



## PAUTSCH NAMED NEW AD

Dustin Pautsch has been named the new activities director and dean of students at Jackson County Central.  
Story, B1



# JACKSON COUNTY PILOT

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## CENTER STAGE



After a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the annual recital of Dawn's Dance Connection of Jackson returned home to the Jackson County Central Performing Arts Center stage this past week, where local dancers of all ages put months of hard work on full display before capacity crowds gathered for three performances April 21-23.



PHOTOS BY JUSTIN LESSMAN  
Above: Haydyn Nelson strikes a pose during a dance to "You'll Be Back" from the musical, "Hamilton." Left: Layla Peterson shows off a move and a smile.



Left: Annabelle Wiersen is the picture of poise during a ballet dance. Right: Astrid Olsem (left) and Ava Brinkman take to their toes while dancing to "This Will Be."



PHOTOS BY DAN CONDON AND JUSTIN LESSMAN

## JCC to offer transitional kindergarten

by JUSTIN R. LESSMAN  
Publisher

Jackson County Central schools will offer transitional kindergarten in the fall.

Transitional kindergarten serves as a bridge between preschool and kindergarten and seeks to provide students with the opportunity to develop fundamental skills needed for success in a developmentally appropriate setting. The JCC Board of Education unanimously approved offering transitional kindergarten this fall at its meeting Monday evening in Jackson.

Kim Meyer, principal of Riverside Elementary School, said the concept is one that has been discussed for a few years now.

"Talking with staff and looking at research, it's a good thing," she said.

Transitional kindergarten will be open to students enrolled in kindergarten with May 1 to Sept. 1 birthdays, which make them the

youngest children in the grade. The curriculum will focus on state kindergarten standards and transitional kindergarten components, Meyer said, incorporating social-emotional learning.

"Families may choose transitional kindergarten for various reasons, whether it is for academic or social-emotional support or a combination of both," she said. "Transitional kindergarten curriculum allows each student to learn and develop at their own pace and in ways that lay a foundation for success as they continue their educational journey."

Meyer said school officials gauged parental interest in transitional kindergarten during recent preschool open houses and kindergarten roundup and were surprised.

"We have 24 families interested and 15 to 16 on board," Meyer said, adding she envisions capping enrollment in the inaugural transitional kindergarten class at between 16 and 18 students.

"We were surprised to see that much interest," said Barry Schmidt, superintendent of schools at

See **KINDERGARTEN** on **A3**

### Inside...

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School days for Jackson County Central students next year will be a bit longer than at present.

## Local observances of National Day of Prayer next week

Faithful to gather outside schools and courthouse

by JOSHUA SCHUETZ  
Staff Writer

The Jackson Kiwanis Club and Jackson Ministerial Association will host local observances of the National Day of Prayer next Thursday at all four schools in the Jackson County Central School District, as well as at the Jackson County Courthouse in Jackson.

Local pastors will lead prayer outside each school

and at the courthouse.

Pastor John Schuetz of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Jackson, who is helping to organize the event, said the goal is for people of all ages to pray for God's blessings on different areas of life and for the health of the nation as a whole.

"We pray for the Lord's blessings on our families, the church, businesses, the military, government, entertainment and the media," Schuetz said. "We ask for the Lord to bless the various aspects of our commu-

See **PRAYER** on **A3**

### Inside...

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See more photos from last week's rehearsal for the annual recital of Dawn's Dance Connection of Jackson.

### Online...



Thousands of photos from last week's Dawn's Dance Connection rehearsal are online at [jacksoncountypilot.com](http://jacksoncountypilot.com).

## JCC juniors and seniors set for an 'Enchanted Evening'

by JOSHUA SCHUETZ  
Staff Writer

Jackson County Central High School juniors and seniors will have a magical night at their prom on Saturday, with dancing, dining and entertainment planned.

"The theme for this year is 'Enchanted Evening,' and the colors are black and gold, so it's a fairy-tale theme," said JCC teacher Karrah Luchts, who is helping to organize prom this year.

The event will kick off at the high school at 6:15 p.m. with the grand march, where attendees will get the chance to get their picture taken and show off for their friends and family. A catered smoked meat dinner will be served, followed by a hypnotist show.

Finally, students will dance the night away, with DJ Cole John from Windom set to provide music for the dance.

"The dance will finish at 12:30, and post-prom will start after that," Luchts said.

JCC Post-Prom Committee President Melissa Osterberg said the committee has a full post-prom party planned for students who choose to attend.

Attendees will get to unleash their inner James Bond with a casino night, featuring beloved table games like blackjack. Osterberg said bingo, black-

light volleyball, inflatables and a comedy act are also set for the post-prom party this year, along with door prizes, donated by local businesses.

Osterberg said the \$30 fee to attend the post-prom party has been covered

by the JCC Positive Action Toward Health community group, funded in part by the school's Positive Community Norms Grant. The Jackson Knights of Columbus hosted an omelet feed to help fund the event as well, raising more than \$1,000 for it.

The post-prom party is slated to wrap up at 4 a.m.

### If you go...

**What:** Grand march  
**When:** Saturday, April 30, 6:15 p.m.  
**Where:** JCC High School

## FFA teams strike gold at state



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Members of the state-champion ag mechanics team from the Jackson County Central FFA Chapter are Zach Rasmussen (from left), Micah Worthington, Keenan Ambrose, Joseph Mohr and Dan Stubbe.

### Inside...

**B8**

Region champions from the Jackson County Central FFA Chapter were honored at the Minnesota Region VI FFA Banquet last week in Westbrook.

Ag mechanics team wins it all

by JUSTIN R. LESSMAN  
Publisher

The Jackson County Central FFA Chapter's ag mechanics career-development event team is the best in the state.

The team claimed first-place honors in state competition during this week's Minnesota State FFA Convention in the Twin Cities and qualified for national competition later this fall.

The team dominated the competition, with team members Zach Rasmussen, Dan Stubbe and Joseph Mohr finishing one-two-three, respectively, as individu-

See **FFA** on **A3**

