

# EAGLE MESSENGER

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF LIBERTY-BENTON LOCAL SCHOOLS | FALL 2022 NEWSLETTER

## SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

# LIBERTY-BENTON STARTS SCHOOL YEAR STRONG



Another school year is well underway at Liberty-Benton. We've had a fantastic start to the year with lots of exciting new things taking place, such as the opening of our newly renovated high school, our fifth graders transitioning to the middle school, and the grand opening of the new entryway to our outdoor athletic complex.

We're excited for these modern facilities and the additional opportunities they will offer our students. The entryway to our athletic complex is one of a long list of examples of how our community goes above and beyond to support our students and honor our Liberty-Benton traditions, and for this, we are grateful.

Additionally, after a two-year hiatus from Ohio's school report cards being issued as a result of the pandemic, Liberty-Benton secured one of the strongest scores in the state with 24 of 25 stars. While state report cards are just one measure of success, this demonstrates our commitment to being a top-notch district. Congratulations to our students and staff, and thank you to our families and community for your continued encouragement.

Liberty-Benton provides a variety of arts programming, athletics, and extracurricular clubs that add to our academic experience and further prepare our students for today's workforce by giving them the soft skills many employers are seeking. If you're a student reading this, I hope you'll check these opportunities out and get involved. And for our families and community members, I encourage you to support these activities this school year. Read on to learn more about the great things happening across our district, and as always... Go Eagles!

With Gratitude,



**Mark Kowalski**, Superintendent

## IMPORTANT DATES

**NOVEMBER 2 + 3**

**PARENT-TEACHER  
CONFERENCES**

Nov. 2: 5-8 pm  
Nov. 3: 8 am-3:30 pm and 5-8 pm

**NOVEMBER 4**

**END OF FIRST NINE WEEKS**

**DECEMBER 14**

**REMOTE LEARNING DAY  
FOR STUDENTS**

**JANUARY 27**

**END OF FIRST SEMESTER**

\*All dates are subject to change.  
Please visit our website for updates.

## PK-8 BUILDING ON TIME AND ON BUDGET

Recent news from our construction crew indicates that our new PK-8 building is on schedule and on budget. We are looking forward to taking possession early next summer and to a smooth transition at the start of the 2023 school year!



## LIBERTY-BENTON CELEBRATES NEW ATHLETIC COMPLEX ENTRANCE

On August 26, the Liberty-Benton community celebrated the completion of a new entrance for the outdoor athletic complex. The new entry features a Memorial Garden, honoring our fallen Eagles, and recognizes the many friends of Liberty-Benton who made the Fieldhouse and future projects possible.

The entry is worthy of the many upgrades that have been made to the complex in recent months, including the new Fieldhouse, resurfacing of the track, and installation of the turf field. It will serve as a welcoming point of entry for our community and guests for years to come!

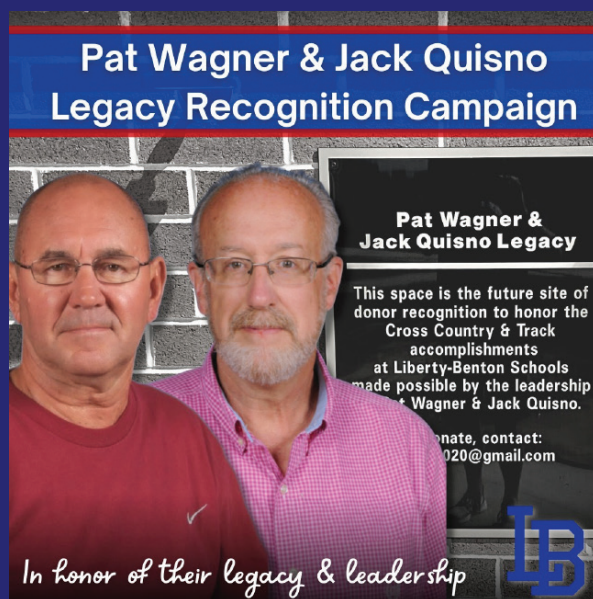
# SUPPORT OUR LIBERTY-BENTON RUNNERS

In honor of Pat Wagner and Jack Quisno and their combined 60+ years of leadership and passion for the district's track and cross-country programs, the Liberty-Benton Athletic Boosters Campaign has launched a fundraiser to support track and cross-country and other capital needs. Donors will be recognized with a plaque on the wall outside the new entryway to the stadium.

### COMMITMENT LEVELS INCLUDE:

- **Diamond Donor: \$5,000**
- **Gold Medal: \$2,500**
- **Silver Medal: \$1,000**
- **Bronze Medal: \$500**

Payments can be made over three years (2023, 2024 and 2025) or a one-time Venmo payment can be made to LB-AthleticBoosters.



Scan the QR code to the left for a donation form, and join our Facebook group (Liberty-Benton Track & XC Alumni) for donor updates, current track and cross-country news, a schedule of events, and more!

# DID YOU KNOW FACT

## DID YOU KNOW

Liberty-Benton had the highest Ohio Report Card Rating of all schools in Hancock County with

# 24/25 Stars!



## LIBERTY-BENTON RECEIVES HIGH MARKS ON STATE REPORT CARD

Ohio's School Report Cards were issued in mid-September, and Liberty-Benton received 24 of 25 possible stars, ranking 13th in the state out of 607 districts!

This is the first time in two years that report cards have been issued as a result of the pandemic, and they come with a new rating system. Replacing the traditional letter grade is a five-star rating, with one being the lowest (needs support) and five being the highest (significantly exceeds). State report cards are intended to give parents/guardians, community members, educators and policymakers information about how districts are performing.

### THE DISTRICT WAS GRADED ON THE FOLLOWING:

- Achievement
- Progress
- Gap Closing
- Graduation
- Early Literacy

Next year, the report card will also rate districts on Readiness, which looks at how well students are prepared for future opportunities, whether training in a technical field or preparing for work or college.

Report cards are just one measure of success for school districts, but this demonstrates Liberty-Benton's commitment to being a top district in Northwest Ohio and the state. Congratulations to our staff and students, and thank you to our community for your continued support.



Visit [reportcard.education.ohio.gov](https://reportcard.education.ohio.gov) to view Ohio's School Report Cards.



# TREASURER'S UPDATE



They say it takes a village to raise a single child. Multiply this by 1,000, and it takes a strong community to educate and prepare a district full of students for their future.

Thankfully, Liberty-Benton is such a district. In addition to our all-new PK-8 building and renovations to our high school, the district has several construction projects underway or recently completed that are part of our master facilities plan.

The tradition of meeting our district's growing educational needs dates back to 1994 when voters passed an \$8.2 million, 7.6 mill levy to fund the construction of a new high school on County Road 9. From these humble beginnings, Liberty-Benton has grown substantially in both variety of programming and the number of students and families served.

In May of 2019, the community supported the district once again by approving a \$25.6 million bond. In combination with funds received from the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission, the district was able to move forward with the construction of the new PK-8 building, renovate the existing high school, and construct an 800-seat auditorium. To date, \$14.3 million in local dollars and \$15 million in state dollars have gone toward these construction projects.

Other projects have included the installation of a new turf field and track, improvements to the baseball field, seating, and netting, a new athletic facility entry, and an all-new Field House. The cost to the district of the turf field and track was \$1.4 million and was funded locally from funds set aside for permanent improvements. The baseball field and

associated improvements were paid for with a generous gift from the Athletic Boosters and private funding collected by the Baseball Diamond Club. These renovations are valued at \$375,000. The cost of the new athletic facility entryway was \$451,000, also paid for with local funds set aside for permanent improvements. Last, our Field House, which is valued at \$1.6 million, was constructed without the use of any taxpayer dollars. We are so thankful for our Athletic Boosters, who contributed 94.4% of the cost. The district committed approximately \$92,000 to the project as a result of Liberty-Benton being named the beneficiary of the Janet Light-Hilty-Basinger Charitable Trust.

All of this shows the district and community's commitment to our collective future. Thank you for being our – and more importantly – our students, village.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Dobbins".

**Lisa Dobbins**, Treasurer



## ANOTHER SUMMER READING MENTORING PROGRAM IN THE BOOKS

This past summer, approximately 20 Liberty-Benton staff members helped 50+ students in grades K-3 brush up on their reading skills through the Summer Reading Mentoring Program.

The program took place the first three weeks in August. Teachers worked with students in guided reading groups, reviewed sight words, helped students with reading comprehension and on decoding words, and applied sounds to make words.

Thank you to our bus drivers, paraprofessionals and teachers who make this possible year after year so that our students are ready to take on the next school year!







## MEET LIBERTY-BENTON'S NEWEST TEAM MEMBER

Liberty-Benton Elementary is excited to welcome a new staff member this school year. He looks a little different than you might expect. He has four legs, is yellow, and has a tail! If you guessed that the newest staff member is a dog, you are correct!

Otis is a 2-year-old yellow lab and is accompanying Mrs. Gazette, the school counselor, to school each day. His official title is School Facility Dog, and his responsibilities include interacting with students in whatever way they are comfortable and however they need him. Just as teachers and counselors are specially trained, so is Otis. He began training to work with children when he was just 6 months old.

School Facility Dogs are shown to:

- Increase self-esteem
- Strengthen memory and problem-solving skills
- Improve behavior

In addition to traveling from classroom to classroom with Mrs. Gazette, you may also find Otis hanging out in the office with Mr. Burkett. Feel free to say hello with a pat on the head or a hand – or paw – shake the next time you see him!

# NEW STAFF



**Nicole Dishong**  
Cafeteria Aide



**Chelsey Gray**  
Library Lunch Room Aide



**Kendra Grubinski**  
Spanish Teacher



**Nick Jacobs**  
8th Grade Science



**Megan Leichty**  
Kindergarten Teacher



**Tyler Niekamp**  
Assistant Principal MS  
and HS



**Aonesty Paniagua**  
Elementary Aide



**Laurel Smith**  
Elementary Instructional  
Aide



**Lindsay Taylor**  
7th Grade Reading  
Teacher



**Doug Whiteman**  
MS + HS P.E. Teacher  
and Head Varsity Boy's  
Basketball Coach



# HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ENJOYING UPDATED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

After months of anticipation, Liberty-Benton High School students returned for the 2022-2023 school year to a new and improved building.

This past summer, the high school underwent a complete transformation, including:

- Converting the library into additional classrooms
- Modifying the cafeteria to include learning and collaboration spaces
- Relocating the Choir room and Computer Lab
- Adding air conditioning to the gymnasium

The project was funded by the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission through the Rebuilding Ohio Schools Program and the bond issue passed by the community on May 7, 2019. The state's share of the cost is 57% while 43% is being covered by local dollars.

We are so excited about the enhanced opportunities for learning and collaboration this newly renovated space provides our students.



JOIN, LIKE & FOLLOW  
US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

@LibertyBentonLocalSchools  
@LBLocalSchools  
@libertybentoneagles



Liberty-Benton Local Schools  
9190 Co Rd 9  
Findlay, OH 45840

