

EXCELLENCE FOR ALL:

**THE STRATEGIC PLAN
FOR EDUCATING
JACKSON SCHOLARS**

2019-2024



JACKSON
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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Vision

At Jackson Public Schools, we prepare scholars to achieve globally, to contribute locally, and to be fulfilled individually.

Mission

At Jackson Public Schools, we develop scholars through world-class learning experiences to attain an exceptional knowledge base, critical and relevant skill sets, and the necessary dispositions for great success.



Core Values

At Jackson Public Schools, we believe in the importance of equity, excellence, growth mindset, relationships, relevance, and positive and respectful cultures.

EQUITY

Our vision of equity, put simply, is “all means all.” We ensure equity by celebrating each scholar’s individuality, interests, abilities and talents; providing each scholar in each school with equitable access to high-quality instruction, courses, and resources; and holding high expectations for all scholars to graduate college-ready and career-minded. Similarly, we recognize and value the individual abilities, experiences and talents of our staff; providing all staff with equitable access to opportunities for development and growth; and ensuring that such opportunities are provided through clear and transparent processes.

EXCELLENCE

High expectations for our scholars help to prepare them for college and career paths. High expectations from and for all adults foster ownership, consistency, and transparency. Every member of our district performs with an attention to detail and the quality that each task demands in order to achieve great outcomes.

GROWTH MINDSET

Our leaders—scholars and staff—thrive in environments where belief in their abilities is affirmed. Everyone in the organization embraces the ideal that effort and perseverance lead to success.

RELATIONSHIPS

It is essential to develop relationships through mutual respect of culture, social context, and community. This allows us to create a community of safety, trust, productive vulnerability, and genuine connection as we celebrate successes and value opportunities for constructive feedback.

RELEVANCE

Scholars experience relevant education that is engaging, motivating, and inspiring, leading to a lifelong commitment to learning. Our scholars must learn to connect with each other, the larger community, and the 21st-century world, ultimately developing agency to contribute to positive change in Jackson, in Mississippi, and in the world.

POSITIVE AND RESPECTFUL CULTURE

Scholars and staff thrive in learning environments where growth and achievement are the highest priorities and climates are safe, positive, and respectful. These environments engage and excite all scholars, leaving them hungry for more knowledge. All adults contribute to a positive and respectful culture allowing them to experience more productivity, increased retention, and joy at work.

Our Shared Commitments

1

A Strong
Start

2

Innovative Teaching
& Learning

3

Talented &
Empowered Teams

4

Joyful Learning
Environments

5

Culture of Accountability
& Excellence

Dear JPS Community,

Over the past two years, Jackson Public Schools has undergone a significant effort to examine what works for our scholars and families, and what needs to be done to ensure their success now and in the future. This five-year strategic plan, developed with input from hundreds of stakeholders and multiple organizational partners, is the result of that collective work.

As we continue to see radical changes in our world, education will need to make similarly radical shifts; therefore, we have a responsibility to ensure that a Jackson Public Schools education prepares scholars for greatness in achievement and service through world-class educational experiences.

This plan reflects our need to lay a strong foundation while maintaining the flexibility to innovate: two characteristics integral to any successful 21st-century school district. Though not completely exhaustive, this plan speaks both to our aspirations for better service to scholars and families and descriptions of key commitments we are making to prioritize our work.

What this plan means for scholars:

- More pre-kindergarten opportunities
- Excellent teachers in every classroom and effective leaders in every building and central office
- Rigorous learning with appropriately differentiated support
- Consistent expectations for academics and behavior
- Voice in their education

What this plan means for families:

- More access to pre-kindergarten and resources to support scholar success
- Timely communication about their children's progress and needs
- Voice in their children's education
- Assurance that they can hold all members of the district to the highest standards

What this plan means for staff:

- Meaningful and relevant professional development, including instructional coaching
- Opportunities for teacher leadership and mentoring
- Clear and consistent expectations for teaching, learning, and outcomes
- Accountability for scholar success
- Collaboration and synergy between individuals, groups, and departments
- Innovation and a voice in the improvement process

What this plan means for community members:

- Increased accountability for progress in the district
- Opportunities to share their expertise with scholars and families
- Deeper engagement opportunities

This plan outlines goals that will require discipline and commitment from every segment of the Jackson Public Schools community—educators, scholars, families, and community supporters. It will require continuous reflection and adjustment of our policies, actions, and mindsets to ensure that all scholars have access to the world-class education they deserve. We must keep a laser-like focus on our commitment to provide each of our scholars—regardless of their background, ability/disability, or zip code—a high-quality education. We are inspired by the individuality and potential of each of our scholars, and by their families and others who are working alongside us to meet their needs.

Amazing things are destined for Jackson Public Schools. Let's work together to transform lives through excellent education.

Sincerely,



Errick L. Greene, Ed.D.
Superintendent

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Our Challenge and Opportunity

Jackson Public Schools is the second largest school district in Mississippi, serving nearly 24,000 scholars in 2018-2019 across 57 schools and programs:

- Seven high schools
- 12 middle schools
- 33 elementary schools
- Five special programs
- 96 percent of scholars identify as African-American
- 99 percent of scholars are eligible for free/reduced priced lunch.

Jackson, Mississippi—the community we serve—is both the capital city and the state’s only urban municipality. Almost 30 percent of the city’s population lives in poverty, with the negative impact of these socioeconomic indicators disproportionately affecting the city’s African-American residents.

In school years 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-18, the district received an F rating from the Mississippi Department of Education. And while the number of individual schools receiving a D or F rating has declined from 40 in 2015-16 to 37 in 2017-18, about two-thirds of the district’s schools are still drastically underperforming. In 2017-18, nearly a quarter of our scholars were chronically absent, and a growing body of research shows that chronic absenteeism is directly related to lower academic performance.

Our challenge, in short, is this: to lay a strong foundation for immediate and continuous growth and improvement in Jackson Public Schools and to do so in a way that is sustainable and responsible. We must refine and replicate what is working, improve or replace what is not, and fill existing gaps so that every one of our scholars receives the high-quality education to which they are entitled.

While our challenge is great, several recent events have converged to make this an opportune time to embark upon a new path. In the fall of 2016, given significant declines in the district’s performance on state-mandated assessments, as well as violations of numerous state accreditation standards, the district was placed on probation by the Mississippi Department of Education. The state board of education voted to take over the district in September 2017 and submitted to Governor Bryant a proposed declaration of emergency as required by law.

Rather than carry out the declaration, Governor Bryant consulted Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and various education experts, to determine a plan that would best serve the Jackson community. The result was the creation of a commission charged with meaningfully engaging the community and conducting a student-centered assessment of Jackson Public Schools that would inform a plan of action for the district. With these goals in mind, the Better Together Commission (BTC) was formed with 15 members appointed by Governor Bryant, Mayor Lumumba, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and Jackson Public Schools. Tasked by the BTC, Insight Education Group developed a comprehensive report, *“Ready to Rise: Our Scholars, Our Future, Our Time.”* This report included a robust data collection process; review of recent, relevant research; and 51 specific recommendations to help the district chart a course for success.

In October 2018, the Jackson Public Schools Board of Trustees appointed Errick L. Greene, Ed.D. as the new superintendent. His arrival provides a fresh outlook toward helping to mitigate the challenges and recognize the opportunities in our district. A complement of highly talented leaders with expertise in school/district turnaround and teaching and learning was assembled to support Dr. Greene in district transformation efforts.

In addition to the new district leadership team, multiple audits, reviews, and reports by the state, community organizations, and outside consultants have provided abundant information about what parents, scholars, teachers, staff, and community members value and want to see reflected in their school system. These reports provided numerous data points on scholar performance, perceptions of school climate, and school participation rates, as well as clear, measured, and deliberate recommendations for large-scale, sustainable improvement.

And finally, we have benefitted greatly from dedicated leaders on the Board of Trustees, caring staff members, and a community filled with individuals and organizations deeply invested in their city and committed to doing what's best for its youngest residents. In particular, we are especially appreciative of Governor Phil Bryant, Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for their catalyzing efforts in building support for a “third way,” convening a diverse array of stakeholders (including members of the Better Together Commission), and providing resources to enhance the transition process. These relationships not only provide us with tireless advocates and reflective thought partners, but also afford us the ability to provide scholars and their families with additional opportunities, such as out-of-school-time programming, innovative educational options, internships, access to additional technology, and external supports.

Our challenge is great, but the opportunity presented to us in this moment is even greater. The need to take full advantage is pressing. We must set high expectations for all and hold every scholar and staff member accountable for high performance. Our scholars, their families, and our community deserve nothing less.

“The most important thing that an educator can do for children, youth and young adults is to unveil opportunities of hope for them. As a city and as a community we have suffered—as so many communities across the country have suffered—trying to preserve and strengthen our public school system. But in every challenge there is great opportunity.

*Suffering produces endurance.
Endurance produces character.
Character produces hope.
And hope does not disappoint. (Romans 5:3-5)*

We need to give our children hope every day ... all day. This strategic plan charts our course over the next five years and embraces a future full of hope. Our vision and mission guide our steps as we create opportunities for achievement for all of our students and families, and thus our city and state.”

- Jeanne Middleston Hairston, Ed.D.
JPS Board President

Better Together Commission Members

Ivye L. Allen, Ph.D.
President, Foundation for the Mid South

Claiborne Barksdale
Chief Executive Officer Emeritus, Barksdale Reading Institute

Robert Blaine, D.M.A.
Chief Administrative Officer, City of Jackson

Geraldine Chaney, M.D.
Pediatrician

Cheryl Coleman
JPS Math Teacher & Parent

Ronnie Crudup Sr.
Senior Pastor, New Horizon Church International

Kathleen Grigsby, Ed.D.
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Laketia Marshall-Thomas
Assistant Superintendent, High Schools

Charles McClelland
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Shauna Nicholson-Johnson, Ed.D.
Former Principal, Baker Elementary School

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Laurie Smith, Ph.D.
*Education and Workforce Development Policy Advisor,
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Ed Sivak, Ph.D.
Executive Vice President, Hope Enterprise Corporation

Leland Speed
*Developer and Former Executive Director,
Mississippi Development Association*

Rhea Williams-Bishop
*Director of Mississippi and New Orleans Programs,
W.K. Kellogg Foundation*



The Plan

Developing the Plan

Over the last nine months, we have met with scholars, parents, teachers, leaders, partners, and community members to better understand their desires for the future of the district. We have carefully reviewed the findings and recommendations in the reports written during the past two years by the Mississippi Department of Education, the Council of the Great City Schools, Insight Education Group, and One Voice. Their findings and recommendations are reflected in this plan and will guide us over the next five years.

Implementing the Plan

This plan is designed as a series of commitments to the scholars and families of Jackson Public Schools and will guide the district's decisions and actions over the next five years. In order to fulfill these commitments, it is important that the plan is implemented with consistency, transparency, and fidelity and that we all hold ourselves and each other accountable for achieving what we have set out to do. At the same time, the plan is intentionally written to allow for continuous learning and refinement and to enable the district to operate with flexibility and agility based on the evolving needs of our scholars, their families, and communities.

Resources will be allocated according to the priorities required of each commitment, and allocation decisions will be made through a transparent process. It is important to recognize that while all Jackson schools will be held to the same high expectations for performance, individual schools may require different strategies or resources to get there. Staff at all levels will continue to have opportunities to engage in planning and decision-making related to their work.

In order to implement the plan successfully and ensure the long-term stability of the district, there will be instances in which the district may need to scale changes over time, starting with a small group of classrooms or schools, refining until success is demonstrated, and then expanding. This is how learning organizations operate and how we ensure promising practices are carefully implemented.

Finally, families and community members will be actively encouraged to partner with the district as the plan is implemented. Feedback on the plan, its implementation, and its impact will be solicited through focus groups, community meetings, and annual surveys and will be compiled and reported on by the Jackson Public Schools Office of Public Engagement.

Targeted Outcomes

To ensure our success, we must be intentional about monitoring our progress toward achieving the goals established in our new strategic plan. We recognize that scholar outcomes and experiences are the ultimate measures of our success as we implement our bold new direction. We have developed these metrics to measure our scholars' access to high-quality instruction, beginning in pre-kindergarten and continuing to high school graduation (see The Profile of the Jackson Public Schools Graduate); their academic growth at a number of critical junctures; and their access to and experience in safe and nurturing environments.

Milestones	Measurements	
Where will we be by 2024?	Where are we now?	How do we measure our progress?
All scholars have access to a high-quality JPS pre-kindergarten experience	580 available seats	Number of "seats" in pre-kindergarten
An average of 40% or more JPS scholars performing proficiently (at Level 4 or 5) in Reading & Mathematics across Grades 3-8 and High School End of Course exams (English II/ Algebra I)	24.7% English/ Language Arts 19.6% Mathematics	MAAP
50% or more scholars performing proficiently (at Level 4 or 5) in Reading & Mathematics by the end of 3rd grade	29.9% English/ Language Arts 21% Mathematics	MAAP
Double the percentage of scholars performing proficiently (at Level 4 & 5) in Reading & Mathematics by the end of 8th grade	16.8% English/ Language Arts 15.8% Mathematics	MAAP
Triple the percentage of scholars performing proficiently in Algebra by the end of 10th Grade (from 10.7% to 30%)	10.7% at Level 4 or 5	MAAP Algebra I 10th Grade
Increase the average composite score on ACT to 21 or above	15.6	ACT
80% or more of JPS scholars graduating in four years	71%	Percentage of scholars enrolled in 9th grade who graduate four years later
10% or fewer of JPS scholars suspended per school year	15%	District discipline data
Decrease chronic absenteeism to no more than 20% of JPS scholars	26%	Attendance data
Parents and families express overall satisfaction with their scholar's school	Baseline to be established in SY 19-20	Comprehensive Needs Assessment Survey

Commitments and Key Initiatives

Commitment #1:

A Strong Start

Scholars perform better in school and complete more years of education when they engage in high-quality early learning. Providing comprehensive access to high-quality pre-kindergarten opportunities exposes young scholars to positive learning experiences that will prepare them to develop the skills needed for success in school and life. Through the strategic initiatives outlined below, we will ensure that every 4-year-old in Jackson has access to high-quality, full-day early learning opportunities, supporting our vision of every child entering kindergarten ready to experience school success.

Commitment in Action

We commit to the following key initiatives:

- Developing a robust early literacy campaign
- Expanding the number of pre-kindergarten (4-year-old) seats
- Developing a plan for collaboration, partnership, and alignment with existing Head Start, daycare, and early childcare centers in Jackson
- Developing a Parent Academy that supports a strong start for young scholars
- Implementing a high-quality and developmentally appropriate pre-kindergarten curriculum

Implementation Plan

Some of the initiatives will take more planning and time to implement than others. The table below outlines the estimated action plan for implementation of **Commitment #1**; the color yellow indicates a planning year, the color orange indicates initial implementation, and the color blue indicates continuous refinement.

Commitment #1: A Strong Start Key Initiatives	Implementation Years				
	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Develop a robust early literacy campaign	P	P	I	R	R
Expand the number of available pre-kindergarten seats	I	I	I	R	R
Partner with existing Head Start, daycare, and early childhood centers in Jackson	I	I	R	R	R
Develop a Parent Academy	P	I	R	R	R
Implement high quality, developmentally appropriate curriculum	I	I	R	R	R

Key: Planning (P) P Initial Implementation (I) I Continuous Refinement (R) R

Commitment #2:

Innovative Teaching and Learning

Scholars will achieve at high levels when teaching and learning are built around their individual strengths, needs, cultures, interests, and dreams. It is critical that each adult in Jackson Public Schools recognizes each scholar as an individual and ensures equitable learning opportunities that facilitate the development of skills, knowledge, confidence, and voice.

In order to graduate global citizens prepared to solve the problems of tomorrow, we must embrace schooling that is radically different from current and past practices. Innovation will be encouraged in classrooms, schools, out-of-school times, and across the district, as space is created for new ideas and ways of “doing school.” Through the strategic initiatives outlined below, we will encourage teaching and learning that is relevant and personalized to scholars’ interests, responsive to their identities, and reflective of the types of critical thinking and collaborative problem-solving required by tomorrow’s world.

Commitment in Action

We commit to the following key initiatives:

- Implementing consistent, coherent, and focused curricula across all content areas
- Providing robust elective offerings (World Language, Arts, Advanced Placement, Early College Experience, Dual Enrollment, Career-Technical Education) for each scholar beginning as early as middle school
- Developing school and course pathways in response to the evolving workplace (e.g., Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics)
- Ensuring that all scholars have access to powerful and engaging out-of-school time experiences
- Ensuring a culturally and socially relevant approach to instruction
- Developing effective intervention models to support struggling scholars
- Implementing a balanced assessment system

Implementation Plan

Some of the initiatives will take more planning and time to implement than others. The table below outlines the estimated action plan for implementation of **Commitment #2**; the color yellow indicates a planning year, the color orange indicates initial implementation, and the color blue indicates continuous refinement.

Commitment #2: Innovative Teaching and Learning Key Initiatives	Implementation Years				
	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Implementing coherent and focused curricula	I	I	I	I	R
Robust elective offerings beginning in middle school	P	P	I	I	R
Clear school and course career-related pathways	P	I	I	R	R
Engaging out-of-school time experiences	P	I	I	R	R
Culturally and socially relevant approaches to instruction	P	I	I	R	R
Effective intervention models to support struggling scholars	I	I	I	R	R
Balanced assessment system	I	I	I	R	R
Certified teacher in every classroom	P	P	I	I	R

Key: Planning (P) P Initial Implementation (I) I Continuous Refinement (R) R

Commitment #3:

Talented and Empowered Teams

Scholars' achievement is improved when they are taught by educators who know them as individual learners and who can differentiate instruction in ways that ensure all scholars have access to high-quality curriculum and can achieve high expectations. Implementing the strategies below will ensure we are focused on improving our candidate pools and developing the capacity of the most significant school-based influences on scholar achievement: the teacher and principal.

Commitment in Action

We commit to the following key initiatives:

- Developing a Leadership Academy and a Teacher Academy (especially for teacher assistants)
- Developing a world-class Teaching and Learning Professional Development Center
- Developing a High School Teacher Preparatory Academy with the opportunity for scholars to earn an Associate in Arts degree with their High School diploma
- Developing a “grow our own” approach at all levels of the organization and in both instructional and operational functions
- Creating a robust teacher mentorship program

Implementation Plan

Some of the initiatives will take more planning and time to implement than others. The table below outlines the estimated action plan for implementation of **Commitment #3**; the color yellow indicates a planning year, the color orange indicates initial implementation, and the color blue indicates continuous refinement.

Commitment #3: Talented and Empowered Teams Key Initiatives	Implementation Years				
	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Leadership and Teacher Academies	P	I	I	I	R
Teaching and Learning Professional Development Center	P	I	R	R	R
HS Teacher Preparatory Academy	P	P	I	R	R
“Grow Our Own” approach to all professional learning	I	I	R	R	R
Teacher Mentorship Program	P	I	I	R	R

Key: Planning (P) P Initial Implementation (I) I Continuous Refinement (R) R

Commitment #4:

Joyful Learning Environments

Scholars learn better when they are in environments they view as safe, supportive, and positive. This means our schools and classrooms must be designed and led in ways that encourage and nurture the joy of learning, foster a sense of belonging, build trusting relationships, and encourage risk-taking and questioning that are essential to lifelong learning.

As outlined below, we will create learning environments that provide relevant content, clear learning goals, and frequent feedback and support, as well as opportunities to build the academic and social skills needed for success. Also, we will endeavor to create a strong sense of belonging and meaningful relationships with scholars to help guide them towards their greatest potential.

Commitment in Action

We commit to the following key initiatives:

- Engaging deeply with families to ensure scholars' well-being and development
- Creating a district accountability model for school climate and wellness
- Creating structures and processes for all scholars to build positive and meaningful relationships with caring adults (i.e., mentors, tutors, and volunteers)
- Researching and implementing a district-wide framework to address Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Fostering learning experiences that are fun and deeply engaging

Implementation Plan

Some of the initiatives will take more planning and time to implement than others. The table below outlines the estimated action plan for implementation of **Commitment #4**; the color yellow indicates a planning year, the color orange indicates initial implementation, and the color blue indicates continuous refinement.

Commitment #4: Joyful Learning Environments Key Initiatives	Implementation Years				
	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Engaging families to support scholars' well-being and development	I	I	I	R	R
District accountability model for school climate and wellness	P	I	I	I	R
Fostering relationships between scholars and caring adults	I	I	R	R	R
Researching and implementing a district-wide framework to address Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)	P	P	I	I	R
Fostering learning experiences that are fun and deeply engaging	I	I	I	R	R

Key: Planning (P) P Initial Implementation (I) I Continuous Refinement (R) R

Commitment #5:

A Culture of Accountability and Excellence

A culture of accountability and excellence must permeate the entire district in order for us to achieve the goals outlined in this strategic plan. In addition, each individual faculty and staff member must hold her or himself to the highest possible standards and support our Mission, Vision, Core Values, and Commitments. Thoughtful planning, deliberate and consistent use of systems and data analysis, and a deep commitment to professional learning will enable us to build—and sustain—a districtwide culture of accountability and excellence.

Commitment in Action

We commit to the following key initiatives:

- Developing a district performance-based management system for all team members based on measurable goals in the Strategic Plan
- Developing structures and processes to consistently celebrate high-performing team members
- Establishing structures for high-functioning leadership teams throughout the organization
- Developing transparent practices to provide equitable access to district resources across all schools
- Developing operational structures and processes that are more efficient and responsive to the needs of scholars, family members, and schools
- Developing conditions that will invite and cultivate innovative practices

Implementation Plan

Some of the initiatives will take more planning and time to implement than others. The table below outlines the estimated action plan for implementation of **Commitment #5**; the color yellow indicates a planning year, the color orange indicates initial implementation, and the color blue indicates continuous refinement.

Commitment #5: A Culture of Accountability and Excellence Key Initiatives	Implementation Years				
	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Performance-based management system for teachers, principals, and Central Office leaders	P	P	I	I	R
Consistent celebration of high performing teachers, leaders, and members of the operations team	P	I	R	R	R
High functioning leadership teams	I	I	I	I	R
Provide equitable access to resources	P	I	I	R	R
Improve operational responsiveness to scholars and their families	I	I	I	R	R
Invite and cultivate innovative practices	P	I	I	I	R

Key:

Planning (P)	P	Initial Implementation (I)	I	Continuous Refinement (R)	R
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The Profile of a JPS Graduate

describes Jackson Public Schools' aspirations for *each and every one* of its graduates.

JPS aspires that each graduate will embody many of the qualities and achieve several of the accomplishments described below. These qualities and accomplishments fall under three competencies—Communication & Critical Thinking, Collaboration & Citizenship, and Content Mastery & Digital Literacy—that reflect the fast-changing world in which JPS graduates will become productive citizens and compassionate leaders.



Content Mastery & Digital Literacy

JPS graduates always operate with a growth mindset and exhibit excellence in all they do. Thus, they seek out and successfully complete individually challenging coursework, proficiently utilizing technology and media to do so. Content Mastery & Digital Literacy may be evidenced by:

- Successful completion of rigorous coursework (AP, IB, and higher level mathematics/science courses)
- Performance in academic competitions and extra-curricular activities (science fairs, debate, etc.)
- Ability to draw from various content areas to establish and defend a coherent point of view



Communication & Critical Thinking

JPS graduates connect to one another, to Jackson, and to the world in relevant ways and are active agents in creating and maintaining a positive and respectful culture. Thus, they are active readers by choice, write effectively in multiple genres, communicate clearly, and solve problems. Communication & Critical Thinking are evidenced by:

- Successful oral presentation based on independent research or analysis
- Working proficiency in second language as evidenced by course credit, college credit, or AP score of 3 or higher, or completion of IB curriculum
- Successful completion of a substantial analytical research paper



Collaboration & Citizenship

JPS graduates nurture positive relationships and strive for equity. Thus, they are team players who embrace diverse ideas, accept feedback as opportunities for growth, and advocate for the betterment of the larger community. Collaboration & Citizenship are evidenced by:

- Voter registration and working understanding of local, state, national and international political issues
- Active membership in a civic club, faith community, or service group
- Successful completion of a significant community service project



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Transforming lives through excellent education