

Fall 2024



THE TROJAN PRESS



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# HOME OF THE TROJANS

The East Jackson Community Schools is a positive, productive and successful learning community for all students.



Designed at Ray Printing Co., Jackson, Michigan



**Jeffrey Punches**  
Superintendent

## COMMITTED TO HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION

Dear East Jackson Families & Community Members,

I am delighted to extend a warm thank you as we are underway with an exciting new school year. As your new Superintendent, I am honored and eager to carry on my work with the community. Having served East Jackson for

the last 8 years, I plan to continue my commitment to educational equity, student achievement, and collaborative leadership. I look forward to working closely with our talented educators, staff, parents, and community partners to ensure that every student receives a high-quality education in a supportive and inclusive environment.

Our district’s mission is to “assist all students in reaching their fullest potential, to foster a sense of responsibility, to encourage respect and sensitivity towards others, while providing a safe, supportive, organized environment for teaching and learning. Together, we will continue to build upon our successes and explore new opportunities for growth, innovation, and student engagement.” I am dedicated to open communication and transparency, and I encourage you to reach out to me with your thoughts, questions, and ideas. I invite you to stay informed about district news, events, and initiatives by visiting our website and following us on social media. I am excited about the journey ahead and the opportunity to serve this exceptional community. Let us work together to make a positive impact on the lives of our students and prepare them for future success.

Warm regards,

**Jeffrey M. Punches**  
Superintendent  
East Jackson Community Schools

## BOARD OF EDUCATION



President Ken Straub, Secretary Jan Maino, Vice President Mischele Wilkins, Treasurer Mickey Crowley, Trustee Amy Boatright, Trustee Misti Bell & Trustee Lisa Hendricks.

Unless otherwise noted, Board meetings are on the second Monday of each month in the East Jackson Elementary Community Room located at 4340 Walz Rd. Jackson, starting at 6:00 p.m.

### Organizational Meeting

January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025

- (Regular meeting immediately follows)
- Oath of Office for Newly Elected Members
- Officer Positions
- 2025 Meeting Schedule

# EAST JACKSON ELEMENTARY



**Amy Blackledge**  
Principal EJE

Greetings East Jackson Community,

Welcome to the 2024-2025 school year. We are off to a great start, and I am honored to have the opportunity to lead East Jackson Elementary. I am excited for a successful year with eager students, dedicated staff, and a supportive community. A strong partnership with parents/guardians will make a great difference in a child's education. At EJE we look forward to working with you to help your child grow academically, socially, and emotionally. We recognize that children need support from both home and school to be successful. We appreciate seeing you at Parent-Teacher Conferences, and many of our Title I Parent-Involvement events. Please check the school calendar and monthly principal newsletters for a full list of events that will be happening throughout the school year.

Our PTCO has a full Board and is always eager to support students and staff at EJE. They offer in-person and zoom options for meetings to make it easier for volunteers to join and share their ideas. Please consider coming to a meeting and helping the PTCO plan rewarding events for students throughout the school year. I look forward to seeing families throughout the school year.

Go Trojans!  
**Amy Blackledge**  
Principal EJE

## TROJAN CHAMPS

My name is Calvin Carter, and this is my third year serving as the PBIS Coordinator at the elementary school. I oversee positive behavior rewards and support throughout the building. Last year we focused on incorporating quarterly rewards for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. Students were rewarded for following CHAMPS expectations, having good behavior/citizenship and for completing classroom assignments. Students who earned quarterly rewards

had Kona Ice, attended a movie at the Michigan Theater, went bowling at Suburban Lanes, and went to All Skate. Positive rewards and incentives are incorporated throughout all grades. Monthly, each classroom has 1 to 2 students who have shown outstanding CHAMPS behavior and are rewarded with a wristband and either a treat or extra recess. We saw awesome improvements in our student behavior and performance. We can't wait to keep seeing these positive changes this school year!



## PUPPET PLAY

This year Mrs. Khadhraoui's kindergarten class has been practicing their storytelling skills by retelling stories with puppets in their reading book clubs. Students are engaged in their favorite storybooks and able to retell, sequence, and communicate stories to one another.

Before kindergartners are able to read, they have to develop a strong love for books. Puppets have been a great way to build children's love for different books and keep them engaged in reading! Who knew reading and puppets could be so much fun?



## WELCOME EMILY ALDERMAN

My name is Emily Alderman, and I am so excited to be a part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade team at East Jackson Elementary! This is my first year with EJE, but I previously taught 5<sup>th</sup> grade in another district for two years. I am a graduate of Eastern Michigan University where I studied Elementary Education with a minor in Integrated Science. I also worked for the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum during college, and I am excited to bring my knowledge and experience of hands-on learning into the classroom.

We have been learning about animal adaptations during science. We designed our own birdhouses for different types of birds based on their characteristics and learned that different types of birds need to eat in different ways. Some birds eat whole seeds while others crack them and spit out the shell. Other types of birds drink nectar so these birds need different types of feeders to mimic what they would eat in the wild.

I am looking forward to learning and growing alongside EJE's awesome second graders this year. It is going to be a great year!



## MATH WITH MS. ESHAM

Students in Ms. Esham's room have been learning different ways to learn Math and ELA concepts. One way students enjoy learning, is by participating in hands-on activities. Our pop-it games or Shut the Box math game are a big hit in the classroom.





## DEAN OF STUDENTS

My name is Mr. Jones, and I have been working with students for many years and in many capacities; from military-style academies to skilled trades colleges. I consider it an honor to be the Dean of Students at East Jackson Elementary School.

There is something very special about our school. Not only does the beautiful country setting make us unique, but our amazing teachers also make us the educational destination for this entire area. But don't take my word for it. Contact me and we will arrange a visit.



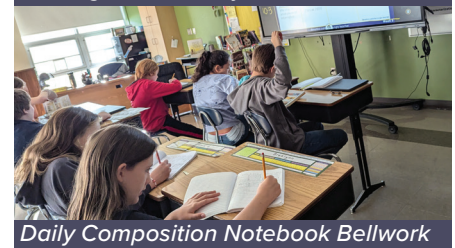
## MRS. SCHULTZ'S 6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE LANGUAGE ARTS

The sixth-grade Language Arts program is designed to foster a love of learning and equip students with the essential literacy skills necessary for success. By focusing on reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar, the program aims to develop well-rounded communicators who can effectively express themselves both orally and in writing. Students will learn a variety of reading and writing strategies to enhance their comprehension and expression, such as summarizing, analyzing, and synthesizing information. They will also explore the eight parts of speech (nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections) to understand how words work together to form grammatically correct and meaningful sentences.

Throughout the year, students will engage in daily oral language practice to reinforce these concepts. Activities such as root affix analysis, inferencing, grammar correction, and vocabulary development will help students develop a deeper understanding of the English language. In addition to traditional classroom activities, the program may incorporate creative writing exercises, literature discussions, and collaborative projects to make learning engaging and meaningful. By the end of the year, students will have developed a strong foundation in literacy skills that will serve them well in their future academic pursuits and beyond.



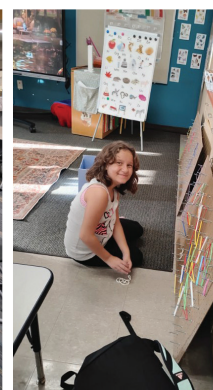
*Students collecting evidence while reading a short story.*



*Daily Composition Notebook Bellwork*

## TITLE 1/MATH NIGHT

On September 18<sup>th</sup>, students and their families enjoyed playing math games at Title 1/Math Night. Yahtzee was played, team style with inflatable dice and families could also play the Sorry board game or the Life-Size version set up in the gym. There was a Multiplication Speed competition in Mrs. Mejia's room while Mr. Kenyon and Mrs. Puhr called out BINGO in the library. Other games included Dominoes, card games, Jenga, guessing jars and two large geoboards. This year's newest addition was popcorn provided by the PTCO. Thank you again to everyone who helped, as well as the families who attended.



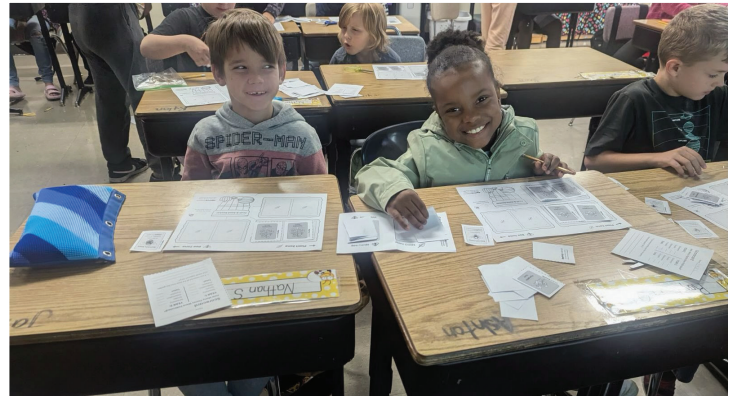
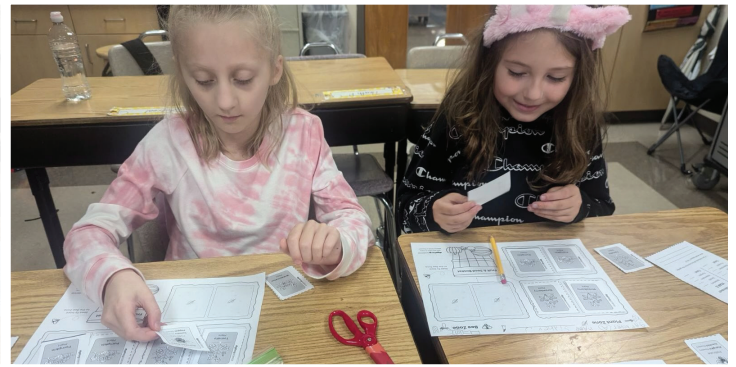
## LEARNING AND APPLES AND HOMECOMING... OH MY!

Students in Ms. MacGuinness' classroom have had a busy fall. First, we learned about 3D shapes and participated in a 3D Shape Hunt. Second, we tasted 2 different types of apples and made applesauce. Red apples were our favorite and we thought the green apples were sour. Third, we participated in homecoming activities with dress up days, homecoming coloring pages and a movie day with our school friends. We Love Fall!



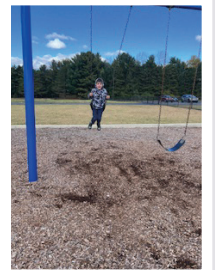
## POLLINATION

Our third-grade friends had an amazing time playing a pollination game and learning about the importance of pollinators and the process of pollinating our plants and flowers.



## RECESS TIME

Mrs. Holmquist's first grade students have been hard at work. In the classroom, they have been working on subtraction and adding within five. The students use math manipulatives to help them figure out the answer to the problem. Students have also been enjoying recess time, where they play on the swings, monkey bars, and other playground equipment.





## GIRLS ON THE RUN

Girls on the Run is an after school program for 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade girls. The curriculum focuses on social-emotional learning topics such as emotions, friendships, empathy, etc., all while preparing the girls for a celebratory 5k event at the end of each season. This year East Jackson Elementary hosted their first ever fall season; we have done spring seasons for several years, but gave fall a try this year.

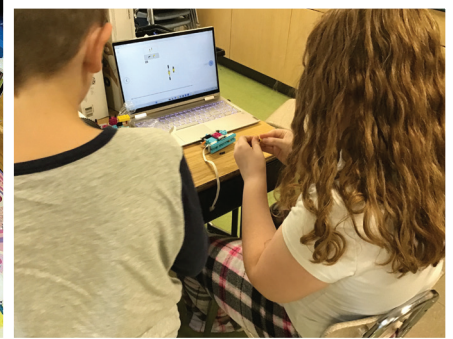
During the seasons the girls also brainstorm and complete a community impact project, choosing how they want to positively impact the community around them. This season the girls made friendship bracelets and hid them around their school with positive messages to bring smiles to students' faces. They ended the season by running their celebratory 5k and enjoying an ice cream party!



## ROBOTICS

Elementary students have been busy building models and robots for the Lego League Challenge Robotics Team. The Challenge team this year is composed of 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, & 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. Working with students from other classrooms is always a fun part of being on the team. A couple of 4th-grade students were asked about their favorite parts of being on the robotics team, and as the coach, I completely agree. "We can work with our team and have fun with robots and Legos!" The team learns how to code their robot and work with each other to

problem solve. The students are excited to work with mathematics and engineering skills to solve their missions. When the students solve a mission, they feel accomplished and are excited to have completed one of the challenges. The students are looking forward to our competition! They can't wait until they get to show other people their hard work and dedication to the robotics team! Our competition date is yet to be confirmed but it will be a fun day for our students!





# EAST JACKSON SECONDARY SCHOOL



**Joel Cook**  
Secondary Principal

As the school year progresses it is exciting to reflect on the first quarter and watch how our students have found their academic groove and have embraced our “Expect Respect” mantra. We continue to offer a wide variety of elective and required courses that prepare our students for life outside of the classroom. More than that, we continue to strongly encourage our students to get involved with extracurricular activities. It is a proven fact that students that participate in extracurricular activities or athletics do better academically and behaviorally.

While the temperatures continue to drop, the energy and enthusiasm for learning remain high at EJSS. We are looking forward to finishing the first semester strong, with students and staff ready to take on new challenges and achieve great things in the weeks ahead.

**Joel Cook**  
Secondary Principal

## WORK BASED LEARNING

At East Jackson Secondary School, we pride ourselves on preparing our students for their future, whether that is going directly into the workforce, skilled trade, or higher education. This year we have introduced a new “Work Based Learning” concept that continues to momentum in high schools across the country. Work Based Learning allows students to gain practical, real-world experience in a qualified work environment. Work Based Learning is an actual class and students can achieve high school credit while also being able to get a head start on their future by interning, job shadowing, cooperative learning, etc. The best part is they can get paid, so they are earning money while attending school! This is our first year with our new Work Based Learning initiative, and Mrs. Laura Panches is leading the effort. We look forward to continuing to grow this program and help our students continue to get a head-start on their future.



*Senior Nickalie Pratt earns high school credit...and money.*



*Daltin Ice assists with beautifying the EJSS campus as part of our Work Based Learning Program*



*Senior Yvette Hernandez organizes periodicals as part of her Work Based Learning Program*



# HOMECOMING



All Hail! Seniors Julius Farrell & Mariah Kerley are crowned King and Queen during EJSS Homecoming 2024



Students from EJE got to experience the Trojan Spirit at the Homecoming Pep Assembly



Juniors Kilee Sajdak & Khloee Gettings get into the Homecoming spirit while posing for 'Merica Day



Senior Roberto Mireles leads the Trojan Band during the National Anthem



Sophomores Journey Palmer and Landin Hendricks decorate the hall during Spirit Week



The graduating class of 2025 shows off their winning "Spirit Jug" at the Homecoming Dance



# GAME ON AT EAST JACKSON

Before students return for each new school year, all East Jackson staff report for a couple days of professional development. The primary goal of our “PD” days is to welcome staff back and provide valuable updates and training as we begin the school year. While refreshing knowledge and updating policies is necessary it can also be cumbersome and mundane. That was most certainly not the case with this year’s PD as it was “Game On” at EJCS! The goal this year was to blend learning with staff engagement

and find a quality balance between enjoyment and professionalism. While we covered key topics & explored new strategies, we did it in a way that made the entire experience more interactive & more enjoyable. By infusing a sense of fun into our professional development, we set the tone for a positive, productive learning experience that helped the staff connect with one another while refining our skills. This contagious energy has continued to build as we navigate our way through the beginning of the school year.





**Joe Niehaus**  
Athletic Director

The Winter Sports Season has come and gone, and it was a successful one! Both basketball programs were competitive in the new Cascades Conference and EJ finished with 3 All-Conference Basketball Players: Caleb Weaver, Mariah Kerley, and Priya Mericle. Competitive Cheer was able to complete a full season for the first time in a few years and senior, Clayton Clark, our first All-State wrestler in 13 years placed 4<sup>th</sup> in the 157 lb. weight class. East Jackson finished the season by hosting one of the most competitive boys basketball districts in the entire state. We hosted over 2,000 fans on two separate nights, which was a great atmosphere to show off our new gymnasium. As we shift gears to winter sports, it's looking like it is going to be another great season! Keep an eye out for our boys' track team as they look poised to have many state qualifiers!

Go Trojans!  
**Joe Niehaus**  
Athletic Director

## 2023-2024 ATHLETICS FINISH WITH A BANG

The softball team won a district championship for the first time since 2019, and the track team had multiple athletes receive all-state honors. Many of our athletes earned honors with a few standouts.

- The boys' 4x800 relay team of Michael Allen, William Kennedy, Javin Mericle and Randy Reddick set a new school record on their way to All-State Honors.
- Mariah Kerley set a school record in shot put and received All-State Honors.

## FALL SPORTS ARE A WRAP AND IT WAS ANOTHER GREAT SEASON FOR OUR STUDENT ATHLETES!

The girls golf team finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Cascades Conference for the second year in a row and finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in their Region, qualifying them for States. Many of our athletes finished the season with honors and two of our cross-country runners narrowly missed qualifying for the state meet. As we head into winter sports, there are many exciting things to look forward to. The opening weekend of wrestling is highlighted by our girl's wrestling

invitational. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual girl's tournament and one of the biggest in the state of Michigan. Our boys' and girls' basketball teams look to be competitive in one of the best basketball conferences in southeast Michigan. Cheerleading teams also look forward to a great season as participation numbers continue to rise in their program. We look forward to seeing everyone in both gyms this winter! Go TROJANS!



*The Varsity Volleyball team celebrates a point against Napoleon*

# WINTER SPORTS SCHEDULE

## Boys Basketball

11/19	Scrimmage	6:00 PM
11/26	Whitmore Lake Away	7:00 PM
12/3	Homer	7:00 PM
12/6	Grass Lake Away	7:00 PM
12/11	Hanover Away	7:00 PM
12/13	Leslie Away	7:00 PM
12/18	Napoleon Away	7:00 PM
1/8	Columbia	7:00 PM
1/10	Manchester Away	7:00 PM
1/13	Sand Creek	7:00 PM
1/15	Jonesville Away	7:00 PM
1/17	Michigan Center Away	7:00 PM
1/21	Addison	7:00 PM
1/23	Grass Lake	7:00 PM
1/24	Morenci Away	7:00 PM
1/28	Vandercook Lake Away	7:00 PM
1/30	Leslie	7:00 PM
2/4	Napoleon	7:00 PM
2/7	Manchester	7:00 PM
2/11	Michigan Center	7:00 PM
2/13	Crossover	7:00 PM
2/17	Pansophia Academy Away	7:00 PM
2/20	Hillsdale Away	7:00 PM
2/24	Districts at HH	7:00 PM

## Girls Basketball

11/25	Scrimmage	6:00 PM
12/2	Hillsdale	7:00 PM
12/4	Pansophia Academy	7:00 PM
12/10	Homer Away	7:00 PM
12/12	Leslie	7:00 PM
12/17	Columbia Away	7:00 PM
12/19	Michigan Center Away	7:00 PM
1/3	Olivet Away	7:00 PM
1/7	Jonesville	7:00 PM
1/9	Manchester Away	7:00 PM
1/14	Addison	1:30 PM
1/16	Michigan Center	12:00 PM
1/22	Vandercook Lake Away	7:00 PM
1/24	Grass Lake	7:00 PM
1/29	Napoleon	7:00 PM
1/31	Leslie Away	7:00 PM
2/3	Hanover Horton	7:00 PM
2/7	Manchester	7:00 PM
2/10	Whitmore Lake	7:00 PM
2/12	Napoleon Away	7:00 PM
2/18	Grass Lake Away	7:00 PM
2/21	Crossover	7:00 PM
2/25	Milan	7:00 PM
3/3	Districts at GL	7:00 PM

## MS Boys Basketball

11/4	Manchester	4:30 PM
11/6	Vandercook Lake	4:30 PM
11/11	Homer	4:30 PM
11/13	Addison Away	4:30 PM
11/18	Columbia Away	4:30 PM
11/20	Hanover Horton Away	4:30 PM
12/2	Leslie	4:30 PM
12/4	Grass Lake Away	4:30 PM
12/9	Napoleon	4:30 PM
12/11	Michigan Center Away	4:30 PM
12/16	Jonesville	4:30 PM
12/18	Manchester Away	4:30 PM

## MS Girls Basketball

1/13	Homer Away	4:30 PM
1/15	Manchester Away	4:30 PM
1/22	Napoleon	4:30 PM
1/27	Addison Away	4:30 PM
1/29	Vandercook Lake	4:30 PM
2/3	Michigan Center	4:30 PM
2/5	Columbia Away	4:30 PM
2/10	Grass Lake	4:30 PM
2/12	Jonesville Away	4:30 PM
2/19	Hanover Horton	4:30 PM
2/25	Leslie Away	4:30 PM
2/27	Homer	4:30 PM

## Wrestling

12/4	Columbia Quad Away	5:00 PM
12/6	Girls EJ Invite	TBA
12/7	Boys EJ Invite	TBA
12/11	Homer	5:00 PM
12/14	Fowlerville Invite Away	TBA
12/18	Addison Quad Away	5:00 PM
1/4	Hanover Quad Away	9:00 AM
1/8	Homer Quad Away	5:00 PM
1/15	Quad EJ	5:00 PM
1/22	Homer Quad Away	5:00 PM
1/29	Manchester Quad Away	5:00 PM
1/31	Confernece Napoleon	5:00 PM
TBA	Team Districts	TBA
TBA	Individual Districts	TBA
TBA	Team Regionals	TBA
TBA	Individual Regionals	TBA
TBA	Regionals Away Girls	TBA
TBA	Team State	TBA
TBA	Individual State	TBA

## Bowling

12/4	Grass Lake Suburban	TBA
12/6	Leslie Suburban	TBA
12/8	Onsted TenPinAlley	TBA
12/11	Addison Suburban	TBA
12/13	Michigan Center Suburban	TBA
12/28	Invite	TBA
1/6	Homer University	TBA
1/8	Grass Lake Suburban	TBA
1/10	Napoleon Suburban	TBA
1/15	Columbia Suburban	TBA
1/22	Hanover Suburban	TBA
1/23	Manchester Chelsea	TBA
1/25	Mel Wolf Jax 60	TBA
1/26	Mel Wolf Jax 60	TBA
1/27	Leslie City Limits	TBA
1/30	Jonesville L & J	TBA
2/3	Vandercook Jax 60	TBA
2/5	Michigan Center Suburban	TBA
2/12	Manchester Suburban	TBA
2/14	Napoleon Suburban	TBA
2/15	Team Playoffs	TBA
2/16	Coed Singles	TBA
2/20	Regionals	TBA
2/28	States	TBA

## MS Wrestling

1/14	Napoleon Away	4:30 PM
1/21	Homer Away	4:30 PM
1/28	EJ Quad	4:30 PM
2/4	Homer Away	4:30 PM
2/11	Manchester Away	4:30 PM
2/13	Championships	4:30 PM

## MS Cheer

11/14	Napoleon Away	6:00 PM
11/21	Homer Away	6:00 PM
12/5	Columbia Away	6:00 PM
12/12	Leslie Away	6:00 PM
12/18	Vandercook Lake Away	6:00 PM

## Cheer

12/17	Michigan Center Away	6:00 PM
1/14	Addison Away	6:00 PM
1/21	Jonesville Away	6:00 PM
1/28	Grass Lake Away	6:00 PM
2/4	Championships Hanover	6:00 PM
2/8	Hudson Tri-County Champs	TBA

ALL DATES AND TIMES ARE  
SUBJECT TO CHANGE



# HALL OF FAME INDUCTION 2024

The 2024 Hall of Fame Class was inducted during halftime of the September 6<sup>th</sup> Varsity Football Game. The Inductees were Leon Hunt (Coach/Administrator), Sandy Straub (Coach), Ron Hendricks (Athlete), Aaron Walter (Athlete), Hal Levy (Volunteer), and the 1971-72 / 1972-73 men's basketball teams. Congratulations to all of the Inductees! Your accomplishments are a testament to the hard work and dedication you displayed during your time as East Jackson Trojans. We look forward to seeing what the class of 2025 will look like!



# KINDERGARTEN ROUNDUP



# 2024-2025

## EAST JACKSON DISTRICT CALENDAR

<b>Dec.23-Jan.3</b>	<b>No School</b> Winter Break (Return to school Jan. 6, 2025)	<b>Mar. 21-28</b>	<b>No School</b> Spring Break (Return to School March 31, 2025)
<b>Jan. 20</b>	<b>No School (Students)</b> Professional Development Day (Staff)	<b>Apr. 18</b>	<b>No School</b> Good Friday
<b>Feb. 13*</b>	<b>Half Day</b> Staff and Students	<b>May 5</b>	<b>No School (Students)</b> Professional Development Day (Staff)
<b>Feb. 14-17</b>	<b>No School</b> Presidents Day	<b>May 26</b>	<b>No School</b> Memorial Day
<b>Feb. 20*</b>	<b>Parent-Teacher Conferences</b> Half Day (Staff and Students)	<b>June 6*</b>	<b>Half Day</b> Last Day of School (Students) Records Day (Staff)
<b>Feb. 21*</b>	<b>Half Day</b> Staff and Students		

**\*Half day release times will be as follows:**  
EJ Secondary School: 12:00 p.m. | EJ Elementary School: 1:00 p.m.



# Home of the TROJANS

### CONTACT US!

#### Administration Office

1404 N. Sutton Rd., Jackson, MI 49202  
517-764-2090

#### EJ Secondary School

1566 N. Sutton Rd., Jackson, MI 49202  
517-764-1700

#### EJ Elementary School

4340 Walz Rd., Jackson, MI 49201  
517-764-1810

#### WAY Alternative School

345 N. Dettman Rd., Jackson, MI 49202  
517-769-8770

#### Transportation

1404 N. Sutton Rd., Jackson, MI 49202  
517-769-8806

#### Food Service

1566 N. Sutton Rd., Jackson, MI 49202  
517-769-8958