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FALL 2024

# POLAR BEAR PRIDE

Your Connection to the Jackson Local School District



COMMUNITY • COLLABORATION • PARTNERSHIP



## Superintendent's Message



The start of the school year can be filled with challenging tasks. It is a tribute to our staff, which works year-round to maintain more than 1 million square feet in our six school buildings on nearly 300 acres of our campuses. Our community entrusts us with maintaining these amazing facilities. In the hustle and bustle of a new school year, it can be easy to overlook some of the good news happening in our district. The following accomplishments are the product of the relationships built with our students, parents, staff, community stakeholders and partners. Without all of you, none of these would be possible.

### NATIONAL MERIT HONORS

We are proud to recognize 11 Jackson High School students who have received National Merit Scholarship status.

The number of students who are taking the PSAT, which is a National Merit Scholarship qualifying test, has been on the rise. Two years ago, 90 students took the PSAT, and we had 226 take it last year. This year, 363 Jackson students registered for the October PSAT. For our students who wish to continue their academic studies in college, the National Merit Scholarship can be a route to help reduce college costs. Some universities offer significant college scholarships for National Merit Finalists and Semifinalists. Congratulations to all of our students for receiving these recognitions.

### STATE REPORT CARD

The Ohio Department of Education & Workforce released data from the latest state report card and we are pleased to inform you our district received the highest rating possible, five stars. Jackson Local was one of just 68 districts in Ohio to receive a five-star rating and one of only three in Stark County.



Report Card data truly is a collaboration between parents, guardians, students, teachers, and staff. All six buildings put a tremendous amount of time and effort into analyzing our data and strategically planning to target areas of improvement. We are proud of our teachers working with our students to reach their potential.

### ARTS PROGRAM WORKING HARD

Our students and staff in the Jackson School for the Arts are busy preparing and planning performances for this school year. Thank you to all who supported JSA by ordering chicken dinners last month.

Coming in November (Nov. 7, 9, and 10) is the fall musical *Mary Poppins*. You can find ticket information by following our JSA website at JSAJackson.org.

### ATHLETICS

We are proud of our student-athletes who are competing this fall at a high level. It is a bit early to tell which teams may win league titles or postseason honors, but we have had a strong showing thus far. Our girls volleyball team is ranked No. 2 in Ohio, girls tennis won the Federal League, boys golf finished second in the Federal League, girls golf is right there as well, boys and girls soccer are playing well and both could win league titles, and our cross country teams (boys coming off a state title last season) are among the top three in the league.

-- Chris DiLoreto, Superintendent



## CONGRATULATIONS

Wow! Jackson Local has 11 students who earned National Merit Recognition and 4 semifinalists!

### SEMIFINALISTS



ISHA NAGAJOTHI



NOAH SCHRADER



ERIC WASCO



MAX WEBER

### COMMENDED STUDENTS



CARTER BACH



STEPHEN HALL



EVAN JORDANIDES



SHAKTHI PRABHAKARAN



MATTHEW SPERLING



BROOKE TRAYER



NATE WEILER

The Jackson Local School District is thrilled to announce that eleven students have earned recognition in the prestigious National Merit Scholarship Program, marking one of the highest counts of honorees in a single year for the district. The remarkable students who have demonstrated exceptional academic achievement include semifinalists Isha Nagajothi, Noah Schrader, Eric Wasco, and Max Weber, and commended students Carter Bach, Stephen Hall, Evan Jordanides, Shakthi Prabhakaran, Matthew Sperling, Brooke Trayer, and Nate Weiler.

The National Merit Scholarship Program is one of the most competitive and well-known scholarship competitions in the United States. High school juniors are entered into the program by taking the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), which assesses critical reading, mathematics, and writing skills. Out of approximately 1.5 million test-takers nationwide, only around 50,000 high scorers are recognized. Of these, around 16,000 students are named semifinalists, representing less than 1% of high school seniors across the nation. The other 34,000 are recognized as commended students, a distinction that places them among the top academic performers in the country.

Semifinalists have the opportunity to compete for some 7,500 National Merit Scholarships worth nearly \$28 million that will be offered in the spring. To become finalists, these students must complete a detailed scholarship application, which includes writing an essay, demonstrating consistently high academic performance throughout high school, and submitting recommendations from a school official. Finalists will be notified in February, and scholarship winners will be announced beginning in April.

This recognition is a reflection of the hard work, dedication, and academic excellence of Jackson Local School District students. Superintendent Chris DiLoreto expressed his pride in the students, stating, "This achievement speaks to the quality of our students, teachers, and the support from our community. These students have set a standard of excellence that makes us all proud."

The eleven honorees represent a broad spectrum of interests and talents within the Jackson Local School District, and their achievements highlight the district's commitment to fostering academic excellence and preparing students for future success. The recognition they have received through the National Merit Scholarship Program is not only a testament to their personal effort and dedication but also an inspiration for all their peers.

Jackson Local School District congratulates these exceptional students for their hard work and dedication to their education. Their success is a source of pride for the entire district, and they set a tremendous example for all students in our community.



Jackson Local Schools  
Student Calendar  
2024-2025

AUGUST 2024						
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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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**  
21 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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JUNE 2025						
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29	30					



## A Great Start to the School Year!



The Jackson Local School District is off to a fantastic start as students, staff, and families kicked off the first day of school with excitement and enthusiasm. The positive energy was felt throughout all our schools as students returned to classrooms ready to learn and grow.

Thanks to the dedication of our staff, the support of our parents, and the welcoming spirit of our community, the school year has started smoothly and successfully. Our teachers and staff worked hard to prepare for the first day, ensuring our students felt comfortable and ready to engage in learning from day one. The involvement and support from our families and community members have played an essential role in making this start to the school year one of the best yet.

We look forward to a year filled with growth, achievement, and **#PolarBearPride!** Here's to a great year ahead!

## 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.*

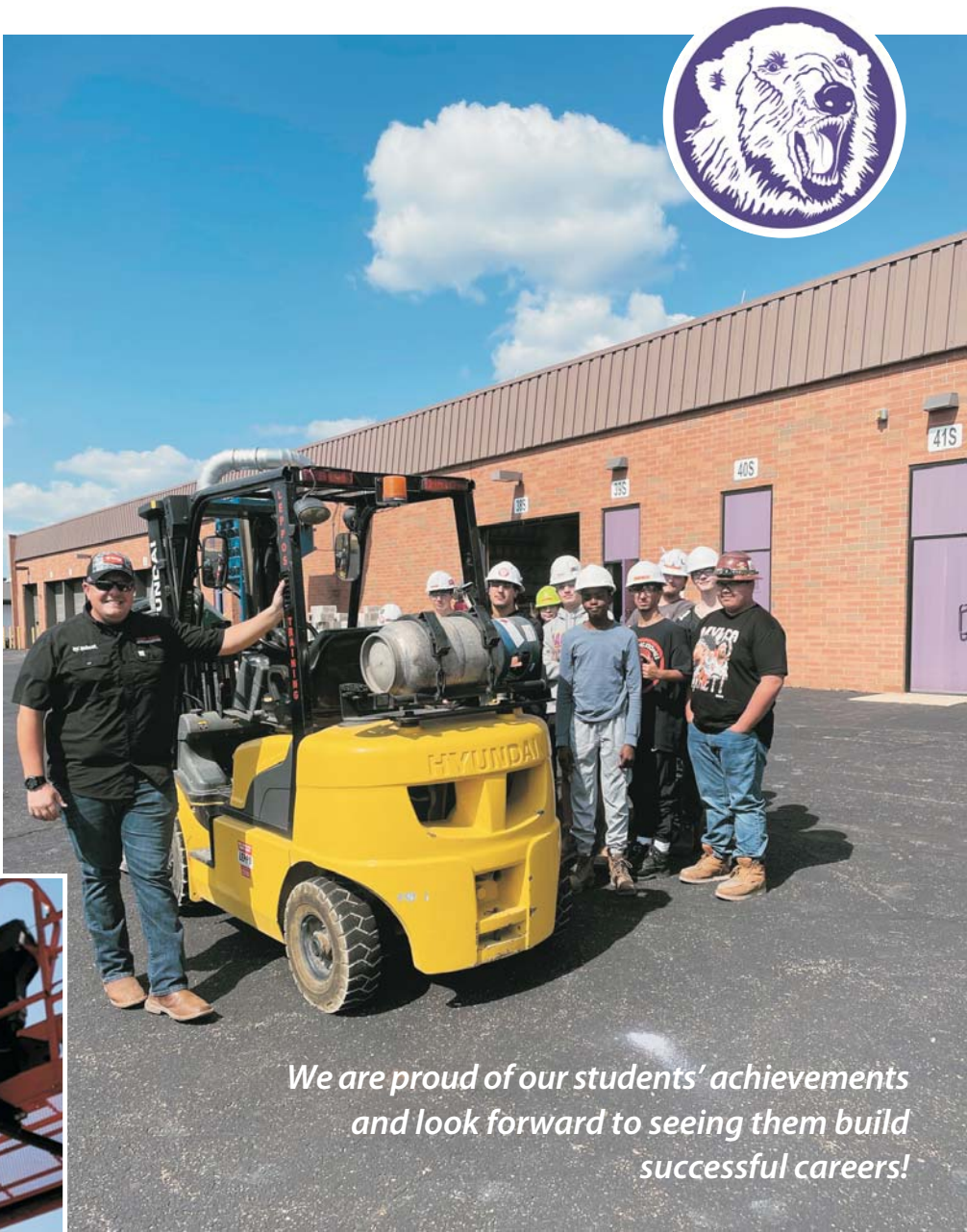


# Career Tech Initiative

Jackson Local School District’s senior construction students geared up for exciting opportunities as they gained essential skills for their future careers. Last month, these hardworking students were certified to operate heavy machinery, opening doors to a range of possibilities in the construction industry. A huge thanks to Leppo Rents for use of equipment.

The week kicked off with forklift training on Monday, where students learned to safely and effectively operate this vital piece of equipment. The hands-on experience provided them with practical knowledge and the confidence to apply their skills in real-world settings. This certification is a significant step forward for students, ensuring they are well-prepared for the workforce and providing a competitive edge in their field.

The program is part of the district’s Career Tech initiative, which is dedicated to equipping students with practical experience and training that will help them succeed beyond the classroom. These certifications not only make students more employable but also lay the foundation for a bright future in the construction and skilled trades industries.



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Jackson Township residents,

Ryan Homes is excited to be back in Jackson! I’m Paul Farley, Sales Manager for Ryan Homes and a local Jackson Twp. resident.

There’s a true need for new homes in our area without the custom home price tag. This is where we fit in. Ryan Homes has plans to elevate our Jackson communities with higher-level finishes, materials, and showcase how great our brand truly is. Think of us as the “new” Ryan Homes.

Since last building homes in Jackson, we’ve implemented changes to our standards and are more committed than ever to building a great home. Two commitments that we’ve enhanced are the customer experience and our brand promise. Read more about both below.

### Customer Experience

The first commitment is to provide an excellent customer experience for every customer. Did you know that before we make any decision, large or small, we run it through a filter? A filter that is prioritized above all else. That is, will this decision enhance or effect the customer experience.

### Brand Promise

The second commitment pertains to our brand promise. Our brand promise is to deliver a high-quality, 100% complete home on time, every time. Since last serving Jackson Twp., we’ve implemented several new construction practices. During the construction process, each home is inspected up to 20 times by local municipalities. Before delivering the keys to our new homeowners, the home is inspected by an independent, third-party inspection team. We are one of the only production home builders that does this two-part inspection process. We do it not out of necessity, but to deliver on our brand promise. This has allowed us to identify opportunities during the construction process. Each item found is resolved before the customer ever gets their keys. Lastly, we’ve enhanced our warranty claims and service departments, so if you ever do have an issue with your home, it is as painless process to get resolved.

### Open Invitation to Julian Courtyards

We invite you to come see for yourself. We welcome you to our newest community, Julian Courtyards. Here you will get to see the “new” Ryan Homes in Jackson.





# 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.

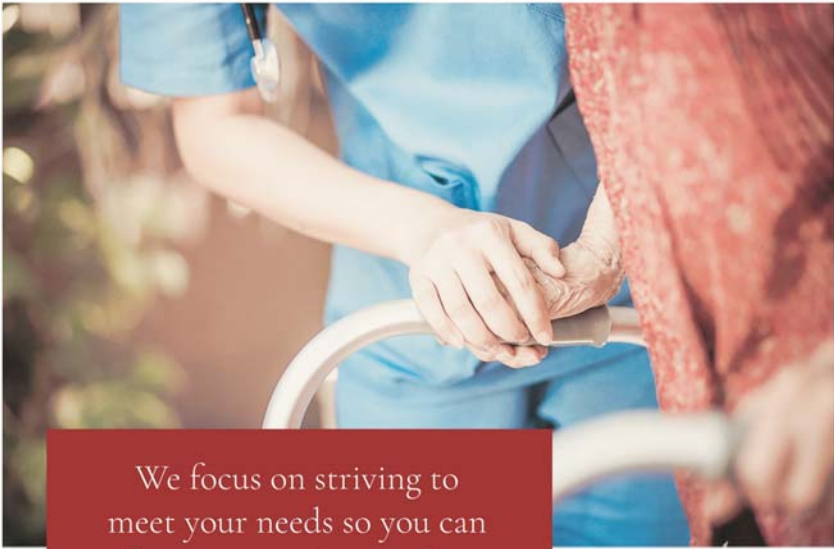
Since its inception in 2020, **\$16,000 has been awarded in scholarships to 32 Jackson graduates** to help them reach their goals in life. In addition, \$20,000 is being added to the available funds by the Jackson Local Schools Foundation, Jackson High School Alumni Association and The Stark State College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



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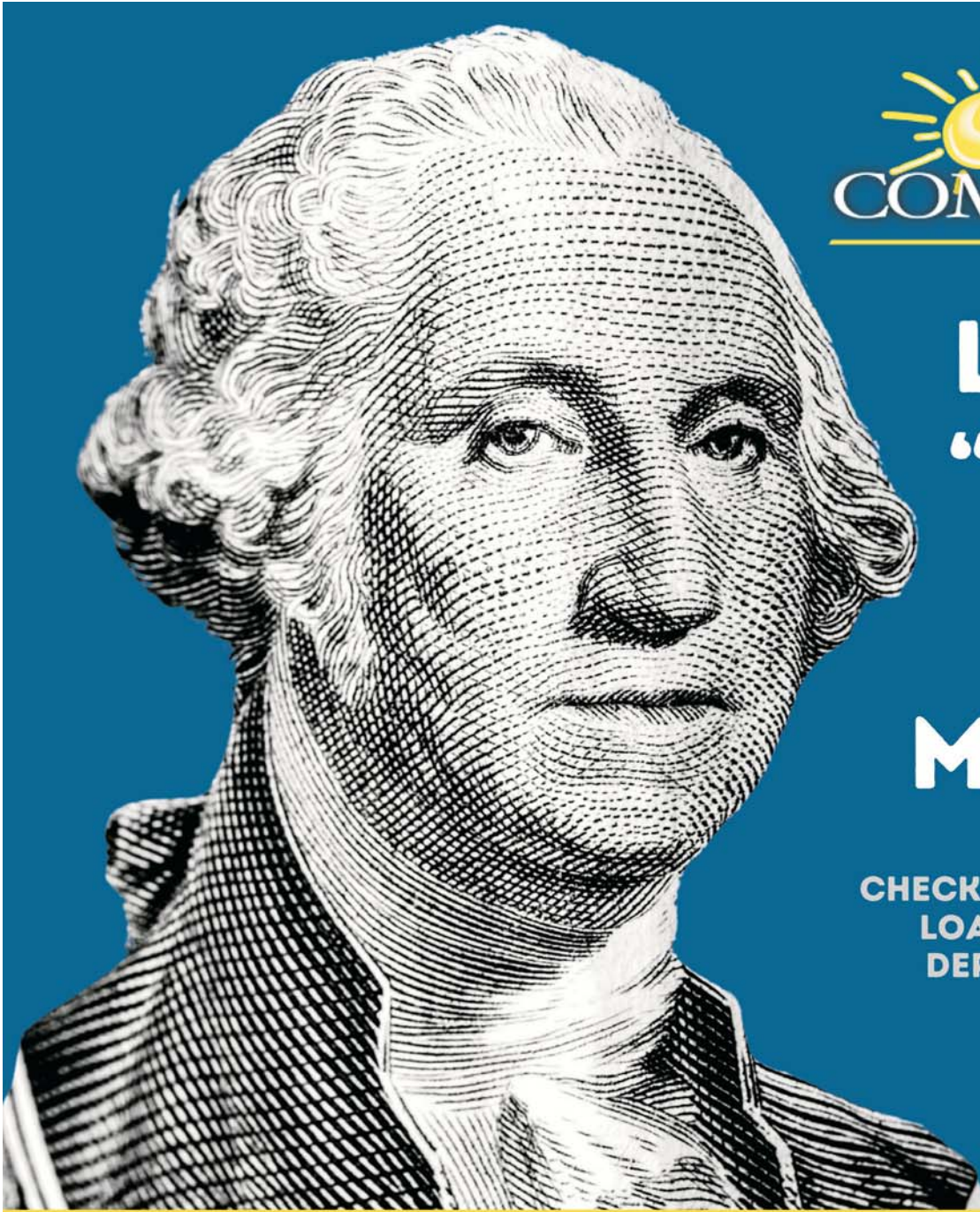


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# Abby LaPole: Overcoming obstacles, reaching goals By Dan Mucci

*Editor's Note: The following story appeared in the September edition of Jackson Living Magazine. It is being reprinted with the permission of Jackson Living Magazine.*

On the surface, Abby LaPole is your typical teenager competing in multiple sports, prioritizing academics, and hanging out with friends. Abby likes to travel and make jewelry, has an engaging personality, and loves her dog, Charlie. Below the surface, the incredible young woman shows signs of continuing to blossom. For one, LaPole is an Ohio state champion in the seated position shot put. That is an amazing feat. But digging deeper, the feat is more astounding, considering that Abby competes athletically with a disability.



At birth, all seemed well for LaPole; however, after what appeared to be a normal birth, a blood clot formed in her left leg. Soon, the doctors needed to amputate her left leg up to her knee. Today, LaPole wears a prosthetic leg. LaPole's interest in sports started at age 3. She twirled the baton but discovered that it was not for her. Eventually, she found basketball, where she used to play at recess every day. Then, in 2019, Jackson Local Schools started wheelchair basketball through Adapted Sports of Ohio (ASO), which opened up a whole new athletic world for LaPole. Through that experience, she expanded her basketball teams to the Jr. Wheelchair Cavaliers and the adult Lady Cavaliers - travel teams' part of the National

Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA). She also plays Sled Hockey for the Wooster Wildcats and throws a seated shotput. LaPole described some of the challenges she faces as an athlete, the least of which was finding teams to be a part of. She said Adapted Sports of Ohio started all these teams. "I have to have certain adaptive equipment, train differently, and find a way to play," said LaPole, who is the daughter of Chris and Jalyn. "I am lucky enough to have a school team that introduced the sports to me. Considering equipment, I can't just go onto the Nike site and buy a pair of ball shoes. I have to find a brand of sports chair to meet my needs. Some sports chair companies include Per4max, RGK, and Top End. These companies make custom chairs, fit to each player, so they are a lot more expensive than a pair of shoes. ASO started the interscholastic teams and provides chairs for the schools. I made a decision this past season to purchase my own custom chair, this is the path many other players around the country have to take. ASO is very generous in providing these pieces of equipment for us to borrow for the season. They do the same for track and field athletes. The equipment is one part of the challenge athletes with disabilities face. The other is training and building upper body strength. Coach Dickson (Jackson's Wheelchair Basketball Coach and her seated track coach) keeps me in shape in the weight room, and I also take the strength and conditioning class offered at the high school," said LaPole.

"Able-bodied basketball is a whole different game than wheelchair basketball. For example, jump shots aren't really possible in wheelchair basketball, so all the power to form a shot has to come from your arms and from what else you are able to control on your body. For seated shot-put, it is similar. Although, I don't need to work my legs as much as stand-up throwers. Since it is a different competition, I don't see the drive to be as good or better than them in their sport; I want to excel with other wheelchair athletes. With that being said, I respect the work any athlete puts into their life and their sport, no matter if it is adapted or not." As previously mentioned, basketball is her first love. She described her feelings about being on the basketball team. "When I first started, the one thing I noticed was kindness," said LaPole. "People on the court understand what others are going through or have gone through. And if they don't understand on a personal level, it is through kindness that you feel heard, seen, and understood. However, there is still TONS of competition! There is heat in the games, and they are an experience you don't really get to see often. And if you watch the Paralympics, which you should, you will see even more competition and heat, no matter the sport."



LaPole views herself as a model for younger basketball players. Jackson's wheelchair basketball team differs because teammates range from first-grade to seniors. "I do consider myself a role model for the younger players," said LaPole. "Younger athletes often cannot see the big picture. As athletes, we will always be different. But I remind them not to focus on what they can't do but rather on what they can do. I always try to encourage and provide positive reinforcement." This summer, LaPole attended two basketball camps, one in Texas and another at the University of Arizona. Her success has come in the seated shot put, but her heart and first love are basketball. Abby's mom, Jalyn, said, "Having the opportunity to participate in school-based athletic programs (the Wheelchair Basketball team and competing as part of the Track and Field team) gives our whole family a taste of the student-athlete experience. ADA is doing a great job of trying to grow these programs, but right now, the number of schools participating is still limited across the State. As more schools participate, the competition more closely mimics 'typical' school athletics, and that's exciting."

For any student/family that desires different sports options, wants to have additional competition opportunities (like Abby), or for anyone whose school hasn't yet

offered adapted programs, frequent travel is typically required. There are some amazing programs available, but most states only have a few locations, at best, that have established programs. We travel about an hour to and from all of Abby's non-school sports practices and out-of-state for the majority of her tournaments, competitions, and extra training. Coach Blake Dickson has made a huge difference in LaPole's athletic experience. "Having a coach that cares has made the basketball program better," said LaPole. "His passion and energy mean a lot." This past spring, LaPole won the Division I state seated championship. LaPole described the emotions she felt as a state champion. "I was extremely surprised," said LaPole, who will be a junior this year. "I could not believe it. I didn't throw my best, but it was enough."

LaPole edged out Federal League foe GlenOak's Elena Knowles. "It was awesome for our league to be represented this way," said LaPole. "Elena and I are friends and hang out sometimes. There is tough competition with Seated Shot-Put, and a lot of work goes into trying to improve." LaPole commented on how Jackson treats athletes with disabilities. The students and administration continue to make strides with room to grow as advocacy for disabled people increases. Each year, there is more inclusion. "There is always going to be room for growth and improvement," said LaPole. "However, each year, there is more and more support for the Wheelchair Basketball team, which is one way to show care toward disabled athletes. A word of advice: if someone is looking to make a change, just treat athletes with disabilities with respect and acknowledge their sport. It means a lot!"



Participating in sports, for any athlete, is tremendous for mental health. "Having the chance to be part of a team and the encouragement to continually challenge yourself is good for anyone," said Jalyn. "However, one of the best aspects of adaptive sports is the chance to meet other people with disabilities. There's no judgment or awkward questions. There's only acceptance, camaraderie, and usually, some intense competition!" Like all athletes, LaPole has dreams and goals. Her ultimate goal is to compete in the Paralympics one day in seated shot-put or basketball.



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### *From the Director...*

Every year, the Jackson School for the Arts student leadership team selects a theme for the year which culminates at our annual Arts Extravaganza. This year, the theme is "Kaleidoscope," a concept that beautifully mirrors the journey we're about to embark on with the Banks family.

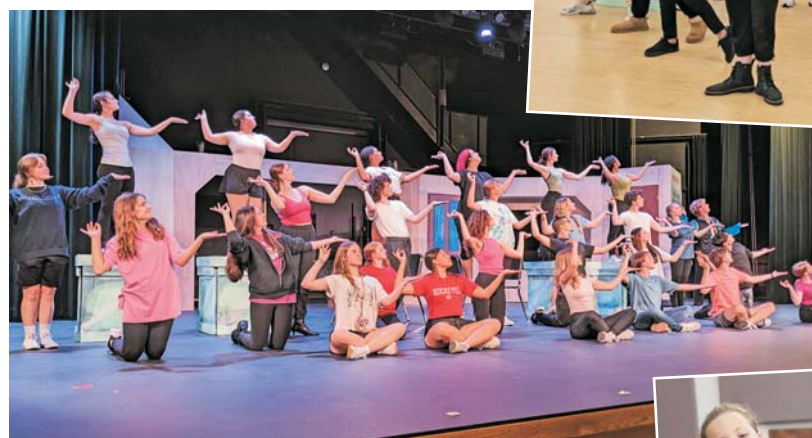
In a kaleidoscope, shifting patterns and colors create a dynamic and ever-changing view, revealing new perspectives with each turn. Similarly, our production of Mary Poppins depicts how family dynamics can be as varied and intricate as the patterns within the device.

The story opens on the fragmented world of the Banks family. Each individual character is like a jagged, disjointed piece struggling to fit together. The Banks family's world is flipped on its head when Mary Poppins arrives, introducing a whirlwind of change and wonder.

Just as a kaleidoscope transforms and refracts light into beautiful, new configurations, the disruption within the Banks household leads to a reconfiguration of relationships. Through their journey, we witness how different perspectives and experiences, when embraced with empathy, can lead to profound personal and familial transformation.

Our hope is that our presentation of Mary Poppins not only entertains, but also resonates with you on a deeper level, illustrating how even when things seem topsy-turvy, the eventual realignment can reveal a more vibrant and harmonious view.

Thank you to our audience and to our JSA families who continue to be patrons of the arts. Without you, none of this would be possible. Thank you for joining us in this exploration of transformation through our kaleidoscopic lens. We look forward to sharing this colorful journey with you!



### **The Production Team**

Mrs. Susan Gardner  
*Director of JSA*

Mrs. Hannah Rissler  
*Director*

Mr. Scott Eversdyke  
*Music Director*

Mrs. Megan Seemann  
*Choreographer*

Mr. Ben Wykoff  
*Assistant Music Director*

Mrs. Robin Snow  
*Costumer*

Mrs. Ryann Despot  
*Publicity Director*

**We look forward to seeing you at a performance on November 7th, 9th or 10th!**





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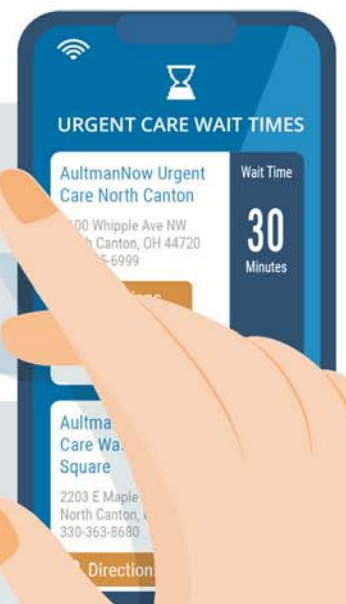
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