



OFFICIAL MEMO

To: Board of Education

From: Dr. Jesse J. Rodriguez

Date: March 18, 2025

Subject: Recommendation to approve the Facility Master Plan

Zion-Benton Township High School District 126 partnered with Wold Architects and Engineers to develop a Facilities Master Plan (FMP) through an inclusive, data-driven process. The goal was to assess facility needs and evaluate investment strategies aligned with the District's Guiding Principles, emphasizing flexibility, financial responsibility, and sustainability to support the evolving demands of 21st-century education.

The FMP serves as a strategic roadmap to guide future decisions based on stakeholder input and evolving needs. It is not a fixed directive but a framework for prioritizing projects as funding becomes available. By incorporating community feedback, Health Life Safety assessments, and financial considerations, the plan ensures investments align with both immediate and long-term goals. This structured approach allows the District to make informed, responsible decisions, balancing facility improvements with fiscal sustainability to create a safe, modern, and effective learning environment for all students.

Stakeholder Engagement & Key Priorities

The FMP process included input from over 400 students, 40 faculty and staff members, and 50 community members through group discussions and electronic surveys. This broad engagement ensured diverse perspectives were considered. Key priorities identified include:

- Quality learning environments
- Restroom upgrades
- Safety and security enhancements
- Wayfinding improvements
- Student well-being

The District remains committed to integrating diverse perspectives into its planning efforts, ensuring that facilities continue to meet the evolving needs of students and the community.

Investment Strategies & Implementation

With stakeholder input, the FMP Committee developed prioritized investment strategies for Board of Education consideration, including:

- Updating classroom finishes
- Upgrading multi- and single-user restrooms
- Addressing Health and Life Safety violations
- Adding air-conditioning to physical education spaces
- Renovating student locker rooms

While these are the top priorities, additional facility improvements may be addressed as resources allow. The plan also incorporates strategic design criteria to ensure cost-effective, future-ready solutions and recommends ongoing investments in infrastructure to support long-term facility sustainability.

Timeline & Next Steps

The Board of Education previously approved facility investments for 2025 and 2026. Given existing projects, newly prioritized investments will not begin before 2027. Implementation will be phased in alignment with the District's funding strategy and construction feasibility, ensuring minimal disruption and maximum efficiency.

Next steps include:

1. Finalizing the District's funding strategy
2. Board of Education prioritization of investment strategies
3. Developing a phased implementation timeline

By proactively addressing facility needs, Zion-Benton Township High School District 126 remains committed to maintaining safe, modern, and high-performing schools that support long-term student success.

Administration's Recommendation: The Board of Education of Zion-Benton Township High School District 126 accepts the Superintendent's recommendation to approve the Facility Master Plan.