



# 2023-24 SCHOOLHOUSE

## MT. ZION SCHOOL DISTRICT #3

MMXXIII



Jeffrey Sams  
Board President



Nathan Brock  
Board Vice President



Michelle Shumaker  
Board Secretary



Regan Deering  
Board Member



Kyle Janvrin  
Board Member



Kent Newton  
Board Member



Kristi Niles  
Board Member

### School Start Times:

Grades 7-12.....7:45 a.m.

Grades K-6.....8:30 a.m.

### Early Dismissal Times:

Aug 16, Dec 20 & the last day of school

Grades 7-12.....11:05 a.m.

Grades K-6.....11:35 a.m.

### Regular Dismissal Times:

Aug 17 & each regular school day after that

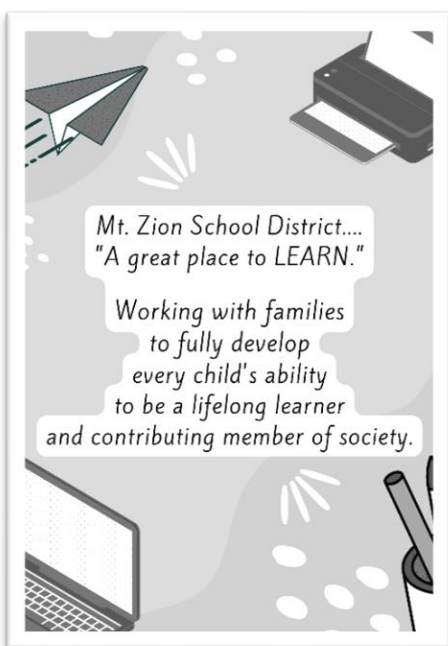
Grades 7-12.....2:30 p.m.

Grades K-6.....3:00 p.m.

### **SUPERINTENDENT**



Dr. Travis R. Roundcount



We would like to welcome everyone to the 2023-2024 school year! I've [attached](#) the school calendar so everyone can plan accordingly. All faculty, staff, and administrators of the Mt. Zion School District will start the new school year with a teacher's in-services on August 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. The district has scheduled department/grade level meetings, building meetings, and other organizational meetings for the faculty during those days. Students will return to the classroom on Wednesday, August 16<sup>th</sup>, with a half-day dismissal. Regular bus transportation will be available on August 16<sup>th</sup>. Parents with special circumstances or questions regarding any aspect of the educational programs or activities for the 2023-2024 school year are encouraged to contact the building principals or central office administration.

We have a tremendous group of faculty and staff returning for this coming school year. Our teachers have performed at the highest level in addressing our student's needs, and we appreciate all of their talents and efforts. Additionally, we are hiring a few additional positions for next year, including a Dean of Students at the JH, Kelly Fox. Mrs. Fox has already been working with our district students for 28 years, and she has contributed towards our student's success inside and outside the classroom. We are excited to have her join our administrative

team! This year we added a second teacher for our English Learners (EL) program. As we change when the needs change, we will now have one EL teacher for elementary students, and one for the secondary students. We also have a full-time social worker at each school, two additional elementary teachers, and two additional special education teachers this fall. Our BASAP director is also new to her position this year. Mrs. Kristina McKean was on our BASAP staff, but this year she was promoted to director after the retirement of Mrs. Rutherford. Mrs. McKean is familiar with the students and the program, and she is available to assist you with your before and after school supervision needs. See her article and contact information later in this document if you have interest in the BASAP program, or if you are interested in working on her staff.

We continue to update our security procedures and equipment annually to stay up with the best practices and safety recommendations. While we have about 200 security cameras, they are often used to assess what already took place. Therefore, our district also puts time and resources into prevention. While I would love to share all of our security enhancements, providing that information communitywide could weaken our security plan. I would be happy to talk with parents individually if you have questions, but the general information I can provide is that we have taken great strides to limit the access of intruders, and we are continuing to do more. While limited access to the building is an inconvenience for parents and families, it increases the safety of our kids and everyone in the building. The Mt. Zion Police Department, other local law enforcement agencies, our school police officer, and our school district would like to remind everyone that our emergency response plan includes immediate actions by law enforcement to eliminate any threat. Safety continues to be a top priority.

Regarding facilities, we are busy this summer remodeling the JH/HS cafeteria and a special education classroom. The cafeteria will allow for better lunch times, and a better daily instructional schedule. The special education classroom will allow us to better prepare our self-contained special education students for life after high school through the use of additional appliances and equipment to further develop essential life skills. The gym floors at Mt. Zion Grade, Intermediate School, and the High School are all being resurfaced this summer. Attached are images of our construction progress at the time this was written in June. All of these projects are scheduled to reach substantial completion before the school year begins. We are also doing future planning for the replacement of the High School boilers and Intermediate and Grade School air conditioning units. These items are being bid to contractors, and will be replaced over the course of the next year.

### Construction Pictures- High School Gym Floor



### JH/HS Cafeteria Becoming All One Level



### High School Special Education Classroom Remodel



I hope everyone is enjoying their summer and know that we have many great things happening to make this school year a success!

### RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

Per the Illinois School Code, permanent records must indicate that the parent/legal guardian resides within the boundaries of this school district. Families who are new to the District or families enrolling new students in the District must observe the residency requirements [found here](#). The residency documents must be provided to school personnel in the building where the student will attend.

## MT. ZION FOUNDATION FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

We are fortunate to have the Mt. Zion Foundation assist our schools with items that fall outside of the school budget. The Mt. Zion Foundation for Quality Education is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization governed by a Board of Trustees whose members are parent volunteers, business leaders, and professionals from the community with a commitment to education. The Foundation operates as an independent entity, established to enrich programs throughout the Mt. Zion Schools. In 2023 the Foundation will again extend its support by allowing teachers to submit mini-grants for various items they want for their students. These items would be valued at or under \$200, and the Foundation covers the cost. To donate please follow [this link](#). If you would like to provide the Foundation an extra hand please email [mzfge@mtzschools.org](mailto:mzfge@mtzschools.org).

We will have excitement this year as a result of the Foundation's contribution towards the cost of purchasing various items in all grade levels including Interactive and non-interactive flat-panel TVs, PE Supplies, science materials, band equipment, books, curricular supplies, as well as materials needed to support the TRIBE freshman orientation and special education. During the past 30 years, the Mt. Zion Foundation for Quality Education has provided over 1.9 million dollars for projects including the purchase of items such as: Chromebooks, video equipment, band instruments, classroom audio/visual equipment, Kindles and E-books, science equipment, live streaming equipment, reading software and books, program support, flexible seating, document cameras, and IPADs.

Mt. Zion is fortunate to have the following individuals as Foundation for Quality Education Trustees for the 2023-2024 school year: Zach Anderson, Jessica Allen, Katy Doolin, Trisha Erickson, Lisa Flora, Jamie Foster, Ross Munsterman, Billy Rockey, Michelle Shumaker, Mary Swartz, Betsy Tanner, and Kristen Thompson. To continue our success, our schools are staffed with dedicated men and women who are committed to providing our children with an excellent education in a safe and secure environment. Parental involvement also contributes immeasurably to the success of our schools. We encourage our parents to join us and be involved in the many active parent organizations in the District. This combined effort makes Mt. Zion Schools "a great place to learn."

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## ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT



Brian Rhoades

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year! For those of you who are new to the District, welcome to Mt. Zion. We look forward to meeting you and helping your child be successful in our schools. For those that are returning, we are glad to have you back. Together, let's make 2023-2024 the best school year yet.

Our goal in the business office is to continue to provide an exceptional learning experience for your child and continue to offer many opportunities for them to be successful while being fiscally responsible with your tax dollars. You can be sure that our decisions are based on providing what is best and necessary for our students to become productive and successful citizens. On the state funding side of things, the state has continued to fund education through the relatively new evidence-based model formula. This formula aims to provide all schools with a set amount per student based on each school's demographics and gives schools who are not yet at that goal additional funding to get closer to the desired funding level. This has resulted in additional funds for our district, as we are still under 70% of this goal. We hope the state continues to fund these additional dollars so we can eventually get to the state goal level.

I want to let you know that I am always open to suggestions, questions or comments about our schools, and my office and phone are always available to anyone. We will look to build on all of the successes of the past and continue to look for ways to improve all of our schools. I look forward to working with all of you and together we all can make Mt. Zion schools continue to be a "great place to learn".



### STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE

All students enrolled at Mt. Zion CUSD #3 are covered under the District's Supplemental Student Accident Insurance. The Student Accident Policy provides coverage for eligible medical expenses as a result of an accident while attending school or participating in school sponsored co-curricular activities. This policy is **secondary coverage** and will pay a **portion** of eligible expenses when no other health insurance is available and/or fill gaps in current health insurance coverage. When an accident occurs, the student should receive a form for the parent to fill out and send in to the insurance carrier. If the student and/or parents have any questions regarding this insurance coverage, they may contact the Central Office at 864-2366.

### E-FUNDS AND ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS

E-funds will once again be available for parents to make many school payments. This system makes payments for school expenses in real time. You must create an account with e-funds using the link provided in the family access food service page or the link on the school web page. Once you create an account with e-funds, you can select your child's name and make the appropriate payment by checking account transfer or credit card. This payment will go directly into the proper account. A convenience fee of \$1.25 per transaction for checking or \$2.85 per \$100 transaction for credit card will be charged by e-funds.

The District will also accept electronic payments for student food service accounts, registration fees, and other payments made to the School District. This system usually takes up to a week to process so it is not intended for lunch balances below \$10.00 or other payments that need to be made immediately. Credit will not be applied to your child's account until the District has actually received the check from the bank. To utilize this free electronic payment system:

1. Go to your local bank's online bill pay system. Enter a school building's name and address from the list below, as the company you wish to pay. For children in different buildings, please make separate entries and the bank will send separate checks. If you are making a payment for Registration and Food Service to the same building we would again ask that you make separate entries and the bank will send separate checks. This will allow the District to better track the payments being made by the bank.

2. On your bank's online bill pay system, enter the amount of the payment you wish to make.
3. On your bank's online bill pay system, enter in the memo line/description line the reason for the payment. Please be specific and provide as much information as possible (student's name, student's ID#, reason for payment - food service, registration fee, etc.).



### START DATES:

***Teacher Institute Days  
(No Student Attendance)***

***August 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>***

***First Day for Students***

***Grades K-12, Early Dismissal,***

***August 16<sup>th</sup>***

***11:05 for Grades 7-12,***

***11:35 for Grades K-6***

**MT. ZION HIGH SCHOOL**

Justin Johnson  
Principal



Ben Davis  
Assistant Principal



Robert Prange  
Athletic Director

**REGISTRATION INFORMATION**

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year!

Online registration will open on July 17th at [www.mtzschools.org](http://www.mtzschools.org). Online registration will allow parents to update information, pay fees, and provide you with access to the 23-24 District Handbook. Families that do not have access to a computer are welcome to come to the school office for assistance in completing online registration. Our on-site registration day is August 1st from 12 PM-6 PM. Returning families are not required to attend, but are welcome to come tour the building, check lockers, and seek any assistance needed from office staff. Anyone enrolling in Mt. Zion School District for the first time must attend on-site registration at the building instead of registering online. New families should bring proof of residency, birth certificate, and a current transcript. We look forward to seeing returning students & meeting new students on August 1st.

**HOW TO FIND & READ YOUR SCHEDULE**

Schedule will be viewable on Family & Student Access beginning July 17th. It is recommended that you print a copy of your schedule prior to the first day of school. Your locker assignment and combination are also accessible on your schedule.

**CLASS SCHEDULE TERM CODES**

- YR - means that you will have this class all year
- S1 - means that you will have this class 1st semester only
- S2 - means that you will have this class 2nd semester only
- T1 - means that you will have this class 1st nine weeks only
- T2 - means that you will have this class 2nd nine weeks only
- T3 - means that you will have this class 3rd nine weeks only
- T4 - means that you will have this class 4th nine weeks only

**CLASS/SCHEDULE CHANGES**

The only changes that can be made prior to the start of school are listed below:

- If a class you previously requested did not fit into your schedule;
- If you are a work program student -- see Mr. Smith;
- If you are a new student in our District;
- If your schedule does not account for work taken or not taken during summer school;
- If you have not signed up for enough classes or have too many classes scheduled this upcoming year; or
- If you failed a course last semester and you need to pick up another course.

**GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT**

Students have been assigned the following counselors:

Freshmen & Juniors.....Ms. Kasey  
Sophomores & Seniors.....Mrs. Kieffer

To be able to effectively assist all families, August 1st will be reserved for new students to the district to meet with guidance counselors about scheduling. Returning students are asked to call 864-2363 or email the assigned counselor to make an appointment to meet in early August before the start of school or during the first week of school:

Ms. Kieffer - [kieffer@mtzschoools.org](mailto:kieffer@mtzschoools.org);  
Mrs. Kasey - [kaseya@mtzschoools.org](mailto:kaseya@mtzschoools.org)

**HIGH SCHOOL DAY & BELL SCHEDULE**

Classes begin at 7:45 am daily and end at 2:30 pm. The bell schedule is as follows:

Early Bird	6:50-7:35
1 <sup>st</sup> Hour	7:45-8:28
2 <sup>nd</sup> Hour	8:32-9:15
3 <sup>rd</sup> Hour	9:19-10:02
4 <sup>th</sup> Hour	10:06-10:49
5 <sup>th</sup> Hour	10:53-11:35
6 <sup>th</sup> Hour	
A Lunch/Class	11:39-12:21
B Lunch/Class	12:25-1:07
7 <sup>th</sup> Hour	1:11-1:54
Focus Period	1:58-2:30

**LUNCH ASSIGNMENT**

This school year lunch assignment is determined by your 6<sup>th</sup> hour class and will display either: A (11:39-12:21) or B (12:25-1:07) next to your 6<sup>th</sup> hour class on your schedule. Lunches will be designated on your scheduled by early August.

**FIRST DAY & WEEK OF ATTENDANCE**

The first day of attendance will be a half day on Wednesday, August 16<sup>th</sup>. Classes will begin at 7:45 AM and dismiss at 11:05 AM. Students enrolled in Early Bird should report as normal at 6:50 AM.

## SCHOOL OPENING & CLOSING

School doors open at 7:15 AM for all students except those enrolled in Early Bird classes which begin at 6:50 AM. At 7:35 AM, a ten-minute warning bell will ring and students will be permitted to go to their lockers and pick up the necessary materials for their first hour class. Students arriving before that time must report directly to the large gymnasium. Students may see a teacher before that time by providing a hall pass from their teacher and when finished, report directly back to the gymnasium. The regular school day ends at 2:30 p.m. **Students must be out of the building by 3:00 PM unless they are participating in an extracurricular activity.**

## HEARTLAND TECH ACADEMY

**The first day of attendance for students attending the Technical Academy is Thursday, August 17th.** The Mt. Zion School District will provide transportation to the Technical Academy on all days including those when Mt. Zion High School is not in session. The bus will depart from the front of the high school at 11:15 a.m. Students attending HTA will be able to purchase school lunches following 4th hour. Morning students must supply their own transportation. All students enrolled in the Heartland Technical Academy will follow the calendar established for the Technical Academy at [www.tech-academy.org](http://www.tech-academy.org)

## FEES

### Instructional Fee

The price for all high school students is \$100. You may also purchase an optional Chromebook protection plan for \$25.

### Driver Education Fee

There will be a \$40 surcharge for all students enrolled in Driver Education classes for the 2023-2024 school year.

### Heartland Tech Academy & Richland Transfer Academy

Technical Academy fee is \$200 for the year and Transfer Academy fee is \$400 for the year.

### Parking Permits

Parking permits (\$40 1st semester, \$20 if purchased after January 3rd [with a \$60 per family cap]) must be purchased in the office along with filling out a registration card.

### Athletic Participation Fee

All athletes must pay a participation fee. The cost of the participation fee is \$60 for high school students per sport (\$260 family cap). The fee must be paid before the first athletic contest. If the student decides to quit the sport, a refund of the participation fee will be given up until the first game. No refunds will be given after the first game.

### Free/Reduced Breakfast/Lunch Applications

Applications will be available during registration and on the District webpage. Once the application is completed and submitted to the office, you will be sent a letter to notify you if you were approved or denied according to guidelines.

## SCHOOL PICTURES & SENIOR HEADSHOTS

School pictures for all students will be taken the morning of Tuesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>. All students should have their picture taken (Grades 9-12), even if you are not purchasing a package, for I.D. cards and Family Access/Skyward use. Picture information is included in the registration email or may be picked up in the high school office. Retakes are scheduled for October 25<sup>th</sup>. **Seniors will have yearbook senior headshot pictures taken at school on August 23<sup>rd</sup> as well. They are encouraged to wear Sunday best dress for this photo.**

## PROGRAMS & POLICIES AT MTZ HIGH

**\*Welcome Class of 2027!** Mt. Zion High School provides a program to assist freshmen in transitioning into high school that we call The Tribe. The Tribe is designed to welcome & support freshmen by pairing them with a junior or senior leader as a mentor. A special Tribe Orientation & Welcome is planned for incoming freshmen on August 11th from 8 AM to 12 PM.

**\*New Staff:** We are proud to welcome our new staff members for this school year:

Rob Prange (Athletic Director), Megan Brown (Special Education), Cheryl Pearson (English), and Rileigh Watts (Spanish).

**\*Building Changes:** The High School Building underwent construction over the summer. Many teachers have moved to new classrooms, please check your schedules for the new classroom numbers. Also, the cafeteria has been given a makeover and we will no longer have three lunch periods. This will allow our students to eat lunch at a more reasonable time. It is very important that students eat a good breakfast as lunch times have moved to later in the day. We are proud of the updates to the school and look forward to showing them off to students and families this school year.



Mt. Zion High School  
Go Braves!

## DRESS & APPEARANCE

Please help us set a positive tone in getting the school year off to good start by making appropriate choices when purchasing school clothes. We ask that clothing be safe and respectful.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Every student is required to have regulation gym clothes to participate in Physical Education. This shall consist of a solid red, t-shirt or sweatshirt, solid black shorts or sweatpants (no yoga pants or leggings), socks, and gym shoes with laces. You may purchase MTZ PE clothing items directly from us.

## ATHLETICS

\*Check out all athletic schedules. **First day of practice/tryouts are as follows:**

- **Football:** Monday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, TBA @Football Field. Contact Coach Patrick Etherton for more information: [ethertonp@mtzschoools.org](mailto:ethertonp@mtzschoools.org)
- **Girls' Golf:** Monday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2:30 p.m. Contact Coach Jay Driscoll for more information: [driscollj@mtzschoools.org](mailto:driscollj@mtzschoools.org)
- **Boys' Golf:** Monday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, 1:30 p.m. Contact Coach Colby Burdick for more information: [burdickc@mtzschoools.org](mailto:burdickc@mtzschoools.org)
- **Cross Country:** Monday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 a.m. @HS Track. Contact Coach Kelly Fox for more information: [foxk@mtzschoools.org](mailto:foxk@mtzschoools.org)
- **Boys' Soccer:** Monday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, 3:00 p.m. @INT Field. Contact Coach Scott Crawford for more information: [Scott.Crawford@primient.com](mailto:Scott.Crawford@primient.com)
- **Girls' Tennis:** Monday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 a.m. @Fletcher Park. Contact Coach Mike Roberts for more information: [robertsm@mtzschoools.org](mailto:robertsm@mtzschoools.org)
- **Volleyball:** Monday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, 7 a.m. @ Big Gym. Contact Coach Traci Dyer Townsend for more information: [townsendt@mtzschoools.org](mailto:townsendt@mtzschoools.org)

**Athletes must complete the online registration process for school before the first practice listed above.**

## FRESHMAN & ATHLETIC PHYSICALS

The School Code of Illinois requires that students entering 9th grade, or students who have moved into the district from out of state must have a physical exam completed prior to October 15<sup>th</sup>.

All students going out for athletics & show choir must have a current physical to tryout, practice, & compete. A physical is good for 13 months from the date of the exam and a copy of the physical must be on file in the high school office. A 9th grade physical can be used as an athletic physical.

9th grade physical forms & athletic physical forms can be found on the website.

## SCHOOL HEALTH



Alex Smith  
School Nurse  
Grades PreK-3



Jeanne Luckenbill  
School Nurse  
Grades 4-12

Welcome back to the new school year! We hope that your summer was a healthy one!

Physical Examination requirements are due on or before the first day of the school year, but no later than October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 for all students entering the following grades for the first time:

- Pre-Kindergarten
- Kindergarten
- 6<sup>th</sup> grade
- 9<sup>th</sup> grade
- Any student who is entering an Illinois school for the first time, regardless of grade level, within 6 weeks of enrollment

Dental Examinations or Waiver are required by May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024, for all students entering:

- Kindergarten
- 2<sup>nd</sup> grade
- 6<sup>th</sup> grade
- 9<sup>th</sup> grade
- Any student new to the District or entering an Illinois school for the first time regardless of grade level, within 6 weeks of enrollment

Eye/Vision Examinations or Waiver are required by October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 for students entering:

- Kindergarten
- Any student entering an Illinois school for the first time, within six weeks of enrollment

Immunizations must be up to date and on file by October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

We welcome the opportunity to assist parents and students during the upcoming school year and look forward to seeing all of you soon!



## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**



*Renea Smith, Administrator*

As we start the 2023-2024 school year, there have been a few exciting changes in the district in regards to special education. At the high school, for the life skills program, a remodel project has taken place and the students will be moving from the second floor to the first floor. The district has hired two additional special education teachers and one additional social worker. The district will now have a full time social worker in all buildings. In addition to the remodel and hiring of additional staff, a transition open house is being planned for the families of students in the life skills programs. This will help parents to gain knowledge of what resources are available in the community that can benefit their child as an active citizen of the community. Additionally, a parent informational meeting will be planned for the first semester of school. This meeting will help parents network with other parents of students with individualized education plans and build their knowledge of parent rights and responsibilities as well as gain an understanding of the continuum of services offered.

As always, I look forward to continuing to develop the services and programs that Mt. Zion is able to offer students with varying disabilities. Currently, Mt. Zion offers special education services from PreK students to students through their 22nd birthday. Services range from speech-language services to self-contained classrooms with related services ranging from occupational therapy to hearing or vision therapy. I can assure you that I will be dedicated to caring for our students and providing them with a learning environment in which they can be successful.

I continue to believe that every child can be challenged to meet their full potential. This can be done with cooperation between home and school. I hope to foster a relationship between home and school that allows for trust and self-esteem building. I am excited to explore new ideas to meet the needs of all

students and to interact with parents and community members. Relationships first. You can reach me by email at [smithr@mtzschoos.org](mailto:smithr@mtzschoos.org).

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## **CURRICULUM AND TECHNOLOGY**



*Billy Rockey, Director*

Hello, my name is Billy Rockey, and I am entering my tenth year in this position. I have been with Mount Zion Schools for the last sixteen years as a teacher and more recently as the Director of Curriculum and Technology. I am excited to continue serving the teachers, staff, and students of Mount Zion Schools. As the parent of three Mount Zion students, working with our teachers and staff on increasing student achievement through more effective use of educational technology and curricular best practices is my number one priority.

Mount Zion Schools continues to focus on helping our students be 21st century learners. Last year was the 7th year of our 7-12th grade 1:1 initiative where all students are assigned their own Chromebook to take to classes and work with at home. It seems we have reached the stage in our 1:1 initiative where it's hard to picture a time where Chromebooks weren't utilized as an educational tool for our students. GSuite and Google Apps provide pupils in all grade levels avenues through which to create and explore while learning. Several teachers in our district took part in Google Level 1 and Level 2 cohorts to become Google Certified Educators. We are proud of the efforts our teachers have made to develop their own proficiencies in utilizing technology to develop the young minds of our students.

We continue to increase opportunities for our students at all grade levels with S.T.E.M. initiatives funded by A.D.M. We look forward to continuing our Lego/Robotics program in all



buildings this year. In addition, funds from A.D.M, the Foundation has provided funds for classroom technology upgrades. In addition, The Foundation put forth funds to support upgrading many, many classrooms across the district with, among many other items, flexible seating, STEM supplies, and large screen televisions to enhance the classroom experiences of our students. The Foundation has also provided science laboratory equipment, and a variety of other educational supports that enrich the education of Mt. Zion students. Braves TV had another successful year allowing people near and far to witness events involving Mt. Zion students and allowing HS students the opportunity to participate in media of various forms.

Internet safety is a major concern for our district. We are proud of the safeguards we have put in place to allow us to track student activity and filter the content as dictated by [Children's Internet Protection Act](#). Google Chromebooks used at school and home are filtered using both the built-in Google content filter, as well as an additional layer of filtering and reporting software called GoGuardian. Teachers at school will also utilize Hapara, which allows them to see a student's Chromebook screen while they are at school, in addition to other features used within the educational setting.

We are proud of our achievements in improving our network infrastructure over the last several years. We have wifi in every classroom and continue to expand access in high traffic areas. This additional connectivity will allow us to meet the increasing demand of our district's expanding technological needs. Our district Internet bandwidth is a robust 1,000 mbps to support the continued growth of online educational learning across the district.

Mt. Zion Schools continues to look for ways to improve communication with parents. All parents have access to Skyward Family Access. Logging into this program will show you a wealth of information including student grades, food service information, discipline, report cards, and more. If you do not currently have this access, you can fill out the Family Access Request Form found under the links section of the district web page. We utilize the Skylert broadcasting system to keep parents informed of emergencies and general information. Our website can be found by going to <http://www.mtzschools.org>. All teachers have email and their addresses can be found on the district web page. We'd also like to encourage parents to follow our district Facebook and Twitter pages on social media.

Julie McNamara, Technology Specialist, continues to play a vital role in keeping our growing resources working efficiently. The assistance she provides to our staff, along with the behind-the-scenes infrastructure maintenance she performs enables our teachers to provide a high quality, technology-rich environment for students.

I am happy to discuss the district's curriculum and technology matters with parents and community members. I can be reached at 217-864-2369 or by email at [rockeyw@mtzschoools.org](mailto:rockeyw@mtzschoools.org).

*Visit your child's school and see how technology is being used to enhance your child's education!*

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## **TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT**



Paul Reeve, Director

Hello, I'm Paul Reeve from your transportation office. Summer is flying by and soon it will be time to board our buses and head back to school. As always, we are constantly seeking ways to make our buses, drivers and routes as safe as humanly possible. We work hard at training our drivers and have some of the best in the country. It takes a lot of effort to become a driver and in my opinion, it is one of the toughest jobs. Not in a physical sense so much but a driver wears many hats. They have to watch the traffic, watch the students on the bus, watch for their stops, all while driving a big yellow, heavy box. Sounds easy doesn't it? We require our drivers to take hours of training, yearly refreshers and regular meetings and it is still a difficult task.

It takes more than just drivers to make a transportation department run. Our office coordinator, Lori, does a great job keeping the daily schedule of the routes and students in order along with arranging the busing for our extra-curricular trips. Dan is our mechanic and is totally dedicated to keeping our

buses in top shape and safe. This is no easy task as our buses travel nearly 2,000 miles per day. Our buses must pass a state inspection at least twice a year and each bus must be in perfect working condition. They also are subject to random IDOT inspection.

This summer we are analyzing all our stops to check for dangerous stops. Some roads/streets are much busier than others and we need to evaluate current stops and routes to make them as safe as possible. We are also looking for places we can group stops. Like stops where houses are next door to each other that can be combined into one stop to cut down on time and lessen traffic backups. Traffic backups are a main factor in people passing stopped school buses which put students in danger. Combining stops will also cut down on time. This past year we have seen increased ridership and several of our routes are taking longer to complete and causing delays in arriving to and from the school. This also means that your pickup and drop-off times may change. We will try to get this information out as quickly as possible.

We here in Transportation try hard to make things go smoothly and safely but I have always said, this is a group effort. We need to have everyone be supportive of your drivers and monitors to help make a safe bus environment. Here are several things you can do.

1. Please explain to your students that their actions on a bus greatly affect their own safety and the safety of others. In my years of experience, I have learned that most incidents with a bus occur when a student or students distract the driver with their behavior. These behaviors include loud talking or yelling, standing up while the bus is moving, jumping seat while the bus is moving, not following all the rules on the bus among other things. Your direction at home goes a long way to helping keep all students safe.

2. Students need to be outside, at their stop, several minutes before the scheduled pick up time. We have a tight schedule to keep and if we are waiting at a stop for a student to come out, it throws the whole route behind. Many routes have 15 to 20 stops and if each one was late, it would be difficult to make it to school on time. Our drivers face many obstacles every day. Traffic, construction, slick road conditions and mechanical issues that can cause delays as well. Please have your student ready. We just can't wait more than a few moments.

3. Please do not use the bus as a taxi service. We understand that there will be times when a student might need to ride an

alternate bus to a secondary address other than their appointed stop. We have no problems accommodating these needs but please use this in an emergency only. Some of our buses are full and just can't accommodate more students. In addition, no student will be allowed to ride another bus or be dropped to an alternate stop without permission from the school or the Transportation Department. These requests must come from a parent or guardian and not from the student. Any student who tries to board another bus without permission will be sent back into the office for the parent to be contacted to pick them up. This is something we just can't allow.

4. All Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade students must have an approved adult **present and visible** at the bus stop before we can let their child off the bus. If no one is present, we will continue on the route and the office will try to reach an adult to make arrangements to drop the student off after route or we will take them back to the school office or Transportation office to be picked up. If the student has an older sibling, we can release them but we must have written permission on file in the Transportation office.

5. If you drive your student to school, please be aware that the flashing red lights and stop sign are still in effect even in the parking lot and a vehicle must not pass the bus.

6. If you normally ride the bus, especially in rural areas and your student is not going to school that day, please call us as soon as possible at 217-864-5233 to let us know. This will help us save fuel and time by not driving out of our way.

7. If you have moved over the summer and your address has changed, please call us at least 10 days before the start of school so we can make the necessary changes in our system and give you updated bus information. Do not call the day of school starting or it may cause a delay in starting your student's transportation. We are not able to make changes the day of.

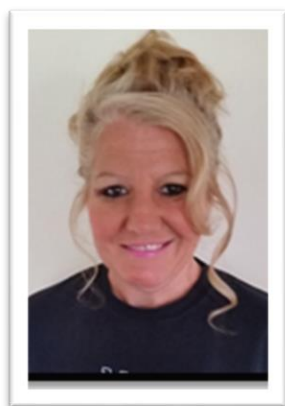
If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the Transportation office at 217-864-5233 or email at [reevep@mtzschoools.com](mailto:reevep@mtzschoools.com) and we will do our best to answer them for you. Remember, we can't do this without your cooperation so let's work together and make 2023 – 2024 a school year that is safe and successful one.

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### **FOOD SERVICE**



*Darcie Hayes, CDM, CFPP  
Director*

### **NUTRITION STANDARDS IN NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH**

The 2023-24 school year continues following the National School Lunch Program requirements for hot lunch. Our school nutrition services will be participating in the DOD program this 2023-24 school year. The USDA annually allocates money for Illinois to spend with the Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable program. Mt. Zion Food & Nutrition Services will be maintaining a healthy balanced nutritious quality meal. Students may purchase a hot nutritious meal and healthy ala carte items.

The focus continues on offering healthier options for students in the Mt. Zion Community Unit School District #3. The District monitors the Local Wellness Policy and makes appropriate

changes to improve nutrition and health education in the classroom, PE classes, and class parties. We encourage healthy choices in the breakfast and lunch program in the District. The Wellness committee includes administrators, teachers, PE staff, school nurse, food service, parents and students. Mt. Zion School District will continue to monitor the policy's implementation in the 2023-24 school year. Parents are encouraged to look at their student's food service information on Family Access. Any school organization that requires the kitchen in any of the schools for the 2023-24 should contact Darcie Hayes **four weeks** prior to the event at 217- 864-2114. This allows for plenty of preparation in order to make the fund-raising event successful.

### **FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM DISTRICT #3 OVERVIEW**

The food service program for grades K-12 offers a daily meal consisting of a meat/meat alternative, vegetable, fruit, bread, and milk. A breakfast meal is offered to students in grades K-12 each day before school. A Grab N Go lunch that consists of nutritious items that are approved for the Child and Nutrition Program. The National School lunch program continues to offer nutritious ingredients in all items for the lunch program. We will be decreasing the sodium 10% more for the upcoming school year 2023-24.

### **DEBIT ACCOUNT OVERVIEW**

Nutrition and Technology team-up in the Mt. Zion School District with an automated meal purchasing system. This program provides a positive identification process used to access a student debit account and record purchases of food service items. A debit account will be established for each user and sharing of accounts will not be allowed. Students, parents, and staff may deposit advance sums of money to cover food service purchases. Advance deposits allow the user to draw from an individual debit account rather than having to handle cash during the lunch serving time. Payments and purchases are recorded daily. Parents will receive an email when the student's account reaches \$10.00. This is a reminder that will be delivered via email until a deposit is made into the student's account. If the student has a negative balance, an automatic call, email, and texted message through School Messenger will be made to the parents as a reminder. Payments may be made using e-funds through Family Access. Once online payments are made the money is automatically credited to the student account. Online payments can be made anytime. **Parents may also call the Food Service Office at 217-864-9450, by 10:00 a.m. and request a student transfer from one sibling to another.**



GRADES K-6

Payments will be accepted each morning school is in session. Payments should be sent in an envelope with the student's name, student's ID number, and teacher's name. Payments should include break-milk money for students in Kindergarten only. Payments will be posted to the student's debit account on the same day if received before 10:00 a.m. The food service office maintains a record of student payments. Payments may also be made using e-funds through Family Access. Once online payments are made, the money automatically is credited to the student account. Online payments can be made anytime.

GRADES 7-12

Payments will be accepted before 10:00 a.m. each morning that school is in session. Locked drop boxes are available in five locations in the Jr. & Sr. High School buildings. This method of payment collection will ensure posting of deposits and that funds will be available in the student's debit account before lunch serving time (10:10 a.m.). and that funds will be available in the student's debit account before lunch serving time (10:10 a.m.). **Payments made after 10:00 a.m. will be posted the following school day. Students will not be allowed to purchase a la carte items when we return to Phase 5 until payments are posted.**

Payments by check, money order, cash and online e-fund payments are accepted and must contain student name and ID number to ensure proper posting. Payments of cash will be accepted in a sealed envelope, available at drop box locations. The envelope must be labeled with student name, ID number, and amount of cash deposit. No change will be given to students. The school Food Service Administrative Assistant will maintain records of all cash deposits and parents can view these deposits in Family Access.

FREE/REDUCED MEAL APPLICATIONS

Free and reduced lunch and breakfast applications, along with letters containing guidelines, are available online throughout the school year and in each school's office. A parent/guardian wishing to apply must complete and return the application to their student's school office. Verification of income, and a letter of approval or denial will be sent by mail to the parent/guardian. **Students with Free/Reduced Status may only purchase A la Carte items if his/her debit account has funds available to cover such items. Kindergarten students with free/reduced status wishing to purchase milk for break time should make payment to cover such (\$.50 per carton) on a weekly or monthly basis.**

Meal Pricing

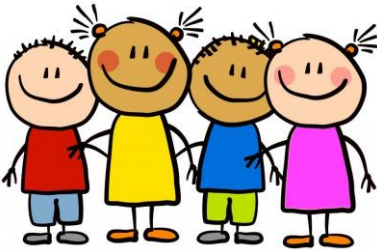
Breakfast K-12		Lunch K-3		Lunch 4-12	
Full	\$2.15	Full	\$2.85	Full	\$3.05
Reduced	\$0.30	Reduced	\$0.40	Reduced	\$0.40
Adult	\$2.35	Adult	\$3.55	Adult	\$3.55

**Students with free/reduced status may only receive one (1) free/reduced lunch and one (1) free/reduced breakfast per day.**

**Second meal - \$6.60** Second meals are charged at full price; there is no federal support for second meals. Menu items may be purchased separately only in addition to a paid lunch.

K-3 one week of lunch = \$14.25  
4-12 one week of lunch = \$15.25  
K-3 one week of breakfast = \$10.75  
4-12 one week of breakfast = \$10.75

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL  
ACTIVITIES PROGRAM  
(BASAP)



Kristina McKean, Director

The Before and After School Activities Program for the 2023-2024 will officially begin on August 16, 2023, the first day of school for students. All children registered in the program should bring a sack lunch on this day since this is an early dismissal day.

Prior to this date, the BASAP staff will be hosting an orientation on Thursday August 10, 2023 at McGaughey Elementary School from 6:30pm-7:00pm. A complete overview of the program will be discussed.

We look forward to another exciting school year. If you have any questions regarding BASAP or the upcoming orientation, contact Kristina McKean, BASAP Director, at 217-864-2814.