

Zionsville Community Schools

Board of School Trustees Meeting "Item for Consideration"

Consent Agenda • Date: February 9, 2026

Out-of-State/Overnight Field Trip

Category:

Human Resources, Personnel/Staffing Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment
 Finance, Budgeting, Accounting Student Services Board Policy
 Facilities, Transportation, Nutrition Community Relations Other

Type of Board of Trustees Consideration Sought:

Action
Discussion
Report

Facts of this Matter:

ZWMS Social Studies Teacher Stacey Behrens and ZWMS French/Supplemental Teacher Christopher Hindsley will be the lead chaperones/organizers for this collaborative international travel experience. Zionsville West students completing their seventh-grade and eighth-grade years (rising eighth-grade students and freshman students) will be offered the opportunity to participate in this trip that will highlight the French language, French history, and French culture. Mrs. Behrens has coordinated the Zionsville West Washington, DC, trip for many years and has experience traveling with large groups of students. Mr. Hindsley has traveled domestically and internationally with student groups prior to his start at Zionsville Community Schools. Both teachers are excited about the opportunity to offer an international travel experience to Zionsville West students and feel confident with their abilities to plan and implement such a trip with the mission of ZCS in mind.

- Travel Destination and Dates:** This is a planned trip to Paris, France, and the Loire Valley during the summer of 2027. Tentative travel dates are from the end of June to the beginning of July 2027.
- Who is Attending:** ZWMS students who will be rising eighth graders and rising freshman at the end of the 2026-2027 school year and who choose to participate in this trip will attend.

Administrator Approving: Dr. Shawn Wooden

Transportation	Traveling students will meet at the Indianapolis International Airport for departure. We will travel via air to Paris Charles De Gaulle Airport (CDG) with a connecting flight in a city (yet to be determined). We will return flying from Paris Charles De Gaulle Airport (CDG) back to Indianapolis International Airport via a connecting flight at an airport yet to be determined.
Lodging	<p>Hotels are selected by EF for their safety, cleanliness, and location. Breakfast will be provided each morning at the hotel prior to departing for the day's events/visits. Breakfast is included in the cost of the trip and will either be a plated breakfast or a buffet.</p> <p>Chaperones will perform room checks at "lights out" times announced each night. The "lights out" time will be based on the day's activities and return time to the hotel. Students are expected to only be in their own room after "lights out" until the group meets for breakfast (provided by the hotel) the following day.</p> <p>Students will be roomed based on 2 or 3 occupancy, depending upon hotel availability. Accommodations meet the standards of a typical European hotel, with rooms featuring private bathrooms and multiple single or shared double beds.</p>

Parent Permission Obtained	Parent permission will be obtained via the registration and payment process. All parents will be required to complete and sign the ZCS Off-Campus Programs and Trips Information Form.
Cost to Students/Families	<p>There are no direct costs for ZCS. Financial elements handled through EF directly.</p> <p>The student travelers will pay \$4,509 (\$245 /month for 18 months). This amount includes flights, tours, breakfast, and dinner meals. Students can also expect to pay additional fees to obtain a passport, purchase snacks/meals in the airports, purchase lunches while on tour, and for spending money while sightseeing in France.</p> <p>EF does offer the opportunity for personal fundraising because each student receives their own unique and customizable fundraising page that is easy to share with friends and family. EF also offers a global citizenship scholarship application (1,000 awards per year).</p>
About Supervision	Zionsville West teachers, Stacey Behrens, and Christopher Hindsley, will lead the trip. Additional Zionsville West faculty will serve as chaperones if needed to meet supervision ratio needs. We anticipate parents of students who may travel with us. Parents would get background checks and be approved for travel in accordance with ZCS policies. During our time in France, we will be joined by an expert EF tour guide who will be with us throughout our visits and travel on the ground.
Trip Insurance Plan and Refund Procedure (if there is one)	<p>Global Travel protection is included with the tour price. It includes both pre-departure and post-departure benefits, including medical expense coverage that may apply on tour and tour cancellation coverage for specified reasons.</p> <p>Travelers may upgrade to “global travel protection plus” plan which has expanded cancellation protection.</p> <p>Refunds are provided in a tiered process depending on time remaining until trip from cancellation date and according to trip insurance plan.</p> <p>Standard example for cancellation 360 days or more prior to departure: Full refund less the \$95 non-refundable enrollment fee, all Non-Refundable Fees, and a \$100 cancellation fee.</p>
Group Safety	<p>Please refer to the EF travel documents attached.</p> <p>EF has an extensive global presence to support their best-in-the-industry experience in collaboration with U.S. and international authorities. Whether it's a worldwide pandemic or a sprained ankle, a missed flight or confusing medical paperwork, they've seen it all and have the resources to handle it.</p>

Objective POSITIVES related to this item or approach:

There are numerous positive outcomes related to this trip.

- **Cultural learning:** Firsthand exposure to other cultures, languages, food, and customs deepens global awareness and empathy.
- **Curriculum connections:** Real-world contexts for history, geography, language, art, science, and social studies standards.
- **Authentic language practice:** Opportunities for hearing/using another language in real-life situations.
- **Social development:** Builds independence, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving among peers. Additionally, provides real-world experience and reinforcement of acceptable travel norms and proper etiquette.
- **Perspective-taking:** Students compare their daily lives with others', fostering civic-mindedness, cultural connections, and critical thinking.
- **Memorable formative experiences:** Shared memories strengthen class community and school identity.
- **College/career awareness:** Exposure to international institutions, industries, or careers sparks future interests.
- **No Academic disruption:** Traveling during the summer minimizes conflicts with regular instruction and assessments and teacher substitute coverage; need for make-up work or alignment with standards.

Objective NEGATIVES related to this item or approach:

- **Cost & equity:** Travel can be expensive; risk of excluding lower-income students or creating pressure to fundraise.
- **Logistics complexity:** Passports/visas, travel insurance, medication management, dietary needs, and airport logistics and flight connections
- **Legal and consent issues:** Parental permission, medical authorizations, background checks for chaperones, and compliance with district/state policies.
- **Behavioral challenges:** Students traveling may encounter “culture shock” or experience “homesickness”; however, we are prepared to address “culture shock” prior to travel and assuage “homesickness” if it arises
- **Safety & health risks:** Illness, injury, political unrest, natural disasters, or travel complications will be managed through EF Global with 24/7 support.

Mitigation strategies

- Traveling using an experienced student travel company, like EF, provides robust planning and logistics coordination, professional guides to connect experience to academic standards and life-long learning goals, emergency medical assistance plans if needed, and travel insurance.
- Mr. Hindsley and Mrs. Behrens plan to require a series of pre-departure meetings (held at Zionsville West) to include mini lessons about the travel experience and also to formulate bonds between students and chaperones that will be traveling together on this trip. Pre-departure meetings will address topics that include:
 - Historical/cultural site preview
 - Cultural practices
 - Language basics
 - Travel etiquette