










TJ Survival Guide
















Whether you've been through it all before or are just starting out here at TJ, this guide contains information about all things TJ - even the lingo! The general time frame for each activity or event is provided - for the specific date, please see the TJ Parent Calendar or watch for email communications and posts on the Thomas Jefferson Elementary PTA Facebook page.















[TJ PTA Website](#)













[TJ PTA Calendar](#)














[Thomas Jefferson Elementary PTA Facebook page](#)













	Description	When	Contact
2-Ball (Spot-Shot)	2-Ball is a 6th grade intramural activity that takes place during recess in the winter months. The game is played with a basketball, where teams of 2 take turns shooting to accumulate points, competing against other teams of two. There is a district-wide 2-Ball contest in February where the teams will compete against other schools in the district.	Winter	 School Office
Adventures in Reading	Adventures in Reading is a really fun extracurricular activity for students who love to read! It is a PTA member run, lunch time book club that provides eager readers an opportunity to read an interesting story, think about what it means, and then discuss it with other students their own age. The AIR weekly discussion meetings run for approximately 6 weeks from January to March. Discussion groups meet during the LUNCH/RECESS period. All children bring sack lunches to the meeting. Books are provided and need to be returned at the end of the program. Volunteers are welcome!	January - March	 PTA
After School Clubs	After School Clubs, Grades 1-6, are sponsored by outside companies that offer a club with a cost to the participants. The clubs are typically one day a week, after school, for 8-10 weeks. In past years, some clubs included: Lego Club (Snapology) and Drama Club (Amazing Greats).	Fall and Winter	 School Office
Art Liaison	TJ's Art Liaison is a PTA member who helps the Art Teacher with art-related projects at different times throughout the school year. Volunteers are welcome!	Ongoing	 PTA
Assemblies	Through the financial support of the PTA, arrangements are made for educational speakers to visit the school for assemblies. Topics range from bullying, to motivational speakers, physics, history and educational games.	Various dates throughout the school year	 PTA
Back to School Fall Fest	The Back to School Fall Festival is TJ's big kick-off to the school year! It is typically held on a Friday evening. There are several activities that are fun for the whole family. Last year's event included a bounce house, train ride, obstacle course festive games and a pumpkin patch.	Start of School	 PTA
Band/Orchestra	Band/Orchestra runs through the entire school year and is available to students in 5th and 6th grade. At the end of 4th grade, students get to see an instrument demonstration and have the opportunity to try several instruments to help them decide what they want to play. There are 2 groups: Beginning - mostly 5th grade and some 6th grade players who are in their 1st year of playing. Intermediate - mostly 6th graders and occasionally 5th graders who started an instrument earlier in another district or privately who are in their 2nd year of playing. Band and orchestra both offer a group lesson once per week and whole ensemble rehearsals before school once each week as well.	All Year	 School Office
Band Concert	Beginning and Intermediate Band each have 2 evening concerts a year where they play a variety of music from different genres. See the TJ Parent Calendar for dates of Band Concerts.	See TJ Parent Calendar	 School Office
Birthday Celebrations	According to District 15 School Policy, children should NOT bring in candy or food treats for their birthday. While it is not necessary for students to bring in anything to share with the class for their birthday, if they wish to bring in something, small trinkets such as stickers or pencils are allowed. Classroom donations, like games or books, are always welcome, sports equipment or art supplies can be donated to the school to commemorate your child's birthday as well! Please coordinate with your child's teacher.	Ongoing	 Classroom Teacher

Description	When	Contact
Book Fair	The annual Book Fair helps promote literacy and a love of reading. Typically the Book Fair runs around the time of Parent/Teacher Conferences and TJ Open House. All proceeds go to purchasing books and supplies for the school.	Fall/Spring  PTA
Box Tops	BoxTops for Education is a "scan and save" program we use to earn cash and equipment for our school. Scan your receipts with the "Box Tops" mobile app and automatically earn \$.10 for the school. Visit the Box Top Education site for qualifying products, contests, newsletters, coupons and complete program details. www.boxtops4education.com	All Year  PTA
Calendar (Online)	The TJ Parent Calendar is available online and is updated by TJ Administration as well as the TJ PTA. The TJ Parent Calendar contains all the dates and times for activities and events throughout the year.	Ongoing  PTA
Classroom SeeSaw	Many K-2 teachers have SeeSaw accounts for their classrooms. The accounts are private and access is granted by the teacher.	Ongoing  Classroom Teacher
Chorus	Chorus is an opportunity for 5th and 6th graders to get involved musically at TJ. Chorus is open to all boys and girls in 5th and 6th grade. Chorus meets two times a week during the recess hour to prepare for the winter and spring concert. Chorus provides students with an extended musical opportunity. Watch for email communications, posts on the Thomas Jefferson Elementary PTA Facebook page or the PTA Calendar for Chorus Concert dates.	All Year  School Office
Clubs	Each year, assuming that funding and sponsorship are both available, TJ staff run clubs. Typically the clubs and the teacher sponsors for the year are decided in the late September timeframe. There is no guarantee that any certain club will run in any year, but some that are typically offered are Student Council, Green Team, STEM, Video Production and Chess.	All year  School Office
Community Clothing Closet	Please consider donating your "gently used" clothing and outerwear of all sizes, as well as new underwear and socks, to District 15's Community Coat Closet. A yellow Donation Bin (with Tax Deduction Forms) is located near the main office. If you or someone you know needs clothing, please contact any school staff member.	Ongoing  School Office
Common Core	The Common Core is a set of standards that are aligned nation wide, with an increased and uniform rigor. Preparing students learnings to follow them through their learning, regardless of the school where they are receiving their education.	Ongoing  Classroom Teacher
Cross Country	Cross-Country is a 6th grade intramural activity that takes place during recess in the fall months. The season ends at the end of September or beginning of October when TJ competes against other schools in the district in a mile run contest.	Sept - Oct  School Office
Dad's Night Out	This is an annual event sponsored by the PTA where Dads get a night out of the house to hang out and do Dad things. There is a cost to the participant. In past years, Dads enjoyed dinner out at Rosati's.	Winter  PTA
Directory	The TJ Directory is a composite of school faculty and students and family contact information. It provides a resource to families so they are better able to connect with one another. To be listed in the Directory, you must join the PTA and submit your PTA/Directory form prior to the deadline, which is usually around September 15. The Directory is usually distributed to PTA members via email in late October or early November.	Fall  PTA
Donuts with a Grown-up	Moms, Dads or Special Grown-up joins their kids in the Multipurpose Room before school starts to have donuts, juice and coffee with other grown-ups, students and teachers. Festivities usually go from 7:45-8:10. Volunteers are always appreciated!	Winter/Spring  PTA
Environmental Education Committee/ Green Team	The Environmental Education Committee/Green Team is a PTA committee that promotes being green during Earth Week which coincides with Earth Day every year.	Spring  PTA
Family Reading Night	Family Reading Night is an interactive experience at TJ where teachers present ways for families to encourage and support reading in the home. Families are invited to engage in fun activities, listen to speakers on books and writing and are offered ideas and resources to help the school and home become stronger partners.	Late Winter/Early Spring   School Office & PTA

Description		When	Contact
Field Day	Field Day is a half day outdoor event during late May where the classes rotate through a variety of fun activities.	Late May	 School Office
Fun Run	The TJ PTA has an exciting new way to put the fun in fundraiser! The Fun Run is our main fundraiser of the year.	Fall	 PTA
Google Classroom	Many 3-6 teachers have Google Classroom accounts for their classrooms. The accounts are private and access is granted by the teacher.	Ongoing	 Classroom Teacher
Grandparents Day	Grandparents and significant elders are invited to spend some time at TJ - typically the Friday before Thanksgiving Week. Guests will enjoy a special presentation and raffle, followed by a visit to the child's classroom, and if interested, some shopping at the Book Fair. Details will come home closer to the date. For more information, contact your child's classroom teacher.	Friday before Thanksgiving Week	 Classroom Teacher
Halloween Parties	On October 31st, your child is encouraged to bring his/her Halloween costume to school. During the last 2 hours of school, the kids will put on their costumes and then enjoy a Halloween parade with the entire school and a party with their class. The Halloween parade takes place, after lunch, right before the parties begin. If weather permits, the parade is typically an outside walk around the school, otherwise, it is conducted throughout the halls of school. No weapons or inappropriate costumes will be permitted. Timing will vary for AM Kindergarten.	Halloween	 Classroom Teacher or PTA Room Rep
IAR Test (Illinois Assessment of Readiness)	An internationally-benchmarked assessment of applied knowledge designed to measure the new Illinois learning standards, which will be replacing the ISAT and PARCC test. Given to students in grades 3-6, there are two rounds of testing, the Performance-Based Assessment (PBA) and End of Year Assessment (EOY).	March, May	 Classroom Teachers
Intramurals	Intramurals is a 5th and 6th grade program that takes place during recess time 2 to 3 times a week for most of the school year. All 6th graders are encouraged to participate. In intramurals, students play team sports using strategies and plays, with a sprinkling of some "just for fun" games. Under the umbrella of intramurals, there are 3 events in which the 6th graders compete against other schools in the district: Cross Country is a mile run contest at the end of September or beginning of October; the 2-Ball contest is a basketball shooting contest which happens the first week of February; and the Track and Field meet is at the end of May.	All Year	 School Office
Kindergarten Round-up	Kindergarten Round-up typically occurs in May, following open registration for Kindergarten students for the next school year. New Kindergarteners and their parents are invited to come to TJ during the school day. Typically, parents attend an orientation to TJ, while Kindergarteners visit the classroom.	May	 School Office
Last Day of school	The last day of school is determined when the Official School Calendar is published each year (typically in November for the following school year). This date is subject to change in May based on the number of emergency school closing days that were used. See the district or PTA calendar for more information.	June	 School Office
Lost and found	Lost and Found bins can be found in the hallway outside of the cafeteria. Items are cleared out of these bins periodically. Please remember to label all of your child's belongings.	All year	 School Office
LRC or Library	The LRC (Learning Resource Center), or school library, is available to every student in the school. Each class usually has a weekly scheduled time to find and check out books. Students are allowed to check-out books for two weeks. Each student is limited to having a certain number of books checked out in their name: Kindergarten - 1 book; 1st - 3rd grades - 2 books; 4th - 6th Grades - 3 books.	All year	 School Office
MAP Testing (MAP - Measures of Academic Progress)	MAPs are a computerized test designed to measure your child's progress throughout his/her time at TJ. MAPs are administered 3 times a year (Fall, Winter, Spring) for grades 2-6. Parents are sent the results about 6 weeks after the testing takes place.	Fall, Winter, Spring	 Classroom Teacher
Meet the Teacher Day	Meet the teacher is typically held the day before the first day of the fall school year. Parents and students have a chance to meet their teachers, take a look around their classroom and drop off school supplies.	Day Before the First Day of School	 School Office
Mom's Night Out	This is an annual event sponsored by the PTA where Moms get a night out of the house to hang out and do Mom things. There is a cost to the participant. In years past, Moms enjoyed painting at Bottles and Bottega.	Fall/Winter	 PTA

Description	When	Contact
Morning Announcements	TJ students are kept abreast of all the happenings at TJ through TJ's Morning Announcements. The Video Production Team, consisting of 5th and 6th graders, produces the broadcast. Each week, one class is selected to lead the school in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance on the air. Announcements are recorded in the Video Production Room and broadcast into the classrooms the next morning.	Daily  School Office
Multi-Cultural Fair	The Multi Cultural Fair, occurring every other year, provides an opportunity for TJ families to enjoy the diversity that exists in our school. TJ families can opt to sponsor a booth and showcase their culture with games, crafts, food, music, etc. Families spend an evening sharing information and having fun with other TJ families.	Winter (every other year)  PTA
Music Programs	A letter will go home to the appropriate grade levels that will be participating in evening music programs as soon as the dates are selected. All evening performances begin at 7:00 p.m, children typically need to arrive earlier. See the TJ Parent Calendar for specific dates.	Fall, Winter, Spring  School Office
Orchestra/Band	Band/Orchestra runs through the entire school year and is available to students in 5th and 6th grade. At the end of 4th grade, students get to see an instrument demonstration and have the opportunity to try several instruments to help them decide what they want to play. There are 2 groups: Beginning - mostly 5th grade and some 6th grade players who are in their 1st year of playing. Intermediate - mostly 6th graders and occasionally 5th graders who started an instrument earlier in another district or privately who are in their 2nd year of playing. Band and orchestra both offer a group lesson once per week and whole ensemble rehearsals before school during the week as well.	All Year  School Office
Parent Teacher Conferences	Parent Teacher Conferences are a time for information sharing between parents, teachers, and possibly students. Discussions include goal setting for the future and progress evaluation. Conference times are usually set up during Parent Orientation in the beginning of the school year.	November  Classroom Teacher
PBIS/PBIS Celebration	PBIS, (Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports) is a systems change method that promotes positive behaviors in students. Strategies are developed that manage student behavior in classroom settings and outside of classroom settings. It is an all-encompassing system of behavior management where all parties involved are on board, so that behavior management is not produced in a piecemeal way. Instead, all students in a school are accountable with support to behave in ways that positively affect them personally, academically, socially, and from a health perspective. PBIS celebrations take place monthly for students who have exhibited positive behavior for that month. (Prize donations are accepted!) For more information, contact the Asst. Principal.	All year  School Office
Pennies for Patients	Pennies for Patients is a drive for loose change to help Leukemia and Lymphoma patients. The drive is typically put on by Student Council.	Winter  School Office
Picture Day	Individual portraits are taken. Those wishing to purchase pictures can submit their order form and payment at the time photos are taken or order online. Photo orders are delivered a few weeks after they are taken. Class photos are delivered later in the year.	August/September  School Office
PTA Fundraising	PTA fundraising takes place in many different ways; some of which are general membership fees, Fall Fundraising, Box Tops, and direct donations. The money raised by the PTA is used to fund numerous enrichment programs, family activities (such as the back to school fall fest, donuts with a grown-up) as well as to provide additional funds to classroom teachers, treats on field day and help pay for student field trips.	All year  PTA
PTA Membership	Annual Membership to the TJ PTA costs \$10 for a family. Sign-up is available on-line or in person at the TJ Parent Orientation. Members receive a copy of the school Directory. Your membership dues go toward programs at TJ as well as supporting the National PTA. Your small donation does so much! No required volunteering. https://tjpta.new.memberhub.store/store	All year  PTA
PTA Monthly Meetings	PTA meetings are held monthly via Zoom starting at 7:15pm. Meetings are held once per month, typically on the second Tuesday, and anyone in the TJ community is welcome to attend. Each month features a report from the principal as well as from different grade level teachers. Schedules for the meetings can be found on the PTA Calendar.	Monthly, year round  PTA
PTA Website	The PTA website contains board and committee information, budget information, a detailed calendar of upcoming events, forms, flyers, PTA meeting minutes and agendas, and so much more! If you have something you would like posted to the TJ website, contact th VP of Communications.	Ongoing  PTA

Description	When	Contact
Readers Workshop	This is a term used to describe how teachers may divide up their Literacy time. In classrooms using the Daily Five Model, the students are in 1 of 5 groups doing the following activities: Read to Self, Work on Writing, Read to Someone, Listen to Reading, Word Work.	Ongoing  Classroom Teacher
Reading Programs	Reading Programs are sponsored by the Reading Specialists and vary from year-to-year. Each month, students are encouraged to read for a certain number minutes per day in order to achieve their goal. Parents must certify that the times reported are accurate. Goals typically vary by grade level and past programs have included Great America tickets and Pizza Hut free pizza coupons.	October - March  School Office
Restaurant Nights	Restaurant Nights are a fun way to earn money for TJ and take a night off from cooking! A local restaurant sponsors the TJ PTA and donates a portion of the proceeds earned. Join other TJ students, families, and teachers for an evening of great food and great friends! For a schedule of Restaurant nights, visit the TJ PTA calendar or the Thomas Jefferson Elementary PTA Facebook page.	Various evenings  PTA
Room Rep	The PTA provides a Room Rep for each classroom. The role of the Room Rep includes assisting the teacher with projects, planning events such as Halloween and Valentine's Day parties, coordinating Teacher Appreciation Week activities, finding chaperones for field trips, and being a communication liaison between the parents and the PTA. Designated Room Reps will need to attend the Room Parent Orientation to receive the basic information regarding duties for the year followed by a meeting with the teachers.	Ongoing  PTA
School Supply Kits	For parents' convenience, the PTA offers the option of ordering School Supply Kits for the upcoming school year. Typically priced between \$48-56, all required supplies are included in a student's order, and are delivered to the child's classroom. This program is a great time saver!	May  PTA
Sixth Grade Events	Each year, the PTA and TJ administration host several events in celebration of graduating 6th graders. The PTA coordinates a picnic at the end of the school year as well as several other activities which could include a bike ride, softball game and more! The PTA also puts together a memory book for all the students, and each student receives a special t-shirt that they have a part in creating. More information will come home throughout the year with details.	All Year  Teachers & PTA
SPARK	Special Education Parents Accessing Resources and Knowledge was formed in response to the growing needs of families whose children learn differently or have special needs, however many of the program topics are relevant to all TJ families. SPARK programs are monthly, and are typically run Monday evenings at Walter R. Sundling Junior High in Palatine. All programs are free. Reference the district calendar for dates and topics. https://www.ccsd15.net/Page/2826	Monthly, year round  PTA
Spelling Bee	Students in grades 4-6 participate in a spelling bee. The winners from each classroom then participate in a school spelling bee and that winner represents TJ at the District spelling bee.	Winter  Classroom Teacher
Spirit Wear	Spirit wear is school-themed/branded clothing that can be purchased throughout the year. Show off your TJ Spirit by wearing your spirit wear! Visit 1st Place Spiritwear and start shopping! LINK TO SHOP	All Year  PTA
TJ Carnival	The TJ Carnival is an event that hosts a raffle, games and activities. It is a great outing for the entire family! Raffle items both big and small, including Teacher Experiences! Volunteers are needed and appreciated! Children should be accompanied by an adult.	Spring  Teachers and PTA
TJ Open House	The TJ Open House gives parents a chance to visit their child's classroom with their child. Students are very eager and proud to show their parents their work. For more information, contact your child's classroom teacher.	Spring  Classroom Teacher
Student Council	The focus of Student Council is service related - they host fundraisers such as Pennies for Patients (an organization that raises money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society). One goal of the club is to increase our awareness of the needs of others and find ways to meet those needs. <i>See Clubs</i>	All year  School Office
Student Helpers/ Safety Patrol	TJ utilizes the assistance of several responsible 5th and 6th graders to help keep TJ students safe. These hardworking kids are assigned one of a variety of roles, including traffic duty in the parking lots, safety patrol inside the school, and Kindergarten helpers. Interested students sign up at the end of the prior school year and are selected by a lottery.	All Year  School Office

Description	When	Contact
"TJ Hi-Five"	Is used by TJ staff to quiet down large groups of students. The teacher will say, "TJ high five", and then start to count down from 5 to help the students get focused back on the staff member.	Ongoing  Classroom Teacher
TJ Tickets	TJ Tickets are part of the PBIS program (See PBIS). Students receive TJ tickets for exhibiting positive behavior traits. Highly coveted, TJ Tickets can be used to purchase prizes during PBIS celebrations - like reading to the younger grades. For more information, contact the Assistant Principal.	Ongoing  School Office
Teacher Appreciation	Teacher Appreciation aims to show the teachers and staff of TJ our love and appreciation, giving them a special thanks for all that they do. The PTA volunteers work within the budget to show our appreciation throughout the year, with the main focus being during teacher appreciation week where each day is filled with a different event. Past examples include: teacher/staff breakfast and/or luncheon, donut/coffee morning, snack tables, and little gifts. During teacher appreciation week, there is usually a theme to get into the spirit with events or small gifts every day. There is always a simple activity sheet sent home with each student for them to create their own personalized sentiment for their teacher. PTA volunteers also work with room reps and/or the students for events like, bring your teacher a flower or needed school supply days, opportunities to contribute to a class gift, etc. There are lots of fun ways to get involved and show our wonderful TJ teachers/staff how much we appreciate them! Please feel free to be creative and share your ideas!	Ongoing  PTA
Track and Field	Track and Field is a 6th grade intramural activity that takes place during recess in the Spring. The season culminates in a district-wide meet, where TJ competes against other schools in track and field events.	Spring  School Office
Valentine's Party	Each class enjoys a Valentine's Day themed party. Information about handing out Valentines to the class will be given to you by your child's teacher.	Valentine's Day   Classroom Teacher or PTA Room Rep
Variety Show	The TJ's got Talent, variety show is a spirited and fun-filled production showcasing some of the amazing talent at TJ. An info sheet comes home in March/April. Students need to prepare their act for auditions, which typically take place in April/May. There is a morning performance for the school and an evening performance for families. The staff meetings to determine teacher sponsors will take place mid-September (after this document goes to print).	Spring  School Office
Video Production	The Video Production Team, made up of 5th and 6th graders, works with school staff to do the behind-the-scenes work to produce the Morning Announcements.	All year  School Office
Vision and Hearing Screenings	Hearing and vision screenings are part of District 15. The program ensures that students receive adequate intervention for hearing and sight issues. Vision and Hearing Screening are done based on grade levels that are mandated by the state. Vision screening is done in Kindergarten, 2nd and 5th grades. Hearing screening is done in Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades. Vision and hearing screening is also done for all students in special education, students new to TJ and for a student who has a request submitted by either a teacher or parent on their behalf.	Fall  School Office
Vounteering	There are many opportunities to volunteer at TJ - whether you want to dip a toe in or jump in with two feet, there is something for you! Check them all out at www.ccsd15.net/TJ-PTA .	Year-Round  PTA
Windy City Bulls	The PTA organizes a fun for the whole family event at a Windy City Bulls game at the NOW Arena. Cost for participants. Special events for the kids, before, during and after the game.	Winter  PTA
Yearbook	The Yearbook contains class pictures, individual student portraits and also pictures taken throughout the year of all the events and activities that take place at TJ. Yearbook book sales typically take place in February. If you wish to receive a Yearbook, you must submit your order and payment during this time frame, there is no guarantee that there will be extra Yearbooks to purchase at year end. Yearbooks are distributed during the last week of school in May. Please consider submitting some of your own TJ photos for the yearbook! Contact the Yearbook Committee Chairs for more information.	Order February Delivery May  PTA