

EAGLE MESSENGER

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF LIBERTY-BENTON LOCAL SCHOOLS | FALL 2024 NEWSLETTER

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

A Quarter of Growth and Gratitude: How Our Community Makes a Difference



DEAR LIBERTY-BENTON COMMUNITY,

We are well into the 2024-2025 school year and my second year as superintendent. As I reflect on the first quarter, I'm grateful for the many well-rounded experiences we are able to provide our students. From alumni visits

that teach students about future pathways and our Leader in Me program that helps build leadership and life skills, to events like our Military Appreciation Night and the Raise the Bar Career Expo, our Eagles are learning to soar.

Time and again, I'm reminded of the common thread that allows our schools to be great – it's you, our community. We are blessed to have staff that show how much they care each day. We are blessed to have involved parents, active partners, and the resources to expand our students' horizons.

As you read this newsletter and all of the great things happening across our campus, I hope you'll remember that you are an essential part of our success story. Thank you for being with us every step of the way.

Bruce Otley, Superintendent

Students Recognized for Perfect Scores

The Liberty-Benton Board of Education recently celebrated alongside 20 students and their families for earning perfect scores on their spring state tests. Six students achieved a perfect score two years running while two students have received perfect scores three years in a row! Not to be left out, two students got perfect scores in both math and science. Congrats to all and keep up the good work!



Pictured left to right: Row 1: Caroline Smith, Evan Buckley, Parth Lalji Row 2: Board Member Heather Franks, Board President Jim Mace, Cameron Pickens, Drew Sharpe, Brayden Butler, Sawyer Robb, and Superintendent Bruce Otley. Row 3: Board Member A.J. Granger, Isaac Koenig, Bryson Collert, Emery Swaisgood, Ellianna Huckins, Board Member Brian Christiansen, Board Member Steve Benson. Row 4: Reagan Knapke, Arthur Gottardi-Lopes, Lucas Theiss, Jonah Todd. Row 5: Jonathan Coldren, Cooper Cox, Josiah Leichty. Not pictured: Andrew Tomlinson, Henry Trautman.

Liberty-Benton Earns Auditor of State Award



I am proud to share that we have once again received the Auditor of State Award for financial reporting for the 2023 fiscal year. This recognition, given to only 8% of approximately 6,000 publicly audited entities, highlights the district's commitment to financial transparency and excellence.

The award followed a comprehensive audit by the Auditor of State's Office, which ensures recipients meet strict standards, including:

- **Timely Reporting:** Filing financial reports by the statutory deadline.
- **Clean Audit:** No findings for recovery, material citations, or significant deficiencies.
- **Compliance:** No public records or ethics violations.

This achievement reflects the dedication of every district employee and their commitment to responsible management of taxpayer dollars. Maintaining financial integrity ensures effective use of funds to support students and educational programs, reinforcing Liberty-Benton's dedication to serving the community with transparency.

Lisa Dobbins

Lisa Dobbins, Treasurer

Liberty-Benton Supporting Hurricane Victims

Liberty-Benton is service focused, helping those in need near and far. We are proud of our students and community members for how they came together to provide two semi truck loads of disaster relief items, including water, cleaning supplies, diapers, food and more for those affected by Hurricane Helene. Special thanks to L-B bus driver, Drew McGuire and Sons Trucking for delivering the supplies to Irwin, Tennessee.



Building on Leader in Me Principles

The district introduced the Leader in Me program a few years ago. This program helps schools build leadership and life skills in students and staff members, create high-trust culture and accelerate academic achievement. Here's a look at some of our Leader in Me activities so far this year.



Second grade students in Mrs. Gierke's class created a beautiful quilt during their Leader in Me time to celebrate the unique differences each student and teacher brings to the classroom.



The Jr. Lighthouse Team kicked off the Leader in Me program for all middle school students at an assembly in September! Action Teams were introduced and students submitted their requests. What a great kickoff to another year of fun and engaging Leader in Me initiatives!



During their Leader in Me session earlier this year, Mrs. Vicars' first grade class explored Habit 1: Being Proactive. They discussed what it means to be proactive and brainstormed different ways to practice this important skill. Then students chose their favorite action and created a fun craft to accompany the new habit they learned.

Construction Updates

Several updates are underway to our athletic facilities, including the renovation of our softball field. Thanks to our donors and dedicated volunteers, this upgrade will enhance the playing experience and provide critical benefits, especially with Ohio's unpredictable spring weather. We are especially grateful for the quick turnaround on this project, which ensures our athletes can enjoy the new field this spring.

A turf field offers excellent drainage, reducing rainouts and ensuring a consistent playing schedule. It also requires less maintenance, keeping the field in top condition and supporting safe, high-quality training and competition.

Stay tuned for our official dedication ceremony, where we will recognize the generous individuals and businesses whose support is shaping the future of our athletics for years to come.

Other improvements include the installation of new football goalposts on the grass soccer field, adding versatility for both football and soccer. A concrete pad has also been poured for bleachers, which will soon be relocated from the old football stadium.

Additionally, the first steel beams for our new 18,000-square-foot bus garage are now in place. Scheduled for completion by the end of 2024, the facility will feature a wash bay, maintenance bay, restrooms, break room, two offices, and 13 bays for bus and equipment storage.

Thank you to everyone who continues to support these exciting improvements to our facilities! These updates will benefit our students and community for years to come.



District Welcomes Grandparents to Campus

Liberty-Benton Elementary and Middle Schools welcomed more than 1,000 grandparents to campus for its biennial Grandparent's Day event on Oct. 21. Grandparents – or other special guests who play a “grand” role in our students' lives – attended a 30-minute class and enjoyed coffee and other light breakfast treats in the morning as well as a complimentary lunch.

Thank you to our PTO for sponsoring the event and our 40+ volunteers and staff for making our grandparents feel so grand!



National Honor Society Welcomes New Inductees

The National Junior Honor Society and National Honor Society recently inducted a new group of students celebrated for their academic excellence, leadership, and service. These students exemplify the core values of NJHS through their dedication and positive impact on the school community. Congratulations to all the new members!

National Junior Honor Society Inductees



Front (L to R): Ashlynn Thomas, Danika Ebert, Grady Hottinger, Josie Kern, Emma Lieb, Isabelle Miller, Adisynn Parks, Berkley Phillips, Brady Ruetz, Claire St. Amour

Row 2 (L to R): Jillian Butler, Tatum Beckley, Chloe Griffith, Josie Hochstettler, Lyla Hollopeter, Sydney Nealis, Brenna Rosengarten, Max Strahm, Bryson Valasek, Janessa Todd, Bethany Wappelhorst

Row 3 (L to R): Courtney Eyink, Elise Brzeznski, Kylie Carr, Devyn Ebert, Ava Ellerbrock, Audrey Johnson, Summer King, Clara Matthes, Hudson Lee, Jacob Nelson, Elaina Slone, Deana Tulley, Nathan Xayasy

Row 4 (L to R): Emelia Kin, Kiera Collert, Abbi Conrad, Elliana Huckins, Carson Kaedaeng, Weston Buttermore, Shelby Jenkins, Rowan Martien, Alexa Padron, Ben Sadler, Matthew Strete, Jonah Todd, Julia Weyer, Savannah Winget

National Honor Society Inductees



Front (L to R): Mara Moser, Lilly Mead, Isabella Deal, Jude Ciraldo, Evelyn Checki, Calista Hamilton, Payton Myers, Payton Spence, Alena Newhouse, Jenna Nelson, Gracie Niese, Sri Senthilkumar, Kailee Williamson, Preston Xayasy

Row 2 (L to R): Cooper Cox, Lukas Dorman, Lillian Hamilton, Adelyn Frakes, Hannah Jenkins, Aidyn Levenhagen, Claire McDaniel, Jay Lincoln, Isaiah Naylor, Emma Recker, Jailee Sarmina, Camille St. Amour, Henry Troutman, Celeste Taylor

Row 3 (L to R): Andrew Berger, Jarrett Birkemeier, Alex Boecker, Austin Collert, Jon Coldren, Ben Gonda, Aiden Hatch, Jackson Hochstettler, Evan Makowski, Jacob Schieltz, Ella Rioch, Sara Smith, Elise Spears, Lauren Starcher

Row 4 (L to R): Ben Beard, Austin Berger, Hudson Day, Zach Elchert, Sam Fredritz, Will Granger, Aly Hocanson, Ally Dysert, Lincoln Holler, Reid Irwin, Aiden Lee, Jaxon Rath, Isaac Schworm, Major Stevens, Isaiah Todd, Andrew Tomlinson, Chase Troyer, Parker Wright

Raising the Bar With Career Expo

Liberty-Benton hosted 27 high school students from Hancock County schools during the Raise the Bar Education Career Expo on Oct. 24. Students learned from teachers, administrators and classified staff about career options in education and the training required.



Alum Returns to Inspire STEAM Students

Liberty-Benton Middle School STEAM students welcomed a special guest during their bridge unit. Alum Will Poling returned to share his journey to becoming a civil engineer, offering students an inside look at the skills needed to pursue a career in the field as well as what the day-to-day life of an engineer looks like.

Thanks to Will, our learners have a better understanding of the STEAM careers available to them!



Homecoming a Success

Another homecoming is in the books!
Congratulations to this year's court!



Queen candidates, from left to right:
Madi Gaerke, Carmen Hohman, Avery Knepper,
Izzy Jolliff and Hope Woods

King candidates, from left to right:
Trevor Ferris, Brayden Lemire, Jake Gerken,
Silas Arredond and Will Niese

Students Tackle Invasive Species, Raise Awareness of Local Ecosystem

Seventh grade students recently took their science and writing lessons outside the classroom and into the woods with a meaningful service learning project. In partnership with Oakwoods Nature Preserve, students removed invasive species. Now, they are researching local plant species and creating informational brochures and flyers aimed at educating the community and sparking interest in our local ecosystem.

Naturalists from Oakwoods are reviewing the student's work to ensure accuracy. What a perfect way for students to understand that their research and writing can have a true impact on society!



New Band Trailer Hits the Road

Our band is stepping out in style this year with an all-new trailer! Purchased last summer, it is hard to miss thanks to a decal wrap complete with Liberty-Benton's logo and colors.

The trailer is six feet longer than the previous mode of transportation, giving the band more space for instruments, uniforms and other equipment, ensuring our musicians are ready for every game and competition.

The new trailer and associated branding were made possible thanks to a partnership between the district and the Band Boosters. Look for it at upcoming events and join us in cheering on our band this year!



Class of 2025 Parking Spots Show L-B Pride

There are so many milestones throughout a student's senior year. The class of 2025 kicked off the year by painting their parking spots, a unique tradition that allows seniors to display their passions and show a little L-B pride!



FALL SPORTS WRAP UP

High School



FOOTBALL

Congrats to our football team, who finished the regular season as BVC champs with an 8-0 record. Several players (and coaches) were also honored with awards:

BVC Offensive Player of the Year: **Zach Elchert**

BVC Defensive Lineman of the Year: **CJ Barbara**

BVC Defensive Player of the Year: **Austin Collert**

BVC Offensive Lineman of the Year: **Will Granger**

BVC Coach of the Year: **Scott Garlock**



And thank you to our band and cheerleaders for always having our backs and creating a fun atmosphere!

VOLLEYBALL

The volleyball team finished the season strong with a 14-8 record and a district run. Lindsay May was named 1st Team BVC.



GOLF

The golf team was BVC runners-up and Andrew Tomlinson advanced to the district meet.



CROSS COUNTRY

The boys' cross country team were BVC and district champions, regional runners-up and placed 15 at the state meet. Congratulations to the following for being named 1st Team BVC: Jackson Hochstettler, Cohen Levenhagen, Aiden Lee, Lane Fannin and Bryce Hans. Jackson Hochstettler

was also named BVC Runner of the Year and Coach Dillon Webster was named BVC Coach of the Year.

The girls' team also fared well this fall. They placed fourth in the BVC, were regional team qualifiers, and Madi Gaerke received 1st Team BVC.



SOCCER

Our soccer teams scored big this year! The boys' team finished 20-2, winning the NCOSA league. They advanced to the regional finals and several players were given league honors.

1st Team All-League: **Garrett Nealis, Will Niese, Trevor Ferris and Aiden Hatch**

League Player of the Year: **Garrett Nealis**

League Coach of the Year: **Aaron Troyer**

The girls' team was also league champions, ending the season at district finals with a record of 10-5-4. Congratulations to Claire Johnson, Ally Ferris and Layla Tiell on their 1st Team All-League achievements.



Middle School

CROSS COUNTRY

After winning the conference title, the middle school girls' cross country team reached the podium with a fourth place finish at this year's state meet. The team had an outstanding season, led by Josie Kern and followed closely by Emma Reider, Josie Hochstettler, Audrey Johnson and Lyla Hollopeter. Josie Hochstettler, Claire St. Amour, Ava Ellerbrock and Hazel Herrera wrapped up the season with career personal records. Congratulations!



VOLLEYBALL

Well done to the girls' seventh and eighth grade volleyball teams for being named BVC champions.





Liberty-Benton Local Schools
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L-B Shows Appreciation for Military Personnel

The Support Our Soldiers Action Team (S.O.S.), advised by Mrs. Duker, organized a Military Appreciation Night for the L-B community. Veterans, active duty military, Purple Star and National Guard families received a free meal sponsored by Findlay AMVETS and admission to the football game.

A chair honoring our Prisoners of War and those Missing in Action was purchased thanks to fundraising efforts by the S.O.S. Action Team and other donations. Shoutout to the Bowling Green State University ROTC program for loaning their U.S. flag for the singing of our National Anthem.

Eagles Gather in Gratitude for Veterans Day Celebration

On Monday, November 11, Veterans Day, our entire school community came together to honor those who have served our country with a special K-12 program. Nearly 300 veterans attended this heartfelt event. The day began with a warm welcome and a delicious breakfast for our veterans followed by an assembly. Our grounds were beautifully adorned with over 1,000 American flags as part of our Field of Flags display.

This event was also made possible by the dedicated efforts of our Support Our Soldiers (S.O.S.) Action Teams. The high school S.O.S. Action Team, led by Mrs. Duker and Mr. Arnold, played a pivotal role in planning and executing the assembly, while the middle school team, under the guidance of Mr. Marshall, also contributed to making the day special.

We are grateful for everyone's efforts in creating an event that reflects our deep appreciation for the service and sacrifice of our veterans.

