

The Liberty Lantern

**JANUARY
2026**



Office Personnel:

Principal: Shane Street

Assistant Principal: Ed Lesniak

Administrative Assistant: Nicole Morris

Administrative Assistant: Jane Lysik

School Office Hours: 7:00am – 3:55pm

Telephone Number: 815-462-7951

[Liberty Jr High Website Link](#)

From the Main Office:

2026 is here...Happy New Year everyone! January is a very busy month at Liberty. We have a full calendar of wrestling meets, girls' volleyball games, and boys' basketball games. Our scholastic bowl and mathletes teams are getting their seasons underway soon and our spelling bee competition will take place on January 15th. Good luck to all those participating.


**Shane Street
Principal**

**Ed Lesniak
Assistant Principal**



Important Dates

- **Jan. 5 ~ No School Institute Day**
- **Jan. 6 ~ Classes Resume**
- **Jan. 9 ~ Jazz Band/Allegro Concert/"The Emperor's New Clothes" 6:30pm**
- **Jan. 15 ~ Spelling Bee in LRC 5:30pm**
- **Jan. 16 ~ Mid-Term Day; End of Q2 Health**
- **Jan. 19~ No School Holiday**
- **Jan. 20 ~ Q3 Health Begins ; School Board Meeting 6:00pm**



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Staff Emails:

For most non-urgent matters, emailing is the best way to contact a teacher. Please use the first initial of the first name and the full last name @nlsd122.org EX: John Smith jsmith@nlsd122.org



Student iPads...

All students are issued a NLSD 122 iPad and are expected to have this with them for all classes and to bring it home each night. Bringing a fully charged iPad to class each day is essential for maximizing learning opportunities and ensuring seamless participation in digital activities. A dead battery can hinder learning, disrupt the classroom and put students at a disadvantage. Please assist your child with creating a routine that ensures they have a fully charged iPad to start each and every day of school.

School Lunch:

The school lunch order link is sent out by district office every other week to the parent/guardian email listed in PowerSchool. Please place your order by the deadline in order to ensure your child will receive lunch. You can find more information on the lunch program here: [Lunch Program](#)

Lunch Times

7th Grade

5A 11:17-11:36

5B 11:36-11:55

8th Grade

6A 11:59-12:18

6B 12:18-12:37

Attendance Matters...

It is very important that your child be in attendance each and every day, but we do realize that there will be times when they are sick and need to stay home. If your child will be absent, please call the main office at 815-462-7951 by 8:30am the day of the absence. Please call even if you send a note or email the teacher. We will begin calling parent/guardians and emergency contacts if we do not receive a call by 8:30am. To arrange an early pickup for your student please call the office to let us know the time you will be arriving.



Ice Cream & Snacks:

Hershey ice cream and other snacks ex: chips, granolas bars, are offered every day during lunch. A variety of flavors/items are available for \$1.00 each. These are a cash only purchase and cannot be deducted from the student's lunch account.





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Emergency Day Plan:

In the event we have to have an “emergency day” (formerly known as a snow or cold day) and students are not able to come into the building for a normal school day, we will have a remote instruction day. There is a special schedule for this and teachers have already reviewed with their students how to access the live remote instruction that will be provided through Google Meet (not Zoom). The bell schedule can be found on page 12 of this newsletter.



Morning Math:

Monday ~ Mr. Billig Rm 120
Tuesday ~ Ms. Lavin Rm 100
Wednesday ~ Mrs. Bethman Rm 102
Thursday ~ Mrs. Bergeron Rm 200
Friday ~ Mr. Bahret Rm 118



Homework Club:

Join as needed in Rm 220
Tuesday ~ 2:55-3:30pm
Wednesday ~ 7:30-8:15am
Thursday ~ 2:55-3:30pm



TerraNova Testing:

As part of our ongoing commitment to academic excellence in New Lenox School District 122, the TerraNova NEXT assessment will be administered to all 7th grade students beginning the week of February 3, 2026. In addition, both the TerraNova NEXT and InView assessments will be administered to all 3rd - 6th grade students during the same week.

The TerraNova NEXT is a nationally normed assessment that measures student achievement in reading, language arts, and mathematics. Students in grades three through six will also complete the InView assessment, which measures cognitive abilities such as reasoning, problem-solving, and critical thinking. *Results from these assessments are components used to determine eligibility for our Gifted and Accelerated Programs. We encourage all students to give their best effort when completing these assessments.*

8th Grade End Of The Year Events:

- 8th Grade Graduation Dance = Friday, May 8th (6:00pm-8:00pm)
- 8th Grade Great America Trip = Thursday, May 21st
- Last Day of Attendance for 8th Graders = Tuesday, May 26th
- Graduation Ceremony = Wednesday, May 27th at Lincoln-Way West HS (7:30pm)



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Student Council:

Liberty's Student Council was very involved in our school and community during the first half of the school year! We ended the year in celebration with our ice cream reward party. It was nice to reflect upon all of our hard work and accomplishments.

Our next Student Council meeting will be Tuesday, January 20, 2026 after school until 3:45pm.

Student Council is an open club and everyone is welcome. We will plan our winter pep assembly and discuss our winter community service projects during our January meeting. Mrs. O'Brien and Mrs. Patras look forward to our student council members' continued involvement with Liberty in the new year!

National Junior Honor Society:

Liberty NJHS members sponsored a very successful food drive in support of the New Lenox Food Pantry. Thank you Liberty for your incredible generosity! NJHS members also spread holiday cheer by creating festive cards for New Lenox nursing home residents.

If you are interested in applying for NJHS this year please see detailed information on page 9 of this newsletter.



Mathletes:

Mathletes teams are forming soon. Has math class typically been easy for you? Ready for something more challenging? Come out for the THRILL and EXCITEMENT of solving complex math problems and puzzles. 8th and 7th grade Mathletes will meet Tuesday mornings at 7:30am, starting January 13th. The Mathletes season runs from January to April. Please see Coach Bahret (7th) or Coach Zettergren (8th) if you have any questions.



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Scholastic Bowl:

The Liberty Scholastic Bowl team is set to begin their season after winter break. Congratulations to the 2025-2026 Scholastic Bowl team members: Kelly A, Nate B, Danielle B, Peyton D, Margie H, Evan H, Abby K, Allison L, Mario L, Lily M, Landen M, Donny P, Gwen P, Noah S, Peyton T, Andrew V, Beckett V, Jase W, Evelyn W, and Kevin Z. The team will start practices in January and matches in February after break.

School Play:

We are pleased to announce auditions for this year's play, "Myth-Guided", will take place on Wednesday, January 14th, after school. Any 7th or 8th grade student who wants to learn more about acting on stage should try out for a part. The action takes place on a tour of the sculpture garden of a museum, when unexpectedly, the statues come to life and reenact the stories of the myths. There are many roles for lots of actors, so all are encouraged to try out. Information and permission slips are in the music room.

Geography Bee:

The Liberty/Martino Geography Bee was held at Liberty on Tuesday, December 9th. Liberty's five finalists were Donny P, Mario L, Lily M, Noah S, and Jacob S. Martino's five finalists were Max Z, Zachary M, Sam B, Ruben S, and Ben H. Congratulations to Liberty's Donny P, who finished in 3rd place, and Mario L, who finished in 2nd place in the individual competition. The individual Champion was Martino's Zachary M. The team competition was super close with Martino winning 80-70. Great job to all participants!

Voices of Freedom:

Be sure not to miss the Voices of Freedom winter production of "The Emperor's New Clothes". This music retelling of the Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale moves the action to the Caribbean island of "Little Iguana" where the Empress dictates all the latest fashion trends. The cast includes: Max Worden~Buzz, Jacob Smit~Philippe, Cristiano Hernandez~Nevis, Lena Holzman~Queenie, Grace Hoffman~Jasmin, Anna McVicker~Barbados, Margie Hess~The Empress, Isabella Flores~Lucia. The crew includes Dom Bielak, Alex Bussema, Nova Frank, Owen Voss and Jase White. The performance is Friday, January 9th, beginning at 6:30pm with performances by Allegro and the Jazz Band. Admission is FREE!



ATHLETICS

Girls' Volleyball

Congratulations to the following girls for being selected to the 2025-2026 Liberty Junior High School Volleyball Teams:

7th Grade

Leah Bax, Sara Conners, Mia Dempsey, Lily Dornbos, Kendall Gentile, Gwenyth Goodwin, Tory Gugliuzza, Gianna Michaels, Amelia Moskos, Josie Nconi Zheng, Lillyann Nimon, Olivia Oberts, Dylan Roesner, Jaidyn Sage, Autumn Wallace.

8th Grade

Kiera Burke, Kinzie Catellier, Leah Eggert, Josie Elstner, Taylor Faxel, Sam Formell, Eva Hale, Bella Kubilius, Reagan Muldoon, Brynn Neudecker, Iris Pfefferkorn, Kendall Spiller, Gabby Valaveris, Sofia Zaragoza.

7th Grade Boys' Basketball

The 7th grade boys' basketball team entered the month of December with nine games on the docket and the competition level was top notch to say the least. Your Patriots have held tough during these times and have begun to slowly realize how to play together as a team and have seen signs of improvement day in and day out. We were able to avenge a loss earlier in the season to conference foe Mokena by besting them the second time around at Liberty with a victory of 39-34 and also secure a win in the first round of the "Future Warriors" showdown against Manhattan Jr. High, 43-36. Once we return from their winter break in January, the boys will culminate the season with their final four regular season games against Martino, Manhattan, Summit Hill, and Homer. The team will then venture into the annual IESA Regional playoffs to be held on or around January 17th at Martino. Best of luck to our boys in blue in the home stretch of the season!

Bowling Team

DATES: Every Tuesday Feb. 10th - April 7th (no bowling over spring break)

LOCATION: Laraway Lanes

COST: \$60.00

Please see Mrs. Hartwig in the PE office for a sign up form.

Only 48 spots available. First come, first served.

Wrestling

The team has worked hard throughout the month of December and is looking forward to competing at a high level as the season enters the busiest month. Below is what the team has in store for January:

- Jan. 3 @ Coalers Invitational (Coal City HS) 9:00am
- Jan. 6 @ HOME vs Morris GS & Peotone JHS (4:30pm)
- Jan. 7 @ HOME vs Minooka JHS (4:30pm)
- Jan. 8 @ Minooka JHS (*JV*) (4:30pm)
- *** Jan. 9=Team pictures during practice
- Jan. 13 @ Romeoville-Lukancic MS (4:30pm)
- Jan. 15 @ Troy MS (4:30pm)
- Jan. 20 @ HOME vs Glen Ellyn-Hadley JHS (4:30pm)
- Jan. 22 @ Channahon JHS w/Dwight CS (4:30pm)
- Jan. 24 @ HOME New Lenox JV Tournament (9:00am)
- Jan. 27 @ Homer JHS (4:30pm)
- Jan. 29 @ HOME vs Joliet-Hufford JHS (4:30pm)
- Jan. 31 @ Dale Keith Invitational (Romeoville-Lukancic MS) (8:30am)

GOOD LUCK WRESTLERS!!!

8th Grade Boys' Basketball

The 8th grade boys' basketball team continues to shine on the basketball court. The team is now 14-3 heading into the final month of the season. The boys are looking to sharpen their skills leading into the regional tournament at the end of the month. Go Patriots!

MUSIC

dept.

WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS MONTH:



Jazz Band/Allegro Concert

Date: January 9th

Time: 6:30pm

Location: Liberty Main Gym

Admission is FREE to all of our concerts!

BAND

Right before winter break, the Liberty Jazz Band and Liberty Band performed in the annual Holiday Concert. Both ensembles sounded incredible and we are so very proud of our musicians. On Friday, January 9, the Jazz Band will perform at the Winter Music Cabaret at 6:30pm in the Liberty Cafeteria. The Jazz Band will perform *Chattanooga Choo Choo*, *Song for San Miguel* and *Domino*. Please come out to hear us perform along with the Allegro Ensemble and Voices of Freedom!

In addition to music for upcoming concerts, in January and February, some of our Liberty musicians will also be preparing music for the IGSM Solo and Ensemble Contest which will be held at the end of February. We know all of our soloists and small ensembles will give stellar performances!

Finally, a huge congratulations goes out to Liberty percussionist, Dom Casey for being selected to the ILMEA State Junior Band. Dom will spend two days in Peoria with other top performing students from across the state of Illinois. Dom and the other state band members will rehearse and perform with a guest conductor and give a grand finale concert at the end of the event. We know Dom is going to represent Liberty very well! Congrats!

ORCHESTRA

The Liberty Orchestra had a great performance in December and is gearing up for the 2026 performances! First up is Solo and Ensemble on Saturday, February 21st. Any participating student needs to be working on their music and soloists need to be sure they are setting aside time to work with their accompanist. Then, in March, the orchestra has two performances. The first will be on Thursday, March 5, at Lincoln-Way Central High School and then the following week at ILMEA Large Group Festival at Olivet Nazarene University in Bourbonnais. Looking forward to a great 2026!

CHORUS

The Patriot Chorus had a busy December with outstanding performances at the New Lenox Commons and at the NLS 122 School Board meeting. With holiday chaos behind them, our singers are busy preparing for a series of performances at the end of February and into early March. Students will also be prepping for the solo and ensemble contest that takes place in February.

[Liberty Jr High December Holiday Concert Link](#)

CALENDAR REMINDERS



JANUARY

- 5th - Institute Day No School
- 6th - School Resumes
- 9th - Jazz Band/Allegro Concert 6:30pm
The Emperor's New Clothes Musical 6:30pm
- 15th - Spelling Bee in the LRC 5:30pm
- 16th - Mid-Term Day
End Q2 Health
- 19th - Holiday No School
- 20th - Start Q3 Health
School Board Meeting 6:00pm



FEBRUARY



- 2nd - 6th - Terra Nova Testing 7th Grade Only
- 12th - Band/Orchestra 5th & 6th Grade Concert
- 13th - Lockdown & Shelter Drills
Early Dismissal 11:25am
- 16th - Holiday No School
- 17th - School Board Meeting 6:00pm
- 18th - Club Picture Day
- 24th - Chorus Step Up Day @ LWW 6:30pm
- 25th - Graduations Portraits in PE Classes
- 26th - Graduation Gown Measuring During Study Halls
Band Step Up Day @ LWW 6:30pm
- 27th - End of 2nd Trimester





NURSE'S CORNER

Medication Administration in School

Our District's Board of Education has adopted a strict medication policy which requires a Student Medication Authorization Form to be completed by a physician and parent/guardian for **ANY** medication that needs to be taken at school. This includes prescription as well as over-the-counter medication. Students may use cough drops at school with written permission from a parent/guardian. That note is good for five days.

All medication must be dropped-off at school to the nurse or other office staff by a parent or guardian along with the completed authorization form. All medication must be in its original container with the student's name on it. Students may not bring medication to school or on the bus, with the exception of emergency medication such as an inhaler or epinephrine. If a child brings medication to school it may result in a disciplinary action. This policy is to ensure the safety of all students. If your child benefits from taking pain medication periodically at school due to headaches, painful menstrual cramps, mouth pain due to braces, or for any other reason, please follow the guidance above and provide the medication in its original container along with the completed authorization form. All medication is stored in a locked drawer and will be administered with the supervision of the school nurse. If you have any questions please call the school nurse at 815-462-7807. The link to the district website and the medication authorization form is provided here:

[Student Medication Authorization Form](#)

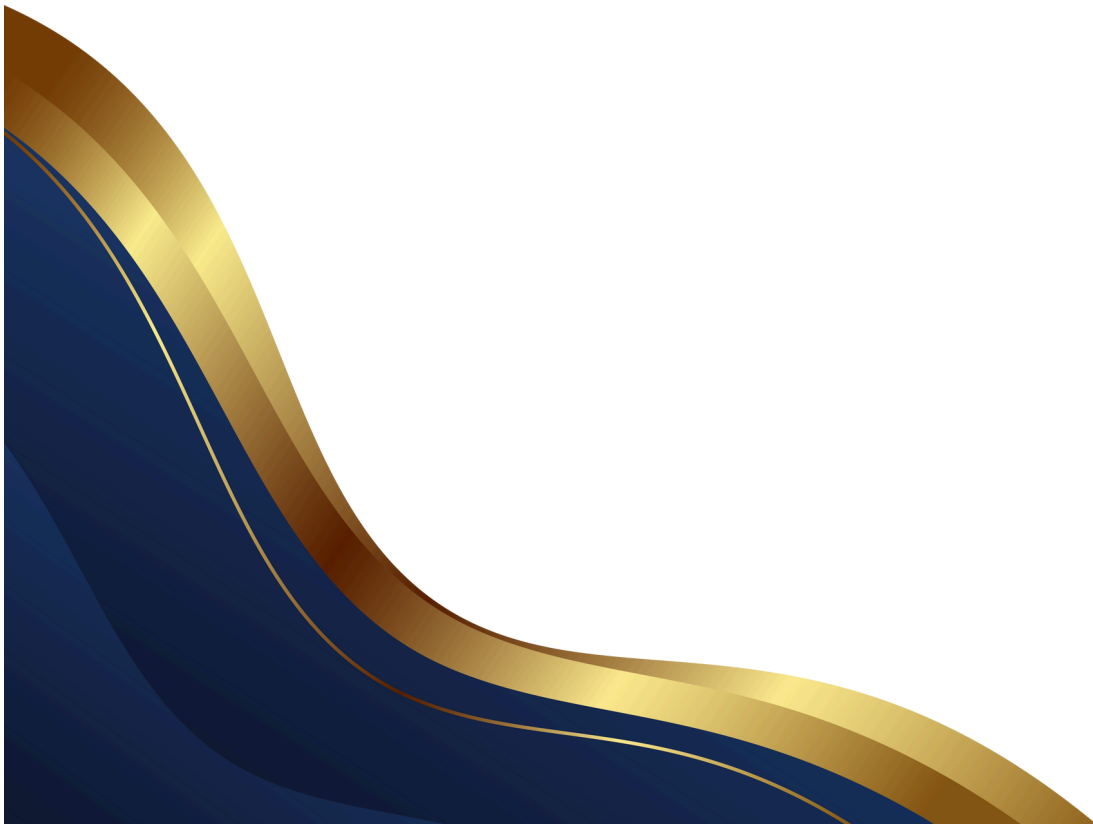
Please read the information below if you are interested in applying for NJHS this year:

In late January, students with a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.9 or higher will be added to the NJHS Application Google Classroom. Once in the classroom, students will have access to the NJHS digital application as well as specific information that will outline the criteria that are needed to be considered for induction into Liberty Junior High's chapter of NJHS.

Some of the basic requirements are listed below. If you are interested in applying for NJHS later this school year, please take note of the requirements and make sure you are working to maintain the minimum requirements for membership.

- 1. Maintain a minimum GPA of 4.0 by the end of second trimester.**
- 2. Participate in at least three clubs or activities, one of which must be a Liberty club or activity.**
- 3. Obtain a minimum of 5 hours of service to either school or community.**
- 4. Maintain a positive discipline record. If an office referral OR four classroom steps are on your record, you will not be eligible for NJHS.**
- 5. Demonstrate strong character in the classroom. If you receive four or more late/missing assignments, you will not be eligible for NJHS.**

For additional information including the qualification rubric, service hour log and leadership document, please view the [NJHS Requirements and Application Process](#) document.





School Messenger District & Classroom Messages Information for Parents/Guardians

STAY IN THE LOOP WITH SCHOOL MESSENGER!

District Messages by Text

- If you are not signed up for NLSD School Messenger please scan the QR code or text the number below!
- This will provide you with District updates and messages via text messages.

**Scan the QR Code or
Send "Y" or "Yes" to 67587**



Opt-in From Your Mobile Phone Now

School Messenger App (Preferred Method)

- By downloading the School Messenger App (scan QR Code below), your child's teacher and school will be able to communicate news with you!
- You can also join groups made by club sponsors, coaches, and nurses (these groups are only available with the app).



Create your account with the email that is on file in PowerSchool. Only the email that is in PowerSchool will work. If you do not know the email in PowerSchool, please call your school's secretary. We strongly encourage you to allow notifications on your device.

Scan the QR for the App Store or Google Play Store to Download the App



App Store iOS



Google Play Store

**Been Invited to a Group
by a Coach, Club
Sponsor, or Nurse and
have an access code?**

1. Tap on Join Groups menu option
2. Tap Join a Group Using a Code
3. In the Join a group window, enter the access code
4. Tap Join

For more information, check out the School [Messenger Parent Support Document](#).

If you need support, please put in a tech ticket here <https://nlsd122.incidentiq.com/guest/4DNVCKVZ/nlsd-technology-support>

LIBERTY E-LEARNING DAY

BELL SCHEDULE

PERIOD 1	9:00-9:25
PERIOD 2	9:30-9:55
PERIOD 3	10:00-10:25
PERIOD 4	10:30-10:55
PERIOD 5&6	11:00-11:25
PERIOD 7	11:30-11:55
PERIOD 8	12:00-12:25
PERIOD 9	12:30-12:55
BREAK	12:55 - 1:25
ASYNCHRONOUS LEARNING ACTIVITIES	1:25 - 3:10



Liberty Junior High 2025-2026 VIP hardcover yearbook

The 2025-2026 yearbook has two options:
Standard Yearbook ONLY - for \$30 (Due 4/10/26)

8th grade Yearbook with Happy Ad - for \$40 (Due 12/20/25)

*Email to follow with Happy-Ad details after purchase

Gmail account is needed to upload Happy Ad information

Questions?

Email Ms. Alvarez at aalvarez@nlsd122.org or Mrs. Berwanger at mberwanger@nlsd122.org

<https://www.vipis.com/group/db0e9aa9/liberty-junior-high-school>



2026

from all of us at Liberty