

The Liberty Lantern

APRIL
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:

The winter season seems to have slowly but surely made its way into our rearview mirror and we should now be able to enjoy some nice spring weather. Spring is an exciting time and we have many important events and activities planned at Liberty. The track and field season has started and they are preparing for their first home meet on April 16th. We have recently concluded our I.A.R. state standardized testing, though our 8th graders will be taking the I.S.A. state science tests April 20-22. A busy time around here for sure.

Shane Street
Principal

Ed Lesniak
Assistant Principal

Important Dates

- **April 7: Classes Resume**
- **April 16: 5th & 6th Gr Orchestra/Allegro Concert 6:30pm**
- **April 17: Mid-Term Day**
- **April 18: ILMEA Music Festival @ Liberty**
- **April 20-22: ISA Science Testing 8th Gr Only**
- **April 21: School Board Meeting 6:00PM**
- **April 22: NJHS Induction Ceremony 6:00PM**
- **April 23: Evacuation Drill**
- **April 24: No School Institute Day**



NEWS



you can use

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

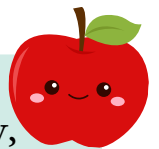
8th Grade

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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Paraprofessional Appreciation Day:

Wednesday, April 1st, is Paraprofessional Appreciation Day. Please join us in giving a big “shout out” to Liberty’s paraprofessionals that do such an awesome job of helping and supporting our students. Thank you *Mrs. Duda, Mrs. Haerr, Mrs. Hallo, Mrs. Minnis, Mr. Richardson, Mrs. Stawick, and Mrs. Ronza* for all that you do!!!



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

ISA Testing:

Our eighth graders will take the Illinois Science Assessment (ISA) from April 20-22. The ISA consists of three units and will be administered during your child’s science class.



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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Mathletes:

The 7th Grade Mathletes Team is preparing for their final contest of the year, looking to improve their score on the last round of the ICTM contest. With just a few meetings left, the team is diligently working hard to finalize the season with a strong performance. Good luck Mathletes!



This year's 8th grade Mathletes piloted a new challenging contest through Aretelabs, which allowed students to compete mathematically against other students in New England, Pennsylvania and Florida. The recent top scorers were Leigha DeMaertelaere and Evelyn Wilson. Mathletes will finish their season competing against other Illinois schools in the ICTM Math Contest. It has been a great season.

Washington DC :

Liberty 7th grade students are invited to join Mrs. Zettergren, through EF Explore America, on a trip to Washington, D.C., October 9-11, 2026. Students interested in attending this educational, once in a lifetime trip, should contact Mrs. Zettergren at rzettergren@nlsd122.org, or visit EF www.efexploreamerica.com/2998812CM for more information. Limited spots are available.

National Junior Honor Society:

NJHS will be hosting a donation drive to benefit NAWS animal shelter. The donation drive will take place at Liberty from Monday, April 13th through Friday, April 17th. Donation items most needed/requested by NAWS:

- Rescue disinfectant
- Wet cat & dog food (they do not need adult dry cat and dog food)
- Kitten and puppy food (wet & dry)
- Kitty litter
- Old towels, blankets, sheets, pillowcases & pillows

Our next meeting for current members is Friday, April 17 at 7:30am. We will be working on wrapping up the NAWS donation drive and preparing for the upcoming induction ceremony on new NJHS members. **Please note that the last NJHS meeting of the year will now take place Friday, May 1st instead of Friday, May 15th as previously scheduled.** Dr. Motsch will be the guest speaker at our May meeting and will facilitate a leadership presentation for our current members as well as the new inductees.



Student Council:

Liberty Student Council is looking forward to many exciting activities this spring! Student Council will be planning ways to show gratitude to our staff during Teacher Appreciation Week. We will host a spring clean-up around the grounds of Liberty in conjunction with Earth Day. Student Council members will also team up with Daybreak Shelter in Joliet for a "salad dressing collection" to extend our support to our community. Please consider donating if you are able! Many thanks to all students who have participated in Student Council this year!

NEWS



you can use

Voices of Freedom:

Voices of Freedom is Liberty's musical theatre workshop and we're looking for a large cast of performers for our spring show "Ani-Magic!" This musical revue will feature songs and scenes from all of your favorite animated films, both old and new. Rehearsals will begin after Spring break. Interested students should pick up information from Mr. Jesse.

Scholastic Bowl:

The Liberty Scholastic Bowl has been steadily improving with each match. Our overall record so far for the season is 2-4. We still have matches to play against Homer, Hadley, and Hilda Walker and we end the season with Regionals on Wednesday, April 29th. Top scorers for Liberty are Nate B, Gwen P, Noah S, Beckett V, Donny P, and Andrew V. Good luck with the remainder of the season.

School Play - *Myth-Guided*::

Congratulations to the cast and crew of this year's school play, *Myth-Guided*. Our audiences were having a ball as they joined our group of tourists on their walk through the Garden of the Gods Sculpture Garden and saw statues come to life to reenact some of the most enduring Greek myths. The cast and crew included: Korbyn Becker, Jacob Smit, Isabella Flores, Kellen McHale, Leah Kafka, Ivy Jerding, Jolee Davis, Ben Pantol, Margie Hess, Owen Voss, Lena Holzman, Maximus Worden, Cristiano Hernandez, Caroline Murphy, Anna McVicker, Bailey Parise, Kira Gagni, Mia Morrison, Kelly Ayala, Peyton Tamosiunas, Nova Frank, Jase White, and Nora Wilke.



Spelling Bee:

We are thrilled to recognize 7th grade student, Matthew Cline, for his exceptional performance at this year's Regional Spelling Bee on March 17th. Competing against talented students from 29 schools across Will County, Matthew earned an impressive 3rd place finish. This accomplishment reflects not only Matthew's strong academic skills, but his dedication and bravery. We are incredibly proud of Matthew and this outstanding achievement. Please join us in celebrating him on representing our school with such distinction!

ATHLETICS

Track & Field:

Tryouts have concluded and the 2026 Girls' and Boys' Track & Field season is underway! Liberty coaches are excited to see the new group of athletes perform in their first meet on April 14th at Mokena JHS! There will be a lot of hard work put in during practices and the coaches are confident everyone will be doing their best to have a successful season. Congratulations to the following students on making the team:

Girls' Track and Field:

7th Grade ~

Katia Ball Leah Bax Carmella DeCesare Mia Dempsey Aubrey Diez Gabriella Garza
Kendall Gentile Gwen Goodwin Hailey Gross Kenzie Hadac Hailey Hatch Molly Jagoda
Avery Pantol Dylan Roesner Jaidyn Sage Ashley Slotwinski Audrey Thompson
Charlotte Zack Natalie Ziemba

8th Grade ~

Kinzie Catellier Taylor Fixel Mairead Gallas Eva Hale Kailey Hogan Alyssa Kohlhagen
Emily La Porte Violet McCann Lylah Moyer Reagan Muldoon Kenzie Neubauer Megan Saller
Ellie Stahr Geneva Stiglic Delia Urbanczyk

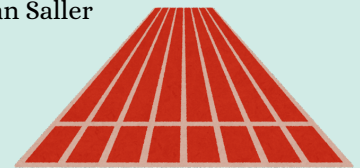
Boys' Track and Field:

7th Grade ~

Dave Aragonfoh Colin Arelano Noah Buck Tristan Christakes Tommy Cichy
Beckham Gremley Lucas Johnson Benjamin Kazmierczak Clark Koziel Matthew Kwasneski
Mason Ludvik Mason McNulty Ben Mulligan Owen Oberts Ben Pantol Declan Pritchard
Charlie Pruett Jake Wargo Austin Witt Alex Zack Jayden Zayas

8th Grade ~

Josh Barger Brandon Bettenhausen Dominic Casey Kyle Casey Michael Dempsey Kellen Durkin
Alex Fox Ethan German Peyton Goldschnikl Seth Grieff Brennen Jacobs Travis Kurth
Lucas Lauricella Easton McDonnell Landen Miller Andrew Murino Jack Noble Liam Ovalle
Donald Pasqua Isiah Quintero Henry Radnis Gavin Reyna Liam Schumacher Elliot Sweeney
Tommy Walsh Maximus Worden



April Events for the Teams Are:

Thursday, April 9th = Team Pictures

Tuesday, April 14th = AWAY Meet @ Mokena JHS 4:15pm

Thursday, April 16th = HOME Meet vs Manhattan w/Rockdale 4:15pm

Tuesday, April 21st = AWAY Meet @ Hickory Creek 4:15pm

Thursday, April 23rd = HOME Meet vs Summit Hill 4:00pm

Tuesday, April 28th = HOME Meet vs Troy w Oak Prairie 4:00pm

Thursday, April 30th = HOME Meet vs Homer JHS 4:00pm

Wrestling:

Congratulations to 7th grader Nolan Barnes who placed 5th in the IESA State Wrestling Finals at Northern Illinois University's Convocation Center on March 13th and 14th! Everyone is extremely proud of Nolan's hard work throughout the season and is looking forward to him returning next year.

MUSIC

dept.



WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS MONTH:

5th and 6th Grade Orchestra/Allegro Concert

Date: April 16th

Time: 6:30pm

Location: Liberty Cafeteria

Admission is FREE to all of our concerts!



ORCHESTRA

BRAVO to the Liberty Orchestra on two fantastic performances in March! The musicianship and professionalism displayed at both the Step-Up Concert and at ILMEA Large Group Festival was truly wonderful. But, as always, when one concert ends, another begins! We are gearing up for our last two concerts of the year. Allegro will perform at the annual Spring String Fling on Thursday, April 16, the the orchestra will present it's Spring Concert on Wednesday, May 13. This is a great time to start thinking about your summer orchestra plans. While summer camps are never required, they are SUPER FUN and you should absolutley go to camp. The first one is Lincoln-Way Rock Orchestra from June 1-12. If you have never done Rock Orchestra, you are missing out! Details will be coming home soon, but mark your calendars now.

BAND

In March, the Liberty Band traveled to Olivet Nazarene University in Bourbonnais to perform at the Illinois Music Education Association Large Group Festival. The band had the honor of performing in the beautiful Centennial Chapel for three adjudicators and received a clinic from one of the adjudicators after the performance. The band learned so much and the adjudicators were full of praise for our musicians. Way to go! The Jazz Band also performed at West Fest in mid-March. The group sounded fantastic and helped kick off an awesome day of music at Lincoln-Way West!

The month of April will be devoted to working on our music for the spring concert, Jazz Cafe and New Lenox Loyalty Day Parade. We are looking forward to some amazing performances to close out the 2025-2026 school year!

CHORUS

the Patriot Chorus had a busy March concert season! After our Step-Up Concert at Lincoln-Way West, the chorus hosted the Liberty Choral Spectacular, where we got to perform alongside the choirs from Oakview, Nelson Ridge, and the Lincoln-Way West Madrigals and created an inspiring night of vocal music. On March 12, the chorus traveled to Olivet Nazarene University, and performed at the ILMEA Large Ensemble Festival. The singers participated in a clinic with Dr. Christopher Owen from Northeastern Illinois University, who gave them excellent tips and techniques that will allow us to improve our sound as an ensemble. The Patriot Chorus had a little time off, but are now in the thick of it preparing for our final performance of the year. Our singers will present a concert on May 20th that will include some lighter repertoire. Details to come!

CALENDAR REMINDERS

APRIL



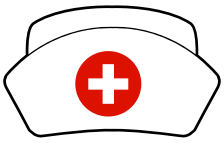
- 7th - Classes Resume
- 8th - Track Team Pictures
- 16th - Orchestra & Allegro Concert 5th & 6th Grade
- 17th - Mid-Term Day
- 18th - ILMEA Music Festival @ Liberty JH 8:00-2:30pm
- 20th - 22nd - ISA Science Testing 8th Grade Only
- 21st - School Board Meeting 6:00pm
- 22nd - NJHS Induction Ceremony 6:00pm
- 23rd - Evacuation Drill
- 24th - No School Institute Day



MAY

- 7th - 5th & 6th Gr Band/Orchestra Concert 6:30PM
- 8th - Early Dismissal 11:25AM
- 8th Gr Graduation Dance 6:00-8:00PM
- 13th - Band/Orchestra Concert 6:30PM
- 19th - School Board Meeting 6:00PM
- 21st - 8th Gr. Great America Trip
- 25th - Memorial Day No School
- 26th - Last Day 8th Gr. Attendance
- 27th - Graduation Ceremony @ LWW 7:30PM
- 28th - Last Day of School 11:25AM Dismissal





NURSE'S CORNER

Important Health Information From the Nurse For Parents to Know

- Doctor's Appointments: Please turn in doctors notes for any absences related to doctors appointments. All documents can be dropped off at the main office or emailed to jkerzman@nlsd122.org.
- Stay home if sick with fever over 100 degrees until fever free for 24 hours
- Please update your emergency contacts in Powerschool.
- Medication authorization forms must be turned in for ANY medication to be taken or given by the school nurse during school hours. This includes over-the-counter medications such as Advil, Tylenol, etc. as well as prescription medications such as Epipen and inhalers. Here is a link to the form [Medication Authorization Form](#)
- P.E. Excusals: Any excusals lasting longer than two days must be documented with a doctor's note that includes the length of excusal listed.
- Please contact the school nurse at 815-462-7806 for prolonged illness lasting longer than three consecutive school days or that have to do with either injuries or concussions. The nurse can assist in planning for the student's return to school.

Please do not hesitate to call or email me if you have any questions or concerns. I am in the office Monday - Friday from 7:55am to 3:10pm. You can also reach me by email at jkerzman@nlsd122.org.





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/quest/4DNVCKVZ/nlsd-technology-support>

Mandatory Update: Student Attendance Procedures Revisions
(Effective for the 2026–2027 Academic Year)

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Consistent attendance is vital for academic success. New Lenox School District 122 has revised its Student Attendance Procedures to comply with the Illinois School Code, the Will County ROE, and the State’s Attorney. These updates will be fully implemented starting the **2026–2027 school year**. Your cooperation with these standards is essential. Contact your school's administration with questions.

Summary of Key Policy Changes

Policy Area	Detail of Revision
Required Documentation	<p>Medical documentation from a licensed healthcare provider will be required for all future illness-related absences after a student accrues 14 undocumented absences. Absences that exceed 14 days without this mandatory documentation will be considered unexcused.</p> <p>Students are allowed up to five (5) mental health days per school year, which do not require a medical note and are counted within the 14 total undocumented absences.</p>
Excused Absences	Absences for approved civic opportunities, family emergencies, religious holidays, and death in the immediate family are excused.
Military Family Support	Military family students are eligible for up to five (5) excused days for deployment-related family situations.
Student Travel	Student travel during instructional days is strongly discouraged. Advance notice is required. Travel absences will be unexcused.
Documented Absences	The student's absence will be excused if written documentation is provided by a licensed healthcare provider that confirms the medical appointment, treatment, or medical condition causing the absence.



New Lenox School District 122
 102 South Cedar Road, New Lenox, Illinois 60451
 Phone 815-485-2169 Fax 815-485-2236

Gifted & Academically Talented Education (GATE)

New Lenox School District 122 believes that each child is unique and has special talents. Teachers provide experiences in an atmosphere in which these talents will be nurtured and new talents will be discovered and encouraged. Teachers provide options in classroom assignments and learning experiences that will encompass a variety of intelligences, modalities, or learning styles. In addition to these experiences, our district offers gifted/accelerated classes.

Our current Gifted And Talented Education program known as GATE will acknowledge the abilities and talents of not only gifted students but high achievers. The intermediate GATE classes will be structured similar to the junior high Accelerated classes in order to provide more opportunities for our students. Students will still need to meet the program requirements in order to participate.

Beginning in fourth grade, a set criteria will be used to determine students' eligibility into the program. A matrix measuring multiple components including student's class performance, cognitive ability, achievement, and aptitude will be used. We have included more criteria to determine placement including aimswebPlus scores and the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR).

Below is the complete list of assessments that will be used to qualify students.

	ELA	Math
Grades 4-8	Cognitive Skills Index (CSI) TerraNova Reading & Language aimswebPlus Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) GPA <i>Local Placement Test (6-8 only)</i>	Cognitive Skills Index (CSI) TerraNova Math aimswebPlus Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) GPA <i>Local Placement Test (6-8 only)</i>

In the GATE/Accelerated class, the curriculum will be presented at an accelerated pace, instruction will involve a deeper level of application, and students will be required to work independently on many tasks. Students in GATE are expected to continually meet and exceed the following criteria to remain in the program. Below are work habits and skills expected of GATE students:

- Independently complete class work.
- Read and comprehend textbooks and material independently.
- Consistently complete homework on time.
- Manage time in order to successfully participate in other activities in addition to academics.
- Attend school regularly.
- Display a high level of focus while in class.
- Demonstrate problem solving and critical thinking skills.
- Participate in additional enrichment beyond required curriculum.
- Produce work at a higher level of mastery.
- Understand working at a higher level may mean limited re-dos and grades that are not all A's.
- Demonstrate a deeper level of application of skills and concepts.
- Enjoy the challenge of the advanced program.
- Demonstrate kindness, patience, and support for one another's unique displays of giftedness.

If your child qualifies for the program, you will receive a letter in May. If you have any questions, please reach out to your child's teacher or principal. For more information, visit our website for the complete GATE document.



**Liberty Junior High 2025-2026
VIP hardcover yearbook**

All the fun, friends, and memories of the year!

Standard Yearbook ONLY - for \$30 (Due 4/10/26)

Order and reserve your 2025-2026 yearbook today!

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>

 **HAPPY**
Easter  

from all of us at Liberty



NLSD122
PTO



BASEBALL
FUN



Joliet Slammers

VS. WINDY CITY THUNDERBOLTS



FRIDAY, JUNE 5, 2026
5:35 PM

JOLIET SLAMMERS STADIUM

1 MAYOR ART SCHULTZ DR. JOLIET, IL

Grab your seats for an NLSD122 PTO Night Out with the Joliet Slammers! Enjoy a fun night at the ballpark with family and friends—open to everyone. Every ticket supports our PTO!

[CLICK HERE TO BUY TICKETS](#)



**TICKET SALES END
JUNE 5 AT 3:35 PM**

NEW LENOX 122 PTO ELECTIONS



HELP US MAKE THE MAGIC HAPPEN - WE NEED YOU!

- ✦ Meet other awesome parents in the district
- ✦ Make a direct impact on your child's school
- ✦ Be in the know and share your ideas on all things PTO

HEAD TREASURER

Keep our PTO running strong behind the scenes:

- Oversee all funds and financials
- Work with the District Finance Director
- Help guide smart spending for our school community

2026-2028 SCHOOL YEAR

ASSISTANT TREASURER

Perfect if you like to keep things organized:

- Collect and count event funds
- Submit deposits to Treasurer
- Handle teacher reimbursements

SOCIAL SECRETARY

For the creative + social media-loving parent:

- Manage PTO social accounts
- Create & post fun, engaging content
- Upload flyers to the PTO website

ALL POSITIONS ARE 2 YEAR TERMS

Have questions?

EMAIL US AT:
nlsd122pto@gmail.com



HOW TO JOIN THE TEAM:

- ✓ Interested in an open spot?
- ✓ Submit your name and interested position on the **FORM HERE** or scan >
- ✓ Voting takes place at the PTO meeting on April 16 at 6:30 pm at the District Office



5K/KIDS DASH

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS



WellnessFair:

- MentalHealth & Wellness business showcase
- Kids activities
- Food Trucks

**SATURDAY APRIL
25, 2026**

**9:00-
12:00PM**

**1 VETERANS PKWY
NEW LENOX**

8:15 am - packet pick-up and same day registration

9:00am- 5K runners and walkers

10:45- Kids Dash

Wellness Fair- 9:15-12pm

5K SIGN UP



Pricing:

Early Bird until 1/31

\$30 with shirt \$20 no shirt

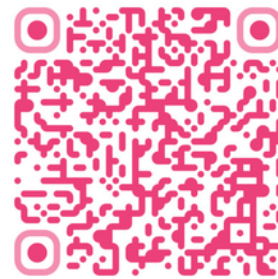
2/1-3/31 \$35 with shirt \$25 no shirt

4/1-4/16 \$40 with shirt

After 4/16 no guarantee for shirts

Dash free to run \$10 for a shirt

KIDS 3-10 DASH



BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

**NLSD 122 PTO, WELLNESS COMMITTEE, AND NEW LENOX SAFE
COMMUNITY COALITION**