

EAGLE MESSENGER

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF LIBERTY-BENTON LOCAL SCHOOLS | FALL 2023 NEWSLETTER

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

A SOARING START TO THE YEAR



We are off to a fantastic start for the 23-24 school year! It was wonderful to celebrate the grand opening of our new PreK-8 facility with everyone, and there have been lots of exciting things happening districtwide. Our sixth graders just returned from a trip north to the YMCA Storer Camps in Jackson, Michigan; our high school students experienced an exciting Leadership Day;

our elementary students have been making great use of our new instructional spaces, and our fall athletes have been competing with Eagle pride.

Liberty-Benton had another excellent performance on the district report card, earning 4.5 out of 5 stars. In fact, Liberty-Benton ranked in the top 15% of all school districts in the state in the overall grade card rating. Worth noting, the district had 5-star ratings in Achievement, Gap Closing, Early Literacy, and Graduation. The district earned 3 stars in Progress, which means the district met, but didn't exceed expected levels of growth. Since Liberty-Benton is perennially high performing, it is statistically improbable to exceed expected levels of growth year after year. Phrased another way, a rating of 5 in the Progress category is a place high-performing districts visit but can't indefinitely stay. Overall, LB continues to excel academically. I'd like to congratulate our students, principals, and teachers for a job well done and thank our parents and community for your continued encouragement and support.

Academics prepare students for success in life beyond high school. This year, students in grade 8 will all experience a 7-week course in financial literacy. Students in grades 11 and 12 will also have a semester of economics. These courses are designed to teach LB students important concepts such as banking, budgeting, checking and savings, investing, compounding interest, debt, credit cards, and loans. In addition, all high school students will be taking the You Science Aptitude and Career Discovery Assessments that will help students identify and match their unique strengths and talents with possible career pathways.

New facilities, new experiences, outstanding academics, competitive athletics, and a new school year! Together as one community, we have much to be proud of! It is indeed a great day to be a Liberty-Benton Eagle!

FLY HIGHER!

A stylized blue ink signature of Bruce Otley.

Bruce Otley, Superintendent



All-New PK-8 Building Opens

A ribbon cutting and grand opening ceremony was held at our all-new PK-8 building on Aug. 28. It was incredible to see the support and excitement from our staff, students, and community as they enjoyed building walkthroughs, music, food, games, and more! Our students are off to a great start learning in their new setting. Thank you to everyone who helped bring this project to fruition!



The Sidewalk Team

The Sidewalk Team is on a mission! Our awesome eighth grade students, along with Mr. Leatherman, Mr. Otley, Mrs. Taylor, and County Engineers Doug Cade and Kyle Parker, took a tour of the area for their grant project. Fingers crossed their grant project is selected this March!



District Receives Purple Star

Supporting Military Families

The Ohio Department of Education sponsors the Purple Star Award, which recognizes schools that show a major commitment to students and families connected to our nation's military. Liberty-Benton's high school, middle school, and elementary school were each awarded this designation this year. Events that led to the award include:

- Veterans Day activities
- Jeans for Troops
- Purple Up Spirit Week



Book Vending Machines Encourage Love of Reading

Thanks to a grant from the Findlay-Hancock County Community Foundation and the Liberty-Benton PTO, Liberty-Benton is offering not one, but two book vending machines this year!

Students at the elementary and middle school will have the chance to earn points for positive behavior and for displaying Leader in Me traits that they can exchange for books from the vending machine. Additionally, Eagle Reader of the Month awardees at the elementary level, and Student of the Month and Quarter awardees at the middle school will also receive a book.

We hope that the machines will help instill a love of reading as well as build a home library for many of our students.



HOMECOMING A SUCCESS

Congratulations to this year's homecoming court! Queen candidates, from left to right: Kaytlin Erdeljac, Alivia Ricker, Lauren Gerken, Wynter Hardy-Fowler, and Ava Hatch. King candidates, from left to right: Jake Elchert, Shane Lasiter, Javan Carpenter, CJ Beeman, and Mason Modd.



Additionally, our cheerleaders did a fantastic job organizing this year's homecoming parade. The entire LB community was represented, including the elementary, middle, and high schools. A total of 35 groups participated and students, families, and community members alike enjoyed treats from the nine food trucks present.

WELCOME NEW STAFF



Stephanie Theiss
Third Grade Teacher



Michael Frankart
K-4 General Music/
Assistant Fifth Grade Band
Director



Alyson Egbert
Fourth Grade Reading
Teacher



Kelly Beckman
American Sign Language
Teacher



Luke Siefing
Director of Operations



Christina Hensley
Seventh Grade English
Teacher



John Hammersmith
Strength and Conditioning
Coordinator



Building Leaders Through Leadership Day

Liberty-Benton High School students recently hosted a Leadership Day for their peers. The event was organized by the LEAD Team, and the school's 23 Action Teams kicked off the day through the Leader in Me process. Students did team-building activities throughout the day and heard from guest speaker William Blackford IV, a national speaker for Franklin Covey.



TREASURER'S UPDATE



We are so excited that the doors to our new PK-8 building are finally open! Our students are enjoying expanded learning opportunities as a result of this modern space. This facility has been funded through a combination of local and state dollars.

In May of 2019, our community passed a bond issue for a combined 7.3 mills. Shortly thereafter, the tax issue for the high school expired, resulting in an actual impact of 5.5 mills. Then in January of 2020, the local tax impact was reduced again to 4.35 mills or \$12.69 per month per \$100,000 assessed property value. To date, just over \$16 million in local tax dollars have gone toward the construction of our new PK-8 building and renovation of the High School. Currently, we are collecting 3.4 mills on the bond issue, or \$9.92 per month per \$100,000 of assessed property value.

The Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC), which is responsible for guiding capital projects for Ohio's K-12 schools, has contributed \$20.9 million to the PK-8 building and High School renovations.

An additional \$7.9 million has been expensed for Locally Funded Initiatives that include enhancements to the new and existing building above and beyond the OFCC's scope of work, such as material and safety upgrades and additional square footage.

Thank you to everyone who made this project possible and for our community's support of our schools so that our Eagles can continue soaring into their future.

Respectfully,

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

Lisa Dobbins, Treasurer

LB Celebrates National Arts in Education Week

National Arts in Education Week was celebrated Sept. 10-16 across our Eagle community. The week is designed to shine a spotlight on the transformative power of arts in education. Arts education includes an array of disciplines including music, theater, literature, and visual art, and is part of a balanced curriculum.



Liberty-Benton Middle School students create unique sketchbook covers with Mrs. Wawrzyniak.



Eighth grade students created semi-blind contour drawings of shoes before naming the shoe, deciding what famous person would wear their shoe, where it would be advertised and sold, the price, and the target age range.





Sixth Graders Travel to Michigan for Outdoor Education

Sixth graders spent Sept. 25-29 visiting the Storer Camps in Jackson, Michigan, where they had experiences that taught them personal responsibility, self-reliance, and teamwork. They had the chance to learn about horses, what it's like to live in the back country, and how to build a shelter and start a fire in the wilderness. They went fishing, canoeing, rock wall climbing, and hiking, a first for many of our students. Best of all, they made memories that will last a lifetime!



New Equipment Bringing Smiles to Faces

Our elementary students are having a blast sliding and swinging on our brand new playground equipment! Additionally, BenQ™ boards are helping our teachers and students learn in new ways.



Egg, Anyone?

Eighth grade science students recently completed a classic experiment: protecting an egg from a high altitude drop. This taught students lessons about construction and engineering while reinforcing concepts of force and energy.



County-wide Professional Development Hosted by District

Liberty-Benton hosted more than 600 educators from schools across Hancock County on Oct. 9. The day of professional development included various breakout sessions on topics like differentiated instruction, technology in the classroom, social-emotional learning, and behavioral supports. Teachers also enjoyed a tour of Millstream Career Center and learned more about what they have to offer. Thank you to Liberty-Benton's food services department for working so hard to feed everyone!

**Liberty-Benton Tops
Charts Again on
State Report Card**



Earning **4.5 out of 5 stars**

**Ranking in the top 15% of all
607 school districts** in the state
of Ohio in total grade card points

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