

SPORTS



Check out the JCHS Senior Night Pictures and Sports pictures.

■ See pages 9-10

LIFESTYLES



Upper Cumberland Middle School Mathematics Competition.

■ See page 16

COVID-19 UPDATE

This snapshot was made available on: April 30.
As of April 23 Jackson County is in the Red Zone.

Total Active: 48
Total Recovered: 1,267
Hospitalizations: 41
Deaths: 35
Positivity Rate: 3.5 %

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1 Section, 16 Pages

Health Department
Offering Walk-In Option
For COVID-19 Vaccinations

The Jackson County Health Department announced last week it is offering walk-in options for individuals to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Appointments are still available but not required.

The Jackson County Health Department is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. for COVID-19 vaccine administration. For questions, individuals can call the Jackson County Health Department at 931-268-0218.

Tennesseans age 16 and up are eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Individuals seeking a COVID-19 vaccine can schedule an appointment at [vaccinate.tn.gov](https://www.tn.gov), visit the Jackson County Health Department for a walk-in appointment, or search vaccinefinder.org to find a local vaccine provider.

The mission of the Tennessee Department of Health is to protect, promote and improve the health and prosperity of people in Tennessee. Learn more about TDH services and programs at www.tn.gov/health.

Gov. Lee Announces
Passage Of Fiscal Year
2021-2022 Budget

On April 29, Tennessee Governor Bill Lee announced the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 budget has passed through the General Assembly. The budget totals \$42.6 billion and includes historic investments in literacy, mental health, broadband, and safety.

"I'm proud that this budget delivers on some of our top promises to Tennesseans and invests in external organizations meeting the needs of our local communities," said Gov. Lee. "Thank you to the General Assembly for their steadfast commitment to our shared goals and establishing Tennessee as a fiscal leader across the nation."

As a result of fiscal prudence and over \$180 million in spending reductions from the state agencies, Tennessee is able to return to pre-pandemic priorities and invest in public-private partnerships.

The budget also includes historic investments in some of the state's most pressing issues including:

\$100M to provide high-speed broadband to every Tennessean; \$250 investment in Mental Health Trust Fund; \$79 million to eliminate the 11,400 person TCAT waiting list

\$145 million for air and rail transportation infrastructure. "I'd like to thank the General Assembly for their outstanding partnership in passing this historic budget," Department of Finance and Administration Commissioner Butch Eley said. "I

am proud of the way state agencies worked hard to curtail spending, allowing us to make long-term strategic investments in the future of our state. This budget will enable us to maintain Tennessee's status as one of the best fiscally managed states in the nation."

The budget includes strategic investments in public-private partnerships, non-profit organizations, and external partners to support Tennesseans' top priorities without growing government. Those highlights include:

Pro-Life & Pro-Family
\$500K to Agape Child & Family Services; \$250K to Families Free, Inc.

\$3M to Human Coalition; \$50K to Isaiah 117 House; \$183K to Psalm 139 Project.

Fighting Human Trafficking & Supporting Victims
\$3.5M to End Slavery Tennessee; \$1.2M to Her Song, a Ministry of the Tim Tebow Foundation; \$600K to Tennessee Anti-Slavery Alliance.

Career & Technical Education
\$1M to Associated Builders and Contractors Greater Tennessee Chapter; \$150K to Center for Employment Opportunities; \$40K to Flight Foundation; \$700K to Niswonger Foundation; \$478K to Tennessee Builders Education Foundation

K-12 Education
\$225K to Boys & Girls

Please See
2021-2022 Budget Pg. 3

JCHS Prom Royalty Announced



SENTINEL Photos / Terri Collins

JCHS King And Queen – Congratulations to this years King Eli Smith and Queen Karleigh Davidson. Be sure to check out page 8 for more pictures.



JCHS Prince And Princess – Congratulations to this years Prince Bobby Dale Pippin and Princess Macy Locke.

CIS Helps Students With Basic Needs

Ultimate Objective:
Increase Graduation Rates

A program at Jackson County High School (JCHS) is seeking to help students achieve success through increasing their attendance.

Communities In Schools (CIS) Site Coordinator Jennifer Fields is working tirelessly to help individual students—as well as their families—with academic and non-academic issues that contribute to absences.

In partnership with Gov. Bill Lee's administration and the General Assembly, CIS coordinators like Fields are working in high schools in rural communities across the state as part of a three-year pilot program to broaden the program's reach among vulnerable students in rural Tennessee.

Fields started her efforts in the school in 2019 and is now in year two of the three-year pilot—and although the program started during a challenging time, she believes it was the right time as she has found unique ways to help at-risk youth.

"The overall goal of the program is to reduce chronic absenteeism,"

Fields said. "It has definitely been challenging since March of last year."

"Not seeing the kids every day for several months made me have to seek other ways to connect with them and be sure that they had the tools they needed to be successful."

Fields explained this program is very much needed at the high school level because when students are elementary- or middle school-aged, when students are consistently absent or homework and assignments aren't complete the blame is normally shifted to the parents; however, as students grow older the blame tends to shift to them—even though they too are still children and many things are beyond their control.

"They are still children who are facing the same issues that have not been resolved for any number of years," Fields said.

"I try to build a rapport with the students and find out the 'whys' surrounding why they are not showing up," Fields explains. "The whys could be anything. We have kids that don't

have running water or electricity so they can't wash clothes. And of course at this age level, it is a little more noticeable to the other students, so of course they're embarrassed. So if we could slip them some clothes once a week or try to find them a way to wash their clothes, their attendance will most of the time improve."

Along with lack of access to basic necessities such as electricity and running water, many students also lack access to food, internet, reliable transportation, stable housing—nor do they have family members that can help them to encourage them to go to school.

"There is a mirage of reasons that we can try to come in and help them fix the issues they may have that is preventing them from being in school," she added.

Fields says that while she is there to help the students, most of the success comes when the family is successful and the program can help provide resources for families that are struggling to help meet those basic needs.

"Some of the students and families

can be a little skeptical when they are first introduced to the program," Fields said.

She added that she puts a lot of energy into building a connection with the families. "Once they realize that I'm not here to get into their personal business and I am actually here to help, they start to really open up. My goal is to keep building those relationships and connections and helping those kids in whatever way I can," she said. "I know it can be hard for people to trust and they may have had bad experiences with other agencies—you just don't know their history. But if these families had a just a little bit of support and someone that cares, it can aid in the students' success."

With this program, the community can actually become involved in as well—considering the program is called Communities In Schools.

Fields can take non-perishable pre-packaged ready-to-eat food items, hygiene products, clothing (plain t-shirts, socks, underwear, basketball shorts, etc.) monetary donations, and an Amazon wishlist is in the works.

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