

# We Are Jasper

## SCALE-ING UP

Students' Classroom Experience

## STATE ASSESSMENT CHANGES

How GJCS is Adapting

## REGISTRATION

For the 2025-2026 School Year



# SCALE-ING UP STUDENTS' CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

BY: ANTHONY PRICE, ELA TEACHER AT JASPER MIDDLE SCHOOL

## What is SCALE?

Greater Jasper Consolidated Schools joined a small collaborative of Indiana school districts, Purdue University, and Regional Opportunity Initiatives in the summer of 2023 as part of the SCALE K-12 partnership. But what is SCALE K-12? SCALE K-12 is a program dedicated to preparing students for careers in microelectronics (ME) by providing teachers and schools with the tools to create and implement engaging learning experiences centered on microelectronics concepts and contexts. With proposed growth in the microelectronics industry focused in the region, GJCS is committed to helping students make connections between their daily lives and microelectronics. For some students, these early connections may lead to a lucrative future career.

Getting an entire grade level of middle school students engaged in anything is a difficult task at any point in time. Getting an entire grade level of middle school students learning coding, honing their informative writing skills, and working to give other groups feedback on their writing and creations in May is a task on hard mode. But it is possible.

Post ILEARN test, the Jasper Middle School's seventh grade ELA students planned, programmed, and designed board games powered by a tiny computer called a micro:bit. Instead of the usual end-of-the-school-year pushback, students actively engaged in their learning. The May doldrums were replaced with the positive energy of creativity and collaboration. Students were excited to present their games and have other students play them.

This engaging project was made possible by SCALE (Scalable Asymmetric Lifecycle Engagement) K-12. SCALE K-12 is an initiative by the federal government to introduce students of all grade levels to microelectronics and their uses. Created by the CHIPS Act, SCALE K-12 seeks to demystify microelectronic production and engineering for Americans and create pathways for future college and career opportunities. SCALE also provides an opportunity for school districts to access technology that they couldn't otherwise afford. The micro:bits provided for the aforementioned group project were purchased by Greater Jasper Consolidated Schools thanks to our partnership with SCALE K-12.

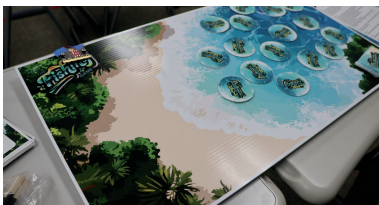


# SCALE-ING UP CONT.

My introduction to SCALE K-12 started two summers ago as a teacher fellow. I was part of a team tasked with writing and implementing a unit that integrated microelectronics inside middle and high school ELA classrooms. I worked with graduate students and teachers from around Indiana to create the unit. Later, graduate students filmed me teaching the unit and collected data. Implementing the project and coordinating with graduate students from Indiana University and Purdue University wasn't always easy or smooth. But I loved the result. My students enjoyed the project and created games that they are very proud of. They worked through the writing process and had a chance to experience peer feedback. And, this year, the entire grade-level ELA team worked together to ensure that every student had this experience (minus the cameras and grad students).

I have continued working with SCALE K-12 in a variety of capacities. Though SCALE K-12 is primarily focused on technology, as a humanities teacher, I feel it is important for us to dip our toes into the STEM stream. We have to help our students interact with technology and other people ethically. We have to teach them to innovate with an eye on history and the future. We have to teach them the human impact of their code and creations. Finally, we have to guide students on how to give and receive feedback, so the human who is using the creation and the human crafting the creation can see each other. That's the opportunity SCALE K-12 provides.

For more information, visit <https://www.scalek12.org/>.



# STATE ASSESSMENT CHANGES, OH MY!



**BY: TINA FAWKS, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT**

Since the inception of Indiana's state assessment program in 1987, educators and students have weathered various system changes. When the testing program began in the 80s, it was tagged ISTEP (Indiana State Testing for Educational Progress). The paper/pencil tests with the bubbles that had to be marked "heavy and dark" were given once a year in grades 3-8 in Math and English, while Science and Social Studies were assessed at specific grades. The ISTEP, updated to ISTEP+, assessment went through various iterations from 1987 to 2019, including shifts in the time of year students were tested, the addition of End-of-Course Assessments for sophomores, the implementation of IREAD-3 in 2012, and updates to increase rigor as standards changed. However, since ISTEP was replaced by ILEARN in 2019, it feels like the rate of change has increased exponentially.

As we prepare for another school year, let's take a look at the most pertinent changes to the state's assessment systems.

## **IREAD-3**

The IREAD-3 Assessment and the policies surrounding its administration have undergone numerous changes in the past couple of years, with more to begin with the 2025-2026 school year.

- While GJCS opted in early to have second grade students participate in the IREAD-3 administration in order to provide an earlier indicator of reading foundation mastery, all schools in the state were required to test their second grade students beginning in the spring of 2025.
- Beginning with the cohort of students in 3rd grade during 2024-2025, the IREAD-3 was given higher stakes. In the past, a student's lack of success on IREAD-3 would be considered as a piece of data in determining if a student should be retained in 3rd grade or promoted to 4th. Because of changes to Indiana code, if a student has not passed IREAD-3 by the completion of 3rd grade, they now must be retained in 3rd grade, unless they meet one of 5 criteria for a Good Cause Exemption.
- Previously, Good Cause Exemptions were provided to students who qualified based on their special education or English Learner status. Being approved for a GCE used to mean that the student could be promoted to the next grade and was also exempt from further IREAD-3 tests. To align to the updated state laws, based on eligibility, students may still be provided a GCE; however, that status no longer exempts a student from taking the IREAD-3 assessment as they progress through the grade levels. Students with GCE will retest until they earn a passing score on IREAD-3 or until promoted to 7th grade.
- In the spring and summer of 2025, students who had not yet passed IREAD-3 were provided additional retest opportunities. Now, second grade students can retest during the retest window, and third grade students have two retest opportunities during this time.
- Schools are now required to offer summer school programming to both 2nd and 3rd grade students who earned scores of At Risk (2nd grade) or Did Not Pass (3rd grade).
- The final piece of the change is the addition of an Individual Reading Plan. In order to assure that students who have not mastered foundational reading skills continue to make progress toward that goal, students who earned scores of At Risk (2nd grade) or Did Not Pass (3rd grade) and who were unable to attend at least 90% of summer school will be required to have an Individual Reading Plan in place. The plan documents interventions, progress monitoring, and communication with parents.

# CHANGES CONTINUED...

The various changes surrounding the IREAD-3 administration and the other related policies demonstrate the state's focus on foundational literacy skills. While Ireland and Jasper Elementary Schools have already started implementing these changes, it will be the first year for the district to implement the Individual Reading Plans and re-testing students who were promoted to fourth grade but have not yet passed the assessment.

## ILEARN 3-8 Checkpoints & Summative

The ILEARN assessment program has undergone numerous changes in the six years since its implementation. The test was rolled out in 2019 to replace ISTEP+. In 2020, administration was canceled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2023, IDOE was tasked by Indiana's legislature to streamline the Academic Standards, and with this streamlining came another revision of the assessment. Finally beginning in 2025-2026, all schools in Indiana will participate in the through-year assessment format, which includes 3 checkpoints and a summative assessment.

- Opting into the pilot year for the ILEARN Checkpoints during 2024-2025 allowed GJCS to get first hand knowledge of how the redesigned assessment functions, what type of data outputs the checkpoints provide, and how to best set up for administration logistics.
- Participating in the pilot year also allowed teachers and building leaders to see changes as they were rolled out throughout the year and to make changes or adjustments in preparation for next year.
  - Adjusting sequencing of curriculum and/or dates to administer within the test window allowed teacher teams to ensure students were assessed over standards at a point when that content had been recently covered or reviewed.
  - Certain types of data were added to score reports, like local and state percentile rankings.
  - Based on feedback from pilot schools, the state made adjustments to take effect in the first full year of implementation; the most impactful of which will be checkpoint data at the standard level that can be used to help inform instruction and remediation efforts.
  - Ongoing discussions within our buildings and grade-level or department teams about how to leverage the data provided by the checkpoints, how to utilize the test-related resources provided by the state, and how to protect as much instructional time as possible was time well-spent.
- The final change came with the redesign of the English Language Arts Performance Task on the summative assessment.

As we prepare for the 2025-2026 school year, it is with confidence that participating in the pilot year provided important insight into the redesigned assessment, an opportunity to provide feedback to the state, and a lower level of anxiety where the changes are concerned.

While IREAD-3 and ILEARN have seen major changes in the last year, the high school also saw a major change with the 2022 transition to the Indiana School Day SAT from the previous Algebra I and English 10 End of Course Assessments. So, what is next? In 2025-2026, we solidify our test administration practices, continue to make small adjustments to curricular timing as needed, and work to utilize data from the assessments to ensure the best learning outcomes for our students.



# IT'S GREAT TO BE A WILDCAT!



As we get ready for a new school year, our theme – “It’s Great to be a Wildcat!” – reminds us of what makes Jasper Schools unique. Our school spirit, pride, and community are the foundation of everything we do. Whether you’re a new student or a lifelong Wildcat, you are part of a tradition that celebrates achievement, support, and belonging.

Throughout the year, be sure to keep an eye out for stories that highlight the incredible students, dedicated staff, and accomplished alumni who make our schools great. GJCS alumni – we invite you to share your Wildcat pride and experiences by filling out this [Alumni Highlight Form](#). Your stories inspire our current students and strengthen our Wildcat community.

Let’s celebrate what it means to be a Wildcat. Together, we’re building a school where everyone can grow, achieve, and belong. It’s Great to be a Wildcat!

## PORTRAIT OF A WILDCAT

### Dean Vonderheide

Jasper High School  
Class of 1971  
City of Jasper Mayor



“I am proud of GJCS because of the experiences provided me, my daughters, and now my grandchildren. A strong educational program makes a difference in one’s life. The future of my family looks promising thanks to GJCS.”

## Portrait of a Wildcat: Dean Vonderheide Jasper High School, Class of 1971

Dean Vonderheide, Mayor of the City of Jasper, embodies the spirit of lifelong learning and community leadership. His journey has been marked by a willingness to embrace opportunity, an unwavering commitment to personal growth, and a deep sense of gratitude for the foundation provided by GJCS.

Dean’s path to becoming Mayor was not charted from the start. As a student at Jasper High School, he served on the Mayor’s Youth Council and held various leadership roles. After graduation, he attended Indiana University on a full-ride football scholarship, intending to become a teacher and coach. Dean spent three years teaching and coaching before accepting a position as Sales Coordinator at Styleline and Ferdinand Furniture (now OFS). From there, he steadily advanced, never shying away from new roles or challenges.

Dean’s career included a remarkable 31-year tenure at Kimball International, where he held positions such as Computer Integrated Manufacturing Leader, Plant Manager, General Manager, and ultimately Chief Human Resource Officer. Upon retirement, Dean set out to give back: he went on a mission trip to Guatemala, started a business, and ran for local office—completing all three.

Civic engagement has always been important to Dean. He served as President of the Jasper Public Library Board, helping to bring the Thyen-Clark Cultural Center to life, and as President of Indiana University’s “I-Association.” Within Trinity United Church of Christ, he held various leadership posts, including two terms as Council President.

Dean credits his success to the teachers, coaches, and administrators at GJCS, who pushed him to be his best and supported his aspirations. “With hard work and dedication, you can be successful,” he reflects. “I am forever grateful for their support.”

## Advice for Current GJCS Students:

“You don’t know what you are capable of until you try. When opportunity presents itself, don’t be afraid of the unknown; you may learn something valuable that will stick with you throughout life. Always put others before yourself—it will pay back in the future. Build a reliable network, never burn bridges, and remember: personal development is your responsibility. You will become what you’re willing to invest your time in.”

**It’s great to be a Wildcat because** of the educational opportunities and personal development experiences provided.

# REGISTRATION INFORMATION



**for the 2025-2026 school year**

Get ready! Registration for the upcoming 2025-2026 school year opens July 17, 2025. Keep your eyes peeled for registration links, which will be distributed through multiple channels: directly to families via email, on our social media platforms, and displayed on our website. These essential links will go live starting July 17, 2025. All schools will hold a joint registration event at Jasper Elementary on Thursday, July 24, from 4:00–6:30 p.m. Staff, administrators, and translators will be available to assist families with registration and answer questions. With additional questions, contact your student's school. For comprehensive back-to-school details, explore our dedicated webpage [ADD NEW LINK!](#)

# INFORMACIÓN PARA LA INSCRIPCIÓN



**del año escolar 2025-2026**

¡Prepárense! La inscripción para el año escolar 2025-2026 empezará el 17 de julio de 2025. Estén atentos a los enlaces de inscripción, que se enviarán a las familias por correo electrónico, se publicarán en nuestras redes sociales y estarán disponibles en nuestro sitio web. Los enlaces estarán activos a partir del 17 de julio de 2025. Habrá un evento conjunto de inscripción para los estudiantes (y todos los grados) de todas las escuelas en Jasper Elementary el jueves 24 de julio, de 4:00 a 6:30 p.m. Los trabajadores, directores e intérpretes estarán disponibles para ayudar a las familias con la inscripción y responder preguntas. Si tiene preguntas adicionales, comuníquese con la escuela de su hijo/a. Para obtener información completa sobre el regreso a clases, visite nuestra página web ([LINK](#)).



# We've GOT SPIRIT!

The staff at JHS have worked hard to instill school spirit and build a fun learning environment this year. At our seasonal pep sessions, we have added a staff cheering block to compete alongside our students. Students have given great feedback on our pom poms and united presence!

## PEP SESSIONS

At the end of each pep session, teachers can nominate students that stood out as being active participants and showcasing good sportsmanship. The student is surprised with a candy bar for being a great leader in the student body.

Students guess which staff member is the mascot for each pep session, further encouraging staff participation.



## LESSONS LEARNED

When educators build a fun, positive environment in the school, the effects are encouraging! Students have enjoyed seeing their teachers work together and have fun. Our pop-up dress-up days have been a huge success for this reason. We look forward to continuing this positive, spirit-filled initiative next year!





# The No CO2 Dragster Project

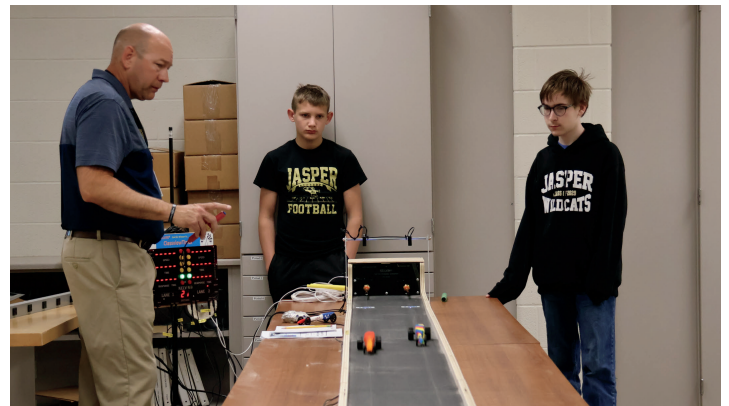
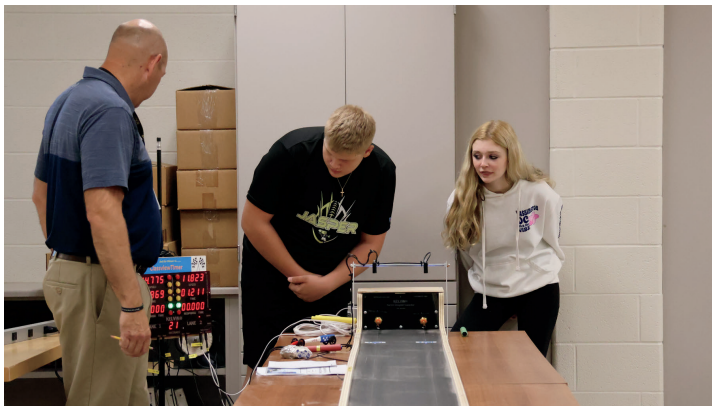
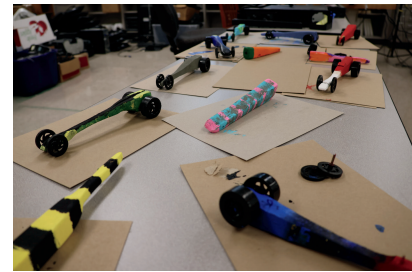
Ladies and gentlemen – START. YOUR. ENGINES!! Well, sort of... In Mr. Schipp's 8th grade "Engineering Essentials" class, students worked on a multi week project to create and design a car that would participate in a competition here at Jasper Middle School. The catch to these cars is that there are no engines because they are strictly made of balsa wood.

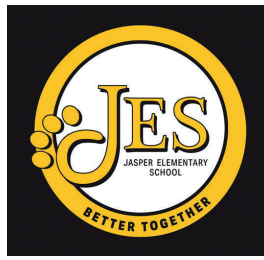
Students start the process of building their drag racing car with creating the design of their car. Once the design has been approved, they then create styrofoam prototypes. The purpose of using styrofoam during this process is to make sure students are aware of their design in this rough draft before diving into the real thing. After the creation of the styrofoam prototypes, students went back to the drawing board to make changes before they started on their balsa wood dragsters.

The last steps of creating their drag racing car was to conduct test runs of their cars and make improvements along the way so they could create the perfect car. Some of these improvements included sanding down the balsa wood, reshaping the dragsters, and conducting axle adjustments to obtain maximum speed. When everything looked perfect on their cars, students were able to paint/decorate their cars to make them their own before the final competition began. The competition was held to decipher who had the fastest dragster.



**1st period: Decker Rhue**  
**5th period: Colton Lorey**  
**6th period: Katie Valencia-Flores**  
**7th period: Daphne Fallon**  
**Top Speed: Mason Skelton 26.8 mph**





## PERSIMMON PROJECT

This semester, fourth graders at Jasper Elementary School embarked on a project to propose the persimmon as Indiana's state fruit. Inspired by a second-grade class in West Lafayette—which successfully proposed the Say's Firefly as the state insect—the students eagerly embraced the challenge.

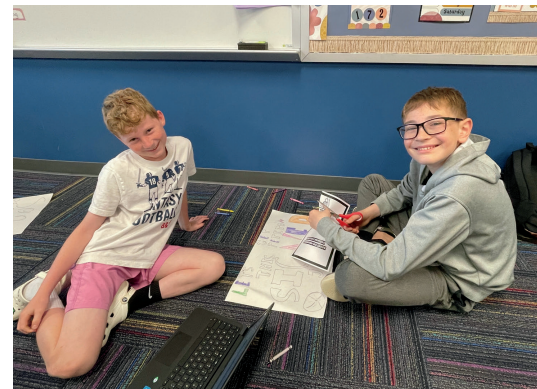
They conducted research and crafted persuasive essays, highlighting the health benefits of the persimmon and its potential economic boost for the state. Five students volunteered to present their findings to local leaders. Following their presentation at Jasper Elementary, a bill was introduced by State Representative Shane Lindauer to designate the persimmon as the state fruit.

It was wonderful to witness their engagement and excitement during the research and writing process. Many students even asked to come in before school or skip recess to work on their writing. The project was a collaborative effort, from essay writing to artistically designed drawings of persimmons, which served as covers for their writings and displays.

On a memorable field trip, the entire fourth grade traveled to the Indiana Statehouse to present their argument to a legislative committee. However, concerns arose among legislators about the persimmon tree's ability to thrive in Northern Indiana. As a result, the students reached out to Purdue University to seek guidance.

Through this project, students learned about persuasive writing, collaboration, and civics. Key Leader in Me habits, such as "Begin With the End in Mind" and "Synergize," were emphasized throughout.

4<sup>th</sup> graders have now created a petition to gain legislative support on the project. To learn more or sign the petition, click [here](#).





## MAKING ILEARN FUN!

ILEARN testing can be a stressful time for both teachers and students. At Ireland Elementary, students in grades third through fifth took the test during the state-mandated testing window. Students are assessed in English Language Arts, Math, and grade level content areas of either Science or Social Studies. To help reduce stress and motivate students to do their best, Ireland Elementary works to balance testing with engaging activities.

While it can be a challenging time, it's also a chance for students to show what they know and how much they've grown. To help encourage and motivate everyone to do their best, Ireland Elementary hosted a pep session filled with games, cheers, and teamwork! The pep rally started with words from Mrs. Bauer and a review of her three golden rules: go to bed early, wake up happy, and eat a good breakfast. Then the rally kicked off with loud music, cheers, and chants. The gym was filled with energy as everyone joined in the "Oh Yeah!" cheer. Students and staff participated in several games. Students played in a fast-paced reaction game called Head, Shoulders, Cup. Sweep the Potato had students and staff racing with laughter while using teamwork. Dodge Bond, a twist on a relay, had pairs of students running while keeping a dodgeball between them. The pep session ended with a classic game of Musical Chairs. The ILEARN pep session was a great way to encourage effort, ease stress, and remind students that "when you work hard, good things happen."

During ILEARN testing, when students were not testing, educational stations were set up in the gym, as well as in the Art room, Music room, and Library. Students had the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities. We are extremely fortunate to have our supportive PTO to assist and oversee these stations. Stations within the school included board games, card games, playdough, card making, reading with AR testing, STEM activities, LEGOS, crafts, and more! Students were able to take a much needed break from testing to rest and recharge! In addition, students were provided with drinks, snacks, and mints, donated by parents throughout the testing week to keep them focused!

ILEARN testing is a challenging and busy week. Constant support and encouragement from Ireland staff and PTO volunteers made this week much more manageable and enjoyable for students!





# JASPER HIGH SCHOOL

## Second Semester Highlights



**Above:** The JHS Young Latinos Unidos mentored and completed fun activities with Jasper Elementary Students.

**Below:** Richard Areba, an infectious disease specialist, spoke to Mrs. Jochum's Biomedical Science classes.



**Below:** Mrs. Grant's AP World History Classes presented on Industrial Revolution inventions Shark Tank Style.



**Above:** JHS students that plan to enlist or enter the workforce were recognized at the second annual Senior Decision Day.



**Left:** Mrs. Johnson hosted Charla y Chocolate, an opportunity for students to drink hot chocolate and work on basic Spanish conversation skills on Fridays during homeroom.

**Below:** It was a snowy day for the annual FFA Truck Show.



**Right:** Lots of scholarships were awarded and students recognized during the JHS Honors Day Program.





# JASPER MIDDLE SCHOOL

## Second Semester Highlights



**Above:** The JMS Performing Arts Club put on a fantastic performance of Finding Nemo Junior!

**Below:** JMS hosted a reunification drill, that included parents coming to pick students up.



**Above:** A JMS student works to modify her dragster after testing it, with the goal of increasing the speed before the competition was set to begin.

**Right:** The JMS Academic Bowl Team had students place in each category and had many first place finishes in the competition at Heritage Hills!



**Below:** JMS Students participated in We The People. Students studied, presented to someone from the Indiana Bar Association, and also took a post-test.



**Right:** JMS 8<sup>th</sup> graders participated in the Dubois County Career Cruise, where they had the opportunity to learn about jobs in all of the different graduation pathways.



**Left:** Students presented to the class about the game they created as part of their SCALE projects.



# JASPER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## Second Semester Highlights

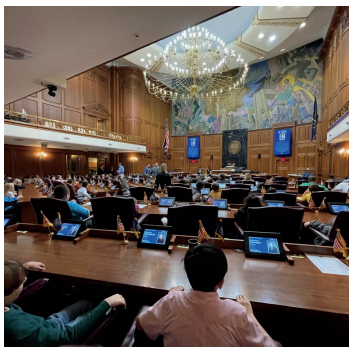


**Above:** Mrs. Small's Kindergarten class participated in Readers Theater, where they read a short story to the class.

**Below:** 5<sup>th</sup> graders hosted a volume zoo! This project had a focus on math, as students created the animals displayed at the zoo using the knowledge they learned about volume. Students from other grades visited and voted on their favorite animal.



**Left:** JES 4<sup>th</sup> graders while at the Indiana State House, presenting to legislators on the persimmon becoming Indiana's State Fruit.



**Below:** Every March, Mrs. Peters decorates the library with a basketball theme, highlighting different colleges and universities, while spotlighting where JES staff members attended school.



**Right:** JES Kindergarteners participated in the Kindergarten Health Fair, where they have the opportunity to learn about things they can do to keep themselves healthy.



**Above:** Officer Knies teaches the DARE Program to students. In this lesson, students learned about effective communication and ended the lesson playing the telephone game.



# IRELAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## Second Semester Highlights



**Above:** PreKindergarten students got to learn all about farming and planting thanks to Farmer Kevin.

**Below:** The Ireland Math Bowl Team got ready for the competition with a team breakfast.



**Left:** Mrs. Vollmer's first grade class participated in an Easter themed math activity where they went around the room and opened eggs that contained a math problem they had to solve.



**Left:** The Kindergarten teachers dressed up for 'Dress Like a Book Character Day' during Read Across America Week.

**Below:** Ireland Elementary 5<sup>th</sup> grade students presented on their ancestors to the class. This student was able to bring her ancestor to her presentation, as she chose her great grandma who is over 90 years old!



**Above:** The Irish Program, under the direction of Mrs. Gayso, was a fantastic performance!

# School & Building Directory



## Jasper Elementary School

(812) 556-3600

[jes.gjcs.k12.in.us](http://jes.gjcs.k12.in.us)

3799 N Portersville Rd.  
Jasper, IN 47546

School Day: 8am-3pm



## Ireland Elementary School

(812) 482-7751

[ies.gjcs.k12.in.us](http://ies.gjcs.k12.in.us)

2386 N. 500 W.  
Jasper, IN 47546

School Day: 7:50am-2:50pm



## Jasper Middle School

(812) 482-6454

[jms.gjcs.k12.in.us](http://jms.gjcs.k12.in.us)

3600 Portersville Rd.  
Jasper, IN 47546

School Day: 8am-3pm



## Jasper High School

(812) 482-6050

[jhs.gjcs.k12.in.us](http://jhs.gjcs.k12.in.us)

1600 St. Charles St.  
Jasper, IN 47546

School Day: 8am-3pm



## Greater Jasper Consolidated School Corporation Central Office

(812) 482-1801

[gjcs.k12.in.us](http://gjcs.k12.in.us)

1520 St. Charles St, Jasper, IN 47546

Office Hours: 8am-4pm



# Greater Jasper

CONSOLIDATED SCHOOLS

1520 Saint Charles Street, Jasper, IN 47546

## IMPORTANT FIRST SEMESTER DATES



**August 4 - Teacher Day**



**August 6 - First Day for Students**



**September 1 - Labor Day, No School**



**September 24 - Professional Development Day,  
No School, Parent Teacher Conferences**



**October 1 - Parent Teacher Conferences**



**October 10 - End of 1st Quarter**



**October 20-24 - Fall Break, No School**



**November 26-28 - Thanksgiving Break,  
No School**



**December 23 - End of 1st Semester**

We Are Jasper Magazine is published by the  
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Corporation and posted to our website.

Find us on social media and online at  
[www.gjcs.k12.in.us](http://www.gjcs.k12.in.us)

