

# EAGLE MESSENGER

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF LIBERTY-BENTON LOCAL SCHOOLS | FALL 2021 NEWSLETTER



We are now into the second nine weeks of the 2021-2022 school year, and I think we can all agree, it feels good to be back! In-person interactions with peers and teachers are an integral part of any student's social and emotional development. Witnessing these interactions is something I missed greatly throughout the pandemic, and are something I hope many of us will not take for granted again.

Speaking of the pandemic, it's safe to say that COVID-19 will again present challenges this school year. We are continuing with the safety protocols implemented last year, including cleaning and sanitizing high-touch areas and following social distancing guidelines whenever possible. Masks remain optional in our buildings, but are highly encouraged. Masks are required on buses per an order from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). We also encourage vaccination for those who are eligible. In fact, we recently held an optional vaccine clinic for staff and students of our Eagle community.

Construction is continuing on and around our campus. Our football program, band, and boys and girls soccer teams are taking full advantage of our new turf field. I can't wait to see the progress on the new K-8 building and new fieldhouse as construction continues. They are more than just buildings – they are helping prepare our students for their future.

As always, thank you for being an active part of the Eagle community. I wish everyone a happy and healthy rest of the 2021-2022 school year.

With Gratitude,

**Mark Kowalski**, Superintendent

## IMPORTANT DATES

**NOVEMBER 24-26**

FALL BREAK

**DECEMBER 7**

7:30 PM

HS WINTER CONCERT

**DECEMBER 14**

7:30 PM

MS WINTER CONCERT AT LBHS

**DECEMBER 23-**

**JANUARY 2**

WINTER BREAK

**JANUARY 17**

NO SCHOOL • MLK DAY

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



## STUDENTS TAKE TO THE SKIES WITH LIBERTY-BENTON ALUM

Liberty-Benton alum Kenzie (Alge) Flanagan and her husband Ryan, both pilots, flew in last spring to share a first hand account of what it's like to have a career in aviation with Career Exploration students.

Kenzie presented a unique opportunity to students who wished to learn more – a Discovery Flight. Seniors Allie Hiegel and Shelby Modd took her up on her offer. Both students visited Kent State University last summer where they took to the skies. The Discovery Flight is intended to familiarize students with the airplane, airport, and the flying environment.

# STUDENT REFLECTIONS

BY: ANDREW THOMAS



Hello, my name is Andrew Thomas and I am a senior at Liberty-Benton High School. Throughout my 13 years at Liberty-Benton I have been blessed to be surrounded by great influences and staff and peers who have contributed to my growth as a student and the adult that I will become.

Having a multitude of non-athletic extracurricular activities, such as FCA, Habitudes, Musical, and National Honor Society have allowed me to be involved with different groups of people who also impacted my school life positively. One major highlight of my Liberty-Benton experience is soccer. Throughout all of school, especially high school, I have been able to participate in soccer where I have created some of my fondest memories. Having soccer be an option as an extracurricular activity has allowed me to pursue an experience which I am passionate about and has taught me valuable lessons and leadership skills.

Another highlight of my school experience was joining the musical. My freshman year I did not participate, but I was convinced to join the tech team sophomore year. Joining the musical introduced me to a wide variety of people with different characteristics than my usual group of friends. Many of my favorite memories include the viewing of others' team sporting events. Being involved in the student sections for football, as well as watching the girls soccer and volleyball teams make state tournament runs has become a core memory that I will never forget.

All of these events and memories are great and will last a lifetime, but the relationships and education that I have gained will prove to be the most beneficial to my future as an Eagle.

BY: ALLIE HIEGEL



Liberty-Benton is one of the best communities to be a part of. Coming from St. Michaels into Liberty-Benton my freshman year was very nerve wracking and something I wasn't quite looking forward to. Now, starting my senior year I couldn't imagine being anywhere else. This is due to the wonderful people and the relationships I've made in this school community.

My teachers have made me feel valued and continue to develop and push me to do my best. I remember my freshman year when the Student Council was meeting for the new year. When the announcement came on it said they were looking for anyone to join. One of my teachers looked at me and said "Go be a leader." This certain teacher knew my potential and pushed me to do it. Since then I've been captain of the girls soccer team, a part of Habitudes leadership group and Student Council, Public Relations Manager for Z-Club, leader for FCA, and on the student lead team. These organizations have taught me, and continue to teach me, lifelong lessons that I will always carry with me.

Liberty-Benton can have a reputation for putting sports first. Many times it does feel like athletics are very important but, there is a whole lot more to Liberty-Benton. One of my favorite memories will always be the band playing our fight song through the hallways during the last period on football Fridays. Everyone together singing and cheering on the band brings us all together and gets us excited to have a great weekend. We know leaving school on Friday that we are a part of something very special and that we belong.

Liberty-Benton is truly one of a kind and has been a great home for the past four years. I'm excited for my senior year and can't wait for the memories that my classmates and I will make this year.

## LIBERTY-BENTON ADDED TO PURPLE STAR LIST

Congratulations to Liberty-Benton High School, which was recently awarded the Purple Star designation from the Ohio Department of Education.

The award is given to schools that show support for students and families in their pursuit of serving the U.S. military. Requirements for being named to the list include having a staff point of contact for military students and families and maintaining a dedicated page on the website with resources for military families. Eligible schools also must complete an optional activity, ranging from providing professional development for staff on special considerations for military families to hosting a military recognition event.

Liberty-Benton joins the ranks with 44 other schools across the state.





# DID YOU KNOW FACTS

1

DID YOU KNOW

**11** school bus  
routes travel  
**365**

miles every day transporting  
students to and from school?

2

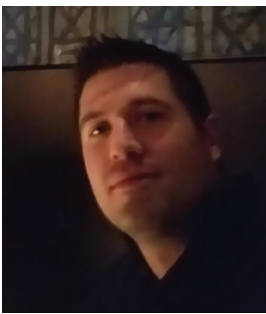
DID YOU KNOW

LB students will travel to

**191**

Fall athletic, academic, and extra  
curricular field trips?

## WELCOME OUR NEW STAFF FOR THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR



**Bryant Miller**  
Eagle Academy



**Christen Shoemaker**  
Lunchroom Monitor



**Christy Cramner**  
7th Grade Math Teacher



**Chyanne Retcher**  
4th Grade Teacher



**Craig Tusing**  
Business Teacher



**Katie Sampsel**  
4th Grade Math and  
Social Studies Teacher  
Assistant High School Girls  
Soccer Coach



**Krista Karhoff**  
Agricultural Education  
Teacher  
FFA Advisor



**Lisa Reider**  
Intervention Specialist



**Patience Secord**  
Kindergarten Aide



**Samantha Borgerson**  
4th Grade Teacher

# UPDATE FROM THE TREASURER



Throughout fiscal years 2020 and 2021, the state invested \$675 million in the Student Health and Wellness program to help school districts support their students' academic achievements through mental health counseling, wraparound services, mentoring, and after-school programs. Governor Mike DeWine signed HB 110, otherwise known as Ohio's two-year budget bill, into law June 30, 2021. The bill extends funding for the Student Health and Wellness program for fiscal years 2022 and 2023.

The program is aligned with Ohio's strategic plan, Each Child, Our Future, which is designed to meet the needs of the whole child. The funds must be used to support one of 11 initiatives outlined in the state budget, and must be developed alongside a community partner.

The district is working with the Hancock County Board of Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS), Hancock Public Health and the Hancock County Educational Service Center to support and expand services to meet the social and emotional needs of our students. Liberty-Benton is using the funds to provide the services of a School Nurse, Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor, School Resource Officer, and support the Leader in Me program.

These additional resources will ensure our students can reach their full potential across their educational journey.

Respectfully,

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

**Lisa Dobbins**, Treasurer

## LIBERTY-BENTON STUDENTS LEARNING HABITS FOR SUCCESS

Liberty-Benton believes all students have important strengths to share. This year, we are helping students discover their strengths and further developing their leadership skills through the Leader in Me program. Lessons and activities for students in grades K-12 will center around Stephen Covey's "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People."

With help from teachers, staff, and trained peers, students will learn to apply the following habits and related principles to their everyday lives:

1. **Be proactive**—focuses on responsibility, choice, accountability, initiative, and resourcefulness
2. **Begin with the end in mind**—teaches vision, commitment, and purpose
3. **Put first things first**—stresses the importance of focus, integrity, discipline, and prioritization
4. **Think win-win**—based on mutual benefit, fairness, and abundance
5. **Seek first to understand, then to be understood**—helps students develop respect, mutual understanding, empathy, and courage
6. **Synergize**—teaches creativity, cooperation, diversity, and humility
7. **Sharpen the saw**—emphasizes renewal, continuous improvement, and balance

Middle and high school students will have additional opportunities to grow their emerging leadership skills. Some will serve on action teams, where students will work together on projects and activities they are interested in, while others will be selected for their school's LEAD team. These students will help guide and plan the building-wide activities for the year.

Thank you to Hancock County and the various businesses that make up the Raise the Bar organization for your funding and support of Liberty-Benton's Leader in Me program. Together, we are working to raise great leaders.





# FACILITIES UPDATE



## K-8 Building

- Design influenced by the Educational Visioning process, which took place in 2020 and helped Liberty-Benton reimagine its educational delivery now and in the future.
- Approximately 130,000 square feet that will include a 700-seat performance auditorium, two gymnasiums, and a cafeteria that doubles as a common area.
- Funded by the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission through the Rebuilding Ohio Schools Program and the bond issue passed by the community May 7, 2019. The state's share of the cost is 57% while 43% is being covered by local dollars.
- Expected to be complete in May of 2023.

## Stadium Project

- Project included resurfacing the track, installing runways for pole vault and long jump, adding additional new areas for shot put and discus, upgrading the fence around the track, and repairing concrete.
- Funded by the district's permanent improvement funds, which are allocated for the maintenance and repair of school property. Permanent improvement funds are funded by a portion of the district's 0.75% income tax.
- A new synthetic turf field was installed. The project was led by Maumee Bay Turf Center, the preferred vendor for 14 NFL teams.
- Project completed in time for the first football game of the 2021 season, which took place Aug. 20.
- In use by football, girls and boys soccer teams, band, cheerleaders, and middle school programs.



## High School Renovation

- Most renovations to the high school will take place in the summer of 2022. Final touches to the project will occur throughout the 2022-2023 school year.
- Notable changes include the library, which will be converted into additional classrooms; the cafetorium, which will include additional learning and collaboration space; and the gymnasium, where staff and students will feel a bit cooler thanks to the addition of air conditioning.
- Funded by the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission through the Rebuilding Ohio Schools Program and the bond issue passed by the community May 7, 2019. The state's share of the cost is 57% while 43% is being covered by local dollars.

## Field House

- Will enrich our student-athletes' experiences year-round.
- Funded by 100+ donors, who collectively raised more than \$1 million through a fundraising campaign led by Liberty-Benton Athletic Boosters Capital Committee.



# SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAMS HELP STUDENTS PREPARE FOR SCHOOL YEAR

This past summer, Liberty-Benton provided summer learning programs to elementary and middle school students to assist with any learning loss they may have experienced due to the pandemic.

The first program was offered to a select group of elementary and middle school students to boost their knowledge in the areas of math and reading. The program was taught in partnership with Sylvan Learning. Fifty-six students completed nearly 2,000 hours of instruction throughout the months of June, July and August.

The second program was for K-3 students and zeroed in on reading skills. Almost 60 students took advantage of the three-week course held in August, 43 of which had 90% or above attendance. Students worked on guided reading, making words, writing and sight words.

The class was a true team effort. Liberty-Benton provided transportation to students if needed, and 16 elementary staff members taught in rotation. Many of the parent surveys echoed the same sentiment – they were appreciative of the additional learning opportunities and said it helped prepare their child for the school year ahead.



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