

Striving for Excellence



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A Periodical of the Jackson Local Schools

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Everything is NOT okay

Jackson faces an impending threat to its well-being as the leading district in Stark County. Without additional funding, the district will continue to decline, affecting the excellent classroom product.

As a community, we're in this together

Our schools are the backbone of our community and are the primary reason families move into Jackson Township. Property values are tied directly to the quality of the schools. If we allow our schools to deteriorate, our property values will follow suit.

The request is the least it can ever be

The district has made deep personnel cuts, to the point where additional reductions cannot solve the funding problem.

The state is NOT coming to the rescue

The governor and the state legislature have been operating Ohio's public school districts illegally for more than 10 years. There's no state solution in sight. Not even a draft.

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The need is real, the time is now

20% of administration has been permanently cut.

Loss of teachers has swelled classroom sizes.

Operating expenses have been slashed by \$2.5 million.

Intervention programs for students needing additional help have been eliminated.

New busing routes have reduced fuel costs.

Cluster bus stops have been put into place, causing children to walk farther to catch the bus.

Jackson's 5,726 public school children are dependent on the adults of their community to help them meet the challenges of 21st century, global economy in which they will live, work, and raise their own families.

What if the levy fails?

In a special board meeting on October 7, before a packed library of concerned citizens, the Board of Education reviewed the following possibilities for reducing the school district budget in the event that the November levy does not pass. All or some of the options will be decided at the Oct. 21 school board meeting to be held at 6:30 PM. at Sauder Elementary. Cuts made will be implemented this January, after the winter break.

Eliminate busing for all high school students and students K-8 who live within 2 miles of school

The state requires busing for students in kindergarten through grade 8, but not for any child who lives within two highway miles of his or her school. Eliminating busing at the high school level and district wide for students in the 1-mile limit would take 10 buses off the road, save \$400,000, and affect 1113 students. Extending the effort to the 2-mile limit would take 24 buses off the road, save \$1 million, and affect 2399 students.

Eliminate Athletics

Eliminating Jackson's athletic programs would save \$1.2 million. The drawbacks: Loss of student athletic scholarships, and students leaving the district to attend high schools that offer athletics. With each student exodus would go approximately \$5,700 from Jackson coffers to the student's chosen school.

For these reasons, the board hopes not to institute this cut.

Other Options Reviewed

The board also reviewed closing the school cafeterias and reducing custodial work but neither offered significant savings. This year, the cafeteria budgets finished in the black, and it was learned that Jackson's custodial crews are cleaning more square footage than industry averages and more than other area schools.

What if the levy passes?

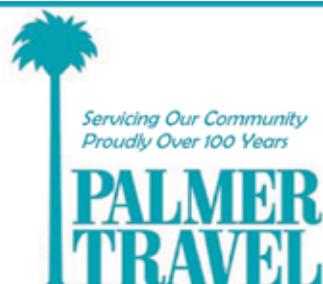
If the levy passes, none of the above cost-saving measures would be implemented, but all of the previous \$2.5 million in cuts would stay in place. None of the funds would be used for construction costs because the recent district construction was fully funded by the bond issue that voters passed in 2004. That project finished on budget. This is an **operating levy** to be used only for day-to-day operations of the district.

Operating costs include items such as up-to-date textbooks and necessary computers, increased utility costs to operate our six school buildings, fuel to run the buses, property insurance, security costs to protect our children, and salary increases to help keep the great teachers and support staff that we have.

The five-year plan assumes Jackson could hire three new teachers each year to address any growing enrollment and to maintain class sizes in the mandatory 1-25 teacher/student ratio for kindergarten through 4th grade.

The plan projects no reinstatement or increase in administrative personnel for that five-year period.

The goal is to maintain the current level of programs and services to students, to maintain the excellence our school system is known for statewide (ranked EXCELLENT 8 consecutive years) and nationally (JHS ranked in the top 5% of US high school by *Newsweek* magazine, 3 consecutive years).



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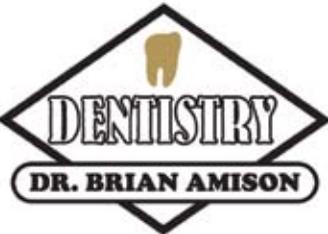
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Some say, "Let the state take over."

Districts that have been through it say it is a race to the bottom and that after a point, efficiency cannot fix the problem. In other words, you cannot cut your way to fiscal security. The state cuts inevitably take the district to state minimums, and the debt incurred assures that future levies will be needed simply to pay down the debt, not to improve education. Neighboring district, Northwest, is experiencing state control. A visit to a recent Northwest School Board meeting and several conversations with state officials revealed the information below.



Northwest Local is in Fiscal Caution. Roger Hardin, assistant director of the Ohio Department of Education's Office of Finance, traveled from Columbus to give a slide presentation to the Northwest Board of Education and about 60 residents on what it means to be in Fiscal Caution, Fiscal Watch, and Fiscal Emergency.

What happens when the state comes in?

#1 Fiscal Caution

When the Auditor of State certifies a deficit between 2% and 8% of prior year general fund revenue

1. The district would receive a letter from the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) stating the designation of Fiscal caution. In accordance with Section 3316.031(C), our Board of Education would have 60 days to submit a plan to correct the budget imbalance.

2. Educational finance professionals from ODE and the Auditor of State's office would meet with the Jackson's Board of Education and school officials to explain that a **district need only meet the state's minimum standards.** Failure to balance the budget puts the district at risk of losing additional state funding.

3. ODE would visit the district monthly to inspect and monitor school operations and the district financial situation. If ODE finds the district has not made

reasonable proposals or has not taken action to correct the crisis, the State Superintendent may recommend to the Auditor of State that the district be placed in Fiscal Watch or Emergency.

#2 Fiscal Watch

When an operating deficit for the current fiscal year exceeds 8% of the district's general fund revenue for preceding year, and voters have not approved a levy that would raise enough money in the next fiscal year to eliminate the deficit

#3 Fiscal Emergency

When an operating deficit for the current fiscal year exceeds 15% of the district's general fund revenue for the preceding year and voters have not approved a levy that would raise enough money in the next fiscal year to eliminate the deficit

1. A five-member commission would be created. The commission would consist of a representative of the Ohio Office of Budget and Management, a representative from the office of the State

Superintendent, a district parent appointed by the State Superintendent, a finance representative appointed by the governor, and a district resident appointed locally. This commission would assume some or all of the powers of the local Board of Education.

2. The duties of this commission include approving a financial recovery plan that must be approved by the State Superintendent. The plan must eliminate Fiscal Emergency conditions, balance the budget, and avoid future deficits.

3. Options available to the commission include:
 - Propose additional reductions
 - Recommend and implement revenue increases (levies and or state solvency assistance)
 - Consolidate the district with an adjacent district.

After the district has operated in the black for two years it would be released from state oversight.

The state has no plan to rescue property owners

Ohio's school systems are one of 56 state agencies seeking a piece of the state funding pie. More than a decade has passed since the Ohio Supreme Court declared the state's school funding system unconstitutional. Still, there is no plan to do business differently, not even a proposal.

Most Ohioans are supporting their school districts

There are 613 school districts in Ohio. Of that number, 17 are in Fiscal Caution, 8 are in Fiscal Watch, and 8 are in Fiscal Emergency.

What will the levy cost me?
The Stark County Auditor has reviewed the district budget and approved 3.9-mills for a 5-year, Emergency Operating Levy.

This would cost the owner of a \$100,000 home
\$9.95 per month.

Check the auditor's Web site for your specifics.
<http://webapp.co.stark.oh.us/TaxEstimator>

Your schools have done what you've asked

\$2.5 million in cuts

- Balanced the cafeteria budget
- Negotiated successfully with the unions so that all employees participate in insurance costs
- Froze administrative salaries 2006/07
- Eliminated the Adult Education Department, including the positions of director and secretary
- Eliminated 7 teaching positions
- Eliminated 2 vocational teachers
- Reduced cafeteria staff
- Eliminated administrative positions:
 - .5 Assistant Elementary Principal
 - Vocational Director
 - Middle School Assistant Principal
 - High School Assistant Principal
 - Assistant Bus Transportation Supervisor
 - Adult Education Director
 - Elementary Curriculum Coordinator
- Eliminated Community Intervention Specialist position (drug and alcohol intervention)
- Reduced summer employment
- Offered retirement incentive for staff at the higher end of the pay scale and hired less experienced staff at the lower end of the pay scale to save more than \$3 million over four years
- Reduced busing cost by creating cluster stops, combining JMMS and JHS routes, reducing drivers, and reducing bus replacement
- Reduced technology costs through lease/purchase agreements
- Raised private funds to make 6th grade Outdoor Education Camp self-supporting
- Eliminated summer school for remedial students
- Eliminated elementary field trips paid by the Board of Education
- Eliminated remedial reading academies
- Implemented athletic fees
- Implemented academic fees for consumable items.



Jackson is a blueprint for school success

The Independent
Editorial May 21, 2008

When Fred Blosser was selected to be superintendent of the Massillon City School District a couple of years ago, he established an ambitious goal of elevating the district to one of the best in the nation.

Every school district, regardless of size and circumstance, should have similar ambitions. It means teachers, administrators and parents are on the same page in attempting to offer our youth the best possible education.

The approach to reaching such a goal is open to debate. What works in Massillon, Ohio, may not work in Eugene, Oregon, or Naples, Florida, or Worcester, Massachusetts.

However, there is a proven road map to creating and maintaining a first-rate public high school available, and it is right here in Western Stark County.

Newsweek recently released its list of the top 1,355 public high schools in the nation and for the third year in a row Jackson High made the grade. That's three consecutive years of being among the top 5 percent of all high schools in America.

Administrators from Massillon, Perry, Northwest, Tuslaw, Fairless and Dalton high schools could do much worse than to take a page or two out of Jackson's education playbook as they look to raise their game into the next echelon of excellence.

Moreover, voters in the Jackson Local School District might want to reconsider their ballot decision after rejecting the last five operation levies put before them.

Any school district that has a high school ranked among America's top five percent deserves a vote of confidence on election day, regardless of whether the individual casting a vote has a school-aged child or not.

State auditors say: Jackson is low-spending, high performing



Jackson Local was selected, by the Office of the Ohio Auditor of State, as a peer in what is called *a Ten-District Compilation*. The state auditors have identified 10 low-spending, high achieving Ohio school districts with similar demographics. Jackson's financial and academic data will be averaged with the other nine districts to create benchmarks of excellence. The data will be used during audits of struggling Ohio districts.

The Auditor of State is responsible for auditing all public offices in Ohio to ensure that public funds are spent appropriately and lawfully.

Unfortunately, without a levy, Jackson will likely be in Fiscal Caution by the end of 2009.



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The Bensons: Kerri, Matt (1995 grad), Kyle, Andy (1987 grad), Lucas, Alex, Sarah, Maria, Paula, Don (1958 grad), and Chris McKay. Not pictured is son Scott, a 1992 grad.

Generations of Bensons have kept their talents in Jackson

Three generations of Bensons have been educated in Jackson Local Schools. Don Benson, the family patriarch, graduated from JHS in 1958. **"My high school experience was light years away from the experience kids get at Jackson today. But it was a different world then, and I am glad to live in a community whose school system has kept pace with the changing world."** Although Don had aspirations of becoming a teacher, he ultimately followed the path of his father and became an attorney. After college, he brought his law degree right back home to Jackson where he could practice and raise a family with wife Paula who said, **"We feel blessed that our children attended such a wonderful school system because they have all become successful adults."**

"Adults who no longer live at home," added Don's sister, Chris McKay. This sent the family into peals of laughter, but Chris redeemed herself by adding with seriousness, **"It's nice when kids bring their talents home after college or military service. An educated community is a great place to live."** After being trained as a Marine, Chris brought her talent back to Jackson and now serves as an intervention specialist, helping Jackson students achieve academic success in their areas of weakness.

"Bringing my talent back home is the best way to get a great education for my kids and to keep getting my mom's home cooking," said son, Andy Benson. Again the family exploded in laughter. Andy teaches students with special needs at JHS and coaches freshman football. He and his wife, Maria have three children (Alex, age 11; Sarah, age 8, and Lucas, age 2). Maria said she likes the schools and the community that the schools help to create. **"There's a big city feel with small town values here,"** she said.

Alex is a JMMS student with a dream. He wants to become an engineer who designs roller coasters. He said his teachers and his dad encourage him in this pursuit by asking him to study hard. **"I like my teachers, and I think I'll be able to design roller coasters if I get good grades in math,"** he said.

Sara is an Amherst student. **"I love my school. The teachers there are great,"** she said, emphasizing the word great. **"They love to teach me."**

Matt, is also a teacher (math) in the Perry Schools and a 7th grade football coach. Matt's wife, Kerri, teaches 3rd grade at Amherst. **"We could have moved anywhere, but we chose Jackson because of the schools,"** said Kerri. Although Kerri was not educated at Jackson, she and Matt agreed that they wanted their children (son Kyle, age 2, and a Polar Bear on the way) to have the same education that Matt did.

Paula said she is grateful that her grandchildren will also be educated in the Jackson schools. Don, who served as a school board member for 12 years from 1993-2004 said he was proud of that service and misses working with Jackson's outstanding board members and school administrators. He also said he envies the rich relationships his sons and daughter-in-law have with their students in the classroom and on the athletic fields. **"Education makes the man and the community,"** he said, **"and I pray to God this community keeps providing its youth a Jackson education."**

What are those Unity signs and shirts?

Last March a group of citizens, worried about the erosion of excellence, approached the school district to ask how they could help pass a levy. This grass-roots group of a few soon swelled to a room full of worried residents who took the time to truly understand the crisis and met monthly to plan ways to retain the excellence. In their discussions it became clear that it wasn't just about saving an excellent school system from becoming average; it was about the quality of life in Jackson Township. "If the schools fail, the rest of the community will soon follow" became a phrase repeated with concern. From that fear lifted the logic, "We're all in this together."



Logo design by Jackson grad Matt Montgomery

"If any aspect of our police, fire, roadways, or schools fail, we all lose," said Jackson resident Jean Furbay.

Then the Jackson football coach, Thom McDaniels said the words, "Unity in our Community," and the group instantly unified around a theme that healthy communities espouse. This group wants Jackson to remain a place to raise a family, build a business, and grow old together.

The Board of Education and top administration saw the long-term merit of the unity philosophy for the health of its employees as well as the community at large and has adopted the slogan as a permanent part of its philosophy rather than a levy campaign slogan. The belief is that we must come together as a community because we cannot escape the fact that we're all in this together. It is the hope of the district and the grassroots team that the entire community will forever see the merits of staying unified about the things that make Jackson Township our chosen place to live.

Jackson grad designs UNITY IN THE COMMUNITY logo

Matt Montgomery graduated from JHS in 2000. He earned his BFA specializing in graphic design from Columbus College of Art and Design and landed a job with Limited Too right out of school. At Limited Too, he was part of the design team that started Justice Just for Girls. He now works for Hollister Co. which is owned by Abercrombie & Fitch where he designs and markets the t-shirts that so many of us wear. When he heard that Jackson wanted to design a shirt that would send an ongoing message of unity to the entire community, he eagerly donated his time and talent to the cause by designing the Unity in Our Community t-shirt logo (see logo in above article).



Matt's thoughts on Jackson Local Schools

"Every community is built around its schools, and let's not kid ourselves, Jackson is a beautiful, upscale community but it would not be what it is without its strong school system. At Hollister, we are committed to the philosophy that we are only as strong as the weakest member of our team, and that if we all commit to doing our part and helping each other, we will outshine the competition. If Jackson pulls together and everybody does just a small part, the schools and community would stay strong and continue to outshine the competition.

"I want to thank the people who pulled together when I was in school. It has created a domino effect for my life. Jackson opened the doors of a great college, and my teachers pushed me through. They set me up for a lifetime of success. Designing the Unity in the Community logo was a way to give back to a community and a school system who gave me a head start. I want to especially thank my art teacher Mrs. Tisdale who taught our classes like college classes and demanded nothing less than 120% from us every day. That made my transition from high school to college extremely easy, which wasn't the case for many of my college classmates.

"My grandparents were teachers. My parents and brother still are teachers. They give their blood, sweat, and tears to their students. Recently, my mom and I were comparing pay checks. She has her masters and is a 29-year teacher in the Jackson schools. I have been out of school for only four years, and I make more money than she does. That speaks volumes about her and all the other teachers at Jackson who do it for all the kids like me. Let's face it, I make t-shirts and they change lives. Without teachers, LeBron James would not know how to count the points he scores. So thank you Jackson. I hope you wear the Unity logo proudly and keep my hometown strong."

Matt lives in Columbus with his wife Quinn and their three-legged dog, Buddy. You can visit his Web site at whycrate.com.

POLAR BEAR PRIDE is published five times each year under the auspices of the Jackson Local Board of Education with advertising support from area businesses. It is printed and mailed to Jackson homes and businesses at no cost to the school district. Polar Bear Pride is not a public forum. Its purpose is to keep the community informed of life and learning in the Jackson Local Schools.

YOUR INPUT IS WELCOMED: Send comments to Paula Blangger, Jackson Middle School, 7355 Mudbrook NW, Massillon, OH 44646, or pblangger@neo.rr.com



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Grandpa James Scheetz, a 1949 graduate of Jackson High School, is surrounded by his sons, grandchildren and great grandchildren: Jon Scheetz - 1970 grad, Ted Scheetz - 1976, Diane (Scheetz) Taray -1984, Julie (Scheetz) Prato 1996, Matt Scheetz 2001, Ashley Scheetz - 2004, Abby Scheetz 2009, Daniel Taray 2016, Katie Taray 2018, and William Prato who will graduate in 2024.

Generations of the Scheetz family support Jackson schools' high-quality education

James Scheetz, age 80, spoke for the family, saying he was educated in the Jackson Local Schools, has always supported the schools, and will proudly continue to do so. **"I have built several houses in Jackson Township because it is a great community to live in, and the schools are what make Jackson so great,"** Grandpa Scheetz said.

His son Jon, age 56, added, **"I support the schools because my grandkids still go to school there, and the entire community benefits from excellence. If the schools fail, the general health of the community starts to fail."**

Jon's son, Matt (a former wrestler and football player) added his support to the pile, saying, **"Jackson schools gave me great opportunities in education and athletics."**

Matt's sister, Julie Prato, said, **"I want to raise my son William right here in Jackson. She added, "I was so prepared for college (Miami University of Ohio) and could be competitive there because of my Jackson education. I would never consider sending my son to any school but Jackson because I want the best for him."**

Julie's sister, Ashley, commented, **"Jackson schools provided me with the education necessary to competively pursue a career in nursing."**

Jackson's 3.9 mill levy would cost the owner of a \$100,000 home \$9.95 per month.

Check the auditor's Web site for your specifics. <http://webapp.co.stark.oh.us/TaxEstimator>

Values best education but feels pain of the economy



Quality education for my two sons has always been important to me but when my financial situation changed, household cutbacks were inevitable and I was faced with a dichotomy. Then one evening as I shared pizza with my boys, I concluded that for us, the Jackson school levy comes down to giving up something as simple as a pizza night or a movie night on a monthly basis. It's no secret that talented workers are leaving Ohio and property values are falling. Making a small sacrifice and knowing that the levy will help Jackson students and inevitably a multitude of property values, goes a long way.

Susan Ralich, pictured here with her sons Nick and Alex, is a Jackson Township resident, homeowner, parent, and sole breadwinner.

Our schools make Jackson a destination community

Ruthanne Wilkof is the President and CEO of the Jackson Belden Chamber of Commerce. She is a Jackson resident who understands the connection between strongly supported schools and community desirability. She had this to say about the value of strong schools.

Looking at it from a business perspective, not supporting our schools makes Jackson a less desirable place to live and a less likely place to start a business. Jackson voters may not know that 40% of the tax bill is paid by the business district. That's why the schools can ask so much less millage than neighboring districts.

With our state legislature being ruled unconstitutional over 10-years ago, what makes us think they will suddenly send Jackson more money for education? For every tax dollar we send Columbus, they return about 10 cents to our schools. I am just glad that for every levy dollar we vote, 100% of it stays right here with our schools, for our kids. Not a single penny of it goes to Columbus. That's one reason I say yes to local levies.

Although my husband and I do not have children in the school system, we refuse to get caught up in the anti-tax feelings that turn children into numbers instead of viewing them as our most precious resource. I am not willing to leave a single one of them behind. Smart kids make great communities, and I want to continue living in a great community, not one that the state has come in and dumbed down to average.

These are hard times in Ohio. And how do you get out of hard times? Education. The worst thing we could do for our local economy is let our educational system slip. We have already lost our very fine Adult Education classes that the district used to provide. In hard times, we have to make tough choices, but something no one can ever take away from you is a learned mind. There is no economic downturn or stock market crash that can remove education from our children's minds. Only we can keep it from them. I believe the most solid guarantee we have for Jackson's future is an educated youth who may go away to college but will return to put their ideas and enthusiasm to work for their own community. The one thing that will keep them returning is a strong school system where they can send their own children. What could be better for a community than a regular infusion of intelligent young people whose fresh innovation will keep making Jackson a better place for all of us, young and old, to live in.

Excellent schools are a solid investment

I believe an effective education system is an investment in the future of our community. A quality educational program prepares our children for college, medical school, trade school, or other field of endeavor. It also is a key consideration for families or businesses when looking for a location to live or open a business. Jackson Local Schools do an exemplary job preparing our children for their future and serving our community. However, the costs associated with providing this foundation are not decreasing. The cost of fuel and utilities alone place a large burden on their financial position. The teachers, principals, support personnel, superintendent, Board of Education, and everyone associated with our school system are doing a tireless job of keeping the system alive and well. They cannot do it alone; they need our support. I plan to vote yes for our schools on November 4. They need us, and we need them.

Joe and his wife Kimberley are parents of Stephen, a junior at JHS.



Joe Lapinski
Vice President,
Mercy Medical Center

Worst thing for local economy is weakening schools

Jeannine Thomas, mother of three and a mortgage loan officer with Huntington National Bank in Jackson Township, had this to say.

My family and I have lived in Jackson since 2003. While I was born and raised in Stark County, when Sam and I started our family we knew Jackson Local Schools were where we wanted our children to attend.

Jackson schools have provided a wonderful education to our three children. I am proud to tell people that our district has been rated "Excellent" for the past eight years, and Newsweek ranked JHS in the top 5% in the nation.

I recognize these are hard times in Ohio and families have had to make hard financial choices. The current economic condition has affected all of us. The worst thing we can do for our local economy is let our educational system slip.

When families move into this area, one of the first questions they ask is about the quality of the local school systems. All Jackson Township residents should want our school system to be at the top of that list.

Our Board of Education heard our concerns and made \$2.5 million in tough financial cuts. Personally, I have seen elementary classroom counts increase from the low 20's to over 30. Bus routes have been combined, administrators and teaching positions have been reduced and children now pay to participate.

Jackson's cost to educate a student is one of the lowest in Stark County, yet we are still rated one of the best. I am not willing to take a chance that my children's educational level could slip. Our community's children are Jackson's future leaders. I want to give them all the advantages that others gave me.



Ron and Ruthanne Wilkof



**Sam and Jeannine Thomas with their children,
Taylor, Trent, and Trace**



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New blog invites community interaction

Hello Everyone. My name is Paula Blangger, and I've been responsible for bringing you Polar Bear Pride since 1995. Many of you already know me because I've been telling the stories of Jacksonites for the past 19 years, first as a journalist/editor at the *Jackson Journal* (Jackson's original weekly newspaper) then as a columnist with the *Repository*, and finally as the creator of *Polar Bear Pride* at Jackson Local Schools.

As you know, print media is costly and being rapidly upstaged by electronic communication. So, moving forward with the times, this old dog is trying to learn a new trick – Blogging. Because the Jackson Web site now allows more community interaction, I have begun my first-ever blog.

My biggest frustration with print is that *Polar Bear Pride* is only published five times each year. Now don't get nervous. We know from your comments that you like Polar Bear Pride, and because it has always been brought to you free by local advertisers, we will keep sending it to you. But there are so many stories to tell and never enough space in *Polar Bear Pride*. There are so many ideas to share, and no place to meet regularly. It is my hope that the Jackson community will join me regularly in the blogosphere where we can, as one community:

- discuss constructive ideas
- create school/community partnerships
- applaud our students' victories
- gain an accurate understanding of how your schools function

Our meeting place will be <http://jackson.stark.k12.oh.us>. Look for **CHAT WITH PAULA** under the **COMMUNITY** tab.



Paula Blangger

SCHOOL CALENDAR

OCT	15	Wed	Parent/Teacher Conferences (K-5)	4:00 – 8:00 PM
			(6-12)	4:30 – 7:30 PM
	23	Th	Parent/Teacher Conferences (K-5 only)	4:00 – 8:00 PM
	31	Fri	Teacher In-service – No School (K-12)	
			Parent/Teacher Conferences (K-5 only)	8:30 – 11:30 AM
			End of 1st 9 weeks	
NOV	3	Mon	No School (K-5)	
	26	Wed	Thanksgiving Recess Begins – No School (K-12)	
DEC	2	Tue	Classes Resume (K-12)	
	22	Mon	Winter Recess Begins – No School (K-12)	
JAN	5	Mon	Classes Resume (K-12)	
	16	Fri	Teacher In-service – No School (K-12)	
			End 2nd Nine Weeks	
	19	Mon	Martin Luther King Day – No School (K-12)	
FEB	5	Th	Parent/Teacher Conferences (K-12)	4:30 – 7:30 PM
	11	Wed	Parent/Teacher Conferences (K-12)	4:30 – 7:30 PM
	13	Fri	No School (K-12)	
	16	Mon	President's Day – No School (K-12)	
MAR	20	Fri	End 3rd Nine Weeks.	
	23	Mon	Spring Recess Begins No School (K-12)	
	30	Mon	Classes Resume	
APR	10	Fri	Good Friday – No School (K-12)	
MAY	15	Fri	No School (K-12)	
	25	Mon	Memorial Day – No School (K-12)	
JUNE	5	Fri	Last Day of School	

Visit Jackson Local at <http://jackson.stark.k12.oh.us>

Nominate a grad for the JHS Alumni Wall of Fame

The JHS Alumni Association is asking for nominees who have distinguished themselves in one or more of the following areas: athletics, community contributions, professional accomplishments, political leadership, humanitarian contributions, or education. Nominee must be a five-year graduate. **Nomination Deadline: May 1, 2009.**

Name of Nominee _____ Graduation year _____

High school achievements: _____

Athletic achievements: _____

Post high school achievements: _____

Nominated by: _____

Mail to: Jackson Memorial Middle School, Alumni Wall of Fame Committee, 7355 Mudbrook Street, Massillon, OH 44646

Correction: In the June 2008 Polar Bear Pride it was stated that the doubles team of Dickerhoof and Thomas finished 4th at the OHSAA State Championships. This is incorrect. It should state: The doubles team of Dickerhoof and Freshmen, Trisha Conlan finished 4th at the OHSAA State Championships.

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J. H. S. A. A. Membership		Jackson High School Alumni Association Membership Form "Once a Bear, Always a Bear!"	
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Amount	Address		
Check #	Phone ()	Year of graduation	
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Lifetime Charter Membership (per graduate)		\$100	
Scholarship Contribution (optional)			
		Total Enclosed	
Retain this portion for your records		Please make checks payable and mail to: JHS Alumni Association Post Office Box 35323 • Canton, OH 44735-8323	



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Band fruit sale in time for holiday gift giving

Jackson Band members will begin their popular Fresh Fruit and Cheesecake Sale now through Nov. 14. Band students will take orders for oranges, tangerines, tangelos, clementines, red grapefruit, pineapples, apples, and pears in several size boxes and bags. Cheesecakes are available in five varieties. Sampler boxes of mixed fruit are available and make wonderful gifts.

Great employee or customer gifts under \$25. Shipping via UPS is available. Fruit will be delivered at JHS on Saturday, December 13. Gift orders will be shipped the week of December 15, 2008.

Proceeds go directly into individual students' band accounts to defray their cost for band camp and band trips.

Eat at the Bear's Den

The student-run restaurant serves the public delicious lunches Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursdays from 11:15 AM to 1:45 PM at Jackson High School.

Senior Citizens' Fall Fling

See the dress rehearsal of *Beauty and the Beast*.

Then have a delicious chicken dinner in the JHS Student Commons.

Thursday, Nov. 6
Jackson High School
Doors open at 3:00
Show begins at 3:30
Dinner served at 5:45

Dinner tickets cost \$10 per person and will be sold from 9 AM to 2 PM, Oct. 14-24 at JHS. No ticket needed for the dress rehearsal.



Annual Christmas Holiday Show – Nov. 24

Horticulture aide Sue Sponseller works with students (from left) Julia Messenger, Nick Olinger, and Kristina Lagade to create items for the annual Christmas Holiday Show. The public is invited to visit the Horticulture Department at JHS on Nov. 24 from 8 AM – 4 PM and 6–8 PM to shop for silk wreaths, artificial arrangements, fresh pine and boxwood trees and wreaths, and the students' sought-after JHS greenhouse grown poinsettias.



Breakfast with Beauty & the Beast

9-11 AM, Saturday, Nov. 1 at JHS. Tickets at \$10 each are available on the Jackson Local Web site <http://jackson.stark.k12.oh.us>.

Tea Party with Mrs. Potts and Chip

Before the performance, Sunday, Nov. 9, JHS. Tickets at \$10 each are available on the Jackson Local Web site <http://jackson.stark.k12.oh.us>.

See the musical:

Friday, November 7, 2008 at 8 P.M.

Saturday, November 8, 2008 at 8 P.M.

Sunday, November 9, 2008 at 3 P.M.

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 **Scott Gindlesberger**
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 **Tom Winkhart**
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 **Chris Goff**
 Board Member • 330-639-2290

Board Meeting Schedule

Oct. 21 Sauder 6:30 PM
 Nov. 18 Lake Cable 6:30 PM
 Dec. 16 Amherst 6:30 PM

Meeting dates and times can change.
 Call 330-830-8000 to confirm.

On The Banner

P Erik Carlson
O Bryant Campbell
L Cole Taylor
A Brett Parr
R Amanda Jacobson

B Andrew Sutherland
E Amanda Smith
A Arielle Elsass
R Emily Streater

P Hasan Sabljakovic
R Rachael Porter
I Kristina Lagade
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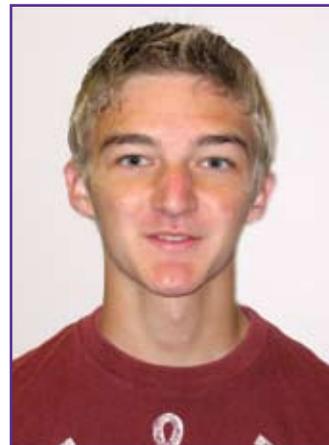
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JHS National Merit semifinalists

JHS seniors Rachel Anderson and Micah Johnson are semifinalists in the National Merit Scholarship Program. The program honors individual students who show exceptional academic ability and potential for success in rigorous college studies. More than 1.5 million juniors in over 21,000 high schools entered the 2009 National Merit Program by taking the 2007 Preliminary SAT/ National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®), which served as an initial screen of program entrants. The nationwide pool of Semifinalists, which represents less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors, includes the highest



Rachel Anderson



Micah Johnson

scoring entrants in each state. To become a Finalist, a Semifinalist must have an outstanding academic record throughout high school, be endorsed and recommended by the high school principal, and earn SAT scores that confirm the student's earlier performance on the qualifying test.



Jackson School for the Arts (JSA) students show the kimonos they have painted. The kimonos represent the five houses of JSA – visual art, vocal art, instrumental art, theater art and dance.



With direction from artist-in-residence, Kathy Jevc, sixth graders use fabric to make a book. At left are Madeline Maneval, Marina Fonner, and Hannah Durr. At right is Kevin Walters with Ms. Jevc. The book will be used as a collection spot for words and objects that students will use to create found poetry.

"Fabric of Our Culture" project begins

Jackson School for the Arts (JSA) will spend the next three years implementing a \$30,000 SmArts grant received from ArtsInStark. The grant will be used to integrate the arts into the history and language arts programs for students in grades 6-12. Using art in the traditional classroom is expected to improve student learning. ArtsInStark will work with Jackson Local to analyze student progress. Beginning with the exploration of the Kimono as an art form, students are studying the significance of fabric to world cultures, the impact of unique fabrics on those cultures, and the metaphorical implications of weaving thoughts and ideas into literature, music, and visual art. They will explore the universal significance of fabric via cultural symbols, historical applications, and the industry of textile production.



Meeting McGruff

Lake Cable kindergarten students meet Mr. McGruff - the crime dog. After hearing a three-minute recorded presentation (while their school counselor animates the McGruff puppet) students engaged in discussion and a coloring activity to reinforce the principals. Throughout the year, the kindergarten classes will hear various programs by McGruff, including *Just Say No*, *Smart Kids*, *Strangers*, and *Respect for Authority*. The program was developed through the National Citizens' Crime Prevention Campaign launched in 1980 to improve the quality of life in America by reducing crime and the fear of crime.



Ed Lynch, Claire Walters, and Sam Postlethwait of the Stark County Voiture #10 Forty & Eight pose with Amherst 1st graders Allison Snyder, Clay Ricker, Spencer Johnson, McKenzie Leiser, Joseph Tesini, and Alex Olesen.

The 40 & 8 presents the colors to first graders

Amherst 1st graders learned about the American flag from Forty and Eight members Ed Lynch, Claire Walters, and Sam Postlethwait. The Forty & Eight is an honor society of American veterans whose charitable activities champion the welfare of American children, foster a nurses training program, and promote the wellbeing of veterans and their widows and orphans.

The Forty & Eight takes its name from the World War I box cars of the French railways which carried either forty soldiers or eight horses to the front lines. This uncomfortable mode of transportation was a common misery among American soldiers who, in 1920, founded the Forty & Eight as a symbol of the service, sacrifice and unspoken horrors of a war that bound all who served.

The guest veterans showed students a replica of the first American flag with its 13 stripes to represent the 13 original colonies and 13 stars in a circle to represent the Union. They explained that the red stripes stand for courage, the white stripes stand for purity, and the blue field behind the stars symbolizes loyalty (or vigilance, perseverance and justice).

Although the veterans did not mention the following to students, it is interesting to note that Robert Heft designed our current 50-star flag in 1958 while living with his grandparents in Lancaster, Ohio. His updated flag was a high school history class project that was adopted by presidential proclamation in 1959.

The veterans also taught that our flag is a symbol of freedom for all. They demonstrated the folding of the flag and had students recite the *Pledge of Allegiance* before giving each child a small flag to keep.

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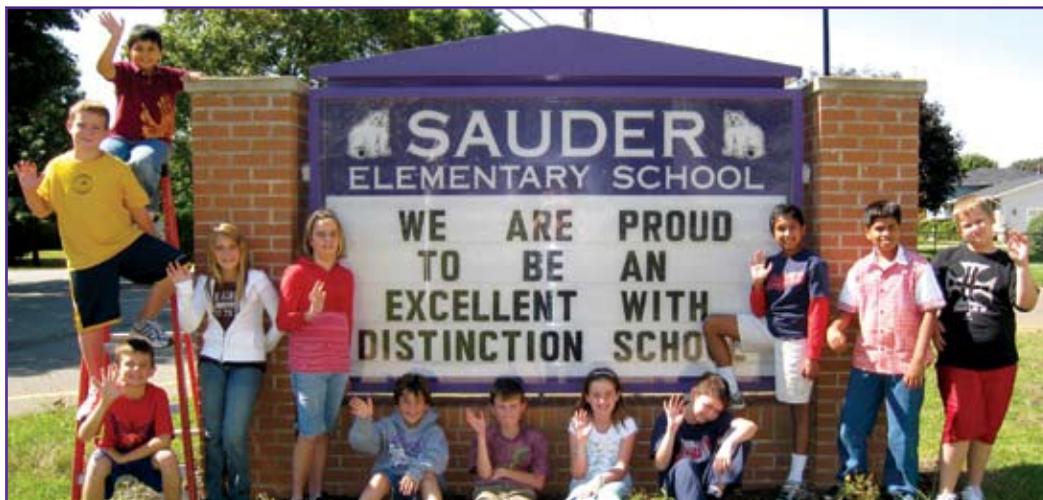
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Sauder students pose in front of their distinctive sign. From top of ladder: Aditya Maitra, Michael Mayle, Austin Todich. Alyssa Kloehn, Abby Slicker, Jonathan Paxos, Chael Brady, Cecilly Kelleher, Ryn Mast, Krish Kripakaran, Neal Goyal, and Brandon Tyson. Both Sauder and Amherst received the state's highest rating of "Excellent with Distinction," meaning the school has achieved an "excellent" rating and students have surpassed "expected growth" for two consecutive years.

Jackson earns 8th year of Excellence

Here are some facts from the state report card.

Jackson High School – Excellent

State indicators met: 12 of 12
 Performance Index Score (0-120): 110.9
 Adequate Yearly Progress: Met



Lake Cable Elementary - Excellent

State indicators met: 10 out of 10
 Performance Index Score (0-120) : 107.9
 Adequate Yearly Progress: Met



Jackson Memorial Middle School - Excellent

State indicators met: 10 out of 10
 Performance Index Score (0-120) : 103.8
 Adequate Yearly Progress: Met



Sauder Elementary - Excellent with Distinction

State indicators met: 10 out of 10
 Performance Index Score (0-120) : 106.5
 Adequate Yearly Progress: Met



Amherst Elementary - Excellent with Distinction

State indicators met: 10 out of 10
 Performance Index Score (0-120) : 104.9
 Adequate Yearly Progress: Met



Strausser Elementary - Excellent

State indicators met: 10 out of 10
 Performance Index Score (0-120) : 106.2
 Adequate Yearly Progress: Met



Other notes on Jackson's excellence

- 43.4% of all Jackson students scored at the advanced level in mathematics.**
- 94.6% of all Jackson students were proficient or above in reading.**
- JHS sophomores ranked 3rd in the state in writing.**
- More than 99% of juniors passed the Ohio Graduation Tests in both reading and writing.**
- Jackson students rank 6th in the state in the number of proficient and above students in 4th grade math.**



Learning Township History

Lifelong Jackson resident and former Sauder student, Mary Aaby, spoke with Sauder 3rd graders about how their school came to be. Mrs. Aaby traced Jackson's educational history back to 1816 when early settlers built Jackson's first log cabin school for the community's children.

Above left: Mrs. Aaby explains days gone by. **Above right:** Skylar Arcario examines hand-made nails used to build Jackson's last-remaining one-room school (now the Historical Society). **Lower right:** Tristan Hamilton holds a hand-made, sun-dried brick from the one-room-school.



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Jackson welcomes new Chinese guest teacher

Mr. Yonghui Ren came to Jackson Local from the Shandong province of China, south of Beijing, where he was a husband, father of an eight-year-old son, and a high school English teacher. He will spend one year teaching Chinese in the Jackson Local Schools. Mr. Ren's travel expenses to the United States and his salary are paid by the Chinese government. Jackson Local is required to provide housing, transportation to and from school, and basic health insurance.

Claudette Istnick of Massillon Driving School taught Mr. Ren to drive.



The Martin family poses with their Chinese guest. From left are: Ellen, Drew, Yonghui (pronounced yon wee), Barry, and Sally.

Housing was graciously provided at no cost to the Board of Education when Mr. Ren was invited to live rent-free in the Lake Cable home of Barry and Sally Martin. The JHS automotive technology students provided basic transportation to Mr. Ren by making a donated 1996 Chevy Cavalier roadworthy. Jeff Bushman of Massillon Driving School donated driving lessons. Mr. Ren's expert driving teacher, Claudette Istnick helped Mr. Ren pass his test last month.



Rainbows Over Strausser

We thought you might like to see this beautiful photo taken by a Strausser Elementary School neighbor after a storm.



First day program reduces anxiety for 513 freshmen

This is what the JHS main gymnasium looks like when it is filled with only the freshman class and their team of 100 mentors. This year's freshman class is 513 students strong. Those students will be mentored by a team of approximately 100 JHS juniors and seniors who spent part of their summer training to be caring and effective mentors. The highly successful mentorship program has had upperclassmen welcoming freshmen at lunch tables, making sure they are fitting in socially, and checking on their academic progress for the past three years. If there are problems, the mentors help their freshmen get to the school counselor. The mentors and freshmen also attend six planned meetings during the school year to enhance relationships and make sure school life is running smoothly.

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School retirees picnic as students return to class

Retired Jackson teachers have made a tradition of meeting for a luncheon picnic each year at Tam-O-Shanter as the school bell calls their co-workers back to class. The retirees have been meeting since 1992 when Marilyn Jones organized the first event. They welcome all retired employees of Jackson Local Schools to attend two events each year – the Backs to School picnic and the holiday luncheon. For more information on the upcoming holiday luncheon, or to receive the *Retirees' Newsletter*, Call Marilyn Jones at 330-499-7494, or Lee Dolan at 330-832-2491.

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Jackson Local Retirees 2008

Jackson Local Schools congratulates these individuals and thanks them for their years of dedication to the youth of our community: Donald Airhart, David Albrecht, Sharon Albrecht, John Allen, Barbara Jo Bailey, Darlene Bailis, Timothy Bailis, Jill Barcus, Carol Burt, Albert Checca, Sandra Conley, Beth Darkow, Steven Dick, Lynn Fete, Jody Gardner, Joan Griest, Cathy Henson, Jane Hudak, Janet Kell, Laurie Langenfeld, Christina Lusk, Deborah Miller, Cheryl Schubert, Kathy Smith, Edward Snow, Marcia Snyder, Ann Stafford, Kathleen White, Paula Yost.



Become a Key Communicator

If you want to really understand how your school district operates, become a Key Communicator. Five monthly meetings with the superintendent will be held from 11:30-1:00, the 2nd Tuesday of each month, starting in January. No committee work. Just show up to learn, share, and become one of Jackson's most informed citizens.

Email Paula Blangger at pblangger@neo.rr.com.

Jackson students value their teachers



Top 25 students honor teachers who made an impact

Each year, Jackson's top 25 students select a teacher who has had a powerful effect on their lives and honor that teacher with a public speech.

Following is a sample of the collective praise students gave their teachers.

Jackson High School teachers are: understanding, patient, personable and genuine, humorous, intelligent, willing to give extra help, keep their curriculum interesting, provide a quality education in a caring environment, teach challenging beneficial classes, enjoy the company of teenagers, have passion for the courses they teach, make a boring subject come alive.

The students and the teachers they honored are:

Katie Brown honored Don Airhart.
Melissa Carosiello-Nancy Montgomery

Adam Dickson-Vasa Delis-Parker
Christina Heade-Jeff Kracker
Kaylee Jones-Christine Adolph
Nicole Kendel-Donna Jeffers
Emily Kenyon-Rick Neitzelt
Karishma Khullar-Parthena Draggett
Travis Krew-Bruce Lautzenheiser
Animesh Lahoti-Andrew Houk
Michael Lapadot-Dan Taray
Yawei Linda Li-Matt Gillette
Chelsey Long-Jill Clapper
Drew Martin- Mike Draime
Molly McDonough-Kevin Walsh
Anelia Mutafova-Jane Hudak.
Elizabeth Rutledge-Denise Varca
Rachel Rutledge-Keri Hoffer
Christopher Schleich-Harold Fisher
Michael Serra-Kathryn Stone
Scott Shaheen-Paul Dillick.
Kurtis Thompson-David Albrecht
Amy Wilder-David Gleason
Steven Williams-Jim Kish.
Emily Winkhart-Frank Gagliardi

The Class of 2008, itself, is a group that deserves some applause. Not only did the class have three valedictorians with 4.65 GPA, there were also 41 students who earned a 4.0. There were four Repository Teens of the Month and one Teen of the Year. They gave back to our community in the following ways:

- Habitat for Humanity
- Mentoring freshman
- Mentoring elementary students in reading, math, art, and dance
- Working at soup kitchens and volunteering at their churches
- Raising the funds to participate in all the extracurricular activities
- Near 100% participation in Community Service Day

NOTE: This article should have appeared in the prior edition of Polar Bear Pride, but space limitations delayed it.



A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in.

—Greek Proverb

Supporting schools strengthens the community



Greg Beiter
Police Officer, JTPD
School Resource Officer

Gerg Beiter is a 1985 Jackson grad who understands the value of Unity in our Community. He has spent 18 years with the Jackson Police Department as a patrolman, a detective, and now a School Resource Officer in the Jackson schools. His salary is paid by the Jackson Township Police Department though he spends his day on site at JHS.

"I asked for this assignment so I could work more on the crime prevention side of law enforcement," he said. Because school resource officers spend a lot of time getting to know the community's young people, they are frequently able to solve youth crimes more easily and/or stop them before they occur.

Officer Beiter believes Jackson Township is a great place to live. "It's an upbeat community with plenty of opportunity for everybody," he said. And he knows how to keep a community strong. "My dad always told me there are four things you always vote yes for in a community — police, fire, roads, and schools because if you don't have these four things, you'll end up voting to live in a bad community."

Senior Citizens pay half price for athletic tickets

If you are age 65 or over, you can attend all regular season varsity contests (except football) for half price. Your general admission ticket will cost \$3 with your photo I.D.

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Unity in Our Community Pancake Breakfast

The public is invited

To promote unity in our community, a dynamic group of 25 Jackson women have organized the first annual, all-you-can-eat pancake and sausage breakfast, to be held at Jackson High School 8 a.m. to noon on October 25, at no cost to the school district. The organizers received community donations for all of the food and serving items from Beuhlers, Bordner's, Chick-Fil-A, CrossCountry Marketing, Food 4 Less, Smith Dairy, Rita's Italian Ice, Smuckers, Sysco Foods, Young Chef's Academy, the Bentivegna family, and former Jackson teacher Marilyn Jones. Elementary students have decorated place mats with the theme "We Love our Jackson Community Because..."

Teachers, students, administrators, the Chamber of Commerce president, township trustees, and community volunteers will be on hand to cook the pancakes, serve our guests, and clean-up after the meal.

Tickets cost \$5 per person (age 3 and under, free) and are available at the high school, all four elementary schools, the YMCA, the library, and at the door.

Repository urges voters to support school levy

The following editorial outlines the conclusion drawn by the Repository Editorial Board after a district review.

Jackson has done what voters asked

Wednesday, October 1, 2008

The Jackson Local School District receives less state funding per student than any other district in Stark County. The state figures that the higher property values in Jackson mean that local residents can and will accept a bigger share of the responsibility for financing their schools. But that hasn't been the case the last four times Jackson has asked voters to pass a new operating levy.

Jackson officials have used the year and a half since the last levy defeat to regroup and to act on the message they perceive voters have been sending them: Keep cutting costs.

"Your schools have done what you've asked," they say now, citing \$2.5 million in cuts over two years. Now they are asking voters to approve a 3.9-mill levy. If the levy is approved, it will expire in five years.

Jackson officials have kept faith with their voters and taxpayers. The Repository editorial board hopes voters will do the same by approving the Jackson levy.

The district has eliminated 6.5 administrative positions and nine teaching positions, reduced its cafeteria staff and eliminated the adult education department. It has cut back on busing, imposed athletic fees and used lease-purchase agreements to reduce technology costs.

The district also offered buyouts to its higher-paid employees to save more than \$3 million over four years, and it negotiated employee contributions to the health insurance program.

Many of these cuts have been kept out of the classroom, but not all. Jackson's fifth-grade classes now average 31 or 32 students. The district has ended almost all intervention programs, including remedial reading academies and summer school for remedial students. It has discontinued district-funded field trips for elementary students.

The Repository editorial board believes Jackson is doing its utmost to reduce costs while trying to preserve the quality of education that has made it a top-ranked district. We urge Jackson voters to support this effort by approving their schools' operating levy on Nov. 4.



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