

# THE JACKSON AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



*“To develop and maintain an economic climate, which creates and retains jobs and enhances the quality of life for all citizens of Jackson/Madison County and West Tennessee.”*

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 8, 2010

### **NEW SUPERINTENDENT NEEDS TO BE A VISIONARY LEADER IN EDUCATION**

Jackson, TN — Every child in our public school system should be provided an excellent education – everyday, in every subject, in every class – in order to succeed in the workplace or postsecondary education. Education is and will continue to be the number one issue affecting the creation of new jobs in Jackson/Madison County as well as the entire region. Without a continually improving public education system, we will not be able to significantly increase the per capita income nor grow the tax base in the community.

The decision of who will be the next superintendent of the Jackson Madison County School System is one of the most important decisions this community has faced in decades. The timing of this decision opportunity coincides with many vital education-related opportunities. With a new governor and new state education leadership, there will be a national focus on Tennessee’s successful Race to the Top bid. Additionally, more education improvement resources will be available to visionary and forward thinking communities.

This decision is not a white/black, north/south, public/private, nor city/county issue. This is a decision that will affect what type of community the Jackson area will become and what type of education will be provided to the children here. It is imperative to locate, evaluate, and hire the very best leader in the country for our school system.

In a time of increasingly tight budgets, it seems counterproductive to buy out the existing contract of Dr. Nancy Zambito and hire an interim superintendent. It would be more prudent to allow Dr. Zambito to finish the work she has started and then quickly begin the search for a replacement. We ask that the Jackson Madison County School Board look toward partnering with the business and industrial community to establish a transparent and professional process to pick Dr. Zambito’s successor.

During Dr. Zambito’s tenure, the Jackson Madison County School System has improved. Students, teachers, and administration have made great strides in elevating test scores and graduation rates that continue to improve today.

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With Dr. Zambito’s announced departure, Jackson must look for a visionary leader that can build upon the successes of the school system by strategically charting a path that the entire community can support. Jackson needs a world-class leader in public education. It will not be enough to be average – Jackson must strive to have one of the top public school systems in the State of Tennessee and the country.

We must look for a leader who can communicate a vision both locally and nationally. The new superintendent must be someone that can represent the community as the Chamber seeks to recruit new jobs – this person must be someone who can sell our public education system to the professionals who make decisions regarding where to place new facilities and the thousands of jobs that they represent.

Our children deserve the very best. We owe it to them to settle for nothing less than the best. Our community is indebted to Dr. Zambito and the successful initiatives that she has implemented to improve the Jackson Madison County School System. The executive committee of the Chamber wishes her the very best as she concludes her work in this community.

Sincerely,

The Jackson Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Committee

Ed Woodside, Board Chairman  
City of Jackson Mayor Jerry Gist  
Madison County Mayor Jimmy Harris  
Kyle Spurgeon, Chamber President and CEO  
James Campbell  
Curtis Mansfield  
Greg Milam  
Steve Raper  
Katherine G. Watts

**About the Jackson Area Chamber of Commerce:** The Jackson Area Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1905 – seven years prior to the United States Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber consists of a diverse and talented staff, an executive committee, dedicated volunteers, and more than 1,350 business members – all committed to growing the economy and quality of life for everyone in Madison County and the region.

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