

Memorandum

Zion-Benton Township High School District 126

Date: April 22, 2025

To: Board of Education

From: Dr. Jesse Rodriguez, Superintendent
Dr. James Woell, Chief of School Business Officer
Ms. Cynthia Moreno, Chief of Human Resources Officer
Dr. Melissa DiGangi, Executive Director of Academics
Mr. Jake Carlson, Executive Director of Student Services and Specialized Services
Ms. Bonnie Felske, Principal ZBTHS
Mr. Kevin Wiland, Principal ZBE

Re: 2025-26 Staffing Recommendations

FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE) STAFFING RECOMMENDATION

The administration has completed its analysis of 2025–26 registration data and recommends maintaining the current FTE allocations for the FY26 school year. This recommendation is based on student course selections and the operational needs of the District. Additional details and contributing factors are outlined below:

Additional Details and Contributing Factors:

ZBTHS

- FY25 student enrollment was 2,563; projected enrollment for FY26 is 2,451.
- The administration aims to maintain most course section sizes at or below 25 students, with few exceptions (e.g., PE and music).
- Courses within the education pathway, which support students with greater academic needs, are generally capped at around 20 students to provide enhanced instructional support.
- A contributing factor in the staffing plan includes continued exploration of expanding accelerated coursework opportunities, such as Dual Credit and Advanced Placement (AP) offerings.
- As is typical during the summer enrollment period and with schedule adjustments, some additional sections may be needed to address course overloads.

Zion-Benton East

- Dual Credit courses will continue through collaboration with the College of Lake County and ZBE faculty.
- Core Dual Credit subjects (Math, History, English, Digital Media, and Business) will be taught by ZBE teachers.
- Beginning Fall 2025, Communications will be offered by a ZBE teacher for the first time, completing the General Education Core Curriculum (GECC) package.
- The staffing plan supports:
 - Preservation of student choice in course selection
 - Continuation of Choir and Band programming
 - Math 2 for Freshmen
 - Freshman Seminar and Career Exploration courses
 - Maintaining average class sizes below 20 students
 - Tier 1 interventions available M–W–F
 - Common Advisory on Tuesdays
 - Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions during 9th period
 - Expansion of AP opportunities for senior Math students
- Staffing has been allocated to ensure effective and efficient day-to-day operations.

Upon examination of revenues versus expenditures for FY26, the administration recommends the following staffing changes:

Staffing:

Upon a comprehensive review of projected revenues and expenditures, the administration recommends the following staffing adjustments:

Position Reallocations and Additions

- **Technology Integration Specialist:** 1.0 FTE (certified staff reallocation)
- **Academic Coaches:** 2.0 FTE (certified staff reallocation)
- **Network Specialist:** 1.0 FTE (reallocation)
- **Citywide Custodial Services:** 2.0 FTE (1 reallocation, 1 new position)

- **District Receiving / In-House Maintenance:** 1.0 new FTE

Job Description Updates

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

These changes are intended to better align staffing roles and responsibilities with the District’s mission, vision, and Strategic Plan priorities.

Additional Details and Contributing Factors:

- The recommended changes in positions, job descriptions, and essential functions are aligned with the mission and vision of the district, along with the District’s Strategic Plan.

Non-Tenured Teachers and Administrators for 2025-26

The following non-tenured staff members are included as part of the recommended 2025-26 staffing plan.

Part-Time Teacher Renewal
Koss, Bonnie .8

First Year Certified Staff Advancing to Second Year
Art, Brien

Casado-Parejo, Yolanda
Cassidy, Ryan
Caswell, Teagen
Curtin, Ryan
Decker, Eric
Gavin, Anna
Gonzalez-Ramos, Sandra
Hersh, Thomas

Huizar, Sonia
Kelley, Joseph
Khemani, Hussain
Lin, Lauren
Martos-Vilchez, Purificacion
Matthews, Kayla
Medina, Carlos
Nunez, Zoe
Stone, Robert
Tarver, Lauren
Williams, Syncere
Wilson, Lemar
Woolard, Tina

Second Year Certified Staff Advancing to Third Year
Annexstad, Paul
Biar, Deb
Cardenas, Brandon
Garner, Christopher
Kim, Eunkyung (Grace)
McNeal, Courtney
Patterson, Jill
Pierce, Kathryn
Stommel, William

Second Year to Accelerated Tenure (2 Excellent Ratings)
Howard, Kyle
Jones, Sophia
Murray, Lana
Najera, Maricela

Third Year to Accelerated Tenure (2 Excellent Ratings in 3 Years)
Anderson, Cole
Bartlett, Kirsten
Diaz, Erika
Ianson, Chad
Larson, Erin
Martinez-Class, Maria
Oates, Sarah
Vazquez, Kayla

Third Year Certified Staff Advancing to Fourth Year
Captain, James
Steinmetz, Korey

Fourth Year Certified Staff Advancing to Tenure
Bresnahan, Madeline
Hamilton, Jeanne
Peiffer, Hanna
Swanson, Thor P.

Non-Tenured Teachers Resignations
Garcia-Rodriguez, Nuria
Gauger, Ann
Gerber, Jason
Gonzales, Marco

Recommended Non-Tenured Non-Renewals
Arrington, David
Kim, Daniel

Administrators Advancing Towards “Tenure”
Orozco, Omar
Wollney, Michael

RECOMMENDATION

The Board of Education of Zion-Benton Township High School District 126 accepts the superintendent’s recommendation to approve the 2025-26 staffing recommendations as presented.