

# Fall 2023 Review

# THE SCHOOL REPORT



## weCARE employee wellness initiative

In a commitment to prioritize the health and well-being of all staff members, Jackson-Madison County School employees receive a 4-day weekend, September 1st-September 4th as a mental health day and to celebrate the kick off of the weCARE employee wellness initiative. This strategic move emphasizes the importance of wellness and self-care within the educational community while demonstrating the Board and administration's ongoing investment in their dedicated staff.

### PAGE 4

## BelieversUnite:

*Sec 2 - Page 2*

**District investment  
in employees paying off**

*Sec 2 - Page 7*



# **\*\*Community Montessori Students Shine at JMCSS Back to School Leadership Conference\*\***

*Emiri Love and Solomon Hammond, two remarkable students from Community Montessori, stole the spotlight and left an indelible mark on the hearts of attendees during the Jackson-Madison County School System (JMCSS) Back to School Leadership Conference on August 1. The conference, held at the prestigious Oman Arena, was a resounding success, and its theme, “Learn, Lead, Love: Creating High-Performance Student Supports,” resonated deeply with teachers, principals, and support staff alike.*

The highlight of the event was undeniably the inspiring speech delivered by Emiri Love and Solomon Hammond. With unwavering confidence and eloquence, these young leaders captivated the audience and, in the words of many, “brought down the house.”

Their message transcended the confines of the arena, leaving everyone in attendance with a renewed sense of purpose and determination.

Superintendent Dr. Marlon King, a champion of educational excellence, took the stage to share exciting news regarding bold investments in the dedicated employees of the JMCSS. These investments, in alignment with the district’s commitment to fostering growth and empowerment, were met with enthusiastic applause and support from the conference participants.

As the conference came to a close, the organizers ensured that all employees were well-nourished, providing a delicious lunch that fostered camaraderie and allowed for meaningful conversations to continue. This simple act of providing sustenance symbolized the district’s

commitment to nourishing both body and mind, a testament to the holistic approach to education

espoused by JMCSS.

The palpable enthusiasm and unity displayed at the Back to School

Leadership Conference have set the stage for what promises to be the “BEST YEAR EVER” in the

Jackson-Madison County School System. The overarching sentiment is clear: educators, students,

and the entire community are poised to rally around their community schools, showing unwavering support for the incredible work unfolding within the district.

The call to action is clear and resounding. Together, the JMCSS community is determined to maintain the momentum generated at the conference, embarking on a historic journey towards unprecedented progress. As the new academic year commences, the district is poised for a year filled with profound learning experiences, substantial growth, and unparalleled success.

In the spirit of “Learn, Lead, Love,” the Jackson-Madison County School system is not only shaping minds, but also nurturing hearts, fostering an environment where excellence is the norm, and dreams are realized. As the community rallies together, they are poised to create a brighter future, one where every student has the opportunity to thrive, learn, and succeed. This year, indeed, holds the promise of being one for the books, with every page filled with inspiring stories of achievement and growth.





# JMCSS Apparel Store:

The district has opened an online apparel store with a variety of available items for families, employees, and community members to purchase. Items include shirts, sweatshirts, hats, and other paraphernalia with various graphic designs. Support the district by purchasing and wearing our newest gear!



**OUR COLLECTION**  
**Shop Now!**

[www.jmcss.org/apparel](http://www.jmcss.org/apparel)



## JCM Students Begin Lane College Pharmacy Program

*College credit, pharmacy tech certification offered*

Seven students from JCM High School are participating in a dual enrollment, pharmacy tech certification opportunity through the CVS Workforce Innovation & Talent Center at Lane College. The program enables students to study STEM programs and learn pharmacology while earning credits toward a college education.



“We had 14 students to apply originally and seven are qualified to be able to fit it in their schedule and be able to leave campus and things like that. So we’re excited to have seven students be a part of the dual enrollment program here at Lane College,” said Ramonica Dorsey, the Principal of Jackson Central-Merry High School.

The classroom lab replicates a working CVS pharmacy! Although pharmacy tech is entry level, this program opens pathways to pharmaceutical sciences and much more. That’s #WINNING with community partnerships! Stay tuned.







## Employees receive health and well-being break, Board and administration continue to invest in employees



In a commitment to prioritize the health and well-being of all staff members, Jackson-Madison County School employees receive a 4-day weekend, September 1st-September 4th, as a mental health day and to celebrate the kick off of the weCARE employee wellness initiative. This strategic move emphasizes the importance of wellness and self-care within the educational community while demonstrating the Board and administration's ongoing investment in their dedicated staff.



"Allowing employees time off for this wellness break is a strategic investment in their personal well-being. We realize stress and burnout in the workplace are real, so the well-being breaks are specifically geared towards providing a time where employees can pause, recharge, and come back with a fresh new perspective," states School Board Chairman Pete Johnson.

Acknowledging the pivotal role that educators and school employees play in shaping the future of the community, the Jackson-Madison County Schools administration is taking proactive measures to support their well-being.

Dr. Marlon King, Superintendent of Jackson-Madison County Schools, commented, "Our educators and staff members give their best every day to empower our students. It's essential that we recognize their dedication by ensuring they have the time to focus on their own health and wellness. Giving employees a well-being break is a reflection of our commitment to supporting our employees both personally and professionally."



The weCARE Kickoff, which took place at Oman Arena on Thursday, August 31, included a number of exciting activities. From salsa and ballroom dancing to yoga sessions, walking, community vendor giveaways, biometric and bone density screenings and more, employees found plenty to enjoy. As an added bonus, schools will compete for prizes with winners determined by levels of participation.

"Our school leaders are competitive, so we expect some eagerness from our teachers to win the Smoothie King prize for the school with the highest percentage of participation. A number of \$50 gift card drawings also encouraged attendance as well, and it's for a great cause," said Dr. Shalonda Franklin, Chief of Social and Behavioral Services. "It was very generous of Gallagher, our benefits provider, to supply us with these incentives."

In addition to the weCARE Program and Friday's wellness break, Superintendent King and the Board continue to prioritize employee well-being and growth through a comprehensive approach that includes employee raises with starting teacher salaries beginning at \$46,000 in September, bonuses, the absorption of rising insurance premiums, and robust opportunities for professional development.

"The well-being of our employees is a top priority and contributes to retaining our staff from year to year," states Chief Human Capital Officer Dr. Diane Watkins. "It is imperative that we continue to look for new ways to support and value our staff, whether it be monetarily or through supportive programs such as weCARE."





# JMCSS Board to Enhance Athletic Infrastructure with CommUNITY project

The Jackson-Madison County School Board is steadfast in its commitment to advancing the CommUNITY Project, an ambitious initiative aimed at revitalizing and upgrading the district's capital assets. Among the key milestones on the project's agenda, the acquisition of Oman Arena and the creation of a cutting-edge multipurpose stadium in the vibrant heart of midtown, are the next major endeavors to be undertaken.

Dr. Marlon King, the Superintendent of Jackson-Madison County School System (JMCSS), emphasized the far-reaching impact these infrastructure improvements will have on the district.

As the second-largest educational system in West Tennessee, JMCSS is well-equipped with the fiscal capacity to invest in enhancing the athletic infrastructure for its students. Dr. King firmly believes that these developments will not only elevate the quality of sports facilities, but also trigger a positive chain reaction that influences academic outcomes and boosts district enrollment.

The centerpiece of this ambitious project is the construction of a state-of-the-art multipurpose stadium, set to feature artificial turf and an all-weather, rubberized running track designed to meet the highest standards for competition running. This stadium will be strategically located adjacent to the historic Oman Arena, a move that synergizes the old and the new in a harmonious blend of tradition and innovation. While the project is tentatively slated for completion in 2024, the timeline is subject to potential delays caused by weather conditions and supply chain challenges, including back-ordered supplies.

To ensure transparency and keep the community and sports enthusiasts informed about the progress of this exciting venture, Crocker Construction, the firm entrusted with the construction, will provide monthly updates during Board meetings. This regular communication will not only serve to keep stakeholders in the loop but also foster a sense of involvement and anticipation.

Initial architectural designs for the multipurpose stadium have already been crafted, providing a tantalizing glimpse into the visionary complex that JMCSS is building for its students, schools, and the broader community. These designs promise a striking and functional facility that will undoubtedly become a hub for sports, entertainment, and community gatherings, reinforcing Jackson-Madison County's commitment to creating a thriving and cohesive community.

As the CommUNITY Project unfolds, the Jackson-Madison County School Board remains resolute in its dedication to providing top-tier facilities that empower students, enhance academic outcomes, and strengthen community bonds. The Oman Arena acquisition and the multipurpose stadium construction are significant steps forward in this journey towards a brighter, more vibrant future for Jackson-Madison County.





# BioSTEM at North Side

Last Tuesday we got an insider's look into North Side High School's BioSTEM program.

BioSTEM is hosted under the Department of Innovation and covers many different possible career fields. Danielle Shaw-Jones, the program's head, and three leading seniors were joined by Greg Hammond in For the District podcast. The BioSTEM program provides many different opportunities to students.

"Somethings that stood out to me were the competitions we have. That's the most exciting thing for me, to show how capable we are as a school and how we've grown," Deanna Bates, one of the seniors, commented.

The program was made possible by several community partners, like West TN Healthcare, Black and Decker, and the UT Department of Agriculture. The two seniors, Madison Tyler and Diana Estes, talked about the white coat ceremony that took place last year. Getting your white coat is a huge accomplishment and gives the students who earned them motivation to further their careers in the BioSTEM field.

When asked what students should take away from the program, Mrs. Shaw-Jones said this, "I hope they are able to have leadership skills, because that's going to be very important.

One thing that we always have to be able to do is to be leaders in the school. I want the students to be exposed to every opportunity possible."



Senior Madison Tyler is a senior robotics member with a TBI

internship. Her future goal is to go into forensic science. Senior Dionna Estes is an officer for TSA, and her future goal is to go into the medical field or real estate. Kelan Albea, the president of TSA and a starter on North Side's football team, talked about his experience with the BioSTEM program.

"Computer science has always been my first love, I've always had a love for computers since I was a child. Mrs. Shaw-Jones has done a great job of trying to show me opportunities in that field that could also go with BioSTEM." His future goal is to go into the medical field, combining both BioSTEM and computer science.



# Students take advantage of Internship Program

*Experience gained through work with district Communications*



This year, eight high school juniors and seniors from Jackson Madison County Schools are participating in JMCSS's Communication Internship Program. Neveah Coleman, Asia Sanders, and Bethany Knott are from JCM – Early College High School. MyKeyla Young and De'Asia Swain represent Liberty Tech, while London Murphy, Aaliyah Marshall, and Mekhi Morris support South Side, JCM, and Madison Academic, respectively. When asked why they wanted to join, they said this.

Swain thought it was “a great opportunity for me to explore media and improve my communication,” Morris had “an equal passion for using my imagination to create visual arts media that have meaning to me and engage those around me,” Coleman said she “Looks forward to learning more about videography and communications,”

“I think that being able to engage with our community and make meaningful connections as an intern is going to be invaluable in the future. You gain real-life skills like time management and perfecting public speaking,” said Knott, reflecting on the past 5

weeks as an intern “Having these opportunities to gain experiences on the field and off, trying your hand at so many different paths within communications, it definitely impacts your future.”

As interns, they get opportunities to meet with board members, interview people in society, and use their skills to promote and encourage the JMCSS and surrounding communities. Several students have already produced articles, videos, photos, and even met the Superintendent recently at a school board meeting.



## Reflective Summary by London Murphy

During the first two months of my internship, I have accomplished many feats, met some challenges, and learned new things. I have submitted my assignments for my district level communications internship in a timely manner for the first quarter. I have produced many videos on a variety of topics. I have become a proficient user on Adobe Rush and Photoshop, and I am exploring my options with Premiere Pro. I co-produced and wrote the script for the district's radio commercial series JMCSS Minute. The quality of my videos is progressing, and I'm becoming more creative with my reporter stand-ups. I did color commentary on JJ 97.7 and a live broadcast for South Side's Homecoming game. My time management has been great considering I am involved in many organizations and sports.

One challenge I'm overcoming is my audio. When I film my reporter stand-ups, the sound is not as loud as it should be, but that will not be a problem anymore because I've been given new mics. I have learned that when I contact and schedule the interviewees the day before, their answers have better quality. I have learned two new communications terms: A-roll and B-roll. I have also learned when recording my voice for projects, I should type out what I'm going to say, so that page flipping will not be heard





# Dual Enrollment Opportunity: Seniors at JCM-ECH Earn College Credit and Graduate with Their Associate Degree

*A total of 99 JMCSS students are full-time at Jackson State Community College*

This year, 49 seniors at Jackson Central-Merry Early College High School are on track to graduate with college credit and their associate degree in the Spring, making them the sixth graduating class of the JCM Early College program.

At Early College High, students are offered the opportunity to dual-enroll at Jackson State Community College or receive credits at the Tennessee College of Applied Technology. Starting as early as junior year of high school, 140 graduates of ECH have earned their associate degrees before receiving their high school diploma.

"I chose Early College High because of the dual enrollment opportunity. It gave me the chance to do something my parents never did—graduating high school with an associate degree," ECH senior and JSCC sophomore Kameron Myles said.



Students who attend JSCC can also receive guidance from Assistant Principal Mia Moore and JSCC Liaison Adair Hardegree to ensure their transition from high school to college is as smooth as possible. Additionally, JSCC offers on-campus workshops and tutoring labs that ECH students are more than welcome to access.

"I like the fact that even though we're on a college campus, we still encourage each other and make sure that we are all getting our work done on time," Oryenne Dople, ECH senior and JSCC freshman stated.

As second-year college students, ECH seniors find a balance between dual enrolling, extracurricular activities, and some even working part-time jobs. For this reason, a lot of the students form study groups with their peers and JSCC classmates.

"One piece of advice I would give to someone before coming here, is to work on time management," senior and JSCC sophomore, Keveontae Smith added.

While many seniors who attend JSCC are full-time college students, they are still involved on the high school campus as well. Things such as student government, clubs, and sports are all made available to the students, and many have been involved on their college campus in the same activities.

"I'm really glad that even as a college student, I'm still able to participate in the fun high school activities. I'm a cheerleader at ECH but also am working towards my associate degree," ECH senior and JSCC sophomore, Asia Sanders shared.





## SECTION 2

# South Elementary named a Level 5 School

South Elementary was recently named a Level 5 School for the second year in a row. The Principal, Scott Nelson, explained how South Elementary achieved this amazing feat. "When you walk the halls of South Elementary, you're going to see students engaged in the learning process. Our teachers and our staff are every day working hard to help grow our students, taking them where they are when they get to us every day and helping them grow," Nelson used the opportunity advanced students have to enroll in GEMS as an example. "All my teachers have been nice to me, and I have really great friends here. My teachers let me express myself," explained Tatum McNeal, a student at South Elementary.

Blake Scarbrough, the P. E teacher at South, reflects on previous years, mentioning that he "Was once a student here, and it was very much what it is now in terms of staff loving one another, loving the kids," South Elementary also provides enrichment opportunities to its students, with full-time art and music teachers.





# Believers Unite:

## Strengthening Public Schools

### *Businesses, community rally in support of Jackson-Madison County Schools*

JACKSON, Tenn. - In the heart of the Jackson-Madison County School System, a beacon of hope shines anew as we proudly unveil the “Believers Unite” campaign. This rallying call is more than a mere campaign; it’s a movement, a symphony of community voices, businesses, alumni, families, and stakeholders united in a harmonious effort. Our goal is as ambitious as it is inspiring: to fortify the very foundation of our public school system and propel its ongoing progress at an accelerated pace.

“The public school system has been the backbone of America’s equality. Born and raised in a small rural county in West Tennessee where the public school system prepared me for the world and beyond, I am a living testament of the work that happens in public schools. Being able to return to the West Tennessee region and serve as superintendent in three different systems, is a clear testament of what access the public school has done for me personally,” said Superintendent Dr. King. “I saw first-hand as a student, the sacrifices my teachers made to prepare me for this opportunity as well as for my classmates.”

The public school system is the fiber of a community. The majority of any community’s make-up are graduates and attendees of the public school system. As a result of the public school system, numerous threads are connected to ensure that a community is vibrant, productive and supportive of the human race. Our partnership with the Greater Jackson Chamber of Commerce has propelled the public school system to make deeper connections with the business world, where we have gained access to new ideas and the market demand as our teachers prepare students for post-secondary options.

“Jackson’s business community support for JMCSS has reached a level not seen in decades. Our community’s growth is directly tied to the performance of our public schools. Our future is very bright,” said Kyle Spurgeon, President of the Greater Jackson Chamber of Commerce.

Recognizing the vital role of educators and staff in shaping young minds, the “Believers Unite” campaign places a renewed focus on investing in the well-being and professional growth of our dedicated teachers, leaders, board members, support staff and beyond. By providing the necessary support, resources, and opportunities for ongoing professional development, JMCSS aims to create an inspiring learning environment that propels both staff and students towards excellence.

“Our teachers are the backbone, the very essence of our education system. We acknowledge that every achievement rests on the shoulders of our teachers, our unsung heroes. Their empowerment, through resources, support, and opportunities, is our foundation for greatness. This, in turn, becomes an environment where each student thrives

academically, emotionally, and socially,” Chairman James ‘Pete’ Johnson states.

Community and businesses are rallying around this vision, recognizing the significance of a thriving education system in building a prosperous future for all. Numerous companies and organizations have pledged their support, whether through financial contributions or by engaging in meaningful BelieversUnite: Strengthening Public Schools Businesses, community rally in support of Jackson-Madison County Schools partnerships with our schools. The belief is that investing in students is an investment in the prosperity of the entire community

Melissa Spurgeon, our Chief of Staff, articulates it perfectly, “Our community partners are change-makers, turning our aspirations into tangible realities. Their support enables us to innovate in ways that elevate professional development, nurture workforce-readiness, and celebrate our triumphs along the journey. The value is undeniable, echoing in the research that underscores the impact of ongoing learning for both students and educators.”

In the next several weeks, we will recognize those organizations and businesses who have already committed and made a contribution towards this campaign to ensure that the previous investments in employees are furthered. As we navigate the chapters ahead, we’re poised to recognize the organizations and businesses that have pledged their support. From \$10K to \$100K, their contributions ripple through our campaign’s tapestry, fortifying our commitment to professional growth, development, and celebration. There is glaring research that supports not only the impact of professional development on student achievement, but also studies that show that celebrating the successes is an integral part of advancing outcomes



for both students and teachers.

“I could not be more proud of all of our school administrators, teachers, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, professional school counselors, central office employees, secretaries, educational assistants, substitutes, board members and the entire support staff who make it possible to run our school system. The stake we plant today is a promise for a future rich with dividends – not just for us, but for generations to come,” said Superintendent King.

United, with unwavering conviction, we charge ahead. We affirm our belief in the power of the public school system, recognizing its potency in shaping lives, nurturing dreams, and transforming communities. With every step, we mold the Jackson-Madison County School System into a symbol, a testament to the heights public education can achieve. Together, with total commitment around this campaign, this community will leave a footprint in the landscape of Tennessee that shows unity, excellence, and unwavering belief in the public school system. Believers unite!



# Lincoln “High Priority School” soars to Level 5 status



Students at Lincoln Elementary are making academic progress and state officials have taken notice. Lincoln was recently named a Level 5 school, the state's top designation, after exceeding academic



growth standards in the Tennessee Value Added Assessment System (TVAAS) for 2022-2023. Principal Annie Atkins, now in her second year at Lincoln, along with students, teachers, support staff and parents deserve the highest commendation for their collective success in meeting high academic goals.

“We implemented meaningful formative assessments every week and talked to the children about practicing how we are going to play,” said Atkins. “What do you have to do to get better? Practice. So our students bought in because we connected it to what they’re good at.”

These weekly assessments made a huge impact in the way that both students and teachers felt about testing once it was time to take the state tests.

“The kids were just taking a test like normal. The anxiety wasn’t high and they were excited because they knew they were going to be rewarded,” said Atkins. “Even the small things are celebrated. We are going to continue to do the same things and move



to even higher levels, because next year we want to be a reward school.”

This signals a significant shift in culture and academic trends for Lincoln. Exciting outcomes are possible when #BelieversUNITE

**Sec 2 -October 2023 -Pg. 3**



# Madison Academic High School Celebrates Twenty-year Anniversary and being named a Level 5 School



Madison Academic High School had lots to celebrate recently, like being named a Level 5 School and reaching its twenty-year anniversary. Madison is also in the top ten in Tennessee, with all honors-level classes. “Madison is all about preparing you for your next step after high school,” said Kaitlyn Ellis, a Madison student. Another, Annily Nguyen, mentioned how “Madison Academic is all about academic drive. All the students are pushing to be the best version of themselves.” Other students noted Madison’s focus on time management and college opportunities. “Many students leave with at least one semester of college credit. We do this with help from teachers from Madison and professors from the University of Memphis,” said Principal Chad Guthrie on the college resources available at Madison Academic. Boran Aljafari commented on the relationships within Madison, explaining, “It’s a community that caters to everybody’s differences and strengths. Whether you struggle in a certain class, there is always going to be somebody who’s going to be there to help you, because the teachers and staff truly do want to see you succeed.”





# District health clinic designed to treat staff and students

JACKSON, Tenn. - The Jackson-Madison County Schools Health Clinic is now open for students, employees, and their families. The clinic is a collaborative effort between Jackson-Madison County Schools and West Tennessee Medical Group located at Jackson Careers and Technology School, 668 Lexington Avenue.

First established in 2009 and reopened this fall, the School Health Clinic offers sick visits (cough, cold, earache, sore throat, infections, minor injuries), sports physicals, Kindergarten immunizations and physicals, well-child exams, mental health services, and referrals to other services.

***“Whether it’s for a simple cold, sore throat, flu, wellness checks, or even sports physicals, the School Clinic offers our students and employees another resource, and it’s also an added convenience,” said Latreace Brown, Clinic Manager with West TN Medical Group.***

West Tennessee Medical Group Family Nurse Practitioner Ashley Hardee leads the School Clinic team and is board certified through the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners. Nurse Hardee has worked in the healthcare setting for 11 years. She received her Masters of Science in nursing from the University of Memphis and has worked the past six years in primary and urgent care settings, providing care to a wide variety of patients.

“Employees are able to get themselves or their children in quickly, and, if they are not contagious, return them back to class. You won’t have to spend hours waiting to see a provider. If the child can go on to school, our teachers and parents can get back to work,” Coordinated School Health Administrator Annette Wilson said.

Hours of operation for the School Health Clinic are Monday-Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. The clinic will be closed on Saturdays, Sundays and on JMCSS holidays.

Thanks to West Tennessee Medical Group, we’re providing our students, employees and immediate family members access to quality healthcare in a timely manner. This is a win for the district and another example of innovative community partnerships.

Deputy Superintendent Dr. Vivian Williams stated, “These Coordinated School Health services are one of the many supports within our Social and Behavioral Services Department. Keeping students healthy and safe is the first step to academic success.”





# Coaches And Community Leaders Celebrate Local Football Rivalries

## *6th Annual Madison Co. Commissioners' Cup Media Day held at Rock'n Dough*

Area football coaches joined members of the Madison County Commission and local first responders for the 6th annual Madison County Commissioners' Cup football media day at Rock'n Dough Pizza on Wednesday, August 30th.

"It brings back the old hometown rivalry between the high schools that we've had for so many years. We just think it's something that's bringing that rivalry back. The excitement it builds up to these games is amazing," Madison County Commissioner Jeff Wall said.

Coaches and players from North Side, South Side, JCM and Liberty were interviewed by various media outlets to share their thoughts and expectations for the season. Additionally, representatives from the Jackson Fire Department, Madison County Fire Department, Madison County Sheriff's Office and the Jackson Police Department were in attendance to celebrate with the teams.

"We're all one family here in Jackson and Madison County. And regardless of what school you play for or where you coach, where you teach, or where you're a student - it doesn't make any difference. As you grow up in this community, you become family. I think later in life these relationships will be put together for good work for the community," Commissioner Wall stated.

North Side won the Commissioners' Cup football rivalry series in 2018, 2019 and 2020. South Side has won the football series the past two years (2021 and 2022). This is the first year JCM will compete for the Cup. The Cougars are representing the Jackson Fire Department. Liberty is representing MCSO. North Side represents JPD while South Side represents MCFD. Each first responder organization is included on the trophy when their corresponding team wins.

"Anytime you call on first responders, it's usually for a problem. These types of situations where you can actually have positive interactions with law enforcement or a first responder is just one way you get to see the kind of heart these men and women have for the community," Commissioner Wall added.



## Community Montessori Adds More Sports, Opportunities For Students

### *SCAN QR CODE TO WATCH CMS SPORTS ANNOUNCEMENTS*

Jackson-Madison County Schools is increasing athletic opportunities for students throughout the district.

Community Montessori, who has traditionally co-oped with Rose Hill for its athletics, is adding soccer, baseball, softball, track and field, basketball and cross country. They will continue to co-op with Rose Hill in football. CMS announced the news with a sleek video presentation on August 17th via Facebook. Scan the QR code to view.

"We had a lot of interest in sports from that school, so we're in a situation that we can add those sports there," Bridgeman said.



School board member Jason Compton, who serves on the district's athletic committee, said it will probably be best for CMS to co-op with Rose Hill for at least football.

"With about 200 students in grades 6-8, they don't really have enough enrollment for a football program unless half the students in those grades were to express an interest," Compton said. "But it's great to see sports really becoming a viable part of these schools again because many of us know how important athletic teams can be to a school and its culture."





# System raises and longevity pay remedy recruitment and retention District investment in employees paying off

JACKSON, Tenn. - Jackson-Madison County Schools has made strategic moves in recruiting and retaining employees, and the results of those decisive measures are beginning to show. Superintendent Dr. Marlon King and Board members are pleased with the impact of the individualized investment plan announced last fall which influenced school culture and student achievement.

“Teacher retention is a problem nationwide; teachers are leaving the classroom at higher rates, and the candidate pool is getting smaller,” says School Board Chairman James “Pete” Johnson.

“Our investments allow us to meet the challenge.”

Last fall, the district unveiled its Individualized Investment in Every Employee Progression Plan (IEP 2 ), which pledged a historic \$6.2 million toward employee recruitment and retention efforts. The plan included an increase in starting salaries that moved JMCSS to the top 25% among school districts statewide. Additionally, the system’s first longevity pay designation was instituted.

Over the last three years, beginning teacher pay for JMCSS has risen a staggering \$7,705, from \$38,545 to \$46,250. In addition to increasing

starting pay, all employees will get a raise this year.

The benefits of increasing teacher pay are now unfolding. There are currently only 13 teacher vacancies districtwide. Nine of the current vacancies are in Special Education, which is a challenging area to staff nationwide.

Longevity pay was implemented as an additional way to attract talent and retain experienced employees. Employees will receive \$100 per year for each year of service in the district. “Not only are employees coming, they are staying. In 2022, a total of 72 employees, both certified and non, retired from the district. Comparatively, in 2023, only 27 employees decided to retire. The longevity plan has been an influential factor in the decision of several employees not to retire,” states Deputy Superintendent Dr. Ricky Catlett.

The strategic investments the district continues to put in place are crucial for attracting, retaining, and motivating talented employees. These measures can lead to a more stable and experienced workforce, improved student outcomes, and a positive impact on the overall educational environment.





**The 2022-2023 Tennessee Value Added Assessment System (TVAAS) scores have cast a spotlight on the impressive and sustained growth within Jackson-Madison County Schools. This continued progress is a testament to the dedication and hard work of our educators, students, and the unwavering support from the JMCSS Board members and the broader community. Together, we are advancing the cause of academic excellence throughout the region. Among the standout achievements revealed by the latest data, we are proud to announce the outstanding performance of several schools:**

**Level 4 Schools:**

- 1. Andrew Jackson**
- 2. Denmark**
- 3. JCT (Jackson Career and Technical Center)**
- 4. North Parkway**
- 5. Rose Hill**

**Level 5 Schools:**

- 1. JCM-ECH (Jackson Central-Merry Early College High)**
- 2. Lincoln**
- 3. Madison**
- 4. Pope**
- 5. South**



These remarkable scores indicate that, on average, our students have made more than a year’s worth of academic growth. TVAAS growth scores serve as a clear testament to our commitment to meeting students at their current level of academic readiness and propelling them forward in their educational journey.

The TVAAS value-added statistics play a vital role in demonstrating the extent of students’ progress year after year. The scale of 1 to 5 offers a precise assessment of this growth. A Level 1 score suggests that there is substantial evidence that the district’s students made less growth than expected. Conversely, a Level 5 score indicates significant evidence that students have exceeded expectations by making more growth than anticipated.

While these initial highlights provide a promising snapshot of our achievements, we eagerly await the full results encompassing district-wide grade levels and subject areas. These comprehensive results are anticipated to be released later this semester by the Tennessee Department of Education.

In closing, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to all stakeholders, including our exceptional educators, dedicated students, supportive families, committed Board members, and engaged community members. It is through our collective efforts and unwavering dedication to academic excellence that we continue to drive progress within Jackson-Madison County Schools. As we move forward, we remain steadfast in our pursuit of providing the best possible education for our students and ensuring their growth and success in the years to come. Together, we are shaping a brighter future for our community.

