

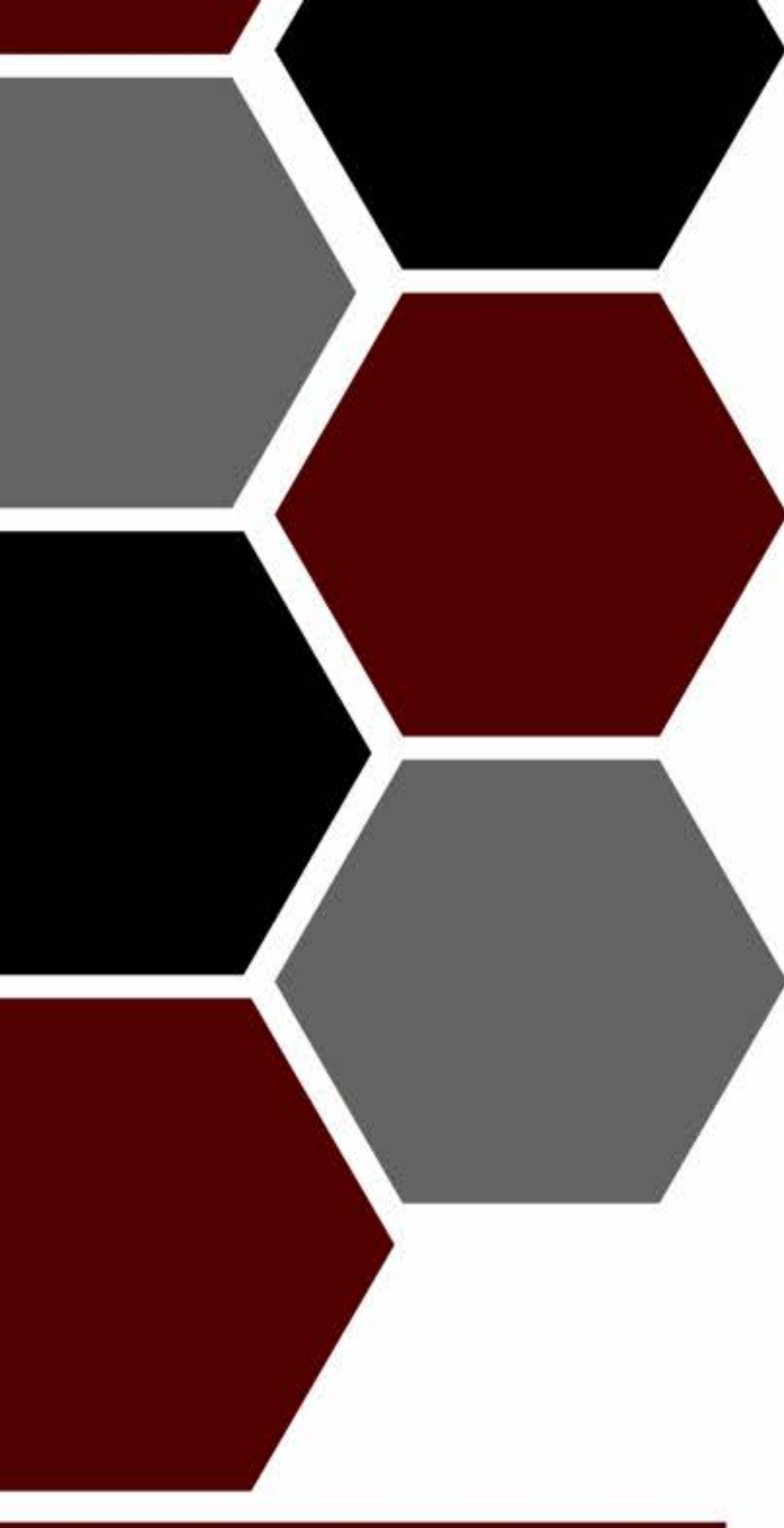


Board of Education Meeting

JUNE 24, 2025



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



ZB Pride Awards



ZION-BENTON
TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT **126**
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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.



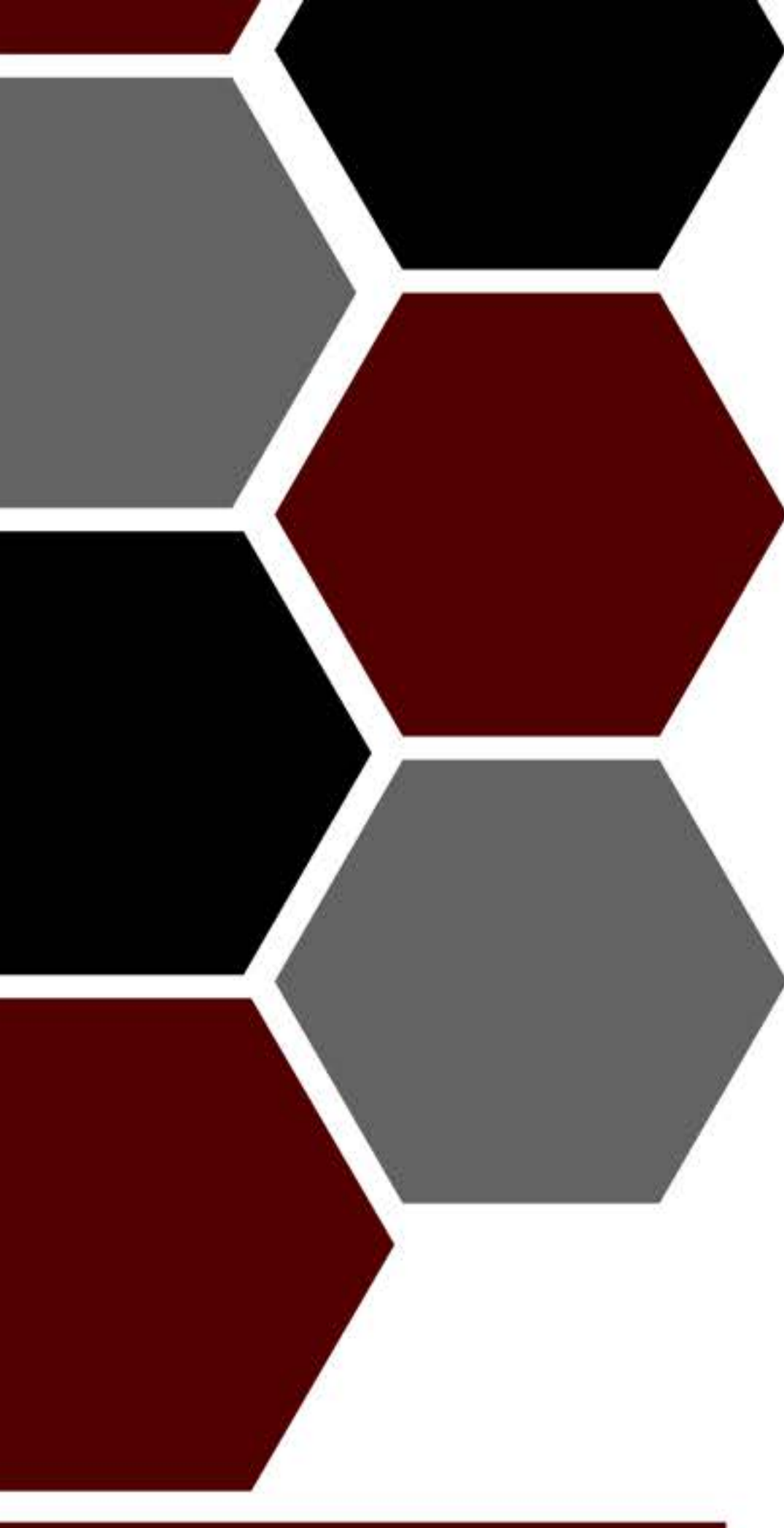
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Public Comment



ZION-BENTON
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Consent



ZION-BENTON
TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT **126**
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Superintendent Report



ZION-BENTON
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EMPOWERMENT - EQUITY - EXCELLENCE

**COMMITTED TO
EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE**

LEADERSHIP - LEARNING - RESEARCH - SERVICE



Summer School Programming

FRESHMEN FOCUSED



In **Team Building**, students are practicing their communication skills and incorporating the Growth Mindset while building cup pyramids. To add stress to the activity, the students can only use a rubber band with strings attached to it move the cups and are racing the clock.

A transitional experience for incoming 9th graders focused on:

- developing relationships with peers and high school staff
- problem solving skills through cooperative **team building**
- **social-emotional learning** (communication styles, conflict resolution, emotional regulation, and self-esteem)
- executive functioning skills, such as organization and time management
- foundational academic skills in **literacy** and **math**
- digital literacy

FRESHMEN FOCUSED TOUR



Ripple Effect

Freshmen Focused helped connect our incoming students with new opportunities!

In Session 1, three students signed up for the ZBTHS Running Camp after learning about it during the coach's presentation. A great example of how early engagement sparks involvement!

Over two exciting weeks, our incoming freshmen participated in Fresh Focus—a dynamic program designed to help them:

- ✓ Build teamwork and leadership skills
- ✓ Get familiar with high school expectations
- ✓ Tour the building and find their way with confidence
- ✓ Meet teachers, coaches, and staff
- ✓ Connect personally with Dr. Rodriguez

This experience set the tone for success—empowering students to enter high school with confidence, connection, and Zee-Bee pride! 🏆

SUMMER STINGER



Our self-contained special education summer program is off to a fantastic start, with weekly themes integrated into academic learning.

Students have explored topics such as diversity, meeting new teachers, and even the FIFA Club World Cup 2025.

Academically, they are practicing literacy skills and real-world math skills, including addition and calculator use.

Social Group lessons are helping students strengthen personal hygiene habits and navigate common summer challenges, while Speech Group activities focus on identifying objects used across different environments.

It's been a strong, engaging start to Summer Stinger!



Summer Events & Initiatives

NJROTC CAR SHOW



This exciting event wasn't just about cars and motorcycles—it was a celebration of student leadership, discipline, and community engagement.

Our NJROTC cadets worked hard to bring the event to life, and the support from attendees meant the world to them.

Your presence and encouragement inspired our students to continue striving for excellence, both in and beyond the classroom.

The event featured vendors, food trucks, and a stunning display of vehicles, all proudly showcasing the spirit and dedication of our school community.

IRRIGATION SYSTEM DONATION IN THE WORKS



Growing Together: Highlights & What's Ahead!

Ms. Bartlett from the Science Department will be the enthusiastic partner with Ms. Lahare's Supported Instructional Program.

She's currently working on an irrigation system donation for the greenhouse! We're also planning field trips to the Chicago Botanic Garden and College of Lake County—both will be scheduled in the fall.

Stay tuned for more updates as we head into the new school year!



GOING GREEN

Our First Two Electric Buses Have Arrived!

Zion-Benton proudly welcomed its first two electric school buses, marking an exciting step toward a cleaner, more sustainable future.

District administrators took the first ride and described the experience as:

- ✓ Smooth
- ✓ Quiet
- ✓ Impressively efficient

These buses represent our commitment to innovation, environmental responsibility, and providing the best for our students and community.

The future is electric—and it's rolling now at ZB!



Your top post

You got 70 reactions and 15 replies on this post!



Zion-Benton D126

4d

Check it out! 🚗🌱 Today our administrators took a ride around Zion in one of our brand new, grant-funded electric school buses! These bus...



70

6 Comments

APP IN THE APP STORE



Zion-Benton Twp. HS
126 - Apps on Google
Play

play.google.com



We're excited to announce that the ZBTHS app is now available in the Apple App Store and on the Google Play Store for Android users! Stay connected with the latest news, updates, and resources—right at your fingertips! Download it today and take ZB with you wherever you go! 🐝

IMPORTANT DATES

JULY 21-24:

Administrative
Retreat

JULY 29-31

New Staff
Academy

AUGUST 4

Back to
School Bash

AUGUST 13

Freshmen
Zero Day

AUGUST 11-12

Opening
Institute Days

AUGUST 14

First Day of
School

BEE BASH

Bee Bash 2025 is scheduled for Monday, August 4, from 4:00 to 6:30 PM in the northeast parking lot of Zion-Benton High School.

While many details are still being finalized, the event is shaping up to be a vibrant, free celebration to bring together families and students from all four school districts as we prepare for the new school year.

Attendees can look forward to 20–25 food trucks, free “Together We Can” t-shirts, community vendors offering information and school supplies, informational tables from each district, student performances, yard games, free haircuts, and a live DJ. Everything—from food to resources—is free of charge, and the focus is on community connection, celebration, and school pride.

Let's celebrate back to school with a

BASH

AUGUST 4TH
4-6:30 PM
IN THE ZBTHS
PARKING LOT

TOGETHER WE CAN!

Join us for this
free community event
hosted by our
community
school districts.

★ GAMES
★ LIVE MUSIC
★ FOOD TRUCKS
★ T-SHIRTS
★ + MORE!

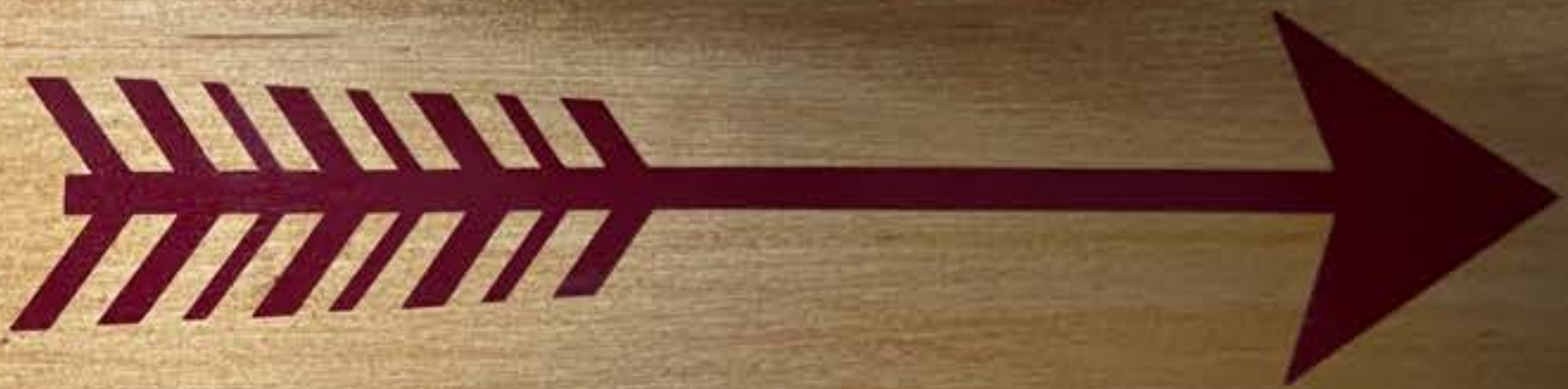
★ FREE SCHOOL SUPPLIES
★ REGISTRATION SUPPORT
★ COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

COME +
CELEBRATE WITH:



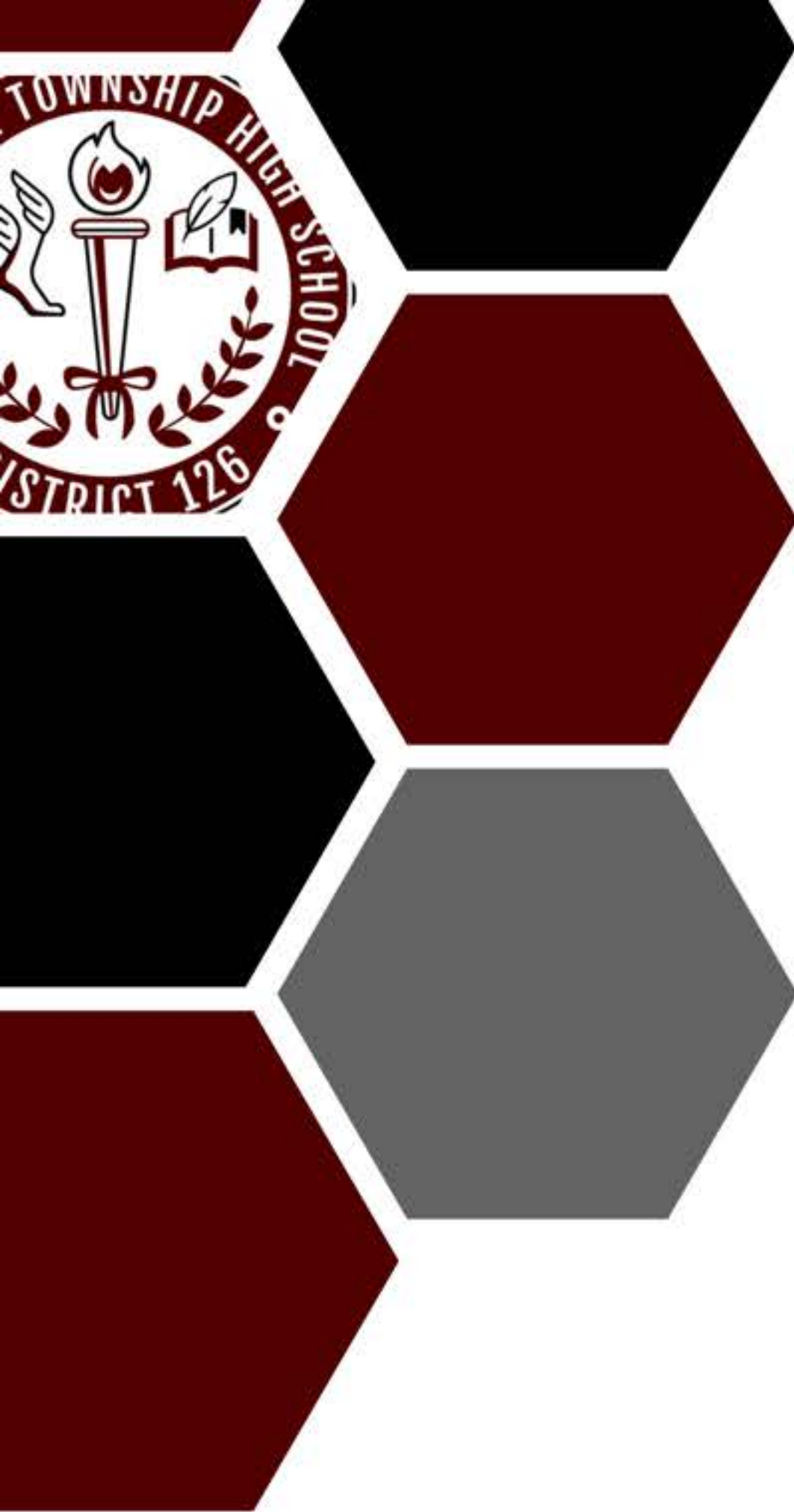
Hold The Vision

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**
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ZBTHS

Principal's Report

ZION-BENTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL



HOME OF THE ZEE BEES

BONNIE FELSKE
ZBTHS Principal
bonnie.felske@zb126.org



PRINCIPAL REPORT - JUNE 2025

Instructional Updates

June has been a busy and productive month focused on reflection, data analysis, and strategic planning for the upcoming school year. I've collaborated closely with our department heads and Dr. DiGangi to ensure that our planning is both thoughtful and purposeful, and that it aligns with the goals outlined in Vision 2030 as we prepare for a strong start to the new school year. Planning for the District Institute days in August are underway and the ZBTHS SIP plan outlining building goals for next year is almost complete. We have seen some positive gains this school year in our climate and culture, discipline data and attendance practices. As principal, I look forward to building on this positive momentum and continuing to provide excellent academic and extracurricular opportunities for students next year.

Operational Updates

Operations continued to run smooth as we finished out the 2024-25 school year. Various planned construction projects are underway and renovations have begun. The Maintenance department has begun working on summer projects and ensuring the building is clean and refreshed for the start of the new school year. Summer school session one is running smooth and will continue into July. Through collaboration with many departments, several operational procedures were evaluated for effectiveness. New protocols for fieldtrips, room reservations, and hallway passes will be implemented with the start of the school year. Finally, Maintenance has done a fantastic job of getting every classroom outfitted with a cell phone lock box so we are ready to implement our new "no electronic device policy" at the start of the school year.

Celebrations

class of
2025





ZBE

Principal's Report

Z·B·E PRINCIPAL'S REPORT



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

June 24, 2025

Instructional Updates

Summer school is well underway at ZB East, with strong student participation and positive momentum across all programs. We are especially proud of our Freshman Focus program this year, which is providing incoming freshmen with a strong foundation for their high school journey. Students are engaged in a comprehensive rotation that includes academic interventions, social-emotional learning, and team-building activities—ensuring a smooth and supportive transition into high school life.

Scheduling for the 2025–2026 school year has been successfully completed. In developing this year's schedule, our priority remained centered on meeting student needs while also ensuring that staff schedules are equitable, fiscally responsible, aligned with teacher strengths, considerate of individual preferences, and designed to promote instructional excellence.

Operational Updates

Our facilities are actively being improved to better support student success. Construction is in progress on a new library space that will enhance learning and collaboration opportunities for all students. Simultaneously, a new canopy is being added by the student entrance to improve accessibility and provide shelter in inclement weather.

We are also preparing for the rollout of our new Personal Electronic Device Policy. To support this initiative, cell phone storage units are currently being installed in every classroom. This proactive step is designed to promote a more focused and productive learning environment across the building.

Interest in ZB East continues to grow, especially among incoming freshmen. We have now conducted 13 recruitment presentations and continue to receive requests from families wishing to enroll their students. It is encouraging to see such enthusiasm for the programs and support we provide.





Committee Report

Business, Bid, Finance Committee



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Committee Report

Curriculum Committee



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Committee Report

Personnel Committee



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Committee Report

Policy Committee



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New Business



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TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT **126**
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Approval

Appointment of Board Representatives:
SEDOL, IASB, TIF





Public Hearing and Amended FY25 Budget



Purpose:

- To officially amend the 2024-25 annual budget of the district in accordance with Illinois School Code requirements.

Why the Amendment Is Needed:

- The original budget was adopted in September 2024
- New developments and/or financial realities require adjustments.
- Amendments ensure alignment with current fiscal conditions and program needs.

Legal Compliance:

- The amendment follows all required procedures:
 - Public inspection period of at least 30 days.
 - Public notice published in a local newspaper.
 - Public hearing held on June 24, 2025.
- In full compliance with:
 - School Code §17-1
 - Property Tax Code §18-50
 - Open Meetings Act



Public Hearing and Amended FY25 Budget



September Budget 2024:

- Budgeted Revenues: \$68,042,779
- Budgeted Expenses: \$66,774,925
- Surplus/Deficit: \$1,267,854

Amended June 2025:

- Budgeted Revenues: \$72,141,148
- Budgeted Expenses: \$70,438,334
- Surplus/Deficit: \$1,702,814

Projected Fund Balances for June 30, 2025:

- ED Fund (10): \$50,134,424
- O and M (20): \$3,782,356
- Debt Service (30): \$4,592,663
- Transportation (40): \$5,756,130
- IMRF/SS (50): \$1,451,851
- Capital Projects (60): \$410,744
- Working Cash (70): \$5,321,924
- Tort (80): \$463,309
- HLS (90): \$906,979



Approval

**Resolution to Adopt
Amended FY25 Budget**



Approval

FY26 Tentative Budget

For FY 26 we are looking at total budget revenues of \$80,678,809.

We are projecting total expenses of \$78,891,366

Surplus: \$1,787,443

We will plan on a transfer from the Ed Fund to Capital Projects during the 25-26 school year. We will plan on covering the EV bus purchases from existing Transportation Fund balances.

More details are present on the attached file in Board Docs



Approval

FY26 Tentative Department Budgets and Capital Requests



The Budget Carousel process has been completed. All departmental budgets have been finalized as much as possible for FY26. Most departments remain flat unless there is a good rationale for adjusting budgets up or down for the next fiscal year. The complete summary of department budgets was attached in Board Docs for your review.

Total Proposed Departmental Budget Increases: \$392,112

Total Proposed All Other Funds: \$1,441,871

Total Increase: \$1,833,983

Total Capital Requests FY26: \$3,278,995

Total Capital Requests FY25: \$1,898,211

Difference Y/Y: \$1,380,784

Biggest Driver, no pun intended, is \$1.4M for 10 electric buses.



Approval

10 Year Health/Life/Safety Survey



The 10 year HLS Study has been completed by Partners In Design. It has been submitted to the ISBE for review and approval.

The architect has estimated a cost of \$2,130,792 to address all of the findings from the study.

After reviewing the results of the study with Josh Gehrig, it is believed that many of the items listed will be corrected as we move through the implementation of the Facilities Master Plan. We also believe that many of the items will be able to be corrected by our in-house maintenance staff which will further reduce the actual costs.



Approval

EV Bus Infrastructure



To avoid Tariff and CPI increases 10 buses were ordered and will be delivered October 1, 2025.

Total cost of vehicles: 3.7M

Total of EPA Grant Funds: 2.8M

Make Ready Grant from ComEd: \$450,000

Total cost to District of vehicles only:
\$450,000

10 Charging units through State Bid contract with all peripherals: \$72,000

Installation of infrastructure to support new chargers: ~\$105,000

Currently working on additional grant/rebate funding for installation costs.



Approval

2025-2026 COTA Recommendation





Approval

2025-2026 OT Recommendation





Approval

2025-2026 SEDOL Contractual Service
Recommendation





Approval

2025-2026 SEDOL Itinerant Services





Approval

School Based Health Services
Recommendation





Approval

2025-2026 Psychological Services
Recommendation





First Reading: Press Plus Updates



What Are PRESS Plus Updates?

Supporting Illinois School Boards with Policy Guidance
PRESS Plus is a policy subscription service from the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) that provides school districts with:

Legally-vetted policy updates aligned with changes in:

- State and federal law
- Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) rules
- Court decisions and regulatory guidance

Why It Matters:

PRESS Plus helps boards stay current, reduce legal risk, and govern effectively—all while saving time and resources.

Let me know if you'd like a version with visuals, icons, or your district logo!

Release 11B

Human Resources: Update to meet compliance back to Title IX 2020 Standards

2:260 Uniform Grievance Procedure

5:10 Equal Employment Opportunity and Minority Recruitment

5:20 Workplace Harassment Prohibited

7:20 Harassment of Students Prohibited

7:180 Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment

7:255 Students Who are Parents, Expectant Parents, or Victims of Domestic or Sexual Violence

Update Non-Discrimination Coordinator and Title IX Coordinator



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Release 11B

4:15 Identity Protection - Policy to include Cyber security to protect personal identification

4:80 Accounting and Audits - Capital Assets value moved from 5000 to 10000

5:60 Expenses - LEGAL REFERENCE UPDATE

5:100 Staff Development Program - update language of teachers and admin to read all school personel
* Also stipulates at least one staff member is a resourcs for pregnant or victums of sexual assualt

6:150 Home and Hospital Instruction - Allows for at home learning for pregnancy related issues. - (up to 3 months)



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Release 11B

6:235 Access to Electronic Networks - USE of AI. - develop a district-wide AI policy. Responsible Use Guidelines

7:10 Equal Educational Opportunities - update to Protected Status to include: Military, unfavorable military discharge, reproductive health decisions

7:60 Residence allows for INTER DISTRICT transfers - parents/expectant parent/ victim of domestic abuse

7:70 Attendance and Truancy - allows for excused absences to fall under verified medical or therapeutic appointment For students who are parents, expectant parents, or victims of domestic or sexual violence, valid cause for absence also includes the fulfillment of a parenting responsibility and addressing circumstances resulting from domestic or sexual assault



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Release 11B

7:185 Teen Dating Violence Prohibited

7:190 Student Behavior - Explicitly defines Sexting.

- Defines Corporal Punishment - which is prohibited

7:200 Suspension Procedures - Provide supports during extended absences

- allowing families to have a representative with them in the process
- if sexual assault is alleged family, student and representative will NOT have access to the victim (but they can pose questions to the board to ask for them)

7:210 Expulsion Procedures - Must Inform parents they can have a representative



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Release 11B

7:250 Student Support Services - at least one staff member is a resource for pregnant or victims of sexual assault

7:270 Administering Medicines to Students
Students may possess Diabetes or Epilepsy Supplies as needed in accordance with medication action plan

7:315 Restrictions on Publications; High Schools Updated to reference definition of Sexting. -Adds language that ENCOURAGES or Incites students to violate board policies

7:340 Student Records - LEGAL REFERENCE UPDATE



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Other Business



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Capital Improvements Update

PLAN

DESIGN

CONSTRUCTION



Phase 1

Phase 2

Phase 3

The summer 2025 renovation and improvement projects continue to move forward. Demolition is nearly complete across all aspects and areas of the projects. Canopy footings have been poured at both buildings. New walls are being erected in the library spaces and things are moving along quite nicely.

The Summer 2026 planning process is well underway. We continue to meet bi-weekly and are close to a final rendition of the renovation of the transportation building and the bus lot as well as the supporting electrical infrastructure which will be designed to support an entirely electric bus fleet in the future.



ZBTHS Library



ZBTHS Kitchen



Main Fine Arts
Hallway





ZBE Library Space



New Canopy Footings ZBE



ZBE Library Space



Floor Sawcut for new plumbing



ZBE Library Space



Community Education Session Update



June 26 at 6 p.m.

The Tax Levy And Your Tax Bill First session will be from 6-6:30 p.m. with 15 minutes for Q and A.

All are welcome.

This is being pushed out and advertised on our SM platforms, our website and the new ZB126 App.



Update on Long Range Financial Plan



The Long Range Financial Planning Process (LRP) looks at historical revenues and expenses and projects anticipated revenues and expenses for the next 5 fiscal years.

As a rule, we have maintained a conservative approach to budgeting and have been gradually increasing fund balances with minimal deficit spending in specific funds. This trend is projected to continue even with dollars budgeted for FMP implementation.

Generally, we look at the four operating funds (Ed, O and M, Transportation and Working Cash plus our Tort fund for these projections. The other funds, Health Life Safety, Bond and Interest, IMRF/SS and Capital Projects are generally not included in the projections.



Update on Long Range Financial Plan

Historical Perspective Operating Funds:

Fund balances have grown from \$55.7M to \$65.7M over the last five years even with all of the construction and improvements being accomplished.

Expenses have also grown from \$51.8M to \$66.9M over the last five years.

Future Projections Operating Funds:

Fund Balances will continue to grow slowly from \$65.7M to \$81.6M if projections hold steady.

Expenses will also increase from \$66.9M to \$77.4M.

Board Policy 4:20 calls for fund balances to equate to 30-40% of annual revenues for each operating fund. The ISBE Financial Profile Score for Fund Balances carries a minimum requirement of 180 days Cash on Hand for a profile score of 4. Currently the District has just over 300 DCOH.



Update on Long Range Financial Plan

DCOH is calculated as follows:

Sum of total expenses from operating funds for the fiscal year: Education + O and M + Transportation (sometimes Working Cash is also included) Projected FY 26 expenses are \$71,149,330

Divide the total of expenses in these funds by 360 (days in an operational year)

Result is a daily operational operating expense (Projected FY 26 amount is \$197,637)

Total the cash on hand and investments in each of the operating funds at the end of a fiscal year. (Projected FY 26 amount is \$60,547,479)

$(\$71,149,330/360)=\$197,637$

$(\$60,547,479/\$197,637 = 306$ DCOH estimated for FY26



CEJA Grant Update



CEJA Grant Round 2 has been approved and we have received our Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). We will receive \$3,296,877.58 in reimbursable funds against our infrastructure improvements. There are periodic reports that must be filed with invoiced expenses for reimbursement. I am working with the same grant coordinator that helped us with Round 1.

The Round 3 CEJA grant application process has not yet opened. The new grant cycle will require a 75% abatement of received dollars. We are uncertain of the mechanism that will be used for this purpose and the District has engaged in communication with other taxing bodies to strategize a proactive and consistent approach in the development of these guidelines and communication.

Our plan would be to abate the 75% as required and then split the remaining 25% with 60% going to services and 40% going to infrastructure. This is preliminary in nature at this point and is subject to change as we receive more information and have further conversations with the Board.



NCA Cheer Camp





Closed Session



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