

Memorandum

Zion-Benton Township High School District 126

DATE: March 18, 2025

TO: Board of Education

FROM: Dr. Jesse Rodriguez, Superintendent
Dr. Melissa DiGangi, Executive Director of Academics

RE: 2025-2026 Textbook Adoptions

TEXTBOOK ADOPTIONS

The District continues to be committed to reviewing its texts to ensure coursework includes texts that are the most up-to-date and relevant for the course content, objectives, and essential questions; are high-interest and engaging; relevant for students; and promote student choice, where appropriate. The selections proposed by supervisors and teachers at both campuses meet one or more of these criteria.

District

Summer Reading

The summer reading program has been a longstanding initiative designed to promote literacy and enrichment by maintaining students' exposure to academic language during the summer months. As the school year begins, English teachers incorporate these texts to foster relationships and develop foundational literacy skills.

Each year, the Summer Reading Committee, led by the ZBTHS school librarian, reviews and selects texts for each grade level. The reading lists are carefully curated to include high-interest books that reflect diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and reading levels. In recent years, the District has utilized Title I funds to ensure every student receives a copy of their chosen summer reading text.

Below are the proposed titles for the 2025–2026 school year. Some are new additions, while others replace titles that may be out of print. As ZBE explores ways to integrate summer reading into its instructional program, it will begin by embedding a selection at the 9th-grade level.

School	Grade Level	Text	Type
ZBE	9	<i>Look Both Ways</i>	This text is a replacement for <i>Voces Sin Fronteras</i> due to pricing and publication availability
ZBTHS	9	<i>All American Boys</i>	This text was previously approved and is returning to the 9th grade reading list
ZBTHS	10	<i>All my Rage</i>	Replacement text for <i>How Dare the Sun Rise</i> and <i>The Tomorrow Code</i> (both are out of print)
ZBTHS	11	<i>Devils Within</i> <i>The Inheritance Games</i>	Replacement text for <i>Sing Unburied Sing</i> and <i>Stuff Matters</i> based on student and teacher recommendations for more engaging texts for this grade level
ZBTHS	12	<i>Unwind</i> <i>Dear Martin</i>	Replacement texts for <i>Into the Beautiful North</i> , <i>Lives of Tao</i> , <i>The Alchemist</i> , and <i>The Book of Lost Things</i> based on pricing or publication availability

Myths and Composition

Both campuses offer Myths and Composition as an English elective or senior English choice for students. The current curriculum has an Asian Mythology unit. Both campuses are requesting the integration of the novel *American Born Chinese*. It provides insight into Asian mythology and generates connections to modern lessons today.

Zion-Benton Township High School

AP English Literature and Composition

The Kite Runner is a modern classic novel taught in a great number of schools for both its engaging subject matter and its accessible prose. It is a book we have taught here both for summer reading and as a choice text in Contemporary Texts. As the AP Literature curriculum

has become more focused on world literature, it fills a gap in our curriculum that caters to more diverse voices. *Pride and Prejudice* is a classic novel that is more readable than most classic novels, while at the same time providing accessible subject matter that has been made into two movies and a mini series. This will work perfectly both because of its readability and its fit into our multi-genre comparison and contrast essay. Both texts will be student purchased consumables.

Contemporary Texts and Composition

As the District aims to include more contemporary texts to support student choice and differentiation in the classroom, the District proposes adding *Patron Saints of Nothing* and *Deadline* as options for students to read within the Pay it Forward unit. Previously, all students read *Pay it Forward* during this unit focused on choices and social change. *Pay it Forward* will remain a selection for student choice, but students will now be able to choose from one of three texts. These books both provide a space to study how the characters make choices in their lives and the consequences and repercussions for their choices and how those choices affect others. The unit examines how characters can change themselves and the communities around them. Both texts will be student purchased consumables.

EL English Adoptions

In alignment with this expansion, the District is revising the curriculum for all four English courses to ensure appropriate scaffolding based on students' language proficiency. The curriculum prioritizes high-interest, engaging content while adhering to the national WIDA English Language Development standards for multilingual learners. Grounded in research on language acquisition—which indicates that second-language proficiency typically develops over four to seven years—the program gradually shifts from foundational skills to more authentic applications using extended texts as students' proficiency increases.

Course	WIDA Performance Levels	Texts
EL English 1	Level 1: Entering	<i>Lift: Welcome</i> (District Purchased) <i>Lift: Introduction</i> (District Purchased) Leveled Readers (District Purchased - Student Choice)
EL English 2	Level 1 & 2: Entering & Emerging	<i>Lift: Introduction</i> (District Purchased) <i>Lift: Fundamentals</i> (District

		Purchased) Leveled Readers (District Purchased - Student Choice)
EL English 3	Level 2 & 3: Emerging & Developing	<i>First Crossing: Stories About Teen Immigrants</i> (Student Purchased Consumable)
EL English 4	Level 3 & 4: Developing & Expanding	<i>Spare Parts</i> (Student Purchased Consumable)

World Language Adoptions

Several years ago, the World Language Department transitioned away from using textbooks as the foundation of their curriculum, instead developing common themes and outcomes across all languages at each level (e.g., Spanish 1 aligns with the same outcomes as German 1 and French 1) and emphasizing authentic sources for language acquisition. While this approach will remain—ensuring consistency in language outcomes and themes—the department has identified a continued need for textbooks to support learning.

With the proposed adoptions, course curricula will integrate both authentic resources that immerse students in the language and structured instruction through textbooks that reinforce language structure and conventions. To effectively reintegrate textbooks while accommodating diverse learning styles, the department is requesting e-text licenses for each student along with a classroom set of hard copies for additional support.

Course	Text
French 1	<i>Chemins 2026 Level 1</i>
German 1	<i>Mosaik 2026 Level 1</i>
Heritage (Spanish) 1	<i>Galería 2025 Level 1</i>
Spanish 1	<i>Senderos 2023 Level 1</i>

Zion-Benton East

Dual Credit Communications 121

2025-2026 will mark the first year the District will have a dual credit certified teacher to offer this course as part of the General Education Core Curriculum package offered at ZBE. The District is still awaiting information regarding what text (if any) we will be required to utilize for teaching this course. Because this is a CLC course, the District must use its required approved texts.

Dual Credit Digital Media

Dual Credit Digital Media has been using the same text since 2015. The text is outdated with the current technology. The proposed text *Graphic Design Portfolio 2025: Adobe InDesign, Illustrator & Photoshop* aligns to the most up-to-date software we utilize. Students will utilize the e-text version of the text for the course, with a small number of hard copies requested to support students who would benefit from a hard copy of the text while in class.

RECOMMENDATION: The Board of Education of Zion-Benton Township High School District 126 accepts the superintendent's recommendation to approve the 2025-2026 textbook adoptions as presented.