

# Zionsville Community Schools

*Board of School Trustees Meeting “Item for Consideration”*

**New Business Item 6i • Date: January 13, 2025**

## Universal Preschool & Other Child Care Fees

### Category:

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

In 2008, Zionsville Community Schools created ZCare as a separate, self-supporting entity within Zionsville Community Schools. ZCare included programs such as Before and After Care, Beyond the Kindergarten Bell, and Universal Preschool (UP). Under federal and state law, public schools must offer services to students requiring special education support upon their third birthday. Until 2008, ZCS paid the tuition for preschool aged children in need of these supports to attend childcare programs throughout the community to meet the requirements under IDEA and Article 7. By building a robust childcare program in Universal Preschool, ZCS has provided free developmental preschool services for eligible children supported with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). UP offerings made possible by ZCS employees ensure we meet federal requirements for developmental preschool children to learn alongside typically developing peers who participate in the fee-based program of UP.

For nearly twenty years, ZCS has provided high quality, needed services to our youth and families all around the year in safe and enriching school environments. For a time, nearly all preschool services were housed on the first floor of Boone Meadow Elementary. When Boone Meadow opened as a school serving middle school aged children and ultimately K-4 students, UP classrooms were established in each elementary school, as well as Zionsville West Middle School. As the district has continued to grow, the locations for UP have shifted in response. In most instances elementary campuses currently house just two classrooms of Universal Preschool. 200 students are currently enrolled in the fee-based UP program across our campus locations.

In addition to community growth impacting the enrollment in UP, Before and After Care (BAC) demand for services has also increased. By way of comparison, in fall 2009 ZCS supported 277 students with Before and After Care. In fall 2024, ZCS supported a total of 699 students with one of the options available via current Before and After Care programming. All ZCS childcare programs are self-supporting through the work of 115 full and part-time employees. The childcare offerings are just one division of the ZCS Office of Special Projects (OSP).

After analyzing the costs associated with the childcare programs and where we stand with similar offerings in our community and neighboring districts, we recommend a continuation of the current fee structure for the childcare offerings as we prepare for the 2025-2026 school year.

**Objective POSITIVES related to this item or approach:**

The district remains committed to providing quality opportunities and programs to families in our community. Maintaining the current fee structure for childcare programming will allow the district to cover staffing and infrastructure costs to support the childcare programs while offering an identified need within the community. These programs are self-supporting. Any additional revenues from the childcare offerings under OSP will continue to support various operations in ZCS, including the staffing of multiple individuals, most of whom are Education or Operations costs in every other school district in the state. Maintaining these high-quality childcare offerings is not only a positive benefit for the children and families who are served but is a fiscally responsible step for Zionsville Community Schools.

**Objective NEGATIVES related to this item or approach:**

None.

**Opinion/Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Board authorize the Leadership Team to maintain current pricing for childcare offerings in ZCS.

**Financial Implications, if any:**

None. The Extended Services fund is the destination for most OSP proceeds, including the revenues from childcare programming. All of the childcare offerings remain self-supported.

**Suggested Wording for a Motion, if any:**

I move to approve the continuation of the current fee structure for Universal Preschool, Bridge, Before/After Care, JAM, and summer camp as presented.