

Zionsville Community Schools

Board of School Trustees Meeting “Item for Consideration”

New Business 6e • Date: March 10, 2025

Student Handbooks – First Reading – No Action

Category:

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

Type of Board of Trustees Consideration Sought:

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

Facts of this Matter:

Each year the Board receives the proposed student handbooks for all levels. It is through this review and approval process that matters of parent and student notice about many school procedures, rules, expectations, and other notices are approved for conveyance to our students and their families. This is a first reading at which members of the administrative team will briefly share their process for preparing this year’s version of the books—which traditionally includes feedback from a set of stakeholders, review, and revision of sections pursuant to Indiana laws and rules, etc.

Background:

A working group of parents, teachers, and administrators meet to review the school handbooks at each level and offer feedback and suggestions for each school handbook. This information has been compiled for your review and consideration. We have separated the information by levels: district, elementary, middle, and high school.

Please note that page formatting and spacing, including alphabetizing sections where appropriate, will occur once the suggested edits are approved and deletions are accepted.

We have included a summary page of the changes for each category and a sample of each handbook.

District Boilerplate Section

Necessary changes to the district policy section included in all handbooks were referred to Mrs. Maggie Ioannacci, Program Director of Student Services, for revisions. Sections were reviewed by leads of Academic Services, Technology, Food Service, and Unified Student Services. Additionally, the district section was also reviewed by the Zionsville School Health Supervisor, Elissa Atkins, RN, MSN for recommended changes to all health information. Mrs. Ioannacci consulted with CCHA on all recommended updates and confirmed the language included all required legal notices and Student Discipline Rules. Mrs. Ioannacci and Assistant Superintendent Ms. Kris Devereaux collaborated to create a district section devoted to attendance, which was added to the boilerplate section of the handbook. The purpose of this section is to provide consistent guidance for students and parents at all levels, while each level may include level-specific attendance information. Mrs. Ioannacci and Ms. Devereaux reviewed this new section with the board’s counsel from CCHA to ensure it included information related to recently updated laws regarding attendance.

Updates to the boilerplate section of each level’s handbook will be made upon the Board’s approval.

Elementary Handbook

The Elementary Handbook Working Group, led by Principal Mrs. Jennifer Raycroft and Assistant Principal Mrs. Jodi Morrow, met for a digital meeting on January 29, 2025. Group participants attended one of two offered meeting times to learn about the handbook review process. Initial proposed edits were sent via a digital form and were due on February 7, 2025. The first draft was sent back to the group for a second round of edits. Those were due on February 19, 2025. The final draft of the document was shared with the working group on February 24, 2025.

Middle School Handbook

The ZCS middle schools' handbook working group was led by Mr. Craig Callahan, assistant principal at Zionsville Middle School, and Mr. Ramsay West, assistant principal at Zionsville West Middle School. The Middle School Handbook Working Group met at Zionsville Middle School on February 13th, 2025. Changes were made after much discussion on the 13th and sent out to members of the working group for final feedback by email. The ten working group members represented the key stakeholders of each school. The group consisted of a student, a parent, a teacher, a counselor, and an administrator from both middle schools in the district. A ZEA representative was included in this working group as well. Each member reviewed their own copy of the 2024-2025 handbook individually and submitted proposed changes as well as questions prior to the meeting where they then discussed these proposed changes together as a group. The Food Service Director and Athletic Directors shared changes with the working group that are reflected in the proposed handbook.

High School Handbook

A working group of students, teachers, parents, and administrators met on February 19, 2025, to discuss potential changes to the high school handbook. All working group members received a hard copy and the digital link to the handbook for their review. Assistant Principals Mr. Matt Walter and Ms. Maureen Borto presented proposed changes and gathered feedback. The working group provided quality input and made further suggestions. Additions and edits to the high school handbook presented to the board include revisions to: the definition of academic dishonesty, students making up their work during suspensions, graduation requirements, weighted grades, auditing of a class, schedule changes, arrival and departure times, expectations for our students in extra and co-curricular organization, and athletic revisions to reflect the use of Final Forms, new sports, and updates from the IHSAA. The team has also made grammatical and formatting changes for clarity.

Objective POSITIVES:

Annual review of student and parent handbooks allows for maintenance of current policy language and necessary updates. The working group input allows for feedback from constituents.

Objective NEGATIVES:

This is a significant amount of content for digestion, although on the whole, substantive changes are few.

Financial Implications related to this item or approach:

None.

Suggested Wording for a Motion, if any:

No action is requested for this first reading. The Board of School Trustees annually reviews and carefully considers matters such as discipline, attendance, grading, and other approaches to the way we do business with and for our students and their families. The handbook revisions will be included in the April meeting for final consideration.