

Zion Elementary School District 6's plan to balance school populations and grade-level configurations to better support student learning. By thoughtfully aligning enrollment across buildings, the district ensures equitable access to staff, programs, and resources while maintaining strong classroom environments in every school. This initiative is grounded in data, guided by student needs, and focused on long-term stability for our schools.

Our district has an enrollment imbalance across school buildings, some schools are over capacity while others have significantly more space. This creates an inequity in the daily experience of our students. By rebalancing enrollment in relation to each building's capacity, we restore space equity so every child has the same opportunities regardless of which school they attend. Balanced buildings mean students can eat lunch in the gym, access shared spaces as intended, enjoy more flexible daily schedules, and build friendships beyond their own classroom. This change is about fairness, community, and giving every student the school experience they deserve.

Every child deserves the same quality of school experience, regardless of which building they attend.

Enrollment aligned to capacity means appropriate class sizes and stronger day-to-day learning environments.

Balanced buildings allow consistent, equitable staffing models that give every student access to qualified support.

Right-sizing now creates a sustainable foundation for programs, planning, and investment across the district

Every decision in this process starts and ends with one question: *What is best for students?*

CHALLENGES

- Under capacity at ZCMS and SPMS.
- Over capacity at West.
- Facility and programming inequities between middle schools (cafeteria, gyms, bleachers, Start Early land).
- Shared virtual learning for dual language and honors between the two current middle schools.
- Academic and engagement transition from 5th to 6th grade.
- Students are eating in classrooms rather than in centrally located spaces for eating.
- Benefits of enhancing collaboration among 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade teachers.
- Hiring challenges for some middle school subjects (e.g. science and dual language).
- Inquiries about permissive transfers and home-schools for 6th-8th graders.
- Limited flexible space at other schools *(related to future potential Beulah Park construction)*.

BENEFITS

- Enhances space usage at ZCMS and Shiloh and decreases students at West so no longer over capacity.
- Eliminates facility & programming inequities between middle schools (cafeteria, gyms, bleachers, Start Early land).
- Eliminates need for shared virtual learning for dual language and honors between the two current middle schools.
- Eliminates academic and engagement transition from 5th to 6th grade.
- Changes should allow for students to eat in centrally located spaces rather than classrooms.
- Enhances collaboration among 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade teachers.
- Teaching certificate flexibility (for a self-contained 5th/6th classroom, a PEL with an Elementary Education (1–6) endorsement is the applicable endorsement and does not require an additional middle school endorsement.)
- Substantially decreases the need for permissive transfers and home-school questions for 6th-8th graders.
- Allows for flexible space at Elmwood *(related to future potential Beulah Park construction)*.

Financial Considerations

STAFFING

Reconfiguration of staff
May lead to spending decrease if we are able to re-allocate teachers into positions currently filled by subcontractors/virtual teachers.

Professional Learning
Additional potential professional learning for teachers moving between middle school and Intermediate school.

Additional professional learning focus to align expectations in each grade i.e. 7th and 8th grade may have had different methodology at SPMS and ZCMS and staff may be mixed.

Considerations for Building Administration, Deans, SRO, etc.

Extra pay for staff who are moving
Classroom prep time (summer timecards) at 4 schools.

PROGRAMMING

Curriculum
Changes would align with current resources used by grade levels and the curriculum review cycles.

Review Exploratories
Specials classes, schedules and rooms for 5th-8th grade.

Music and Arts programming
SPMS has superior music room, but higher level band may be at ZCMS.

Supplies and Materials

Parity Concerns
This transition would help the parity issues that arose in the Master Facility Plan to make the facilities and classroom environment equitable between the two Middle Schools.

DUAL LANGUAGE

Enrollment

Pre-K: Lakeview
K-2: East Elementary
3-4: West Elementary
5-6: Shiloh Park Intermediate
7-8: Zion Central Middle School

The number of students in each grade level should be reviewed to determine number of sections needed. There are 4 sections of dual language for K-2, but only 3 sections of 24-28 in 3rd-5th grade

Audit findings/solutions

Hard-to-fill dual language teaching positions

COMPLIANCE

5th Grade Recess

Special Education Considerations

ADDITIONAL

Moving out of the mobile at Elmwood

Potential additional reconfiguration at Elmwood

Additional potential moves as there may still be an enrollment imbalance between West and Elmwood

COLLABORATIVE TRANSITION

