

Zachary Community School District
Adopted by ZCSB – 2 September 2025
Strategic Funding Plan – Priorities for Proposed Tax Measure 2025

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 tied directly 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, modernize our technology infrastructure, and maintain high-quality instructional facilities, all 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 and resources 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. Tax plan funding benchmarks must be met for Priority 1 before funding for Priority 2 and Priority 3 is considered for allocation.

The Strategic Funding Plan is organized into three areas based on the priority of funding expected:

1. **Competitive Compensation:** Attracting and retaining the best educators and staff through market-leading salaries and benefits.
2. **Technology:** Ensuring every student and teacher has access to the tools, training, and infrastructure needed for 21st-century learning.
3. **Facilities: Maintaining** and improving safe, functional, and engaging instructional spaces, with funding from this measure used only when other resources are unavailable.

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 ZCSD will use dedicated funds to protect our tradition of excellence while preparing every student for success in college, career, and life.

Statement of Intent:

This Strategic Funding Plan reflects the District's current goals for the proposed 2025 tax measure. It represents our good-faith projections based on today's needs and priorities. The Board reserves the right to adjust the use and allocation of funds as necessary to respond to evolving conditions and best serve students and the community. While this plan outlines our intentions, the final use of any funds may be adjusted to meet the evolving needs of our schools, as long as such is in compliance with the tax proposition approved by the voters.

Priority #1: 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 all levels. We will ensure that every dollar allocated toward compensation is used strategically, transparently, and to strengthen teaching, learning, and support services for all students in the Zachary Community School District.

This funding will allow us to meet our staffing and compensation goals while continuing to utilize the district's general funds to maintain the exceptional programs that make the ZCSD what it is today. These programs include high-quality core academics, strong student support services, and expanded co-curricular opportunities, all of which enrich our students' educational experience and prepare them 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 supports, and co-curricular activities that define the Zachary Community School District experience.

Board Requirements to Use Priority 1 Funding:

- **Primary Use for Compensation Enhancements:** Tax plan funds must be directed first and foremost 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 remain a critical priority. Funds will be used in ways that protect the overall compensation package, ensuring long-term financial security for staff and retirees.
- **Alignment with Recruitment, Retention, and Future Benchmarks:** All compensation expenditures must clearly 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 benchmarks to ensure the ZCSD remains highly competitive, attracts top talent, and sustains excellence in teaching and learning.

Priority 1 Accountability and Transparency:

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

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>
EXPANDED PAID TIME FOR TEACHERS/PARAPROFESSIONALS	Initiative 1.6, 5.4, 6.2	<p>Additional compensated days will allow educators to engage in professional learning, strengthen parent and community engagement, and address planning needed to ensure we address the academic needs of all students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Extend 9-month teacher contracts from 182 days to 185 days, with proportional adjustments for paraprofessionals, to provide dedicated time for planning, collaboration, curriculum alignment, and preparing for targeted student supports.</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	Promote long-term service to the district by preserving trust in our retirement commitments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Honor commitments to retirees by maintaining quality benefit plans for retirees.</i>
EXTRA DUTY & TEACHER LEADER PAY	Initiative 1.6, 5.4, 6.2	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.) <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>
COMPENSATION (EXTENDED ACADEMIC TIME)	Initiative 1.6, 5.4, 6.2	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. <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>

Priority #2: Technology

Commitment Statement:

The Zachary Community School District is committed to providing students and staff with modern, reliable, and innovative technology that enhances teaching, learning, and operational efficiency. In today's world, access to high-quality technology is not optional; it is essential for preparing students to succeed in college, career, and life.

Funding from the proposed tax measure will ensure that our classrooms, campuses, and district systems remain equipped with tools and infrastructure that support 21st-century learning. By investing in technology, we will strengthen digital literacy, improve instructional delivery, and maintain the systems that keep our schools safe, efficient, and connected.

Funds will be invested directly into infrastructure, cybersecurity, classroom devices, and digital learning resources that will benefit all 5,600 students, educators, and instructional support staff across the district. This plan ensures taxpayer dollars are used strategically, transparently, and for maximum student impact. This investment will also allow general funds to remain focused on sustaining the exceptional academic programs, student supports, and co-curricular opportunities that make the ZCSD a leader in education.

We pledge to:

- **Prioritize Student Access:** Ensure that every student has equitable access to devices, high-quality digital resources, and reliable internet connectivity.
- **Support Teachers:** Provide staff with the technology and training needed to deliver engaging, effective instruction.
- **Protect Infrastructure:** Maintain and upgrade the hardware, software, and network systems that power our schools.
- **Ensure Cybersecurity:** Safeguard student and staff data through robust security measures and compliance with all privacy regulations.
- **Plan for Sustainability:** Establish a replacement cycle for devices and infrastructure to prevent costly emergency replacements.

Board Requirements to Use Priority 2 Funding:

- **Project Scope and Instructional Impact:** The technology investment must directly support teaching, learning, operational efficiency, or student safety in ways that cannot be sustained without additional funding. Projects should be districtwide in scope or significantly improve instructional access and equity.
- **General Fund Limitation:** The cost of the technology project (devices, infrastructure, or cybersecurity upgrades) must exceed what can reasonably be purchased, replaced, or maintained within the current year's General Fund technology allocation.
- **Exhaustion of Alternative Funding:** All other potential funding streams—including federal programs, state allocations, grants, and restricted-use funds—must be evaluated and determined insufficient before Priority 2 funding may be used.

Priority 2 Accountability and Transparency:

- **Administrative Review:** The Superintendent or designee will prepare a written analysis of any proposed projects, detailing the scope, cost estimates, funding options considered, and the reason tax plan revenues are recommended for the requested expenditure.
- **Board Authorization:** No technology expenditure from tax plan revenues shall be made without a formal vote of the Zachary Community School District's School Board at a public meeting.
- **Public Transparency:** All approved technology projects funded, in part or whole, through the tax plan shall be reported annually in the district's budget presentation and posted on the district website.

Technology Investment Areas

POTENTIAL INVESTMENT AREAS	STRATEGIC PLAN CONNECTION 2025-2030	GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION
STUDENT DEVICES	Initiative 1.6, 6.4	Ensure all devices are current, functional, and capable of supporting instructional applications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Provide and maintain device access for students in grades PreK-12th grade.</i>
STAFF DEVICES	Initiative 1.6, 6.4	Ensure all teachers have access to modern, reliable technology and that every classroom is equipped with interactive instructional tools to improve engagement, support diverse learning styles, and enhance the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Supply each teacher with a mobile device and equip every classroom with interactive displays to enhance instruction and engagement</i>
INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY	Initiative 1.6, 6.4	Integrate modern, reliable instructional technology into every classroom to create engaging, interactive learning environments that support diverse learning needs, promote collaboration, and improve student achievement through effective use of digital tools and resources. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Maintain and expand interactive boards, document cameras, and other instructional tools that promote student engagement.</i> <i>Provide specialized software for STEM, career-tech, and other advanced programs</i>
NETWORK & INTERNET INFRASTRUCTURE	Initiative 6.4	Provide a secure, high-speed, and reliable district-wide network with sufficient capacity to support all instructional and operational needs, minimizing interrupted access to digital learning resources, online assessments, and communication tools across all campuses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Upgrade district-wide Wi-Fi, expand bandwidth, and add redundant high-speed internet to ensure reliable access for all campuses to support increased digital learning demands.</i>
CYBERSECURITY & DATA PROTECTION	Initiative 6.4	Implement a comprehensive, multi-layered cybersecurity framework that safeguards student and staff data, protects network integrity, and ensures compliance with all federal and state privacy regulations, while maintaining uninterrupted access to essential digital learning and operational systems. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Implement advanced cybersecurity measures to protect sensitive information.</i>
TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT & TRAINING	Initiative 6.4	Provide responsive, high-quality technical support and ongoing professional development to ensure educators and staff can effectively integrate technology into instruction, maximize the use of digital tools, and maintain uninterrupted learning and operational continuity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Compensate educators for ongoing professional development on integrating technology into instruction.</i> ○ <i>Maintain dedicated IT support for timely troubleshooting and repairs.</i>
LIFECYCLE & SUSTAINABILITY PLAN	Initiative 6.4	Establish a technology refresh cycle to replace outdated equipment before it fails.

Priority #3: Facilities

Commitment Statement

The Zachary Community School District recognizes that safe, well-maintained, and modern instructional spaces are essential for effective teaching and learning. Tax plan revenues allocated to Priority 3 (Facilities) are not intended to replace existing maintenance funding, but rather to serve as a supplemental resource for major facility needs that exceed the capacity of the annual budget or represent an emergency need in the future.

Our focus will be on upgrading and maintaining spaces where learning happens. This includes classrooms, science labs, libraries, and other student-centered instructional environments to ensure that all students and staff have safe, functional, and engaging spaces for teaching and learning.

We pledge to:

- **Prioritize Instructional Spaces:** Use funds solely for areas directly supporting teaching and learning.
- **Address Urgent Needs:** Focus on repairs or improvements that impact safety, health, or instructional effectiveness.
- **Protect Funds:** Use tax measure revenues for facilities only when other sources are insufficient.

Board Requirements to Use Priority 3 Funding:

- **Project Scale and Urgency:** The project involves significant capital repairs, replacements, or upgrades that are necessary for safety, compliance, or the continuation of high-quality instructional programs.
- **Budget Limitation:** The cost of the project cannot reasonably be absorbed within the current year's General Fund maintenance and operations budget.
- **Exhaustion of Alternative Funding:** All other viable funding sources, including restricted funds, grants, and reserves, have been reviewed and considered.

Priority 3 Accountability and Transparency:

- **Administrative Review:** The Superintendent or designee will prepare a written analysis of any proposed projects, detailing the scope, cost estimates, funding options considered, and the reason tax plan revenues are recommended for the requested expenditure.
- **Board Authorization:** No facilities expenditure from tax plan revenues shall be made without a formal vote of the Zachary Community School District's School Board at a public meeting.
- **Public Transparency:** All approved facilities projects funded, in part or whole, through the tax plan shall be reported annually in the district's budget presentation and posted on the district website.

Facility Investment Areas

POTENTIAL INVESTMENT AREAS	STRATEGIC PLAN CONNECTION 2025-2030	GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION
CLASSROOM & INSTRUCTIONAL SPACE UPGRADES	Initiative 3.1, 6.2	Modernize classrooms, libraries, and science labs to provide safe, engaging, and student-centered learning environments. Prioritize upgrades that directly impact teaching and learning effectiveness, including lighting, flooring, HVAC, and furniture improvements.
SAFETY & COMPLIANCE PROJECTS	Initiative 2.3, 3.1, 6.2	Address urgent facility needs tied to student and staff safety, including fire alarms, security systems, ADA compliance, and emergency egress. Ensure facilities meet state and federal regulations to protect all school community members.
MAJOR SYSTEMS REPLACEMENT (HVAC, ROOFING, ELECTRICAL, PLUMBING)	Initiative 3.1, 6.2	Fund large system replacements that exceed the annual maintenance budget. These projects are critical to ensuring uninterrupted instruction, reducing costly emergency repairs, and maintaining healthy, climate-controlled learning environments.
EMERGENCY RESPONSE & DISASTER RECOVERY	Initiative 2.3, 3.1, 6.2	Provide funding for facility needs following natural disasters, emergencies, or events that cause major disruption. Tax plan funds would supplement insurance or FEMA reimbursements when gaps exist, ensuring continuity of instruction.
GROWTH & CAPACITY NEEDS	Initiative 3.1, 6.2	While our 5-year demographic study does not show immediate systemic capacity issues, addressing overcrowding or future enrollment shifts by school or grade levels may need to be considered in the future.
ENERGY EFFICIENCY & SUSTAINABILITY	Initiative 3.1, 6.2	Invest in energy-efficient systems and infrastructure improvements (e.g., LED lighting, high-efficiency HVAC, water conservation measures) that reduce long-term operating costs and redirect savings to instructional programs.
ATHLETIC & ARTS FACILITIES (INSTRUCTIONAL USE)	Initiative 2.4, 3.1, 6.2	Support upgrades to gyms, performance spaces, and fine arts facilities when directly tied to instructional programs, ensuring students in athletics and arts have equitable, high-quality environments for skill development and performance. This effort would support our district's belief in holistic student experiences supported by the Three A's (Academics, Arts, and Athletics).

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 Board's Resource Committee.
- 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 by investment area (Compensation, Technology, Facilities).
- Progress toward stated goals (e.g., \$60,000 starting salary, one-to-one student device access).
- 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.

Implementation Sequence

The Zachary Community School District will fully fund and achieve the objectives of Priority #1: Competitive Compensation, including the goal of a \$60,000 starting teacher salary, before allocating funds to Priority #2: Technology. Priority #3: Facilities will only be addressed if general or emergency funds are not available.

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.