JPS HINDS PRE-K COLLABORATIVE

# FAMILY NEWSLETTER

November 2026

## A Note from the Director

As we enter November and prepare for the Thanksgiving break, I am so proud of the growth I see in our Pre-K classrooms. Our scholars are asking big questions, exploring new ideas, and building the early literacy skills that will carry them into kindergarten and beyond. Literacy begins long before a child reads a book on their own. It begins with conversations, songs, stories, and new words, and you are your scholar's first and most important teacher. This month, as the district celebrates reading with our district-wide reading fairs on November 20, I hope you will find your own ways to celebrate reading at home, whether that means sharing a favorite book at bedtime or visiting the library.

That same love of language is at the heart of Holidays Around the World, our free celebration on December 10 at the Mississippi Children's Museum. In the days leading up to the event, your scholar will "travel" to India, Latin America, and the Philippines in their classroom through hands-on crafts, new vocabulary, and conversations about how families celebrate the season. You can continue the adventure at home by scanning the QR code in this newsletter to find activities, words, and book recommendations to try together.

Thank you for trusting us with your child's early education. I hope the break brings you rest, connection, and joy with the people who matter most. If you have questions or ideas for strengthening our Pre-K program, please reach out at tcline@jackson.k12.ms.us.

*Tiffany Cline, JPS Early Childhood Director*



## Places of the Quarter:

### Discovering Jackson's Neighborhood Treasures



**Sean Kenny's Animal Super Powers Exhibition @MS Museum of Natural Science**

*October 23 - May 2, 2027*

*Discover the mind-blowing abilities of the animal kingdom in Animal Super Powers, a brand-new exhibition of awe-inspiring LEGO® brick sculptures.*



**National Folk Festival @Downtown Jackson**

*November 13 - November 15, 2026*

Experience the rich artistic traditions of the United States at the National Folk Festival, a free three-day celebration featuring 300+ tradition bearers across seven stages.

**Capital City Lights @ Downtown Jackson**

*December 5, 2026 @ 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM*

*Kick off the holiday season in Downtown Jackson with live music, festive performances, local shopping, food, and family-friendly experiences under the city lights.*

Join us for a Global Celebration

# HOLIDAYS AROUND the WORLD!

Night at the Museum

**THURSDAY**
**DECEMBER 10, 2026**
**5:00 – 7:00 PM**
Mississippi Children's Museum
2145 Museum Blvd., Jackson, MS




## Diwali

***The Festival of Lights***
Families light small oil lamps called diyas, decorate with colorful rangoli, and share sweets with loved ones.




## Las Posadas

A **nine-night celebration**, December 16–24, filled with processions, traditional songs, food, music, and a star-shaped piñata.




## Christmas

**One of the world's longest Christmas seasons**, lit up by the parol, a colorful star-shaped lantern seen in homes and schools.

## Celebrate the Season. Explore the World. Create Memories.

Put on your favorite holiday attire, grab your passport, and get ready to explore holiday traditions from every corner of the globe at the Mississippi Children's Museum. Enjoy a free evening celebrating how families around the world mark the holiday season, featuring India, Latin America, and the Philippines.

Register at strongstartjps.org/hatw/.

Scholars will explore all three cultures in their classrooms during the week of December 7. You can continue the fun at home with crafts, vocabulary, and book and show recommendations. Visit the in-class activities page to see the fun and amazing activities they are participating in.

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## Upcoming Updates

### School Closures

A reminder that school will be closed for **Thanksgiving break from November 23rd through November 27th**, and for **winter break from December 21st through January 1, 2027**. **Classes will resume on January 5, 2027**. Over the breaks, we encourage you to keep learning going with simple moments at home, like reading a favorite book together, practicing Spanish words, or sharing your family's holiday traditions. We wish you a restful and joyful holiday season!

### Every Day Counts: Mississippi's Updated Attendance Law

Strong attendance helps scholars build skills, confidence, and positive learning habits. Mississippi's updated attendance law took effect July 1, 2026, and we want every family to know what has changed.

- **Excused absences:** Scholars are generally allowed five excused absences per semester. The superintendent or designee may approve additional absences for extenuating circumstances, including prolonged illness with medical documentation.
- **Parent notes:** Families may submit up to three illness-related parent notes per semester. Additional illness-related absences require medical documentation.
- **Time at school matters:** Scholars must attend at least 66% of the school day to be counted present, so late arrivals and early checkouts can affect attendance.

Partner with your school by reporting absences promptly, submitting required documentation, and contacting school administrators if illness, transportation, or other challenges affect your scholar's attendance. Together, we can help every scholar stay connected, engaged, and ready to learn!

## General Information

If you have any questions or need support throughout the year, please don't hesitate to reach out to any member of our team or visit our office:

**Office of Teaching and Learning**
624 South State Street, Jackson MS 39201


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# JPS Resources Highlight

## Exceptional Education Services: Supporting Your Child's Academic Journey

At Jackson Public Schools, we are committed to creating learning environments where all scholars, regardless of ability, feel seen, valued, and supported. Our Exceptional Education Services team provides comprehensive support for scholars with diverse learning needs, including:

- Developmental screenings
- Speech and language services
- Occupational and physical therapy
- Individualized education plans (IEPs)
- Parent support and resources

Early identification makes a difference. If you have questions about your child's development related to speech, motor skills, behavior, or learning, we encourage you to reach out early. Our team partners with families to ensure every scholar has access to the support they need to thrive.

**Contact Exceptional Education Services:**



**Hope Pearson**
***Director of Coordinated Early Intervening Services***
hpearson@jackson.k12.ms.us
(601) 960-8950

# Invest in Your Scholars with the Pre-K Tax Credit

You want the best for your child, and so do we. Through Mississippi's Early Learning Collaborative Tax Credit, you can give to the Jackson Early Learning Collaborative and get every dollar back as a state tax credit. Unlike a tax deduction, which only lowers your taxable income, a tax credit comes straight off what you owe. For example, a $200 gift lowers a $1,000 state tax bill to $800.

Your gift goes right back into your child's classroom. The state covers only half the cost of Pre-K, and the other half must come from local matching funds. Every gift helps keep Pre-K free for Jackson families and supports the play spaces, learning materials, and teachers that help scholars start kindergarten ready to thrive. Anyone who pays Mississippi state taxes can qualify, so share this with grandparents, family members, and local businesses who want to support JPS Pre-K, too.

Getting started takes three steps.



Make your gift through the Collaborative.



MDE will issue a donation certificate that holds your place in line.



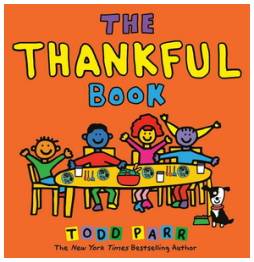
Claim the credit on Mississippi Form 80-401 when you file your state taxes.

Credits are first come, first served, and the 2026 statewide cap is $29 million. If the cap is getting close, you can ask MDE to hold your spot for 30 days while your donation is documented. For more information, email Tiffany Cline at tcline@jackson.k12.ms.us.

# Family Literacy: Building Readers, Building Future

Research shows that children who are read to regularly enter kindergarten with stronger vocabulary, better listening skills, and a greater love of learning. Just 15-20 minutes of reading together each day creates lasting benefits.

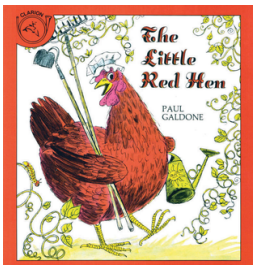
## This Quarter's Recommended Reads



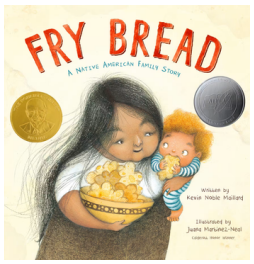

**The Thankful Book**
**by Todd Parr**
A cheerful, colorful celebration of the big and small things we can be thankful for, from family and friends to simply being ourselves.



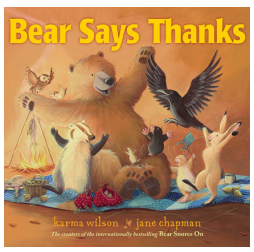

**Thank You, Omu!**
**by Oge Mora**
A touching story about a neighborhood coming together to share a meal and show gratitude for a kind-hearted woman and her delicious stew.




**The Little Red Hen**
**by Paul Galdone**
A classic tale about a hardworking hen who teaches the value of teamwork and sharing the rewards of a job well done.




**Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story**
**by Kevin Noble Maillard**
A warm story about family, tradition, and the special joy of making fry bread together.



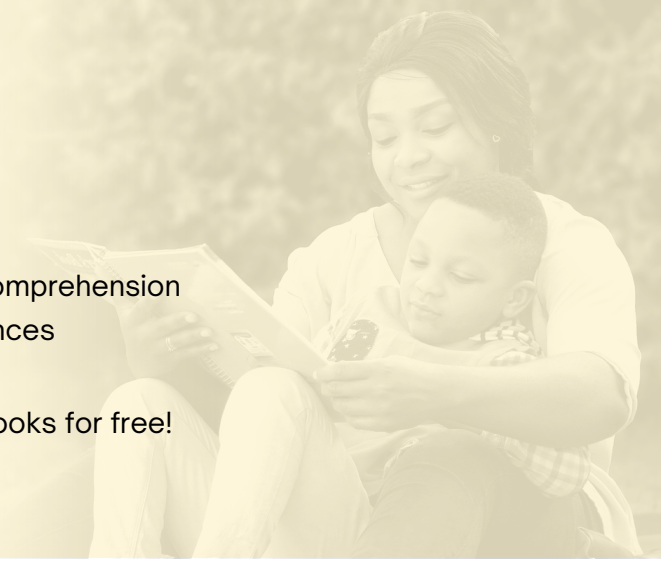

**Bear Says Thanks**
**by Karma Wilson**
A heartwarming story about a generous bear who learns that the best feast is one shared with friends.




**The Leaf Thief**
**by Alice Hemming**
A funny, fall-themed story about a squirrel who thinks someone is stealing his leaves, and what happens when he learns the truth about autumn.

### Tips for Reading Together:

- Let your scholar hold the book and turn the pages
- Ask questions: "What do you think will happen next?"
- Point to words as you read to build print awareness
- Reread favorite books—repetition builds confidence and comprehension
- Connect stories to your own family's traditions and experiences



Visit your neighborhood library to borrow these books for free!
Check jackson.lib.ms.us for your nearest branch.

## Celebrando la Herencia Hispana: Hispanic Heritage Family Section

### Un Mensaje para Familias Hispanas / A Message for Hispanic Families

We celebrate the rich cultural heritage and contributions of our Hispanic and Latino families. Your traditions, languages, and values strengthen our Pre-K community and enrich the learning experiences of all scholars.

### El Poder del Bilingüismo / The Power of Bilingualism

Speaking Spanish at home is a gift you give your child! Research shows that bilingual children often have stronger problem-solving skills, better attention and focus, greater cultural awareness and identity, and enhanced career opportunities in the future. Keep speaking Spanish with your scholar. It supports their brain development and maintains important family and cultural connections.

### Vocabulario de Enero / January Vocabulary

Practice these words in both English and Spanish:

- Compartir / To share
- Otoño / Fall
- Pavo / Turkey
- Calabaza / Pumpkin
- Lápiz / Pencil
- Mochila / Backpack
- Papel / Paper
- Jugar / To play

**Actividad/Activity:**
Each day, practice one word in both languages. Use it in sentences throughout the day to reinforce learning.

### Recursos Comunitarios / Community Resources

**JPS Pre-K Enrollment Information:**
Para información sobre inscripción en Pre-K o recursos bilingües, llame al (601) 960-4002. Todos los servicios están disponibles en español.

**Translation Services:**
JPS ofrece servicios de interpretación y traducción para todas las familias. No dude en pedir apoyo en español.



# Healthy Recipes

## 🥣Hot Cocoa Oat Bites



### Ingredients

- 1 ripe banana
- 1 cup old-fashioned or quick oats
- 1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder

### Kid-Friendly Steps

1. In a bowl, mash the ripe banana with a fork until smooth.
2. Mix the ingredients. Add the oats and cocoa powder. Stir until everything is combined.
3. Roll the mixture into small balls. Refrigerate for 15–20 minutes to help them firm up.

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