

Liberty-Benton Local Schools
Special Education Practices
For Indicator 1 – Graduation

- 1) **Graduation Requirements** - When it comes to graduation requirements, the starting point is the High School Guidance Counselor. The HS guidance counselor will review the diploma requirements with all students, parents, teachers, and staff, and the HS guidance counselor will meet and work more closely with any student who is deemed to be at-risk of not completing one or more areas of the regular diploma requirements.
 - a. The HS guidance counselor will review each student's graduation plan with them during the Spring scheduling process annually, in addition to one-on-one meetings with students who have questions through the year or for students who need more assistance.
 - b. The HS guidance counselor will maintain a color-coded spreadsheet for each student in that grade level that lists the following items toward earning a regular diploma. This spreadsheet is updated weekly as data is available, and the information is reviewed at least annually with students and additionally by request.
 - i. The 2 Diploma Seals for meeting the Readiness requirements including: the Student Engagement Seal, the Technology Seal, the Fine and Performing Arts Seal, the Community Service Seal, the Ohio Means Jobs Readiness Seal, an Industry-Recognized Credential Seal, a College-Ready Seal, a Military Seal, a Seal of Biliteracy, a Citizenship Seal, a Science Seal, and an Honors Diploma Seal.
 - ii. The Competency Requirement through one of the following options:
 1. Option 1: Earning a competency score of 684 or higher on the Algebra 1 state testing and a competency score of 684 or higher on the English II state testing.
 2. Option 2: Two career-focused activities with at least one being a foundational option.
 - a. Foundational options: Cumulative score of proficient on 3 or more WebXams; a 12-point industry recognized credential; complete a registered pre-apprenticeship, an apprenticeship, or show evidence of acceptance into an approved apprenticeship; have a state-issued license for a practice in a vocation.
 - b. Supporting options: work-based learning; earn the workforce readiness score on the Workkeys test; earn the Ohio Means Jobs Readiness Seal.

3. Option 3: Competency through the College Credit Plus (CCP) Program, earn credit in a non-remedial math or English course for the subject area not passed.
 4. Option 4: Provide evidence of enlistment in a branch of the armed forces.
 5. Option 5: Obtain a remediation-free score on the math or English subject area of the ACT or SAT.
- c. The HS guidance counselor will review with all students, parents, and teachers the Ohio Graduation Requirements for Class of 2023 and Beyond. This information is presented annually during the scheduling process, listed in the handbook, discussed at staff meetings, and shared additionally with students as requested.
 - d. All HS Graduation Requirements are listed in the high school handbooks (currently Pages 37-38) annually, and all students and parents must sign that they have reviewed all information in the school handbook annually.
 - e. For students on an IEP, the intervention specialists review the graduation requirements with their students and the IEP team during the annual IEP meeting. The intervention specialists specifically point out any areas of concern from the HS guidance office such as number of credits needed, state test scores needed, or competency and readiness seals still needed. They direct students and parents with questions to meet with the HS guidance counselor.
 - f. For any senior student who has not yet met all of their diploma and graduation requirements, the HS counselor will review what is needed with the student, parents, HS principal, teachers in the areas of concern, and for IEP students, their intervention specialists as well. This information is reviewed at least annually with all students and more frequently during students' junior and senior years.
 - i. The intervention specialists and high school paraprofessional will look for ways to assist students in their areas of deficiency. For example, the student's schedule may be adjusted to accommodate time for the student to complete an Ohio Means Jobs Readiness Seal and Rise Up Industry Credential with small group assistance from a teacher or intervention specialist.
 - g. Our administrative team and school counselor provide the information to all teachers on graduation requirements, alternate pathways, and graduation plans. In addition, our IEP teams incorporate these requirements into each student's IEP and transition information that is reviewed at least annually with the student's IEP team. This information is presented annually and also included in the handbook.
- 2) **At-Risk Students** - For any student in Grades 6-12 who has been considered at-risk of not graduating, an Intervention Assistance Team (IAT) will meet to prepare a list of recommendations for assisting the individual student, and this meeting will occur on a regular basis as long as there continues to be some kind of deficit.

- a. Topics of concern may include: grades, behavior, attendance, state testing, transportation, financial needs, or concerns outside of the school environment.
 - b. The IAT will meet to establish options for providing intervention in the areas of need for the identified student. Members of the IAT will include the school guidance counselor, homeroom teacher, academic teacher(s), school psychologist, intervention specialist, principal, and if appropriate, the school resource officer, mental health counselor, school nurse, outside therapists, and/or community agencies, etc.... Meetings will occur on a regular basis as long as there continues to be an area of deficit.
 - c. Once the IAT has generated the list of appropriate interventions and supports, a point person from the listed IAT members will be assigned to oversee and coordinate each topic with the student and parent on an on-going basis through the year.
 - d. The IAT will meet through the year on a regular schedule to monitor the student's progress toward earning a diploma and improving the area(s) of concern/deficiency.
- 3) **Students Considering Dropping Out** - For any student in Grades 6-12 who indicates a desire to withdraw from school, the school counselor will pursue an IAT process to address the student's concerns.
- a. Liberty-Benton does not want to see any student drop out of school.
 - b. The members of the IAT will work with the student and parent to review options toward earning a regular diploma and help to identify the list of steps to aid in the process.
 - c. Topics of concern may include: grades, behavior, attendance, state testing, transportation, financial needs, or concerns outside of the school environment.
 - d. The IAT will meet to establish options for providing intervention in the areas of need for the identified student. Members of the IAT will include the school guidance counselor, homeroom teacher, academic teacher(s), school psychologist, intervention specialist, principal, and if appropriate, the school resource officer, mental health counselor, school nurse, school career network coordinator, outside therapists, and/or community agencies, etc....
 - e. Once the IAT has generated the list of appropriate interventions and supports, a point person from the listed IAT members will be assigned to oversee and coordinate each topic with the student and parent.
 - f. The IAT will meet through the year on a regular schedule to monitor the student's progress toward earning a diploma and improving the area(s) of concern/deficiency.
 - g. If the IAT feels it is in the student's best interest toward successfully earning a regular diploma, the student may be recommended for an alternative school placement and/or a digital/virtual school environment.

- 4) **Providing Social-Emotional Support** - Liberty-Benton Local Schools K-12 utilizes a curriculum evidence-based program to provide social-emotional support. Working with students to develop these skills is another way to help a student to progress successfully toward graduation.
- a. In addition to the school counselor in each building, Liberty-Benton has a mental health counselor on staff, and both types of counselors get to know the students closely to support their needs. In addition, Liberty-Benton is a Leader in Me district, and all students and staff are assigned to a WIN group (What I Need) or grade level LEAD group. In these WIN/LEAD groups, the teacher serves as an advisor and works with the student individually to encourage and support good grades, academics, attendance, behavior, and progress. The WIN/LEAD group teaches weekly lead lessons to this small group on the 7 Habits of Highly Successful Teens, and they work to lead, mentor, and coach the development of social-emotional and soft skills in all students. Each building's staff members also complete a relationship audit to ensure each student is paired up with multiple caring adult mentors at school. Students are given the opportunity to choose their own Leader in Me action team to participate in, where students develop and apply their social-emotional and soft skills to particular projects in their area of interest. This program is to support the Liberty-Benton belief of all students having a sense of belonging, connection, and engagement to their school, classmates, school staff, and community.
 - b. Through the district-wide Leader in Me program, WIN groups, student-led action teams, and staff teamwork and mentorship of students, a lot of focus on school culture, relationships, sense of student belonging, and student engagement occurs annually. Staff members know students on an individual basis, and all students, including students with disabilities, are welcomed, encouraged, and supported. As part of the annual Measurable Results Assessments, each school building Lighthouse Team and Principal regularly collect the data from students, parents, and staff to make sure they feel their level of engagement and support is easily evident within the schools.
 - c. Recognizing students' achievements and accomplishments:
 - i. At the elementary level, students are recognized during monthly town hall meetings for their achievements and accomplishments in reading, math, citizenship, attendance, behavior, perfect scores, and leadership.
 - ii. At the middle and high school levels, students are recognized quarterly through their WIN groups, grade level teams, IEP teams, and at the building level. Students are recognized for attendance, academics, behavior, perfect scores, leadership, and achievement.
 - iii. At all levels, there are positive communications to home, positive social media shout outs for individuals, and newsletter recognitions for groups of students on an on-going basis.

- d. Our school district provides professional development training to our teachers on identifying students at-risk, CPI non-violent crisis prevention intervention techniques, building threat assessment teams, English Language Learner resources, and trauma-informed care. These professional development topics are coordinated through district administrators and occur on scheduled professional development days, during building staff meetings, and during pull-out departmental time.
- 5) **Coursework Connections to College and Career Success** - To help all students grow and develop as leaders so they may be future community leaders following successful graduation, Liberty-Benton Local Schools works to connect schoolwork with college and career success options.
- a. Liberty-Benton traditionally follows the Model Schools Concepts of Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships.
 - i. The belief is that students cannot succeed academically with rigor and relevance without first having strong relationships in their school. This is a school cultural focus of Liberty-Benton Local Schools.
 - b. The Liberty-Benton Local School District has three entities that are frequently discussed and studied with students and staff to ensure that classes and programs align and connect to: 1) the Liberty-Benton Board of Education Ends Policies, which address academics, good character, independent living, critical thinking, and American citizenship; 2) the Liberty-Benton Strategic Plan, which addresses goals in academics, student pathways for career, college, military, and life readiness, and community partnerships for student learning; 3) the Liberty-Benton Portrait of an Eagle, which lists the skills and qualities we want all students to achieve: people of positive character, service-focused, emotionally intelligent, resilient students, leaders, and critical thinkers. Professional development for staff along with interactions with community businesses to focus and align classroom activities to these local beliefs and college and career success goals are regularly reviewed to be an on-going part of school culture and strategic planning.
- 6) **Community Partnerships** – These partnership programs help to prepare all students for life after graduation.
- a. The Liberty-Benton Local School District partners with the Hancock County Chamber of Commerce, Raise the Bar, and many local businesses to support our students throughout the school year in many meaningful ways at various grade levels. These business partners assist in grade level mock interviews; financial literacy activities with Real Money, Real World; social etiquette and leadership activities with the Amazing Shake; career field interests and independent living skills demonstrations during Life Readiness Day; class speakers on a variety of topics and grade levels; and mentors and job shadowing opportunities.
 - b. In addition, Liberty-Benton partners with the Hancock County Sheriff's Dept and has their own School Resource Officer who works with students in and out of the classroom throughout the school year. He is actually a huge positive influence, and many students choose to use their PBIS rewards to have lunch with the SRO.

- c. Liberty-Benton Local Schools also partners with the Hancock County Health Dept and has their own school nurse on staff. In addition to assisting students with their medical needs, the school nurse also provides medical and safety training and professional development at least annually.
- d. Liberty-Benton also has their own mental health counselor, in addition to separate school counselors in each school building. The mental health counselor maintains a regular schedule for providing services and support to students.
- e. Liberty-Benton High School has their own Career Network Coordinator who works with students individually, in groups, and with classes to help them learn more about potential careers, tour local businesses, and make connections with professionals in the field for mentorship and shadowing opportunities.
- f. Liberty-Benton High School is adding a Careers teacher to the staff for the 2025-2026 school year to assist students in learning more about various careers they are interested in. These activities will occur during classes and WIN/LEAD groups.
- g. All of these providers help to support students to be successful in their education, to do their best in all aspects of life and growing up, to investigate and choose a career of interest, and to successfully earn their regular school diploma. Together, the High School Guidance Counselor, intervention specialists, and WIN group teachers work with individual students to help in matching students up to these resources for their personal assistance in the area of careers, and this occurs throughout the year on an on-going basis.

7) **Learning Environment Options** – To best meet the needs and interests of all students, Liberty-Benton High School offers many options in the learning environment.

- a. Students have the opportunity to attend a variety of career-tech classes at Millstream Career Center in Findlay as part of their high school day and schedule during their junior and senior years. The High School Counselor provides this information and coordinates the registration for students.
 - i. The IEP students must apply and be accepted to the vocational programs they are interested in, like their peers, as many different schools belong to the compact that provides the Millstream Career Center programs.
- b. High school senior students may participate in flexible scheduling at the HS level with arriving after first period or leaving after seventh period if they are in good academic standing and receive approval by the high school office. The High School Counselor coordinates this with students and their schedule.
- c. High school students may also choose to participate in the work-based learning program, and if so, they may leave school early to work at a job. The work-based learning teacher coordinates this with students and employers.
- d. Students could possibly attend the virtual Eagle Academy or could also attend the Hancock County Alternative Opportunity Center, which offers in-person and virtual options. The High School Counselor coordinates these options with students.
- e. For any at-risk students who may be behind on credits, students may complete credit recovery packets that are hard copy, or they may complete credit recovery

coursework through the virtual Eagle Academy. Eagle Academy students do also receive support directly from an LB teacher for this option. Students may also attend summer school at a neighboring larger school if they so choose. All of these options are coordinated through the High School Counselor.

- f. Students with disabilities have the same options as their general education peers to participate in extracurricular activities. We encourage all of our students to participate in different school activities to further develop their sense of belonging to their school and help to engage them with activities for enjoyment. Different announcements, flyers, and emails help to promote the different extracurricular options. Students will see daily video announcements, receive some activity information via emails, and will also hear daily announcements during their WIN group time. The WIN group teachers or any office staff member can help assist students with questions related to these school activities.
- g. Through our own career network coordinator, high school guidance counselor, and our partnership with Raise the Bar, we provide students with opportunities for job shadows, mock interviews, business tours, and internships/apprenticeships. All high school students participate in an all-day Life Readiness Day with career talks, a job fair, and demonstrations on a variety of independent living activities: for example, fixing dry wall, doing taxes, repairing a car, doing laundry,... All students may participate in our work-based learning program and be released from school for employment opportunities. For our IEP students who would benefit from additional resources, intervention specialists and the Director of Federal Programs help students submit referrals to OOD - Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities for additional work-based learning support, resources, job coaching, financial assistance for job-related materials, and continued support after high school.