

The Liberty Lantern

**MARCH
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:

It is an exciting time around Liberty these days. The second trimester has come to a close and we are headed for the home stretch of the school year. Students have just switched to their third trimester cycle classes and report cards will be emailed home on Friday, March 6. Girls' volleyball and wrestling postseasons are underway and the Bowling Club is off and rolling. We are eagerly anticipating the two upcoming performances of our spring play, *Myth-Guided*, which will be at 6:30pm on March 19 & 20. Only four weeks until spring break...this time of year seems to fly by. Bring on spring!

**Shane Street
Principal**

**Ed Lesniak
Assistant Principal**

Important Dates

- **March 2: Trimester 3 Cycle Classes Begin**
- **March 4: Graduation Portrait Retake Day**
- **March 6: Report Cards Emailed Home**
- **March 8: Daylight Saving Time**
- **March 13: 11:25AM Early Dismissal**
- **March 17: School Board Meeting 6:00PM**
- **March 20: End of Q3 Health**
- **March 23: Q4 Health Begins**
- **March 23-27: IAR Testing**
- **March 30-April 6: Spring Break**

NEWS

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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



IAR and ISA Testing:

In the upcoming weeks, New Lenox School District 122 students will participate in online state testing. Seventh and eighth graders will take the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) test from March 23-27. The IAR assessment consists of ELA and math tests.

In addition to the IAR, fifth and 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.

Class of 2026 Information:

Graduation and Great America information will be emailed directly to 8th grade families on Wednesday, March 11th. The online Graduation/Great America store will open on Wednesday, March 11th and will remain open through Friday, March 27th. **Please note, all orders need to be submitted no later than March 27th.**

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:

Liberty's 7th Grade Mathletes Team has been working diligently in preparation for upcoming contests. That hard work paid off in a dramatic way. The team scored the highest results on the ICTM Team Test that Coach Bahret has ever seen. One team received a perfect score of 20/20 and two other teams scored 19/20. Fantastic results from a group that is working their tails off. The Mathletes are continuing practice and learning new concepts as they prepare for more contests in the near future. Great work team!

Our Liberty Patriots 8th Grade Mathletes are determined to put a win on our record, however, we have been falling only points short this month in Math Mathness! We have played virtually against Berkeley Prep School in Tampa, FL and Unami Middle School from Chalfont, PA. Liberty's top scorers have been Evelyn Wilson and Tanner Simanis. This competition is tough, but we are prepared for the challenge.

National Junior Honor Society:

At our NJHS meeting in February, representatives from the local organization, Warriors Walk, visited to share information with our members about their mission to support the mental health of veterans and end veteran suicide, as well as the volunteer opportunities that Warriors Walk has available to students. It was enlightening and inspiring to see the impact those in our community are having to help improve the lives of veterans.

Please read the information on **page 11** of this newsletter if interested in applying for NJHS this year.



Student Council:

In February, members of the Liberty Student Council traveled to a local assisted living facility to make Valentine's Day crafts and visit with the residents. The students enjoyed the opportunity to brighten the day of those senior citizens and look forward to future trips to make a positive difference in the community! Student Council also recently organized a successful spirit week and pep assembly honoring our winter athletes and club participants. We look forward to additional service opportunities in March as we continue to give back to our local community.

NEWS

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Lincoln-Way West Dance Team Tryouts are coming up soon. Open Gym will take place on Monday, March 16, and tryouts will be held on Thursday, March 19. The purpose of the Lincoln-Way West Dance Team is to promote school spirit, teamwork, and athleticism. Any 8th graders interested in the tryout should check out the flyer [HERE](#) or reach out to Miss Lavin for more information.

Scholastic Bowl:

The Liberty Scholastic Bowl team started match play in February with competitions against Joliet Washington and Troy Shorewood. They lost both matches to Washington and split matches against Troy. They will face Hickory Creek, Martino, Manhattan, and Homer the next few weeks. Top toss-up scorers for Liberty are Noah S. & Donny P. with 7, Gwen P with 6, and Nate B & Beckett V both with 5. Good Luck to the team as they continue their season.

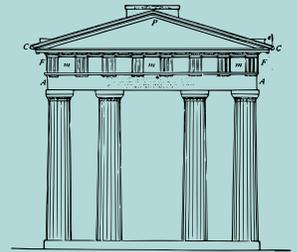
Washington DC :

EF Explore America, along with Mrs. Zettergren, is inviting Liberty Junior High's soon to be 8th grade students to tour Washington, D.C. next school year. This is not a school sponsored activity, but is only opened to Liberty 8th grade students. Our trip is scheduled for October 9-11, 2026, and will be three full days of excursions, including visits to Capitol Hill, Arlington National Cemetery, and Mount Vernon. Parents/guardians can register students at www.efexploreamerica.com/2998812CM or contact Renee Zettergren, rzettergren@nlsd122.org with questions.

School Play ~ *Myth-Guided*:

Please mark your calendars for “*Myth-Guided*”, our annual school play. Join a group of tourists in Greece on their trip through an ancient sculpture garden where the statues of various Greek gods and goddesses come to life and reenact the stories of the myths before your very eyes. Performances are on March 19th and 20th at 6:30pm in the Liberty cafeteria. Tickets are just \$5 and can be purchased during lunch periods beginning March 9th.

All seats are reserved.





ATHLETICS

Girls' Volleyball

The 8th Grade Girls' Volleyball Team ended the regular season with a dynamic win over Lukancic! The team is now working towards competing in the Regionals. Matches will be played at Martino starting Tuesday, March 10. Come out and cheer the team on!

The 7th Grade Girls' Volleyball Team has completed all regular season games with a record of 8-6. They will start the regional tournament February 28, getting the 4th seed and will play against Manhattan. The girls have been extremely committed this season and have grown tremendously from the start of the season. I am so proud of the team and what they have done this season. Let's keep this season going!

Wrestling

Congratulations to the New Lenox Wrestling Team for concluding their season with a 13-11 dual meet record. Additionally, the team placed fifth in the 20-team "Dale Keith Invitational" and won the Bronze Bracket at the "Mid-State Dual's Tournament."

In the IESA Regional on February 28th, the team finished in 2nd place; had 16 individual placers - 12 of them qualifying to compete in the IESA Sectional Tournament at Lukancic Middle School (Romeoville), on Saturday, March 7th!

Players from Liberty were:

Tyson Busse-4th, Zenny Fontus-4th, Elliot Sweeney-3rd, Mick Chearo-3rd, Brian O'Connor-2nd, and Nolan Barnes-2nd. Good luck to Elliot, Mick, Brian and Nolan who will be wrestling at Sectionals!

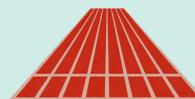
The team will wrap up their season with IESA State Finals, at Northern Illinois' Convocation Center, on Friday, March 13th and Saturday, March 14th. Good luck to all will be competing!

Track Tryouts:

GIRLS ONLY: March 16th & 18th

TIME: 3:00-5:00pm

LOCATION: Liberty Track



BOYS ONLY: March 17th & 19th

TIME: 3:00-5:00pm

LOCATIONS: Liberty Track



Please feel free to contact:

Coach Jim Havlin (boys) jhavlin@nlsd122.org

Coach Dave Hence (girls) dhence@nlsd122.org

All students must have an updated sports physical on file in the nurse's office to be eligible for tryouts!

[IESA Sports Physical Form](#)

MUSIC

dept.



WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS MONTH:

Choral Festival

Date: March 3rd

Time: 6:30pm

Location: Liberty Main Gym

Admission is FREE to all of our concerts!



ORCHESTRA

March is certainly coming in like a lion for the Liberty Orchestra with not one but TWO performances this month! The first is the Lincoln-Way Step Up Concert on March 5 at Lincoln-Way Central High School. The concert begins at 7:00pm in the auditorium. The following week, the orchestra is traveling to Olivet Nazarene University to participate in the Illinois Music Education Association Large Group Festival. On Thursday, March 12, we will load up the buses, then perform at 10:00am in the Centennial Chapel at Olivet. It's a busy couple of weeks!

A Reminder to 8th Grade Parents:

If you have any questions about the transition to high school orchestra, please don't hesitate to reach out. Mrs. Jackson at Lincoln-Way West and Mr. Lipari at Joliet Central are happy to help!

BAND

During the month of February, band members had several performances. Many band members participated in the IGSMA Solo and Ensemble Contest and had extremely successful performances. We are very proud of our musicians who went above and beyond to perform a solo or a small group ensemble. At the end of February, the band performed an incredible concert at Lincoln-Way West High School. The Liberty Band performed *Terracotta Warriors*, *Of Lochs and Thistles*, and *Heartland March*. The concert concluded with all of the Liberty Band members on stage alongside the band members from Manhattan JHS and Lincoln-Way West to feature all 200 musicians performing together in a grand finale performance. Great job musicians we are so incredibly proud of you!

In March the band will travel to Olivet Nazarene University of the Illinois Music Education Association Large Group Festival. The band students will perform in the beautiful performing arts center at Olivet for three clinicians who will then work with the students after the performance to increase their musical skills. The Jazz Band will also perform on March 21 at the Lincoln-Way West West Fest. Come out to hear some great music throughout the day!

CHORUS

Congratulations to the Patriot Chorus on a fantastic performance at the Lincoln-Way West Step-Up Concert on February 24. Our singers represented Liberty very well, performing on their own and with the combined choruses of Lincoln-Way West and Manhattan Junior High. We'll return to Liberty on March 3 for a concert at 6:30pm in the Liberty cafeteria. At this performance, we'll also welcome the choirs from Oakview and Nelson Ridge, as well as the Lincoln-Way West Madrigals. Please join us for a wonderful evening of choral music. Finally, on March 11, they'll head to Olivet Nazarene University for the ILMEA Choral Festival, where they will perform and have a clinic with a panel of choral music experts.

CALENDAR REMINDERS

MARCH

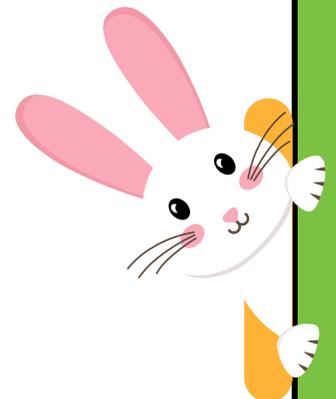


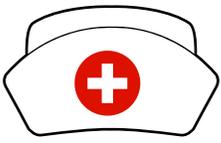
- 2nd - 3rd Trimester Cycle Classes Begin
- 3rd - Choral Festival 6:30pm in Main Gym
- 4th - Graduation Portraits Retake Day
- 5th - Orchestra Step-Up Day @ LWC 6:30pm
- 6th - Report Cards Emailed Home
- 7th - Choral Contest
- 8th - Daylight Saving Time ~ Spring Ahead
- 13th - 11:25am Early Dismissal
- 17th - School Board Meeting 6:00pm
- 19th & 20th - Spring Play 6:30pm Cafeteria
- 20th - End of Q3 Health
- 21st - Jazz Band Performance @ LWW WestFest
- 23rd - Q4 Health Starts
- 23rd - 27th - IAR Testing
- 30th - April 6th - No School Spring Break

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





NURSE'S CORNER

Important Health Information From the Nurse For Parents to Know

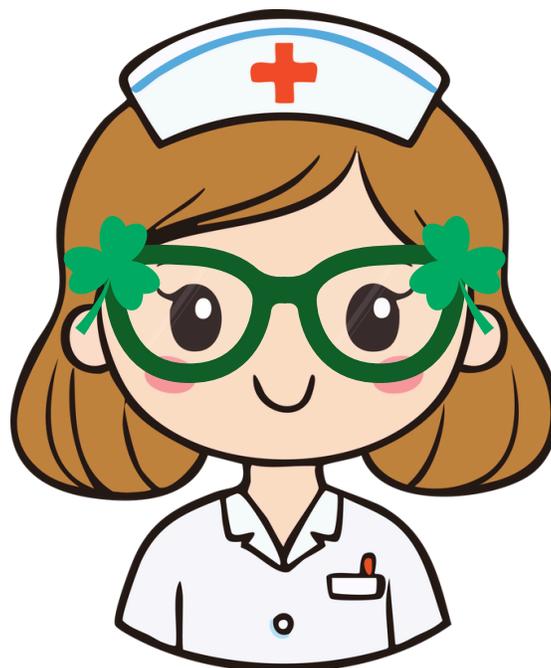
- Doctor's Appointments: Please turn in doctors notes for any absences related to doctors appointments. All documents can be dropped off at the main office or emailed to jkerzman@nlsd122.org.
- Students should stay home if sick with fever over 100 degrees until fever free for 24 hours.
- Please take a look at your emergency contacts in Powerschool and update them if needed.
- 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. Class 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.

Jeana Kerzman, BSN, RN, PEL-CSN





New Lenox School District 122

102 South Cedar Road, New Lenox, Illinois 60451

Phone 815-485-2169 Fax 815-485-2236

Lori R. Motsch, Ed.D., Superintendent

Illinois
5Essentials survey

February 27, 2026

Dear Parents,

This is a reminder to participate in the parent survey supplement, part of the Illinois 5Essentials Survey administration. We guarantee that survey responses will *never* be connected to the identity of you or your child. School reports will only present aggregated information of how parents and students responded as a whole.

A parent survey report will be generated if at least 20 percent of parents respond to the survey. While the parent data will not be made public, the parent report will be made available to the building principal and superintendent and will enable them to make considerations based on the responses given by parents. Your participation in the parent survey will help us understand the conditions at your child's school and guide improvement. Again, your identity and individual survey responses will be kept completely confidential and will never be connected to you or your child.

Please visit <https://survey.5-essentials.org/Illinois/> to take the parent survey.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact 5Essentials Customer Support at 1-866-440-1874 or impact-surveys@uchicago.edu.

Sincerely,

Marianne Cucci, Ed.D

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instructional Technology

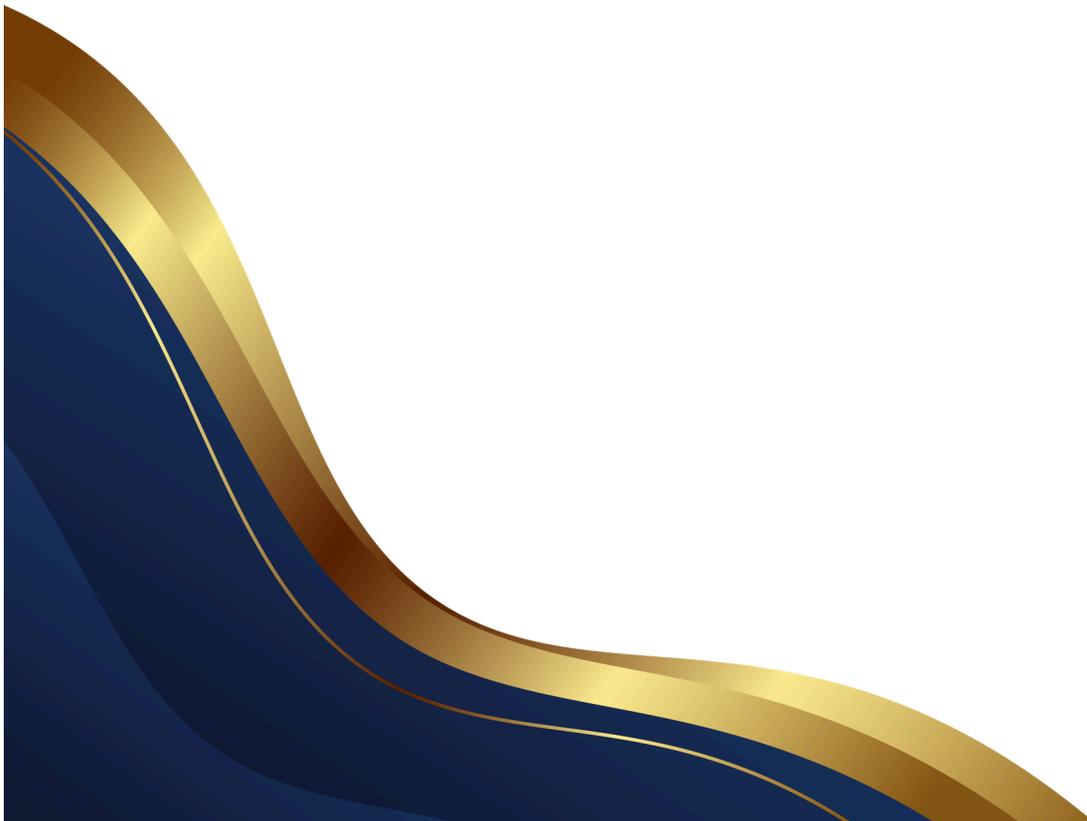
Please read the information below if you are interested in applying for NJHS this year:

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. **Those interested in applying need to submit their application and supporting documents digitally via the Google Classroom page between March 6th and March 13th 2026.**

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.



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



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>



**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
ST. PATRICK'S
DAY**

from all of us at Liberty