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## Did You Know ...

Graduating seniors each year complete more than 1,300 hours of community service by participating in Senior Service Day?



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SPRING 2025

# POLAR BEAR PRIDE

Your Connection to the Jackson Local School District



COMMUNITY • COLLABORATION • PARTNERSHIP



## Superintendent's Message



It is always a privilege to share the celebrations of our students, staff, and school district with our community. Our community has come to expect to read a recap of how we are doing in our three main areas: academics, the arts, and athletics.

With the 2024-2025 school year already past the halfway mark, we look ahead to celebrating the achievements of our students as we approach graduation. We will honor 512 seniors at commencement at Robert Fife Stadium on May 24 to receive their diplomas.

### ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Four of our high school seniors are National Merit Finalists, placing them among the top academic achievers in the country. While none of the four students have officially decided on their college destination, each has applied to at least one university offering a significant National Merit Scholarship, and those scholarships collectively are valued at more than \$500,000. Congratulations to:

- Isha Nagajothi • Noah Schrader
- Eric Wasco • Max Weber

These scholarships represent incredible opportunities. Regardless of where they choose to attend, their hard work and academic excellence have opened doors to a bright future.

Jackson High School's Speech & Debate team made a strong showing at the state tournament, highlighted by Isha Nagajothi winning the state championship in International Extemp. Her ability to think critically and speak with confidence set her apart in this highly competitive event.

Additionally, Charlotte Raketich earned 6th place in Drama, showcasing her talent and dedication on the state stage.

The team's success is a testament to their hard work and the support of their coaches, teachers, and families. Their preparation and commitment to communication, leadership, and critical thinking were on full display, representing Jackson with pride.

*Continued on page 3*

## Jackson Local Schools Raises \$92,000 for Pediatric Cancer Research at St. Baldrick's Event

For the 23rd consecutive year, the Jackson Local School District participated in the annual St. Baldrick's fundraiser, continuing its commitment to raising money for pediatric cancer research. On Sunday, March 9, several hundred volunteers and participants gathered at the North Canton Racquet Club to shave their heads in solidarity with children battling cancer and to contribute to the cause.

Jackson Local Superintendent Chris DiLoreto and North Canton City Schools' Assistant Superintendent Dave Pilati helped kick off the event, which saw Jackson Local teams raise approximately \$92,000. Combined with North Canton's efforts, the two districts brought in an impressive \$177,000 this year. Over the past 23 years, Jackson Local teams have collectively raised more than \$1.1 million for St. Baldrick's.



This year's event began with Jackson student Bella Davide (shown above) shaving Superintendent DiLoreto's head – setting the tone for an inspiring day of giving. The event has grown tremendously since its inception in 2003, when it was first held in a local salon and raised \$5,000.

Jackson Local Schools remains dedicated to this important cause, demonstrating the power of community support and generosity in the fight against pediatric cancer.

## Kindergarten Registration is Open!

If your child turns 5 on or before August 1, 2025, it's time to register for kindergarten in Jackson Local Schools! Our elementary schools (rated Best Schools by U.S. News & World Report) provide a strong foundation in a supportive, community-driven environment. Two of our elementary schools – Sauder and Lake Cable elementaries – are recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as Blue Ribbon Schools.



From hands-on learning to building lifelong friendships, your child's education starts here. We look forward to partnering with your family on this journey and making these early years a time of growth, discovery, and success.

Register today at: [bit.ly/40izR2S](https://bit.ly/40izR2S)  
or scan the QR code.





# Did You Know ...

All six Jackson Local school buildings are Purple Star-certified for the district's commitment to serving military-connected families?



## Jackson Local Schools Student Calendar 2025

MARCH 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
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APRIL 2025						
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JUNE 2025						
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**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

## Jackson Local Schools Student Calendar 2025-2026

AUGUST 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
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SEPTEMBER 2025						
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OCTOBER 2025						
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NOVEMBER 2025						
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DECEMBER 2025						
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JANUARY 2026						
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**AUGUST**  
13 Gr 6/New Student Orientation, 6-8:00 pm  
14 Gr 9/New Student Orientation 7-8:00 pm  
14 Open House - All Elementaries, 4:30-6:30 pm  
19 1st Day for Students (K-12)  
20 Open House - JMMS, Last Name A-M, 6:00-7:00 pm  
Last Name N-Z, 7:00-8:00 pm  
26 Open House - High School, 5:00-7:00 pm  
29 Professional Development Day - No School (K-12)

**SEPTEMBER**  
1 Labor Day - No School (K-12)  
**OCTOBER**  
7 Parent Conferences (K-5) 4:00-8:00 pm  
7 Parent Conferences (Gr 6-12) 4:00-7:00 pm  
9 Parent Conferences (K-5) 4:00-8:00 pm  
10 Professional Development Day - No School (K-12)  
13 Columbus Day - No School (K-12)  
15 Parent Conferences (K-5) 4:00-8:00 pm  
15 Parent Conferences (Gr 6-12) 4:00-7:00 pm  
24 End of 1st Marking Period - 45 Days

**NOVEMBER**  
26 Thanksgiving Break Begins  
26 K-12 Conference Exchange Day

**DECEMBER**  
2 Classes Resume  
22 Winter Break Begins

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

**FEBRUARY**  
12 Parent Conferences (K-12) 4:00-7:00 pm  
13 Professional Development Day - No School (K-12)  
16 Presidents' Day - No School (K-12)  
18 Parent Conferences (K-12) 4:00-7:00 pm

**MARCH**  
20 End of 3rd Marking Period - 42 Days  
30 Spring Break Begins

**APRIL**  
6 K-12 Conference Exchange Day - No School (K-12)  
7 Classes Resume

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

**JUNE**  
19 Juneteenth

FEBRUARY 2026						
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MARCH 2026						
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APRIL 2026						
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MAY 2026						
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JUNE 2026						
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## 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 Lia Jones, Esq., Vice President Scott Gindlesberger, Christopher Goff, Esq., Tom Winkhart, Esq., Tonya Wright.



**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 degree from The University of Akron School of Law. He is Chairman, President and CEO of Employers Health and spent ten years as an adjunct professor of law at The University of Akron School of Law and two years as an adjunct professor at Northeast Ohio Medical School. Mr. Goff and his wife have three adult children who 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.



**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.

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



## Did You Know ...

Jackson Local Schools has consistently been recognized by the Ohio Auditor of State for having clean audits?



## Superintendent's Message

continued from front page

### ARTS CELEBRATIONS



Aileen Chen's acrylic paint work was a Gold Key award winner this year and is currently on display at the Meraki Gallery at Jackson High School.

representing the East Region in the Ohio Statehouse Art Show come from Jackson High School. Their work will be displayed at the Ohio Statehouse and Riffe Center starting March 29 during an Opening Reception at 12 p.m.

We also appreciate all the hard work and time our students and directors put into our Pep Band at our home basketball games. Having this group present adds to the energy and excitement of watching the Polar Bears on the hardwood.

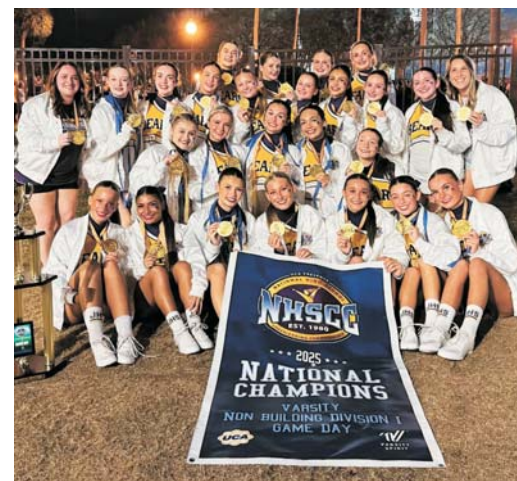
### ATHLETIC CELEBRATIONS

Our winter sports season finished with a great deal of post season success and league championships. Our boys basketball team won a share the Federal League title for the third season in a row. Congratulations to first-year head coach Michael Coon, who led our girls basketball team to a district championship and an appearance in the Elite 8 for the second straight season.

Gymnast Gabby Whalen advanced to the state meet and two wrestlers – Brody McKinney and Vann Riordan – advance to the state tournament and freshman Liam Dillon was an alternate.

Our cheerleaders (right) won not one but two state titles at the OASSA state cheerleading competition. This is the same team that went to Florida and won a national title earlier this year!

Our boys and girls swimming and diving teams each won Federal League titles and went deep into the state tournament again.



Our wheelchair basketball team (below), which made it to the state Final Four last year, went a step further this season and played for the state title. The Rolling Polar Bears lost to Tallmadge. Junior Abby LaPole was named to the All-Ohio team for the third year in a row. Congratulations to head coach Blake Dickson.



These athletic accomplishments put Jackson in the lead in the All-Sports trophy with the spring season left to play. We are fortunate to play in a great league with competing schools who share our commitment to sportsmanship and our love for competition.

As we celebrate these accomplishments, we remain grateful for the unwavering support of our families, staff, and community members who make Jackson Local Schools an extraordinary place to learn and grow.

## GO POLAR BEARS!



## Vintage Jackson 2025 Event

The Rotary Club of Jackson Township invites the community to an evening of celebration at Vintage Jackson 2025, an annual fundraising event dedicated to supporting Jackson High School's Scholarship Program and addressing community needs. **The event will take place on Thursday, April 24, from 6-9 p.m. at Shady Hollow Country Club, located at 4865 Wales Ave. NW.**

Attendees will enjoy an evening of finely crafted beverages, fine food, camaraderie, and the elegant ambiance of Shady Hollow Country Club. One of the evening's highlights will be a silent auction, featuring an array of unique baskets and exclusive items up for bid.

Proceeds from Vintage Jackson 2025 will provide scholarships to Jackson High School students, helping them pursue their educational and career goals. Additionally, funds will support vital initiatives that meet the needs of the local community.

The Rotary Club of Jackson Township has a long-standing tradition of service, and Vintage Jackson is one of its signature events aimed at making a lasting impact. Community members, business leaders, and supporters are encouraged to attend and be part of this special night of giving.



**For more information or to purchase tickets please scan the QR code**

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## Did You Know ...

Jackson Local offers 27 AP courses, and nearly 8 out of 10 student score a 3 or higher in those AP classes to earn transferrable college credit?



# ***THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO GOT FREEZIN' FOR A REASON!***



***CHECK OUT MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE 7!***

**This year over 420 jumpers took the plunge to raise \$34,000 for classroom grants and donations to other deserving charities!**

**For more information on the Jackson Local Schools Foundation or to see the classroom grants that have been funded over the years please visit [jacksonlocalschoolsfoundation.org](http://jacksonlocalschoolsfoundation.org).**



  
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# 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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# Did You Know ...

Jackson High School houses 7 career and technical programs, including auto technology, CISCO networking, culinary arts, horticulture and more?



## Landon Thiel: Committed to Achieving his Goals *By Dan Mucci*

The pipeline of Jackson High School baseball players advancing to Division I programs will grow by one more at the conclusion of the 2026 school year. Junior Landon Thiel, a left-handed pitcher, has committed to play for The Ohio State University. Thiel hopes to follow in the footsteps of former Jackson players Dillon Dingler and Kyle Nicolas on his path to the pros.

Thiel, a two-sport athlete at Jackson, also plays center for the basketball team. He stands at 6-foot-7 and weighs 195 pounds. "It's tough to play two sports," said Thiel, the son of Matt, a former Jackson High School athlete, and Amy. "I make sure to respect the season I'm playing. That's my focus. When I'm in basketball season, my concentration is on basketball. When baseball season comes, I focus on baseball. Both sports complement each other and require many of the same skills.

### Balancing Two Successful Programs

Thiel is fortunate to play for two highly successful programs under accomplished coaches.

"I'm lucky," said Thiel, who enjoys playing golf with his dad, fishing, being outdoors, and playing video games. "Each program has won two state titles. My coaches prepare me for the next level."

Like many kids, Thiel started playing baseball at the age of 5 with his friends and never stopped. In seventh grade, he elevated his game when he joined the Ohio Kings travel baseball team. Before playing for the Kings, he played multiple positions, but after that, he focused more on pitching and transitioned into a full-time pitcher.

As a left-handed pitcher, Thiel has a natural advantage since most high school pitchers are right-handed. He described his pitching style: "I like to attack the batters," Thiel said. "My best pitch is my fastball, which reaches 88 mph, and I get good extension. It helps me get ahead in the count. Then I have a nice slider and curveball to complement my fastball. As I get older and continue to progress, I'll increase my velocity, improve my location, and get stronger."

### Coaching and Development

Thiel credits his coaches with helping him reach this level. "My pitching coach at Jackson, Dan Rodriguez, who just retired, was great with pitchers," said Thiel, who plans to study business at Ohio State. "I also trained with Nick Venuto, a former pitching scout for the Minnesota Twins. He has been working on my mechanics since seventh and eighth grade."



Playing basketball and baseball at Jackson has helped prepare Thiel for the future. "We compete so hard – every day is a battle," said Thiel. "We're a big school, and we have a lot of Division I athletes. Our coaches know the game and prepare us well, but they also understand that we're high school kids and need to have fun. I play with some great teammates, and it pays off when we go to state."

"Landon is a true 'lead by example' player," said Jackson High School baseball coach Bill Gamble. "He has earned a ton of respect from his teammates and coaching staff with his work ethic and performance on the mound. He's an extremely competitive multi-sport athlete with moxie beyond his years. Landon has a super high ceiling as a left-handed pitcher with significant potential as he gets physically stronger."

"Right now, he sits tied for eighth all-time in career wins at Jackson with 12 after two seasons on the mound for the Polar Bears (2023: 5-0, 2024: 7-2, 68 strikeouts). He helped the 2024 pitching staff tie the school record for most strikeouts in a season (240), originally set in 2017."

### Committing to Ohio State

Thiel's baseball future became clearer this past August when he pitched in a major event in Georgia and performed well. As a result, colleges took notice. He visited Virginia Tech, Vanderbilt, Cincinnati, South Carolina, and Indiana before ultimately deciding he wanted to be a Buckeye.

"I really liked everything about the program and felt comfortable there," said Thiel. "I like head coach Justin Haire and pitching coach Tyler Robinson. They gave a great presentation. I also met their strength and conditioning coach, who talked about how they help athletes with nutrition

and what to eat. I talked with (Jackson) Coach (Bill) Gamble, and I got a good reference from Kyle Nicolas."

Gamble emphasized how Jackson's program prepares players for the next level. "We pride ourselves on preparing our players to compete at the next level. The training sessions and the sweat equity that each player puts in alongside their teammates make a difference. Combine that with strength training and an elite practice environment, along with an extremely competitive schedule, and you can see how our players develop. In 15 years, we've had 83 – and counting, including Landon – players commit to college baseball. We truly practice what we preach: a 'K2 Life (kindergarten to life)' mentality."

*This story is reprinted with permission from Jackson Living Magazine.*



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