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WINTER 2024

POLAR BEAR PRIDE

Your Connection to the Jackson Local School District



Happy Holidays!



Superintendent's Message



As the holiday season approaches, I am reminded of the gratitude I feel for the opportunity to serve our school community as your superintendent. This year, our students have gone above and beyond, dedicating countless service hours across the district, even before our Senior Service Day in May. In a particularly touching effort, groups such as the Student Council, Jackson School for the Arts, Jackson Academy for Global Studies, and others joined forces to bring joy to more than 120 Jackson Local families, providing clothing and gifts that impacted the lives of over 500 individuals this holiday season.

Our community members should be proud of the fact that our Student Council raised funds for this project through the homecoming dance. Through their efforts, they volunteered to shop for essential clothing, warm winter gear, gift cards, and toys to support families in need during the holiday season. This initiative planned and executed well in advance of the holidays, has been made possible by the dedication of our district and school leadership teams. We are thankful for their hard work and commitment to supporting our students and families. Kindness creates a ripple effect and is a great multiplier.

INCLEMENT WEATHER NOTIFICATION

This is the time of year when it is important to remind our district families and the greater Jackson Local community of school closing information. In the event of inclement weather, the Jackson Local School District will notify parents, guardians, and caregivers as quickly as possible. Notifications will be sent via phone call, text message, and email. Additionally, all closing information will be posted simultaneously on the district's website for your convenience. Our community can find school closing information on traditional media sites.

STEWARDS OF YOUR SUPPORT

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce releases the Cupp Report annually. The report is a comprehensive publication from ODEW that provides detailed information on more than 60 variables. The report is named for former Ohio House Speaker Bob Cupp, who advocated for transparency and accountability in school funding.

It gives me great pleasure to share with you that the Jackson Local School District, when viewed among a list of 20 state-selected like and similar districts, is ranked the most efficient for administrative cost per student and total cost to educate per student. Jackson Local, among those same 20 schools, receives the least amount of state revenue per student, too. This is to underscore that we analyze and strategically direct our resources, and we are grateful for the support our community provides our district.

Continued on next page

OUR STUDENT LEADERS

JACKSON HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2025



Senior Class President

KATE THOMAS

WHAT MAKES JHS SPECIAL?

At JHS, our dedicated teachers, staff, and administrators go above and beyond to create a welcoming environment where every student feels supported, valued, and safe. They are always ready to offer guidance and assistance, ensuring that each student feels comfortable and accepted. Our faculty not only encourage personal growth, but they also inspire academic achievement and empower students to reach their fullest potential.

FAMILY

My parents are Joe and Jessica Thomas. I am an only child and I have 2 dogs, Izzie and Hazel.



Senior Class First Vice President

SAMANTHA STRIFLER

WHAT MAKES JHS SPECIAL?

Our amazing educators and staff have built a culture that prioritizes both academics and personal growth. Every student has the opportunity to become involved with something that they are passionate about and receive an education that best prepares them for their futures.

FAMILY

I am the daughter of Pete and Marylou Strifler. I have two brothers, Jack (24) and Evan (22), and my dog Penny.



Senior Class 2nd Vice President

BEKAH YODER

WHAT MAKES JHS SPECIAL?

JHS provides a welcoming and inclusive environment for all students. Students can connect with others and discover their passions through clubs, sports teams, classes, or the community. JHS offers a wide range of opportunities and experiences that encourage students to explore their interests and grow. This supportive atmosphere helps students to feel comfortable and valued.

FAMILY

My family is my parents Paul and Amy Yoder I have one sister Lizzie(20) and three brothers Levi(16), Jared(22), and Jake (24).

Continued on page 3

Jackson Local Schools
Student Calendar
2024-2025

AUGUST 2024						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
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SEPTEMBER 2024						
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OCTOBER 2024						
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NOVEMBER 2024						
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DECEMBER 2024						
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JANUARY 2025						
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AUGUST

14 Gr 6/New Student Orientation, 6-8:00 pm
15 Teacher In-Service
15 Gr 9/New Student Orientation 7-8:00 pm
15 Open House - All Elementaries, 4:30-6:30 pm
16 K-5 Conference Exchange/6-12 Teacher Work Day
19 Teacher In-Service
20 1st Day for Students (K-12)
21 Open House - JMMS, Last Name A-M, 6:00-7:00 pm
Last Name N-Z, 7:00-8:00 pm
27 Open House - High School, 5:00-7:00 pm
30 Professional Development Day - No School (K-12)

SEPTEMBER

2 Labor Day - No School (K-12)

OCTOBER

8 Parent Conferences (K-5) 4:00-8:00 pm
8 Parent Conferences (Gr 6-12) 4:00-7:00 pm
10 Parent Conferences (K-5) 4:00-8:00 pm
11 Professional Development Day - No School (K-12)
14 Columbus Day - No School (K-12)
16 Parent Conferences (K-5) 4:00-8:00 pm
16 Parent Conferences (Gr 6-12) 4:00-7:00 pm
25 **End of 1st Marking Period - 45 Days**

NOVEMBER

27 Thanksgiving Break Begins

DECEMBER

3 Classes Resume
23 Winter Break Begins

JANUARY

6 Classes Resume
16 **End of 2nd Marking Period - 45 Days**
17 Professional Development Day - No School (K-12)
20 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - No School (K-12)

FEBRUARY

13 Parent Conferences (K-12) 4:00-7:00 pm
14 Professional Development Day - No School (K-12)
17 Presidents' Day - No School (K-12)
19 Parent Conferences (K-12) 4:00-7:00 pm

MARCH

21 **End of 3rd Marking Period - 42 Days**
24 Spring Break Begins
31 Classes Resume

APRIL

18 K-12 Conference Exchange Day - No School (K-12)

MAY

26 Memorial Day - No School (K-12)
30 Last Day for Students & Staff
30 **End of 4th Marking Period - 43 Days**

JUNE

19 Juneteenth

FEBRUARY 2025						
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APRIL 2025						
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MAY 2025						
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JUNE 2025						
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29	30					

	First and Last Student Day
	Professional Development Day
	No School (K-12)
	K-12 Conference Exchange Day

Continued from front page
Superintendent's Message

ARTS, ATHLETIC PERFORMANCES

We are quickly approaching the halfway point of the 2024-2025 school year, with the second quarter ending on January 16 after winter break. Since the start of the school year, it has been truly inspiring to see our students shine, whether in the classroom, on stage, or on athletic fields and courts. The Jackson School for the Arts production of *Mary Poppins* was a huge success, with all three shows either sold out or nearly sold out. From the captivating acting, singing, and dancing performances to the remarkable set design, every aspect of the production was outstanding. A huge *Thank You* to everyone who contributed to this memorable event!

Our athletic teams are off to a great start this winter season in boys and girls basketball, bowling, swimming and diving, wheelchair basketball, wrestling, gymnastics, and competitive cheerleading.

Of course, the fall season got off to a tremendous start with our athletic teams winning six Federal League titles, and finishing second in the other three fall sports. Our teams were a combined 46-2 in league play. We would be remiss if we did not recognize the competition in the Federal League and how our league partners truly make one another better.

The support our students receive from their families, extended families, friends, and our community does not go unnoticed. Together, we uphold a tradition of excellence and pride in Jackson Local Schools.

-- Chris DiLoreto, Superintendent

Jackson Local Board of Education

The 2024-2025 Jackson Local Board of Education members meet monthly during the calendar year. The members are: Board President Tonya Wright, Vice President Lia Jones, Esq., Scott Gindlesberger, Christopher Goff, Esq., Thomas Winkhart, Esq.



TONYA WRIGHT was appointed to the Board of Education in June 2020 and was elected to the Board in November 2021. She has a track record dedicated to servant leadership in Jackson and Stark County. Tonya graduated cum laude from the University of Akron with a bachelor of arts degree in business and organizational communications in 1992. She earned her master's degree in business administration from Kent State University in 2000, while working full-time. She has served in various corporate leadership roles, most recently product marketing manager at Diebold-Nixdorf. She also was an adjunct instructor at Stark State College in the business department. Mrs. Wright and her husband, Mark, have two daughters, Anna, a Jackson High School graduate, and Ava, a Jackson Local student.



LIA JONES was elected to the board in 2021. She graduated from Denison University with a bachelor of arts degree in communication. She earned her Juris Doctor from the University of Akron School of Law. Jones is senior vice president and senior fiduciary strategist for the Akron, Canton, and Mahoning Valley region at KeyBank. In addition to her work on the JLSD Board of Education, Jones is a member of the Akron Symphony Board of Directors. She was the 2018 recipient of the 30 for the Future Award, presented by the Greater Akron Chamber. Jones lives in Jackson Township with her husband, Caleb, and their young daughters, Elle and Olivia.



SCOTT GINDLESBERGER was elected to the board in 2004 and has been re-elected four times. Mr. Gindlesberger holds a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Mount Union and a master's degree in finance from the University of Akron. He is a Senior Vice President with Stifel Nicolaus. Mr. Gindlesberger and his wife Susie have four children, all Jackson Local graduates.



CHRISTOPHER GOFF began his first term in January 2008 and has been re-elected three times. He holds a bachelor of science degree in business administration, with a major in finance from Ohio Northern University, a master's degree in political science from The University of Akron, and a juris doctor from The University of Akron School of Law. He is CEO and General Counsel at Employers Health and is a former adjunct professor of law at The University of Akron School of Law, and currently is an adjunct professor at Northeast Ohio Medical School. Mr. Goff and his wife have three adult children who have graduated from Jackson Local Schools.



TOM WINKHART began his first term on the board in 2002 and has been re-elected to the board five times. He holds a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Toledo and a juris doctor degree from the University of Akron School of Law. He is president of the law firm of Winkhart Law Group and also of Cornerstone Real Estate Title Company. Tom and his wife, Janelle, have five children, who have graduated from Jackson High School.

The Board of Education meets monthly. Regularly scheduled meetings can be found on the district's website.

Continued from front page

OUR STUDENT LEADERS

JACKSON HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2025



Senior Class First Secretary

AVERY BELDEN

WHAT MAKES JHS SPECIAL?

JHS stands out as a place where students are empowered to become involved in all facets of life. Whether through sports, academics, the arts, career techs, or clubs, each student can explore their passions. These experiences foster personal growth and equip students to become proficient with the skills and confidence they need to thrive in the future.

FAMILY

My parents are Aimee and Brad Belden. I have a younger brother, Griffin, and a silver lab, Kona.



Senior Class 2nd Secretary

BROOKE TRAYER

WHAT MAKES JHS SPECIAL?

The faculty at JHS is phenomenal. Everyone from the principals to the teachers to the lunch monitors is dedicated to their work, always supporting students and creating an environment where students can thrive no matter what they want to pursue. I wouldn't be who I am today without the wonderful teachers in every department at JHS!

FAMILY

My parents are Shannon Trayer and Sean Hathaway. I have an older brother Landen (20) and a cat named Winston.



Senior Class Treasurer

SARAH WALKER

WHAT MAKES JHS SPECIAL?

There is such a large priority placed on helping nonprofits in the area. Whether it's class participation in a donation drive, or clubs leaving the township to assist, students seek opportunities to help those in need. This strong involvement shows the dedication our student body has to improving the lives of others, and the priority placed on giving back to the community.

FAMILY

My parents are Michael and Michelle Walker. I have one sister, Emma (20), and my dog Bella (6)



We have exciting news, Jackson! Niche.com has ranked Jackson Local School District as the best in Stark County, and we're among the top in Ohio and the nation! This success is thanks to our dedicated staff, supportive parents, hardworking students, and all of YOU in the Jackson community. Together, we are providing the best educational experience for our kids. Thank you for being part of this achievement!

Jackson is the No. 4 best school district for student-athletes in Ohio and the No. 27 best school district in all of Ohio. We are in the top 5% of school districts in the United States, which is a testament to our students, teachers, parents, and community.

In addition to Niche.com, U.S. News & World Report has again ranked all six Jackson buildings as U.S. News & World Report "Best Schools." Jackson is the only district in Stark County with at least six buildings all ranked by the national publication. Jackson High School is ranked by U.S. News & World Report as a Top 60 U.S. high school. This places Jackson High School in the top 6% of schools in Ohio and the top 8% in the country.



Polar Pups!

Our Polar Pups do an amazing job interacting with all our students in all six buildings. They can turn "ruff" days into awesome ones!



Polar Pup Lily visits Mrs. Durkin's class at Strausser.



POLAR BEAR PROMISE

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR JACKSON GRADS

Are you considering an **associate degree**, getting a **certification** to help you in your job or looking to **start your college experience** at a great institution that's less expensive and close to home?

If you're a Jackson High School graduate (of any year), you may qualify for a **Polar Bear Promise Scholarship** at **Stark State College**!

This program, funded by the Jackson Local Schools Foundation, the Jackson High School Alumni Association and the Stark State College Foundation, awards scholarships annually to Stark State College students who are Jackson High School graduates.

Since its inception in 2020, **\$16,000 has been awarded in scholarships to 32 Jackson graduates** to help them reach their goals in life. In addition, \$20,000 is being added to the available funds by the Jackson Local Schools Foundation, Jackson High School Alumni Association and The Stark State College Foundation.

For more information, contact the Stark State College Office of Financial Aid:
6200 Frank Ave. NW | 330-494-6170 ext. 4301 | studentservices@starkstate.edu



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4



PROUD JACKSON ALUMNUS Jeff Kracker, Athletic Director

By Dan Mucci



A sold-out crowd takes in a football game this past season at Robert Fife Stadium. The Polar Bears earned a share of a Federal League championship in football this past season, one of six league titles for Jackson.

The following article appeared in the latest Jackson Living Magazine. For more information, please visit: bestversionmedia.com/magazines/jacksonliving

Growing up, Jackson High School Athletic Director Jeff Kracker grew up around sports. So, it seems like divine intervention led him to oversee the 27 varsity sports at his alma mater. "I have always been around sports," said Kracker, who is a 1997 Jackson High School graduate. "I am the youngest of six kids in my family. My oldest sister played basketball at Central Catholic. My mom taught and coached girls track at St. Mary's Catholic School. My dad volunteered to help and coach youth sports. It is my comfort zone. It is all I have known to be around coaches, parents, and student-athletes. It is fun to be at all these events. I have a competitive mindset."

The path to being athletic director took a few twists and turns. Kracker explained his career path. "I started out as a history teacher," said Kracker, who graduated from Bowling Green State University in 2002, where he earned a bachelor's degree in integrated studies for grades 7-12. "I taught history and U.S. and world government and coached football and track for nine years. Then, I moved to assistant principal for five years and principal for six years. When former athletic director Dan Michel retired, I talked to Superintendent Chris DiLoreto. I told him the high school was in good shape with experienced assistant principals, and I wanted to be the athletic director."

Three years later, Kracker seems a natural. "I oversee all athletics for grades 7-12," said Kracker, who is married to Colleen. They have three kids: Jonah (JHS '22), James (JHS '26,) and Julius, who is 2. "My role is to keep track of ticketing, schedule facilities, and maintain social media. I also support the kids and coaches. I have an amazing athletic secretary in Kari Heck, who is the parent of an athlete. She keeps me smiling and laughing. "At the middle school, Harold Fisher does an amazing job as dean of students and middle school athletic director."

Kracker, who earned his master's degree from Ashland University, follows in the footsteps of Terry Peterson and Michel. He discussed the challenges of the role.

"The challenge is to meet the high expectations of the district," said Kracker, who enjoys lifting weights, running, hiking, biking, yard work, and spending time with his family. "It is a good challenge. First and foremost, I support the kids in their academic and athletic needs. Each year, the Ohio High School Athletic Association changes and evolves with practices. For instance,

we had switched to all online tickets. Then, the state said we needed to offer students and adults cash tickets at the gate. So, we responded to that request."

"Athletes' needs are changing as well. We do our best to meet their mental health needs and help them navigate social media. Our goal is to provide a great education and supplement with athletics with a not win at all costs to get league championships. We want to provide a great educational experience."



Jackson football coach Jay Rohr welcomes youth players on the field during Youth Football Night this past fall.

The challenges presented also provide a clear vision of improvements that could be made. "I want this department to continue to have great partnerships with all sports K-12," said the athletic mentor of the purple and gold. "Right now, our football, boys/girls' basketball, lacrosse, and soccer teams have great partner relationships helping to raise funds to support the program. Those different partnerships are built through the head coaches who sustain those connections. We want to continue to build and improve these partnerships."

In today's athletic world, mental health is on the radar of coaches and athletic departments. Jackson appears to be ahead of the curve. "We partner with many different organizations regarding mental health who have a background in mental health," said Kracker. "Today, our coaches have to get certified in mental health to recognize challenges athletes may have. Our coaches try to ask questions. If our coaches recognize a challenge, we have resources to help the athlete. We don't expect staff/coaches to solve problems; they just need to alert counselors. Our coaches are expected to help our athletes

with their physical fitness and mental fitness. Our coaches will sometimes give days off practice when they realize the athletes are struggling. We are continuing to have conversations with how individuals are doing, and that continues into the off-season. We try to take a proactive approach."

Facility improvements

Part of Kracker's responsibility is to identify renovations and improvements that are needed for the district's athletic facilities. The athletic department just completed collaborative renovations on multiple district facilities thanks to longstanding partnerships with community, booster groups, and youth sports. Below is a list of renovations:

- Replacing the turf at Robert Fife Stadium.
- Sanded and repainted the main basketball court at the high school, which was the original floor when the school opened in 1970.
- Redid Sauder Elementary School's original gym floor, the district's original middle school floor, which is used for Jackson Youth Basketball.
- Put artificial turf on the practice field.
- Put artificial turf on the soccer and track field at Rick Neitzelt Stadium.



The new turf on the soccer fields, which can now double as youth football and lacrosse fields when needed.

All these renovations help Jackson athletes in grades K-12. The soccer field includes lines for lacrosse. The band was also able to use the soccer field during the school day when weather prevented them from using the grass practice fields. Kracker said the district facilities should be in good shape for a while. But he said the district needs to plan for the future when the turf fields need to be replaced someday. "We also have a great relationship with Jackson Township's Parks, who updated/resurfaced all of the tennis courts in North Park to be just like new," said Kracker.

Continued on page 8

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POLAR BEAR ATHLETICS



FEDERAL LEAGUE CHAMPS

Jackson is beyond proud of these 2024 Federal League champion teams! They were each recognized at a recent Board of Education meeting for their accomplishments.



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GIRLS VOLLEYBALL



GIRLS SOCCER



BOYS SOCCER



GIRLS TENNIS



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Jeff Kracker profile *Continued from pg. 5*

"The girls could not use them this season while the courts were under renovation, but the courts look awesome. It is a great partnership."

Kracker is proud of how the arts and athletic departments work close together so students can participate in both disciplines. "When I was principal, I oversaw the arts department," he said. "I used to tell the art teachers they were more alike with the athletic coaches than they thought. They both set high standards and expectations. Today, our performing arts teachers and coaches work together so athletes can make tryouts for both disciplines and will trade off practices based on specific performance deadlines. They are collaborating and communicating to do what is best for the student."



Jeff Kracker (right) and Superintendent Chris DiLoreto congratulate families and student-athletes during girls soccer senior night.

Moving forward, Kracker said he wants to keep the fun in sports. Part of the fun is the kids have fundraisers at school. One of the fundraisers is a staff vs. kids pickleball tournament. There are six courts next to the tennis courts at North Park that can be utilized. "We want to always continue to look for ways to get better with the education, township, and booster club opportunities," said Kracker. "We need to look for the next best thing for our kids and staff with the community, the arts, athletics, and academics." The former athlete has taken the reigns of the legacy his predecessors built. A former athlete who is a sports enthusiast is successfully leading his alma mater to the next generation of successful athletes, both physically and mentally healthy.

2024-25 Registration

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Should I go straight to work after I graduate?
Should I enlist in the military?*



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We are in search of individuals from a wide variety of careers to share about their profession with sophomore, junior, and senior students at the Career Showcase at Jackson High School on January 24 (lasting about an hour).

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2,511 Sq. ft. partially furnished ground floor office suite with 3 private offices, reception/waiting room area, conference room, bullpen area with cubicles, 1 ADA restroom, storage room & kitchenette with a fridge. New roof 2021, new asphalt & new LED lighting in and out.

- Move in condition
- Jackson Township has no personal or corporate taxes.
- Locate near Belden Village.
- **Total rent, NNN & utilities per month is \$4,283.35**

Spencer Hartung
330.936.0276

Saylor Putman
330.495.8292

**For Lease:
\$12.95/Sq.Ft.
NNN**



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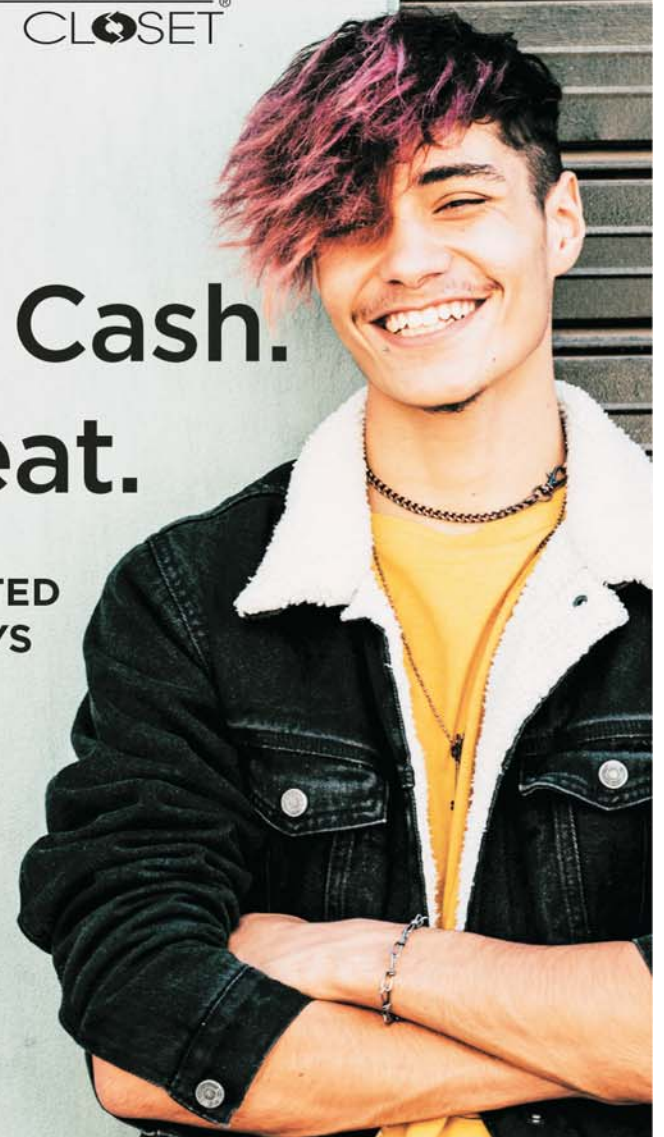


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Jackson Local seeks to serve students with disabilities



Within the intent of the federal statutes (Rehabilitation Act of 1973-section 504 and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act IDEA-public law 105-17), the Jackson Local School District continues its effort to locate and identify children with disabilities from birth through age 21. Children with disabilities have physical, emotional, and/or mental impairments that may require special education. Public schools provide free and appropriate education regardless of a child's disability. However, before these children can be served, they must be found. Many of these children are not visible because

they may not function in the community's mainstream, and many are preschoolers. Parents may not realize that programs and services are available through their school district or from agencies in their community.

If you are aware of a child who may need a special education program or services, contact Kathy Brand, Jackson Local School District's Special Programs Director, with any questions you may have regarding this notice at 330-830-8006



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With the support of our sponsors, the Foundation has awarded more than \$189,000 in grants to Jackson Local Schools and has donated approximately \$115,000 to local charities.

Take The Plunge February 8th, 2025 Lake Cable 2:30 PM

Sign up today and start raising funds for the charity of your choice. Half of all of the money you raise will go to the Jackson Local Schools Foundation to fund classroom grants for our teachers. The other half will go directly to the Non-Profit of your choice. Sign up today at

www.jacksonpolarbearplunge.org