



Head of School Search

OCTOBER 2024

Jackson Academy
4908 Ridgewood Road
Jackson, MS 39211
601.362.9676
jacksonacademy.org





OVERVIEW

One of the premier independent schools in Mississippi, Jackson Academy was founded in 1959. JA educates more than 1,200 students in grades Preschool (age 2) to twelve. Located in northeast Jackson, JA attracts students from the entire Metro Jackson area. JA's strong academic program establishes a foundation for success throughout a student's journey at JA and beyond. Graduates attend a prestigious list of colleges and universities.



OVERVIEW

A nondenominational school with Christian values, JA emphasizes faith development. The school's mission states:

Within our nurturing and spiritual community, Jackson Academy inspires and equips each student to lead a life of purpose and significance.

"Family" and "community" are descriptors shared by students, parents, faculty, and alumni. There is deep loyalty and love for the school, and a significant number of students are children of graduates. JA designs programs and activities that bring together students from across the Pre-K to 12th grade spectrum. High reenrollment rates are a testament to the positive feelings that families have for the school.

Jackson Academy is accredited by the Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS) and Cognia and holds memberships in The College Board, the Midsouth Association of Independent Schools, and the Cum Laude Society. JA is also proud to be one of only three Apple



Distinguished Schools in Mississippi and the only such school in the Jackson metro area. JA offers a full program of extracurricular activities including varsity and junior varsity sports, instrumental and choral music, theater and arts.

The school's facilities are on two campuses, the main campus and Raider Park, the athletic facility. Spacious, well-furnished buildings on the main campus provide each division with age-appropriate learning environments. A beautiful 800-seat Performing Arts Center provides a venue for the school's music, dance, and theater programs, and a large, attractive gymnasium and football field support the extensive athletic programs. Raider Park includes athletic fields for baseball, softball, and soccer, a track and field facility, and a tennis complex.

Jackson Academy's most recent strategic plan has largely been implemented. The plan, entitled "**Pathway to Significance**," includes three elements.

Bright Minds: Jackson Academy will take a deep dive into the needs of today's learners and the school's performance data to make sure curriculum meets the educational needs of a spectrum of learners.

Good Hearts: Jackson Academy will invest in the mental and emotional wellness of JA students and faculty, seeking also to foster connection and belonging across the community. JA will clarify the spiritual element of its mission, enhance the SOAR outdoor program, and formalize the administration of student life programs and community service.

Facilities and Processes: There is a spirit to JA that can only be experienced in person. JA will refine processes to connect mission-appropriate students who will thrive within our school and to keep alumni in connection throughout their lives. JA will continue to provide a highly functioning campus that engages students year-round through auxiliary programs. JA will position the school to be prepared for effective expansion, appropriate use of existing and future facilities, and continuing attention to security and safety.

JACKSON ACADEMY FAST FACTS

SCHOOL



Established: 1959
Grades: K2-12th
Preschool (K2 to K4): 200+
Lower School (K5-5th): 425+
Middle School (6th-8th): 200+
Upper School (9th-12th): 375+
Student:Teacher Ratio: 10:1
Total Enrollment (August 2024): 1200+

TUITION



K2 (Full-day): \$8,150
K3 (Half-day): \$6,120
K4 (Half-day): \$6,120
K4 (Full-day): \$9,360
K5 (Full-day): \$10,500
Grades 1-4: \$12,480
Grade 5: \$13,740
Grades 6-8: \$14,940
Grades 9-12: \$17,520
Multiple child discounts are offered to families with 3 or more children

FINANCIAL INFORMATION



\$17,500,000 Operating Budget
\$6,000,000 Endowment
\$300,250 Annual Fund (2023-2024)

FACULTY



Faculty & Staff: 232
Full Time: 189
Part Time: 43
With Advanced Degrees: 74

PROGRAM FEATURES





PROGRAM FEATURES

ACADEMICS

The school-wide academic program has four emphases: Collaboration, Communication, Creativity, and Critical Thinking. The school is organized into four divisions: Preschool (K2-K4); Lower School (K5-5); Middle School (6-8); and Upper School (9-12). These divisions – almost like schools within the larger school – make customized learning experiences for different age ranges possible. In particular, JA believes that students in the Middle School years benefit by being grouped with students at a similar stage of pre-adolescence. Even though they may pass from division to division, all students can still rely on the familiar faces of previous teachers, who remain available to them throughout their years at JA.

Preschool emphasizes academic exploration and play in an environment where children feel cared for and safe. JA seeks to instill in children the foundation for a lifelong love of learning. Through personal attention and a thoughtful academic curriculum, JA is committed to the intellectual, creative, social, emotional, and physical growth of each child. Through hands-on activities, children develop perceptual motor skills, strengthening the link between moving and learning. Preschool students begin each day with a Bible story, the Pledge of Allegiance, and prayer. They explore science concepts through hands-on learning and gain exposure to the idea of language and phonemic awareness. Students develop creative expression through art, music, and library. They enjoy snacks and socializing during snack time and playbreak, and channel natural energy into the refinement of perception and coordination abilities through physical education.

The Lower School curriculum emphasizes the basics of reading, writing, grammar, mathematics, social studies, and science. Art, music, Spanish, and library enrichment classes rotate through once each week. Physical education days vary by grade level. Students begin each day with an uplifting message from the dean, followed by classroom devotions, prayer, and the Pledge of Allegiance, and they attend Chapel to develop a deeper understanding of spirituality. Lower Schoolers learn the fundamentals of Spanish conversation, vocabulary, and culture from a native Spanish speaker. JA's Lower School builds



on a strong reading core and immerses children in exploration with math manipulatives, STEM lab, digital presentations, and field trips. At the end of Lower School, students will have the confidence and independence to take on the greater responsibilities of Middle School.

In Middle School, students are introduced to a departmentalized approach, which provides focused instruction in the core subjects and an opportunity to explore honors classes, special subjects, and foreign languages. An increasing number of electives are available each year, such as Intro to Musical Theatre and Survey of Old and New Testament. Middle School teachers build upon the work of the Lower School, helping children discover and flourish with their gifts, talents, and passions. Students have the opportunity to explore extracurricular activities, such as student government or community involvement, to feel better prepared to enter Upper School with confidence. Students work on their own take-home iPads, developing podcasts and videos to demonstrate mastery of a topic and the ability to communicate clearly as well as increase keyboarding skills.



PROGRAM FEATURES

The Upper School program is designed to prepare students for success in college and life. Each student brings important, different academic interests, talents, and abilities to the JA community, and JA considers it the school's mission to equip each student for a life of purpose and significance.

JA works intentionally to bring about academic achievement within a nurturing and spiritual community. The Upper School curriculum includes multiple levels in each department, including Advanced Placement courses. Some departments offer multiple APs. A variety of electives such as Sports Management, Theatre, Tech, Latin, and financial management (among many, many others) help students engage with particular interests and career opportunities. JA's Apple One-to-One program continues with the use of iPads in the Upper School. Jackson Academy has a dual enrollment program in language arts and math through Belhaven University, which allows JA seniors, as well as some juniors, to take college classes for credit. A strong guidance-counseling program keeps students on track with the ACT testing, college admissions, and financial aid processes. Counselors alert students to scholarship possibilities, ways to strengthen their applications, and more. Upper School students explore spirituality and faith during four required chapel services each year. Additional chapel attendance is voluntary and encouraged. Upper School students take great pride in serving as leaders within the JA community as part of Student Ambassadors, Honor Council, Alpha and Omega, and other mentorship programs.

SPIRITUAL LIFE

Jackson Academy explores life's most important questions through a Christian perspective, rooted in the belief that true learning comes from nurturing and developing minds, bodies, and souls. It sees faith, learning, and life as inextricably linked. To participate in life at JA is to accept an invitation to live out Christian values in every action taken – in the classroom, the chapel, and through service to those in the community. Students of all faiths are welcome at JA, and they are

encouraged to deepen their faith through discussion and exploration, volunteer service and service learning, and spiritual discovery. Preschool and Lower School students have daily Bible readings and/or devotions and a prayer. Middle and Upper School students attend student body chapel four times a year, with additional chapels every month.

STUDENT SUPPORT

Under the innovative banner of The Peak, JA has introduced a holistic approach to student support that transcends the traditional educational framework, aligning with the demands of today's dynamic learning environment.

This comprehensive framework encapsulates a diverse array of specialized programs, each crafted to cater to the distinct needs of JA students. From academic excellence to personal growth and social development,





PROGRAM FEATURES

The Peak ensures that students are equipped not just to succeed, but to soar. It embodies Jackson Academy's commitment to providing differentiated, personalized, and comprehensive support, reflecting the school's dedication to guiding each student toward their highest potential.

Among the transformative programs housed under The Peak umbrella are:

- ✔ Tailored Counseling Resources: Offering personalized career planning, alumni shadowing, and customized academic scheduling, ensuring each student finds his or her path.
- ✔ Academic Excellence Programs: Providing essential resources like ACT accommodations, differentiated learning instruction, and targeted help sessions to enhance academic achievement.
- ✔ Holistic Health and Wellness Initiatives: Featuring the SOAR outdoor experiential learning program for each grade, an emphasis on optimal physical wellness, and Life Skills programming designed to prepare students for the challenges ahead.



By centralizing these vital services within a cohesive framework, Jackson Academy ensures that both prospective and current families can easily visualize and access the wealth of opportunities available to their children.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS CENTER

As a crucial component of The Peak, the Academic Success Center supports each division: Preschool, Lower School, Middle School, and Upper School. The Academic Success Center serves as a central point for students and parents seeking the right support on their educational journey. Programs in the Academic Success Center identify learning needs and connect students with resources to provide an optimal educational experience, striving to promote strengths while supporting learning differences.

Through the Academic Success Center program, a well designed and fully staffed support program, JA offers several tiers of instructional support to qualifying students. A Director and 10 facilitators work closely with the faculty at each grade level to ensure success for all students. The purpose of the tiered support is to meet the students where they are currently functioning, supporting the whole child on their educational journey.

Jackson Academy employs a team approach in meeting students' needs. The team consists of the student, parents, teachers, support personnel, and outside professionals as indicated.

This team provides:

- diagnostic testing,
- resource classes for remediation and reinforcement,
- study skills and brain-based learning activities,
- educational counseling, and
- group guidance activities geared toward healthy choices.



PROGRAM FEATURES



SOAR OUTDOOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

JA partners with families inside and outside the classroom to help students cultivate good life principles, which prepare students for the dynamic future they will face. The school's signature outdoor experiential program, SOAR, encourages the development of critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, citizenship/culture, and character/connection.

JA's SOAR Outdoor Program began as a seventh-grade rafting trip more than 50 years ago. The traditional adventure has expanded into an array of programs that reach all grade levels. The youngest learners may engage in an outdoor on-campus activity that introduces a lesson of communication or creative thinking, while older students participate in off-campus adventures that vary by grade level. These often touch on the development of ethics, faith, service, outdoor knowledge,

and leadership. SOAR's opportunities help students grow through experiential learning and involvement in outdoor settings, sometimes moving them out of their comfort zones. Recent examples include rafting the Mississippi River and camping on a sandbar, practicing teamwork and trust on the low ropes course at JA's Ashleigh Park, or facing new challenges at an off-campus high ropes course in Mississippi.

HONOR CODE

The student-governed Honor Code at JA expresses the values of the school community, and helps students and adults strive toward personal honor and integrity in all dimensions of school life. Upper School students in grades nine through twelve sign a pledge indicating their intent to follow the Honor Code. Also, students apply for the chance and responsibility to serve on the Honor Council.

Honor Code and Pledge:

As members of the Jackson Academy community, we will maintain the highest standards of integrity and respect while striving to achieve excellence in and out of the classroom. As such, on my honor, I will not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do.

ATHLETICS

More than 20 varsity sports and 16 junior varsity sports comprise the athletic program at JA. The Raiders compete in the MidSouth Association of Independent Schools in most sports. Spacious and attractive fields and courts provide the venues for the Raiders' competitions. "The Brickyard," JA's football stadium, features artificial turf and a Jumbotron. A baseball diamond, a softball field, a track and soccer field, and new tennis courts complete the outdoor facilities. The "Raider Dome" hosts basketball and volleyball contests. A spacious and well-equipped weight room houses up to 100 athletes at once.



PROGRAM FEATURES

ARTS

An extensive program of visual and performing arts is available to students. The instrumental music program and support organizations involve both Middle and Upper School students, and include Marching Band, Concert Band, Jazz Band, Sixth Grade Band, Drumline, and Color Guard. Middle and Upper School singers have multiple opportunities to showcase their talents as members of our award-winning show choirs, and concert choirs. Dramatic arts are represented both with classroom offerings and performances. A fall production, one-act play competition, and spring play are presented annually. The visual arts are represented in each division and culminate in the upper school with courses in drawing, two-dimensional and three-dimensional design, and AP Studio Art. A school newspaper, yearbook, and sports broadcasting complete the arts offerings.



BROADCASTING PROGRAM

Jackson Academy students have a unique opportunity to learn and participate in professional level broadcasting through Raider Network. Patterned on ESPN's video production, Raider Network is a professional-level production company and on-demand video resource that broadcasts athletic and other school events. Working with state-of-the-art video and production equipment and working alongside professional broadcasters, JA students learn all aspects of creating and producing high quality videos. The Raider Network team is an Emmy winning production team that produces live broadcasts for JA, the Midsouth Association of Independent Schools, and the SEC Network in conjunction with ESPN.



ALPHA AND OMEGA PROGRAM

Community and a family feeling are hallmarks of a JA experience. The Alpha and Omega program pairs seniors with kindergartners. The pairs share many experiences throughout the school year, establishing relationships that ensure connections across the student age span.



LOCATION

JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

The capital and most populous city of Mississippi, “the city with soul” is home to more than 150,000 people. The population of the metropolitan Jackson area is over a half-million people. Situated on the Pearl River, the City of Jackson is known for its warm, welcoming atmosphere, Southern food, and music including blues, gospel, folk, and jazz. The Mississippi Blues Trail details the history of Jackson in the development of this uniquely American musical style. The city had a prominent role in the Civil Rights Movement, and the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum is featured on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail.

Jackson is served by Jackson-Evers International Airport with nonstop service to eight cities. Major cities such as Dallas, Atlanta, and New Orleans are within a day’s drive. Numerous colleges and universities call Jackson home, including Millsaps College, Mississippi College, Belhaven University, Jackson State University, and Tougaloo College. The University of Mississippi’s Medical Center and Mississippi College Law School are also located in Jackson. Cultural attractions include numerous museums, several dance companies, and the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra.



THE POSITION





THE POSITION

Jackson Academy is seeking a Head of School who will be a strong spiritual leader that has a passion for education and is prepared to lead our school for many years to come. Character, integrity and the ability to make fair and firm decisions are important traits sought by every constituency at JA. It will be important for any applicant to demonstrate the ability to delegate and support the strong faculty leadership team already in place while providing the vision and experience to capitalize on long-range strategic opportunities that will allow JA to remain competitive in our market. We desire our next Head of School to balance confidence with humility and be a servant leader who will quickly grow to love our school, our culture, and our mission.





THE POSITION

Qualities and Qualifications

PERSONAL QUALITIES

This warm, close-knit community at Jackson Academy expects a leader who:

- is comfortable sharing their faith in a spiritual environment
- possesses a passion for education
- is comfortable making fair and firm decisions
- communicates clearly and effectively
- is a person of high character and integrity who will embrace our mission and our culture and has the ability to inspire others

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

The successful candidate will:

- possess strong leadership and management skills
- display the ability to delegate and support a strong faculty leadership team
- be a leader with vision and ability to execute on long-range strategic opportunities
- have a passion for JA with a commitment to lead us for many years to come

Challenges and Opportunities

The new Head of School will be expected to:



Strategically maintain or grow enrollment to ensure competitiveness with other schools in the area



Uphold JA's standards of excellence in all areas of the school



Continue JA's strategic planning through **visionary** leadership



Honor the school's mission and maintain a strong sense of community



THE POSITION

How to Apply

Prospective candidates should send the following materials in a single PDF document to the Search Committee of the Board of Trustees:

- Letter of interest specifically addressing this position and school
- Resume (education and work experience)
- Statement of educational philosophy
- Statement of leadership philosophy
- List of five professional references with contact information
- Letters of reference, if available, but not required

Applications for the Head of School position should be submitted as a single PDF to jahos@jacksonacademy.org by Wednesday, December 4, 2024.



McKie Edmonson
jahos@jacksonacademy.org



Brad Williams
jahos@jacksonacademy.org

Jackson Academy is committed to the admission of qualified student applicants of any race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex/gender or religion, and providing them with all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded to students at the school. JA does not discriminate in violation of the law on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, or sex/gender in provision or administration of its educational and admission policies, including financial aid, academics, athletics, or any other school administered programs.



For inquiries and
more information,
contact:

McKie Edmonson
jahos@jacksonacademy.org

Brad Williams
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Jackson Academy

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to lead a life of purpose and significance.***

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