

Zachary Community School District

Strategic Funding Plan – Employee Compensation Tax Initiative Planning Document

The Zachary Community School District (ZCSD) has a long-standing tradition of excellence, consistently ranking among the top-performing school systems in Louisiana. Our success is rooted in the dedication of our educators, the strength of our academic programs, the support of our community, and the commitment to providing safe, innovative, and student-centered learning environments.

To maintain this standard and prepare for the future, the district has developed a Strategic Funding Plan that is directly tied to our Board-approved 2025-2030 Strategic Plan (linked on our website) and the proposed dedicated tax measure. This plan outlines how voter-approved revenues will be allocated to strengthen our workforce retention and recruitment opportunities, while protecting the programs that define our holistic student-centered approach by supporting the Three A's (Academics, Arts, and Athletics).

The priorities in this plan reflect our core belief that investing in people is investing in student success. Each priority is designed to address current challenges, anticipate future needs, and ensure fiscal accountability to the taxpayers of Zachary.

The Strategic Funding Plan is focused on how we will use this dedicated tax proposition:

- **Competitive Compensation:** Attracting and retaining the best educators and staff through market-leading salaries and benefits.

Every section of this plan includes explicit tax fund pledges, priority investment areas, and defined accountability and transparency requirements to ensure our continued tradition of strong stewardship of public funding. This document is both a roadmap for investment and a commitment to transparency. It demonstrates how the ZCSD will use dedicated funds to protect our tradition of excellence while preparing every student for success in college, career, and life.

Competitive Compensation

Commitment Statement:

The Zachary Community School District affirms its unwavering commitment to investing in the people who make student success possible. We believe that every child, whether in PreK or their final year of high school, deserves to learn from highly qualified, motivated, and well-supported educators and staff. We recognize that competitive compensation is not just a financial decision; it is a promise to value the professionalism, dedication, and expertise of our workforce.

Through the passage of this proposed tax measure, we will prioritize the recruitment, retention, and recognition of exceptional employees at every level. We are committed to ensuring that every dollar is allocated toward compensation and is used strategically and transparently to strengthen teaching, enhance learning, and support high-quality services for all students in the Zachary Community School District.

This funding will enable us to meet our staffing and compensation goals while continuing to use the district's general funds to sustain the exceptional programs that define the Zachary Community School District. These include high-quality core academics, comprehensive student support services, and expanded co-curricular opportunities—all of which enrich the student experience and prepare our learners for success in college, career, and life.

We pledge to:

- **Invest in People First:** Place the needs of our educators and support staff at the center of financial planning.
- **Honor Our Workforce:** Recognize the critical role of every staff member, from classroom teachers to bus drivers, custodians, and food service workers, in creating safe, supportive, and thriving schools.
- **Stay Competitive and Equitable:** Keep salaries and benefits at levels that attract and retain top talent, ensuring equity across positions and experience levels.
- **Maintain Transparency and Accountability:** Provide the community with annual reports detailing how funds are allocated and the measurable impacts on recruitment, retention, and student outcomes.
- **Protect and Enhance Student Programs:** Use general funds to continue investing in exceptional core academic offerings, student support, and co-curricular activities that define the Zachary Community School District experience.

Board Requirements to Use Funding:

- **Primary Use for Compensation Enhancements:** Tax plan funds must be directed toward achieving the district's initial benchmark goal of increasing teacher salaries by \$10,000 and support staff salaries by \$5,000 from the 2024–2025 salary schedule. This benchmark represents the first step in a long-term commitment to keeping the ZCSD's compensation among the most competitive in the state and region.
- **Sustainment of Benefits and Retirement Commitments:** While compensation increases are the immediate focus, maintaining strong benefits for both current and retired employees remains a critical priority. Funds will be allocated in a manner that protects the overall compensation package, ensuring long-term financial security for staff and retirees.

- **Alignment with Recruitment, Retention, and Future Benchmarks:** All compensation expenditures must directly support the recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers, support staff, and administrators. Beyond the initial benchmark raises, the Board will continue to establish and pursue future compensation targets to ensure the Zachary Community School District remains competitive, attracts top talent, and sustains excellence in teaching and learning.

Accountability and Transparency:

- **Administrative Review:** The Superintendent or designee will prepare a written analysis of any proposed compensation initiative, outlining scope, cost estimates, funding options considered, and the rationale for recommending the use of the tax plan revenues.
- **Board Authorization:** No compensation expenditure from tax plan revenues shall be made without formal approval by a vote of the Zachary Community School District School Board at a public meeting.
- **Public Transparency:** All approved compensation initiatives funded, in whole or in part, through the tax plan, will be reported annually as part of the district's budget presentation and published on the ZCSD website.

Example Compensation Investment Areas

PRIORITY INVESTMENT AREAS	STRATEGIC PLAN CONNECTION 2025-2030	GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION
CERTIFIED SALARIES AND BENEFITS	Initiative 1.6, 5.4, 6.2	<p>Provide competitive, market-leading salaries for certified educators to attract, develop, and retain high-quality teachers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Commit to achieving a \$60,000 starting teacher salary to make ZCSD one of Louisiana’s most competitive school districts through across-the-board raises for certified educators.</i>
SUPPORT STAFF SALARIES AND BENEFITS	Initiative 1.6, 5.4, 6.2	<p>Ensure all classified employees receive fair, competitive compensation that reflects the essential role they play in the district’s success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Raise the pay floor in identified positions to provide sustainable, market-competitive earnings for every position and implement increases that keep pace with surrounding districts.</i>
SUBSTITUTE PAY	Initiative 1.6, 5.4, 6.2	<p>Build a consistent pool of high-quality substitutes to reduce disruptions to student learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Maintain compensation rates for substitute teachers that are competitive with neighboring districts and reflective of the increasing demands of the role.</i>
PERFORMANCE & LEADERSHIP INCENTIVES	Initiative 1.6, 5.4, 6.2	<p>Recognize and reward educators who achieve exceptional results in student growth and academic achievement, and those who take on leadership roles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Expand incentives for educators who meet or exceed student achievement targets in VAM subjects and grades.</i> ● <i>Expand career ladder opportunities with added compensation for mentoring new teachers, leading professional development, or serving as school/district-level teacher leads/coaches.</i>
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMPENSATION	Initiative 1.6, 5.4, 6.2	<p>Expanded professional learning outside of regular contract hours, ensuring these opportunities are aligned with district priorities and tied to measurable improvements in student outcomes. Recognize and reward ongoing skill development, advanced certifications, and training that directly improve instructional quality and student support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Provide stipends for educators and staff who participate in professional learning outside of regular contract hours.</i>
RECRUITMENT INCENTIVES	Initiative 1.6, 5.4, 6.2	<p>Address staffing shortages, attract highly qualified educators, and provide equitable access to quality instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Maintain and expand targeted stipends for positions in state-identified shortage areas as well as other roles determined by district staffing needs.</i> ○ <i>Provide signing incentives for critical-need hires.</i>
RETIREE BENEFITS	Initiative 1.6, 5.4, 6.2	<p>Promote long-term service to the district by preserving trust in our retirement commitments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Honor commitments to retirees by maintaining quality benefit plans for retirees.</i>

<p>EXTRA DUTY & TEACHER LEADER PAY</p>	<p>Initiative 1.6, 5.4, 6.2</p>	<p>Maintain the district’s tradition of valuing and rewarding those who enhance student learning, leadership skills, and school culture through co-curricular and extracurricular involvement. (Comply with mandated state law hourly wage requirements for extra duty assignments, ensuring that these requirements do not hamper or reduce the district’s dedication to student activities beyond the classroom.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Continue to provide competitive stipends to educators and staff who take on significant responsibilities outside of the school day that improve instructional quality across the district.</i>
<p>COMPENSATION (EXTENDED ACADEMIC TIME)</p>	<p>Initiative 1.6, 5.4, 6.2</p>	<p>Expand efforts that give students the additional time and support needed to close learning gaps, accelerate progress, and build the skills necessary for long-term academic success, while ensuring staff are fairly compensated for their time, expertise and commitment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Provide additional pay for educators and staff who work beyond their standard contract hours to deliver extended learning opportunities — including targeted interventions that front-load instruction, individualized tutoring, after-school academic programs, and summer learning.</i>

Transparency and Accountability of Tax Plan Resources

Oversight of Funds

To ensure taxpayer dollars are managed responsibly and directed toward the priorities approved in the dedicated tax measure, the Zachary Community School District commits to the following oversight measures:

Annual Board Approval of Budgets

- The School Board will review and approve all budgets connected to the dedicated tax revenues each fiscal year.
- Funding allocations will be tied directly to the plan's stated priorities and goals.

Monthly Updates at Resource Committee Meetings

- District leadership will provide monthly progress and expenditure updates to the School Board.
- Updates will include spending-to-date, project milestones, staffing progress, and anticipated budget adjustments.

Annual Public "Impact Report"

The district will publish a detailed public report each year showing:

- Funds spent on the investment area (Compensation and Benefits).
- Progress toward stated goals (e.g., \$60,000 starting salary)
- Impact on recruitment, retention, student achievement, and program quality.

Independent Oversight & Audit

- External audits are conducted annually to ensure funds are used exclusively for the designated purposes.

Taxpayer Assurance Statement

The Zachary Community School District is committed to responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars. If, at any time, the objectives of this plan are fully met through alternative funding sources, or if the district determines that the revenues from this tax measure are no longer required to sustain the identified priorities, the district will take action to reduce or roll back the tax rate accordingly. This ensures that taxpayers are not asked to contribute more than is necessary to maintain the commitments outlined in this plan.