (CYEFR) required for the GATA audit package, will not exceed \$48,000.00, and additional fees related to the implementation and testing required under the GASB 101 Compensated Absences will be a minimum of \$1,500.00. The actual fees may vary from the amount shown due to variations in conditions or additional audit procedures requested by the State of Illinois or other agencies. Fees for such additional services would be billed at our usual hourly rates. We would inform you if we were experiencing any

difficulty which would cause any increase in the base fee. We will progress bill for up to 75% of the contractual total upon completion of the fieldwork and the final bill will be issued at the time the draft reports are delivered. All services will be billed to you monthly, payable on receipt. Amounts unpaid after 60 days will be charged late fees at a rate of 1% per month in addition to costs of collection.

Whenever possible, we will attempt to use Zion Benton Township High School District No. 126's personnel to assist in the preparation of schedules and analyses of accounts. This effort could substantially reduce our time requirements and facilitate the timely conclusion of the audit. Further, we will be available during the year to consult with you on financial management and accounting matters of a routine nature.

During the course of the audit we may observe opportunities for economy in, or improved controls over, your operations. We will bring such matters to the attention of the appropriate level of management, either orally or in writing.

You agree to inform us of facts that may affect the basic financial statements of which you may become aware during the period from the date of the auditor's report to the date the financial statements are issued.

We agree to retain our audit documentation or workpaper for a period of at least five years from the date of our report.

At the conclusion of our audit engagement, we will communicate to the Board the following significant findings from the audit:

- Our view about the qualitative aspect of the District's significant accounting practices.
- Significant difficulties, if any, encountered during the audit.
- Uncorrected misstatements, other than those we believe are trivial, if any.
- Disagreements with management, if any.
- Other findings or issues, if any, arising from the audit that are, in our professional judgment, significant and relevant to those charged with governance regarding their oversight of the financial reporting process.
- Material, corrected misstatements that were brought to the attention of management as a result of our audit procedures.
- Representations we requested from management.
- Management's consultation with other accountants, if any, and
- Significant issues, if any, arising from the audit that were discussed, or the subject of correspondence, with management.

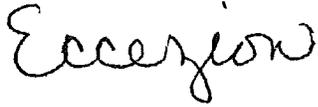
The audit documentation for this engagement is the property of Eccezion and constitutes confidential information. However, we may be requested to make certain audit documentation available to regulator's pursuant to authority given to it by law or regulation, or to peer reviewers. If requested, access to such audit documentation will be provided under the supervision of Eccezion's personnel. Furthermore, upon request, we may provide copies of selected audit documentation to regulators. The regulators may intend, or decide, to distribute the copies of information contained therein to others, including other governmental agencies.

In accordance with the requirements of *Government Auditing Standards*, we have attached a copy of our latest external peer review report of our firm for your consideration and files.

Please sign and return the attached copy of this letter to indicate your acknowledgement of, and agreement with, the agreement of our audit of the basic financial statements including our respective responsibilities.

We appreciate the opportunity to be your financial statement auditors and look forward to working with you and your staff.

Very truly yours,



Eccezion
Strategic Business Solutions

This letter correctly sets forth the understanding.

Acknowledged and agreed on behalf of Zion Benton Township High School District No. 126 by:

Name:  JAMES WHEEL

Title: CSBO

Date: 4/2/2025