



Liberty-Benton Local Schools

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Where Eagles Learn To Soar

May 22, 2026

Dear Liberty-Benton Parents and Guardians,

Liberty-Benton High School is excited to introduce a meaningful new opportunity for students beginning in Fall 2026 with the launch of our Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) program. At its heart, JROTC is a leadership development program designed to help students grow in confidence, character, responsibility and service.

This elective course will give students the opportunity to build skills that extend far beyond the classroom. Through JROTC, students will focus on citizenship, teamwork, communication, personal wellness, respect, accountability and integrity. These are qualities that help students become stronger leaders, better classmates and more engaged members of their school and community.

We understand families may have questions about what JROTC is and what students can expect from the program. Participation in JROTC does not require students to join the military or commit to military service in any way. The program is not a military recruitment program, disciplinary program or requirement for students interested in military careers. Instead, it is designed to help students develop leadership and life skills that can benefit them in college, careers and everyday life.

Students involved in athletics, music, FFA and other extracurricular activities can still participate in JROTC during the school day as part of their schedule. Depending on student interest and enrollment, opportunities may also include activities such as Color Guard, Raider Challenge fitness competitions, Robotics Team and Drone Team experiences.

The program will be led by Major Joel Sabella, who brings 20 years of service in the United States Army and a strong background in education, leadership, communications and technology. Major Sabella holds a Master's degree in Higher Education Administration and Leadership, a Bachelor's degree in Childhood Special Education and has taught at the collegiate level as an Assistant Professor of Military Science. His experience and commitment to student growth will help create a program rooted in high expectations, encouragement and support.

We believe this program has the potential to make a lasting impact on students by helping them discover their strengths, serve others and develop the leadership skills they will carry with them well beyond high school.

Families interested in learning more about JROTC are encouraged to contact Mr. Gerken (bgerken@liberty-benton.org) or Mrs. Vaughn (kvaughn@liberty-benton.org). It is not too late to schedule the class as an elective course.

We are excited for this new chapter and the opportunities it will bring for Liberty-Benton students.

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Superintendent

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Superintendent
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LIBERTY-BENTON
EAGLES

LIBERTY-BENTON JROTC: Developing Future Leaders!

JROTC IS A LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

JROTC IS NOT:

-  • Is **NOT** a **MILITARY RECRUITMENT PROGRAM**
-  • Is **NOT** a commitment to join the military
-  • Is **NOT** just for students joining the military or considering ROTC in college
-  • Is **NOT** for disciplinary correction

JROTC IS:

-  • Focused on **CITIZENSHIP, CHARACTER & RESPONSIBILITY**
-  • Builds **CONFIDENCE, DISCIPLINE & SELF-RESPECT**
-  • Develops **COMMUNICATION & TEAMWORK Skills**
-  • Promotes **SERVICE TO SCHOOL & COMMUNITY** 
-  • Promotes **PERSONAL WELLNESS**
-  • Encourages **RESPECT, ACCOUNTABILITY & INTEGRITY**
-  • A **PATHWAY** to develop skills for **COLLEGE, CAREERS & LIFE** 
-  • For students desiring to **develop leadership skills**

JROTC is Student Centered!

Contact Mr. Gerken or Mrs. Vaughn at 419-424-5351 at 419-424-5351 or bgerken@liberty-benton.org kvaughn@liberty-benton.org

Beginning Fall 2026

Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps is a leadership development program that students can schedule as an elective at LBHS starting this coming Fall of 2026.

Q: I already participate in extracurricular activities (athletics, music, FFA etc.), can I still be involved in JROTC?

A: Yes-you can still take the course during the school day, and participate in after school activities as your schedule allows.

Q: What possible activities could be offered?

A: Color Guard, Raider Challenge (fitness courses), Robotics Team, Drone Team. Enrollment in the program may drive some of these options, and we'd like to know what our students might be interested in.

Q: If I enroll in JROTC am I committing to the military?

A: NO. Being involved in JROTC does not obligate you to join the military in any way. But, if you were thinking about possibly having a ROTC experience in college, or would like to see what it might be like to serve, JROTC would be a great experience to have with ZERO obligation to the military.

Q: Do I have to wear a uniform to school every day?

A: No. But there may be scheduled times each month when you may wear a uniform.

Contact Mr. Gerken or Mrs. Vaughn at the high school to schedule!

