

Zionsville Community Schools

Board of School Trustees Meeting “Item for Consideration”

New Business Item 6c • Date: January 13, 2025

Course Adjustments to Middle School Program of Studies

Category:

<input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources, Personnel/Staffing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment	
<input type="checkbox"/> Finance, Budgeting, Accounting	<input type="checkbox"/> Student Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Board Policy
<input type="checkbox"/> Facilities, Transportation, Nutrition	<input type="checkbox"/> Community Relations	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Type of Board of Trustees Consideration Sought:

Action	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Report	<input type="checkbox"/>

Facts of this Matter:

Each school year, ZCS leaders assess new legislation and consider changes to required course work.

On December 11, 2024, the State board of Education passed new graduation requirements via a new high school diploma. Based on these changes, and to ensure ZCS students have choice and a strong foundation in sequential courses, we recommend adjustments to the middle school program of studies in the areas of World Language, Physical Education, and Preparing for College and Careers.

World Language:

ZCS believes that language learning leads to greater understanding of different cultures, opens more opportunities in secondary study, enhances problem-solving and critical thinking skills, and improves performance in other academic subjects. Developing proficiency in other languages also broadens career options, enhances a student's college application, and opens a range of post-secondary fields of study.

The new high school diploma's Honors Seal (similar to our current Academic Honors diploma) requires four (4) world language credits instead of six (6) to eight (8) credits. To establish a solid foundation in the World Language Level I course, we recommend adjusting the middle school offerings as follows:

We recommend restructuring our world language sequence so that our current Level I middle school courses will be taught over two years. Level II courses will no longer be taught in the middle school but will commence in the 9th grade year.

For the 2025-2026 School Year

Incoming 7th grade students who request a world language course will take the first year of the two year, Level I sequence, either Spanish Part 1 / French Part 1/ or Mandarin Part 1. The first half of Level I standards will be taught. World Language Level I as a standalone course will no longer be offered at the middle level.

8th grade students will continue their current plan, taking either Level II of their current language or Level 1b (if currently enrolled in 1a for the 2024-25 school year).

For the 2026-2027 School Year and Beyond

7th grade students will be enrolled in a language course (Spanish Part 1/French Part 1/ or Mandarin Part 1) as described above.

8th grade students will take the second year of the two year Level I sequence. (Spanish Part 2/French Part 2/ or Mandarin Part 2). The second half of Level I standards will be taught. World Language Level II as a standalone course will no longer be offered at the middle school.

As we do now for our Level I courses, no credit will be awarded for the two year Level I sequence.

Physical Education:

The new high school diploma requires one (1) physical education credit instead of two (2). The Indiana Department of Education is currently stating that Physical Education I, Physical Education II, and Elective Physical Education are the only courses that will meet this requirement. Currently, ZCS has a large percentage of students who take Physical Education I via an online platform in the summer. We believe that learning the Physical Education standards in person with a ZCS teacher will be a stronger, more comprehensive experience for our students. We recommend adjusting the middle school offerings as follows:

For the 2025-26 School Year and Beyond

8th grade students will take Physical Education I. This course will be awarded one (1) high school credit to fulfill the physical education course requirements for the new diploma. All five (5) Physical Education I standards will be taught.

Currently, other Indiana districts are offering Physical Education I in their middle schools and are finding it beneficial for their students.

Preparing for College and Careers:

Effective July 1, 2024, each school corporation, charter school, and state accredited non-public school must implement a career awareness course. This course is one of the required courses students must complete for high school graduation. For the 2024-25 school year, the ZCS Board of Trustees approved offering this course at ZMS and ZWMS to ensure all students receive this required instruction while we awaited State Board of Education approval of the new high school diploma. This one year approval ensured our current eighth grade students received this required course while not limiting their choices of other experiences.

Now that the new high school diploma has been approved, we recommend this course only be offered at high school for credit. The standards for the course align well with other high school course offerings to enrich our students' experiences.

For the 2025-26 School Year and Beyond

Preparing for College and Careers will only be offered at ZCHS for high school credit and will no longer be offered at ZMS or ZWMS.

Objective POSITIVES related to this item or approach:

Annual review of the course offerings in relation to new legislative mandates keep our course offerings compliant for our students. If approved, ZMS and ZWMS will adjust these courses in our program of studies offerings.

Objective NEGATIVES related to this item or approach:

None known.

Financial Implications, if any:

None known.

Opinion/Recommendation:

Recommend approval.

Suggested Wording for a Motion, if any:

I move to approve the course adjustments to the middle school program of studies as described starting in the 2025-2026 school year.