

JCTA Initiatives Aligned with Vision 2020

Supporting Professional Growth and Promoting Collaborative Endeavors

Introduction:

The Jefferson County Teachers Association (JCTA) is committed to supporting teachers in their professional practice and the success of every student in the Jefferson County Public Schools. Much of work JCTA does to promote student success and the continuous improvement of educator professional practice directly aligns with and supports the JCPS Vision 2020 strategic plan. The Association engages in this work because we are fundamentally committed to children and public education. Consequently, much of this work occurs with little or no fanfare. The Association concluded it could be beneficial to create and share this overview of the many initiatives JCTA undertakes in support of our collective efforts for the children in our public schools.

Teacher Voice:

- ❑ **Democratic Teacher Voice** - The leaders of JCTA are elected by the almost 6,000 members of the Association and serve as the democratic voice of Jefferson County's teachers. Association positions are determined at monthly Representative Council meetings, where each school has recognized voting representatives. Between Representative Council meetings, JCTA's large (30+ member) Board of Directors sets policy and provides direction to JCTA's executive officers and staff. The JCBE-JCTA labor agreement states, "The Employer recognizes the Association as the official representative of certificated personnel in the school system who are employees [in the JCTA bargaining unit]."

- ❑ **Employee Engagement Survey** - JCTA partnered with the JCPS Foundation, IBM, and JCPS to pilot an innovative employee engagement survey at a number of JCPS schools. Area businesses, such as Humana, have seen notable improvements in employee attendance, engagement, retention, and productivity as a result of the sustained use of a similar engagement survey over time. JCTA, with its collaborative partners, adapted the survey for use in a public school setting, which had never been done before. Schools now have their results and JCTA is working with its partners to support the use of this information for school improvement at each site.

- ❑ **TELL Survey** - JCTA partners with the Kentucky Department of Education, the New Teacher Center, and JCPS to conduct the statewide TELL survey in Jefferson County. Logistically, JCTA makes sure codes to take the survey are distributed to every teacher. The Association runs weekly articles in its Action newsletter explaining the importance of TELL and encouraging teachers to participate in the survey. JCTA also makes

monetary contributions for incentives to encourage high teacher participation in the survey. After TELL results are released, JCTA offers trainings for school-based teams, which can include the building principal. These trainings help school teams learn how to access and interpret their school's TELL data. The trainings also assist teams in identifying schools that are similar to their school which are having success in areas where the team's school needs to improve. This process allows teams to learn effective practices from other JCPS schools. Effective understanding and use of the TELL survey reduces the need for other surveys and helps diminish "survey fatigue" in the district.

- ❑ **Organizing through Public Narrative** – This training is provided to JCTA members through NEA to develop a story of self. Participants learn the story structure of challenge, choice, outcome, and how developing a public narrative can motivate others to action on behalf of students and public education.
- ❑ **Positive Public Education Media Campaign** – Since 2008, JCTA has supported a comprehensive, evolving positive media campaign to highlight the great work of JCPS teachers. This campaign, which includes award-winning television commercials featuring actual JCPS teachers, seeks to bolster educator morale and combat the ongoing negativity in the media focused on JCPS and its teachers. The Association believes this sort of positive media is essential if we are to attract talented young people into the profession and keep quality teachers in our classrooms.

Educational Advocacy:

- ❑ **NEA ESSA Conference** – To better understand the changes, challenges, and opportunities as we move from the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law to the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), JCTA sent a team of teachers, as well as JCPS Chief Business Officer Tom Hudson, to an ESSA overview conference organized by the National Education Association in collaboration with the US Department of Education. The multi-day conference was held in Montgomery County, Maryland.
- ❑ **Legislative Days of Learning** – Each year while the General Assembly is in session, JCTA takes two groups of up to 30 members each to Frankfort for an all-day learning and engagement experience. Participants begin at the Kentucky Education Association headquarters in Frankfort where they are briefed on the operational procedures of the General Assembly as well the important issues being considered on that day. The Association works with participants in advance the Day of Learning to schedule meetings with their Representatives and Senators. Days of Learning are held on days when either the House Education or Senate Education Committees are scheduled to meet so that teachers can experience these important meetings. Participants then attend meetings of the full House and/or Senate, followed by a trip back to KEA headquarters, where they debrief their experience with Association leaders and staff,

who can answer any questions they may have. Association leave and substitute teachers are provided and paid for by JCTA.

New Teacher Supports:

- ❑ **New Teacher Institute** - JCTA assists the district in welcoming newly-hired teachers to the Jefferson County Public Schools at multiple new teacher orientation events during the year. JCTA speakers help with orientation. The Association sponsors lunch for the entire group, and JCTA provides welcoming freebies and school supply giveaways.
- ❑ **New teacher Supply Warehouse** - JCTA organized its New Teacher Warehouse program in recognition of the fact that the teaching profession can be particularly challenging for beginning educators who have not accumulated instructional resources and teaching supplies. To address this, Teachers with 5 and fewer years of experience in JCPS are invited to JCTA's annual warehouse. Over the summer, JCTA collects donations of teacher and student materials and purchases new supplies. Often retiring teachers "pay it forward" by passing on their best instructional resources to a new generation of teachers. New teachers are then invited come to the warehouse and take any of these supplies and resources they need for free. More than 250 early-years teachers benefit from this extremely popular program each year.
Watch a short video here: <https://youtu.be/f64ni9ZpZCM>

National Professional Growth Opportunities:

- ❑ **National Teaching and Learning Conference** - Each year JCTA sponsors a group of teachers to attend the National Teaching and Learning Conference organized by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Teachers attending this conference attend sessions highlighting highly effective as well as emerging innovative practices from across the nation and bring this information back to JCPS for the benefit of our schools and students.
- ❑ **National Board Support** - JCTA and KEA provide ongoing training and support at the JCTA office for teachers seeking certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. These are professional coaching and support sessions by teachers for teachers. JCTA also partners with the district to sponsor a celebration event for teachers who achieve National Board Certification each year.
Learn more here: <http://www.nbpts.org>

Local Association Trainings:

- ❑ **JCTA Diversity Trainings** - JCTA provides a nationally award-winning program of ongoing diversity trainings to help teachers appreciate the diversity present in their classrooms and better address the varied backgrounds and needs of their learners. These trainings were developed by the National Education Association and are led by JCPS/JCTA teacher trainer cadre members. Topics covered include core beliefs and how they shape interactions with others, strategies for handling hot buttons, and social justice issues. PD credit is offered. This training is approved by the Education Professional Standards Board for teachers who require diversity sensitivity training. Watch a short video here: https://youtu.be/-95loeReLsw?list=FLB1vT5uPR5N6TDH_VUoyndQ
- ❑ **JCTA Classroom Management Trainings** - This training was created and is taught by JCTA members who are classroom teachers. Attendees learn classroom management strategies and best practices to help you be more successful in their teaching. Six hours PD credit is offered. This training is approved by the Education Professional Standards Board.
- ❑ **JCTA SBDM Council Trainings** - JCTA has staff who are state-certified to provide ongoing trainings for SBDM Council members. These trainings fulfill the statutorily-required training requirements for new and returning SBDM council members. PD credit is offered for these trainings.
- ❑ **SBDM Overview Trainings** - JCTA also offers trainings for teachers who are not on SBDM councils but who are interested in learning more about the authorities and responsibilities SBDM councils possess and do not possess. These overview trainings cover what every teacher should know about SBDM councils. PD credit is offered for these trainings.
- ❑ **JCTA Ethics Trainings** - JCTA's Ethics Training provides a thorough understanding of the Code of Ethics for Kentucky Certified Personnel. The session also covers typical issues investigated by the Education Professional Standards Board, including confidentiality, professional conduct, student records and documents integrity, supervision of students, and appropriate versus inappropriate teacher conduct in and out of school. Participants also learn and review social media dos and don'ts. Three hours PD credit is offered. This training is also approved by the Education Professional Standards Board.
- ❑ **Teacher Financial Health Trainings** - JCTA offers a variety of ongoing workshops designed to help teachers better understand and plan for important financial decisions, such as dealing with college debt, the purchase of their first home, and retirement planning. Some recent workshops have focused on the following topics:

- ❑ **Financial Planning 101** - Presented in partnership with Ameriprise Financial, this session focuses on budgeting, savings, the importance of establishing good credit, and number of other introductory financial planning topics.
- ❑ **When Can I Afford to Retire?** - Presented by NEA member Benefits Representative Guy Kendall-Freas, this workshop increases members' awareness of their retirement system, their pension payout options, health care costs and more. Participants learn how to determine if they are on the right track in their retirement preparations and, if not, what their options are, including sheltering severance pay and purchasable service credit options. An overview of how the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provisions (GPO/WEP) affect social security is also be provided.
- ❑ **Erasing Student Loans and Debt** - Presented by NEA Member Benefits Representative Guy Kendall-Freas, this workshop covers the forgiveness options of some types of student loans, options for repayment, and do's and don'ts of student and other loans.

JCTA Engagement Supporting JCPS:

- ❑ **Deeper Learning Conference** - To assist in building district capacity to support the deeper learning focus of Vision 2020, JCTA sends teachers to the Deeper Learning Conference at High Tech High School (featured in the film "Most Likely To Succeed"). The Association covers the travel, lodging, meals, and registration for attending teachers.
- ❑ **Assessment Reduction/Revision Work Group** - In order to reduce the number of mandated district assessments, improve the quality of required assessments, and build teacher capacity to design and score high quality assessments of their own, JCTA has formed a collaborative work group with JCPS. Dena Dossett chairs the group which meets monthly to oversee this important work that is central to Vision 2020.
- ❑ **Vision 2020** - JCTA leaders and members were very involved throughout the year-long process of creating the JCPS Vision 2020 strategic plan. The Association was a leader in moving the district toward deeper learning to create much more engaging experiences for learners that will lead to greater student success. The Association has also been a champion for moving the district toward fewer and better assessments. These concepts form the fundamental theory of action behind Vision 2020.
- ❑ **EGS/EQOC** - The Educator Quality Oversight Committee (EQOC) is a JCBE-approved, collaborative committee (half teachers/half administrators) that serves as the district's statutorily required 50/50 evaluation committee and that is tasked with overseeing the

development and implementation of the JCPS Educator Growth System (EGS). The JCPS EGS is a collaborative, systemic, comprehensive, long-term, year-round initiative to find, support, and grow educators throughout their careers with JCPS. The EGS includes our formative and summative evaluation of certified education professionals, the JCPS tailored implementation of the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES), and the development and revision of the annual JCPS Certified Evaluation Plan (CEP). This oversight also extends equally to the development and implementation of other parts of the EGS system such as recruitment and hiring, induction, mentoring, early support, retention, professional growth planning, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), curriculum/instruction/assessment supports, and PD (and possibly peer assistance and review),. The Committee's goal is to ensure that each area improves and coordinates with the other areas to support and grow educators in accordance with effective practices, the JCPS Strategic Plan, JCBE priorities and agreements, and state/federal guidelines. The deep, collaborative work of EQOC and the joint commitment to the JCPS EGS is at the heart of professional, classroom, school, and district improvement and certainly touches the lives and work of of all certified employees in the district every day.

- ❑ **JCPS Deeper Learning Planning Group** - JCTA is represented at the foundational planning and implementation level on this collaborative and interdepartmental JCPS group that is charged with helping the district achieve the deeper learning and personalized learning focus of Vision 2020. This includes adopting a broader definition of learning and teaching strategies, assessments, and rigorous learning opportunities that promote student mastery of academic knowledge and the development of the capacities (e.g., creativity, critical thinking, self-regulation) and dispositions (e.g., persistence, empathy, responsibility) necessary for success in life.

The JCBE-approved Deeper Learning Framework around *thinking, communicating, and caring* (and the initial nine dispositions) was deeply influenced by the collaboratively planned Superintendent's Next Generation Skills Summit. The JCPS Deeper Learning Convening was also influential in helping to establish the direction and first steps to actualize the deeper learning thrusts of Vision 2020. JCTA's representation on the committee and the committee's relation to EQOC, the Educator Growth System, and the JCTA Teaching and Learning Committee help to assure not only support for deeper learning among JCTA leaders and the achievement of Vision 2020, but also the collaborative development and coordination of strategies, processes, language, and infrastructure for support and implementation of deeper learning across the district.

- ❑ **CTEPS** - In simple terms, CTEPS is personalized project-based learning for teachers. CTEPS teachers use design thinking to focus on a challenge in their school, district, or state. By working with others outside of their local environment, teachers seek a wider view and create action plans based on this richer perspective that often sheds new light on old problems back home. JCTA supports CTEPS in Jefferson County in a number of

ways, including financially, logistically, and through our collaboration with our JCPS-JCTA Teacherpreneur.

Learn more here: <http://www.kycteps.org>

- ❑ **Teacherpreneur** - JCTA partnered with the Center for Teaching Quality (CTQ) and JCPS to create the district's first Teacherpreneur. A Teacherpreneur is a new teacher leadership position in which teachers teach a portion of their day and are released to engage in leadership roles in the other portion of their day. JCTA and JCPS collaboratively interviewed and selected our first Teacherpreneur. JCTA then covered the cost of travel and training by CTQ in North Carolina for the new Teacherpreneur. Our collaborative work with the Teacherpreneur has included building virtual communities of educators using digital media supported by CTQ virtual teacher space as well as assisting with the implementation of CTEPS in Jefferson County.

JCTA-Community Partnerships:

- ❑ **Say Yes Initiative** - JCTA partnered with the Community Foundation of Louisville, the Mayor's Office, JCPS, and other community organizations to host visits by officials from the Say Yes Foundation and to develop our community Say Yes Grant application. Say Yes is a community-wide commitment to provide every student in the county with the opportunity to attend college or a post-secondary degree institution. Say Yes focuses on early years supports, such as wrap-around services, and culminates in last-dollar tuition scholarships for state universities and other partnering higher education institutions
- ❑ **Urban League Summit** - JCTA joined the Urban League in raising awareness of the issues facing minority youth in our community, the shared moral imperative to address these challenges, and promising strategies being used across the state and nation to help close learning and opportunity gaps. JCTA President Brent McKim and JCTA Board member Tia Edison joined Superintendent Hargens and Chief Academic Officer Lisa Herring in leading a panel discussion of these critical issues.
- ❑ **Retired Teacher Luncheon and Other JCTA-Retired Activities** - JCTA seeks to keep retired teachers actively involved in educational issues through ongoing outreach activities such as luncheons and social activities. At these activities, the Association highlights how retired teachers can stay involved and support our public schools in Jefferson County.

Recognitions:

- ❑ **JCPS Student Recognitions** - To assist teachers in motivating and recognizing their students, and to help celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, the JCTA Human and Civil Rights Committee sponsors a number of district-wide student competitions at

multiple grade levels. Students are judged on essays, dramatic performances, and visual art submissions which reflect the year's chosen MLK, Jr.-inspired theme. Student winners and their parents are invited to an inspirational dinner where the students are recognized and prizes are awarded.

- ❑ **Exemplary Teacher and Other Recognitions** - Also known as JCTA Spotlight Awards, the Association's Spotlight Committee recognizes and celebrates exemplary teachers for their outstanding accomplishments and efforts on behalf of children and public education. The Association also recognizes community partners who have distinguished themselves in supporting students, teachers, and JCPS schools. Spotlight Award winners are recognized at a special meeting of all JCTA Professional Representatives from across the district and are highlighted in our glossy, full-color Spotlight newsletter that is distributed to all JCPS teachers as well as many community partners.
- ❑ **JCTA Retirement Dinner** - JCTA sponsors a wonderful retirement dinner for all of our retiring teacher members each year. Each retiree is individually recognized and presented with a retirement gift in appreciation of their years of dedicated service to the students of Jefferson County.

Scholarships:

- ❑ **Teacher Advancement Scholarships** - JCTA and KEA provide a number of merit-based scholarships to teachers seeking to advance their professional growth through higher education coursework. These scholarships include providing financial support for those seeking their initial National Board Certification, those pursuing National Board re-certification, as well as Master's degrees leading to both Rank 2 and Rank 1 status.
- ❑ **JCPS Student Scholarships** - In conjunction with the JCTA Human and Civil Rights Committee's various student competitions, JCTA provides multiple post-secondary scholarships for exemplary students who plan to enter the field of public education.

Grants:

- ❑ **NEA Collaboration Grant** - JCTA secured a \$15,000 Great Public Schools grant from the National Education Association to support efforts to improve collaboration between JCPS and JCTA. The grant helped cover the costs to bring in Dr. Patrick Dolan to conduct a number of focus group interviews and present findings and recommendations to a joint meeting of the administrative leadership of the district, the school board, and the leadership of the Association. Building on Dr. Dolan's visit, a group of JCPS administrative leaders and JCTA leaders are studying the book Coherence by Michael Fullan, which was recommended by Dr. Dolan during the presentation of his findings. Funds from the collaboration grant from NEA are now being used to cover costs for a joint JCTA-JCPS team to attend the Quest Conference, where Dr. Fullan's work will be

featured. Because this conference includes many sessions on Deeper Learning and Project-Based Learning, JCTA invited the principal at Doss High School to identify teacher leaders to send to the conference with JCTA covering the costs.

- ❑ **One Class at a Time Mini-Grants** - JCTA has partnered with WHAS11 to create the “One Class at a Time” mini-grant program in which teachers can apply for grants of up to \$500 to pay for innovative projects they would otherwise be unable to fund for their classes. All the funding for the grants was provided by JCTA with WHAS11 advertising the program and featuring the winners on the station’s daily news broadcasts. Several thousand dollars in grants have been distributed since the program began. Watch a short video here: http://www.whas11.com/entertainment/television/great-day-live/help-the-one-class-at-a-time-project-get-teachers-the-supplies-they-need_20160505063526979/172218979

JCTA Committees:

- ❑ **Public Education Advocacy Committee** - During the legislative session, JCTA keeps its members informed of important pieces of legislation under consideration by the General Assembly. Members are encouraged to learn more about these important public policy issues so they can engage with their elected officials in support of children and public education.
- ❑ **Human and Civil Rights Committee** - The JCTA Human and Civil Rights (HCR) Committee is composed of JCPS teachers who are focused on social justice, equal rights, economic rights, and cultural diversity on behalf of all teachers and students across the district. The HCR committee plans and implements the MLK, Jr. Diversity Arts Contest, JCTA Exemplary Student Scholarships, and MLK Jr. Memorial Awards Dinner. In addition, the HCR Committee conducts minority outreach (women, ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+), spreads cultural awareness, oversees JCTA diversity trainings, and informs and mobilizes JCTA leaders in support of rights for all. The HCR Committee also supports and engages with community organizations that align with these priorities.
- ❑ **Social Affairs Committee Activities** - To relieve stress and provide educators with opportunities to connect less formally with other teachers across the district, the JCTA Social Affairs Committee plans discounted or free activities just for JCPS teachers. Recent examples include an Edgar Allen Poe night at the Frazier Museum, a group nighttime Halloween tour of Waverly Hills, a teacher night at the Louisville Bats, Labor Day at the Louisville Zoo, a teacher improv night performance at the Bard’s Town, and an Educator Day at Churchill Downs.
- ❑ **JCTA Teaching and Learning Committee** - The JCTA Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) is comprised of some of the top of the JCPS/JCTA teacher leaders and practitioners devoted to study, engage in dialogue, and actively support and

constructively engage the district and the community to incorporate the very best learner-centered practices, approaches, strategies, conditions, and policies to help embrace, engage, and empower our JCPS students to thrive throughout their P-12 JCPS careers and in life beyond JCPS. This group is well versed in educational theory and practice. The TLC meets regularly both to stay abreast of current developments in cutting-edge educational research and discuss how to develop and implement great teaching and learning practices and approaches throughout JCPS. The TLC acts collectively to respond to opportunities to advance innovative learning practices.

The TLC developed a prototype DRE3A2M School concept & design - <https://m.facebook.com/dre3a2mschool/> - which JCTA is interested in collaborating with JCPS to implement. The TLC serves as a sounding board for teachers in the Association to improve JCPS draft documents and plans such as strategic plans, including Vision 2020, grant proposals, etc. The TLC also provides guidance on teaching and learning issues to JCTA leaders and the JCTA Board. This group provides training to JCPS/JCTA educators on cutting-edge teaching and learning strategies and is developing capacity to connect and expand leadership opportunities and grow educators via virtual and face to face means. The TLC helps JCTA lead in teaching, learning, and professionalism and helps assure that JCTA is a union of professionals concerned first and foremost with the learning experiences of our students and those who activate their learning.

The TLC secures and implements grants and coordinates with external partner organizations like NEA, CTQ (on initiatives such as Teacherpreneur), and with KEA (on initiatives like the TALK Conference).

JCTA Caucuses:

- ❑ **Speech Language Pathologists Caucus** - The JCTA Speech Language Pathologists (SLP) Caucus has been working collaboratively with appropriate district staff to develop modifications and improvements in record-keeping software used to track growth in student language skills. The caucus has also been working with the EQOC and appropriate district staff to revise and update the SLP summative evaluation so that it better supports continuous growth and improvement for our speech language pathologists.
- ❑ **Early Childhood Caucus** - The JCTA Early Childhood Caucus has been working collaboratively with appropriate district staff to best determine how to carry out the specific needs of the JCPS Preschool program, especially with regard to JCPS' recent Head Start Grant.
- ❑ **Black Caucus** - The JCTA Black Caucus is an inclusive group whose vision is to empower JCTA members, parents, and the community, to become effective advocates in addressing the needs of minority students. The Black Caucus focuses on a number of

priority issues: parent/community advocacy; promoting a curriculum that recognizes the role, history, and accomplishments of the minority community, including support for the creation of Black History Matters, to be taught within Jefferson County; taking steps to address the school to prison pipeline; closing learning and opportunity gaps via the promotion of affective learning and via culturally-relevant field trips.

- ❑ **Deaf or Hard of Hearing/Vision Impaired/Orientation and Mobility Specialists Caucus (HDD/VI/OM)** - The JCTA DHH/VI/OM Caucus was established during the 2015-2016 school year by JCPS teachers who were interested in working together to determine solutions based upon common concerns that are specific to their areas of teaching. The DHH/VI/OM Caucus gives a voice to a small, yet essential part of the JCPS teaching community who meet the needs of some of the county's most challenged students.

- ❑ **GLBTQ Caucus** – Members of the JCTA GLBTQ Caucus have worked with Fairness on issues related to GLBTQ rights. Caucus members have also participated on a JCPS Committee responsible for considering sexual orientation and gender identification issues within the school district. (However, it is important to note that those who have been involved report that this JCPS committee has not been effective in achieving meaningful progress on these issues in the school district.) Additionally, one member of the caucus recently received the honor of being one of only seventeen educators nationwide appointed to the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee of the 3,000,000-member National Education Association.