

# LIBERTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS EDUCATOR

Spring 2023



**#SHARETHEGOODLPS**

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# SCHOOL DIRECTORY INFORMATION

## Early Childhood/Elementary Schools

Early Childhood Center	9600 NE 79th St. KCMO 64158	736-5324	Sarah Birk, Principal Bart Tittle, Asst. Principal
Alexander Doniphan	1900 Clay Dr. Liberty, MO 64068	736-5400	Beth Cunningham, Principal Chavis Clawson, Asst. Principal
EPiC Elementary	650 Conistor Liberty, MO 64068	736-5730	Michelle Schmitz, Principal
Franklin	201 W. Mill Street Liberty, MO 64068	736-5440	Amy Toeppen, Interim Principal Jaysa Hartman, Asst. Principal
Kellybrook	10701 N. Eastern Ave. KCMO 64157	736-5700	Andrea Wilson, Principal Kayli Burrell, Asst. Principal
Lewis and Clark	1407 Nashua Liberty, MO 64068	736-5430	Mitch Hiser, Principal Dawn Shannon, Asst. Principal
Liberty Oaks	8150 N. Farley KCMO 64158	736-5600	Shannon Thompkins, Principal Jeanne Hinnenkamp, Asst. Principal
Lillian Schumacher	425 Claywoods Pkwy. Liberty, MO 64068	736-5490	Chris Gabriel, Principal Jaysa Hartman, Asst. Principal
Manor Hill	1400 Skyline Dr. Liberty, MO 64068	736-5460	Valerie Utecht, Principal Jordan Williamson, Asst. Principal
Ridgeview	701 Thornton Liberty, MO 64068	736-5450	Tyler Shannon, Principal Heather Buckman, Asst. Principal
Shoal Creek	9000 NE Flintlock Rd. KCMO 64157	736-7150	Christy Boman, Principal Jamie Ackart, Asst. Principal
Warren Hills	1251 Camille St. Liberty, MO 64068	736-5630	Michelle Swierski, Principal Matthew Krohne, Asst. Principal

## Secondary Schools

Discovery Middle School	800 Midjay Dr. Liberty, MO 64068	736-7300	Greg Mees, Principal Courtney Dickerson, Asst. Principal
Heritage Middle School	600 W. Kansas Liberty, MO 64068	736-5380	Reagan Allegri, Principal Ryan Dahm, Asst. Principal Jennifer Selock, Asst. Principal
Liberty Middle School	1500 S. Withers Rd. Liberty, MO 64068	736-5410	Jeremy Bradham, Principal Shirley Kantola, Asst. Principal
South Valley Middle School	1000 Midjay Dr. Liberty, MO 64068	736-7180	Jill Mullen, Principal Whitney Weakley, Asst. Principal Joe Lutes, Asst. Principal
Liberty High School	200 Blue Jay Dr. Liberty, MO 64068	736-5340	April Adams, Principal Bridget Herrman, Asst. Principal David McDorman, Asst. Principal Michael Sharp, Asst. Principal Sara Wickham, Asst. Principal Jason Cahill, Activities Director
Liberty North High School	1000 NE 104th St. Liberty, MO 64068	736-5500	Precious Kurth, Principal Lee Allen, Asst. Principal Josh Baldwin, Asst. Principal Rosemary Camp, Asst. Principal Brandon McCoy, Asst. Principal Lane Green, Activities Director
Liberty Academy Alt. School	1115 Blackberry Dr. Liberty, MO 64068	736-5470	Melissa Norris, Director of Alternative Education



*Pictured Front Row (L-R): Drew Marriott, AJ Byrd, Nick Bartlow Back Row (L-R): Karen Rogers, Kim-Marie Graham, Angie Reed, Dan Currence*

## Board of Education

Nick Bartlow, President  
nick.bartlow@lps53.org

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Dan Currence  
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Kim-Marie Graham  
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Drew Marriott  
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Karen Rogers  
karen.rogers@lps53.org

## Liberty Public Schools

District Offices  
8 Victory Lane  
Liberty, MO 64068  
(816) 736-5300

## Superintendent

Dr. M. Jeremy Tucker

## Website

www.lps53.org

## On the cover

South Valley Middle School 8th Grader Lilly Morgan displays her skills on the basketball court to her teachers and classmates on Friday, January 20, 2023.





From the desk of

**DR. M. JEREMY TUCKER**



## AN EXCITING TIME IN LPS!

I hope this update finds you enjoying some of the early parts of spring as we begin to come down the final stretch of what has been another amazing school year in Liberty Public Schools! There has been so much to celebrate recently, as you will see in the pages that follow within this publication. From recognizing our employees of the year, to student achievements in fine arts and athletics, it has been incredibly exciting to witness first-hand the many accomplishments that are taking place, and will continue leading up to when our graduating senior classes of 2023 walk across the stage to receive their diplomas coming up in May.

Additional information you will find within this edition of our quarterly magazine in the next few pages are details regarding our upcoming Liberty Public Schools No Tax Increase Bond Issue and Levy Transfer that will appear on the April 4, 2023 ballot. If approved, the No Tax Increase Bond Issue would authorize the issuance of up to \$120 million in bonds to fund nearly \$100 million in projects focused on safety, security, and accessibility improvements, student learning enhancements, and increasing operational efficiencies across the District. In addition, the Bond would include \$20 million that would be utilized to restructure existing debt in order to take advantage of lower interest rates and to free up funds to address pressing District operating needs. Local voters will also see a second Liberty Schools issue on the April 4, 2023, ballot that is a fifty-cent debt service levy transfer. If approved, this would allow the District to transfer fifty cents from the District Debt Service Levy to the District Operating Levy. Much like the Bond ballot item outlined above, this action would not increase the overall District tax levy. The purpose of this transfer would be to dedicate additional dollars to address District operating needs, including funds to be utilized to attract and retain quality faculty and staff. A common question we receive is: How is it possible to go to voters with no tax increase issues? Our Board of Education has spent the last several years aggressively paying off existing debt and refinancing for better rates, thus, we now have room in our state-set debt limit to take on additional debt with no tax increase to our District stakeholders. We feel confident that we are now in a position that our next several issues that

would go in front of voters would be No Tax Increase issues.

Our team has been spending the past several weeks sharing information regarding these issues to various community groups in an effort to educate and inform. In total, we expect to have conducted over sixty in-person meetings prior to election day as we engage with all stakeholder groups. I would also encourage you to visit our LPS website at [www.lps53.org](http://www.lps53.org). You will find a Bond Information button in the top right corner of the main page. Within this portal you can view all of the various projects outlined within the plan, a video presentation that shares all the important details, a Frequently Asked Questions page, and more. There is also a video series titled "30 Things to Know Regarding the April 4 No Tax Increase Bond Issue and Levy Transfer" that is currently being shared on our social media platforms, most notably the LPS Facebook page.

We look forward to sharing with you all of the exciting things ahead for us in the coming weeks and months as we close out the 2022-2023 school year. None of our success would be made possible without the partnership and support from our amazing community. Thank you for helping make Liberty Public Schools one that we can all be proud of.

All my best,

**Dr. M. Jeremy Tucker,**  
**Superintendent - Liberty Public Schools**



*LPS Superintendent Dr. Jeremy Tucker visits with staff at Ridgeview Elementary earlier this semester.*

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If you would like more information about Liberty School District, please contact the Communications Office at 736-5300, or visit our website at [www.lps53.org](http://www.lps53.org).





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# NO TAX INCREASE BOND ISSUE AND LEVY TRANSFER

## ABOUT THE LPS NO TAX INCREASE BOND ISSUE

Citing the need to complete projects focused on safety, security, accessibility improvements, student learning enhancements, and increasing operational efficiencies across the District, the Liberty Public Schools Board of Education unanimously placed a \$120 million No Tax Increase Bond Issue on the April 4, 2023, ballot. In addition to the \$100 million in projects, the Bond would include \$20 million that would be utilized to restructure existing debt in order to free up funds to address pressing District operating and capital needs.

## HOW WILL FUNDS FROM THE NO TAX INCREASE BOND ISSUE BE UTILIZED?

Following the District's long-range planning process, which included a significant amount of stakeholder engagement and feedback, a plan detailing facility improvements was recently approved by the Board of Education. Projects identified to be completed as part of this Bond include the following:

- Safety and security upgrades across the District
- Significant remodel and renovation to Heritage Middle School
- Gymnasiums that would include performance spaces at Discovery Middle School, South Valley Middle School, and EPIC Elementary
- Remodel and renovations to Special Education, Family and Consumer Sciences, and other learning spaces at Liberty High School
- District-wide infrastructure projects including air quality/heating and cooling upgrades, safety and accessibility improvements, repair to aging rooftops, and more
- New District support services building that would allow for much-needed additional space for various support services programs; including purchasing, warehouse and distribution department, school age care program, nutrition services
- Remodel of District transportation facility to potentially allow space for our high school auto tech and engineering programs
- Construction of tennis courts at Liberty High School
- Addition of field turf and site upgrades to baseball/softball complexes at Liberty High School and Liberty North High School
- Addition of an outbuilding for classroom space and outdoor recreational area at Liberty Academy
- Construction of new running track at Liberty Middle School



**Please Vote on April 4, 2023**



## ABOUT THE LPS NO TAX INCREASE LEVY TRANSFER



A second LPS item on the ballot is a No Tax Increase Levy Transfer that would allow the District to transfer 50 cents from the District Debt Service Levy to the District Operating Levy. Much like the Bond ballot item, this action would **NOT** increase the overall

District tax levy. The purpose of this transfer would be to dedicate additional dollars to address District operating needs, including funds to be utilized to attract and retain quality faculty and staff.

FUND	Current Levy	Proposed Change	Proposed Levy
Incidental (Operational)	\$4,0200	50¢	\$4,5200
Debt Service	\$1,5477	50¢	\$1,0477
Capital Projects	\$0,3600	No Change	\$0,3600
TOTAL LEVY	\$5,9277	No Change	\$5,9277

## HOW IS IT POSSIBLE TO GO TO DISTRICT VOTERS WITHOUT A TAX INCREASE?

Thanks to forward-thinking financial management by the Board of Education, LPS is now in a position to ask for a Bond without raising taxes. This is a result of aggressively paying off existing debts and refinancing for better rates, something the Board of Education has been passionate about in recent years. Because of these factors, we now have capacity within our state-set debt limit to take on these measures without an increase to the District levy.

## HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE NO TAX INCREASE BOND ISSUE AND LEVY TRANSFER

To learn more about the No Tax Increase Bond Issue, we encourage you to visit the Liberty Public Schools website at [www.lps53.org](http://www.lps53.org). Please keep an eye on our various social media platforms, as we will be introducing a 30 Things to Know About the April 4 No Tax Increase Bond Issue and Levy Transfer series coming up in March. There will also be several opportunities to attend informational meetings regarding the no tax increase bond issue leading up to Election Day on Tuesday, April 4, 2023.



*Paid for by Liberty 53 School District  
Dr. Jeremy Tucker, Superintendent  
8 Victory Lane | Liberty, MO 64068*

**Please Vote on April 4, 2023**





# FOLLOW US ON TWITTER

## Telling the LPS Story

In Liberty Public Schools, we have several social media platforms in place that provide us with the opportunity to help tell our story. Our Twitter page allows us to share daily updates from event taking place all around LPS. As you can see on the right side of this page, several Tweets have been highlighted from this semester that capture just a few of the stories worth sharing. In addition, you will find all of our school Twitter handles and hashtags below, and we encourage you to give them each a follow!

Name	Account	Hashtag
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### Elementary Schools

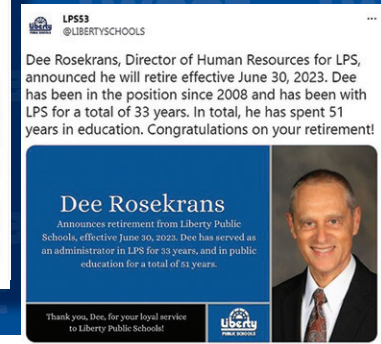
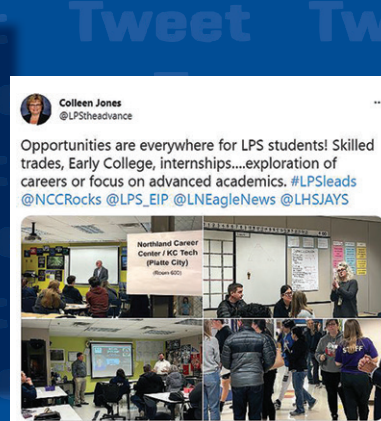
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EPiC	@EpicElementary	#lpsepic
Franklin	@LPSFranklinElem	#lpsfranklin
Kellybrook	@KBElementary	#kbcougars
Lewis and Clark	@lclblazers	#lclblazers
Liberty Oaks	@libertyoaks	#libertyoaks
Lillian Schumacher	@LillianSchuElem	#lssharks
Manor Hill	@MHPatriot	#mhpatriot
Ridgeview	@RVRoadrunner	#rvroadrunner
Shoal Creek	@ShoalCreekStars	#starssc
Warren Hills	@WHWildcats	#whcats

### Middle Schools

Discovery Middle School	@dmsbluejays	#dmsleads
Heritage Middle School	@heritagescoop	#heritagem
Liberty Middle School	@LibertyLMS	#LMSsoars
South Valley Middle School	@svmsEagles	#svmseagles

### High Schools

Liberty Academy	@LibAcademy	#LPSAcademy
Liberty High School	@LHSJAYS	#lhsjays
Liberty North High School	@LNEagleNews	#northnation





# 8th Grader Finds Strength in Wheelchair Basketball



By Kellie Houx

An essay from South Valley Middle School eighth-grader Lilly Morgan brought about a day of festivities dedicated specifically for her, including Friday, Jan. 20 being named Lilly Morgan Spirit Day.

Science and IMPACT teacher Ashley Brown said in the school's time with the IMPACT program, Morgan is the first student to want her story shared. With the opening line, "I'm not just a girl in a wheelchair," Morgan's words flowed from her, talking about her obstacles during infancy.

Her father, James Morgan, said Lilly was born with sacral agenesis syndrome, where her spinal column doesn't drop below the T-11 vertebrae. Lilly's mobility is via a wheelchair, and another challenge was remedied with hearing aids.

James said his wife Katelyn Morgan and the couple's other children, Lexie, 16, a sophomore at Liberty North, and Layla, 12, a seventh-grader are a team. The family attends games and provides a significant cheering section and support for Lilly, who has become a wheelchair basketball star.

James said the story started when the family was looking for something to do and headed to the Hy-Vee Arena for an open gym.

"It was a slow Saturday," he said. "We were walking through the upper level and Lilly was rolling along. All of a sudden, this man

pulls on her wheelchair wheel and asks her about opportunities and if she has ever thought about wheelchair basketball. He spoke about a demonstration downstairs and that was all it took."

That bold man, Matt Bollig, has been one of Lilly's wheelchair basketball coaches for four years.

"It was quick for her to get hooked," James said. "We went to the first practice and that was it."

However, it wasn't just the National Wheelchair Basketball Association and the Kansas City Kings, an area wheelchair basketball team that she plays for, giving her the tools to be a stellar wheelchair basketball player. She also gained help from coach Cole Quick at South Valley.

"He took it upon himself to help her shoot," James said. "He helped her put in the work."

The Kansas City Kings play all over the nation. Their record is a successful one with 44 wins and 1 loss. The team played this past weekend in the 2023 Kansas City Crossroads Invitational. Soon, they will head to Atlanta.

In her essay, she writes about guarding players and making her first basket. Last year, her team had an undefeated record and went to nationals.

"So you see, I'm not just a single story," Lilly wrote. "I'm not just a girl in a wheelchair. I'm much more than that. I'm a dog owner, I'm a daughter, I'm a basketball player and much more. I'm a whole person."

In the school gym, demonstration games Friday erupted with cheers for Lilly every time she was passed the ball or managed to recover the ball. She also rolled around the school for a small student parade as the student body cheered for her.

"It was amazing that the school came out for me like this," she said. "In my story, I talk about my health problems, but I am a person who loves animals in general and dogs specifically. I'm a sister and a daughter. I'm a basketball player."





# LIBERTY NORTH JUNIOR IS MISSOURI GATORADE VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR



*By Liam Keating*

The platform many young children run their student government campaign on is often very simple. "Vote for me and I will change the water fountains to flow with Gatorade," an easy proposition that is often shot down by the adults.

Just maybe, Liberty North should think about adding the sports drink to their fountains because the Gatorade Player of the Year Award runs through the Eagles' volleyball team.

Announced on Jan. 13, junior Carlie Cisneros was awarded the top prize for the best volleyball player in the state. Cisneros ended the year with 534 kills, 425 digs, 63 blocks and 31 service aces this season.

"Since I have been a little girl, Gatorade Player of the Year is always something that I have heard about, but never in a million years would I think that I could get it," she said.

This is the second time in three years that Liberty North volleyball has secured this honor. 2022 Liberty North graduate Addison Beagle won the award her junior season in 2020. Beagle is currently a key member of the Drake Bulldogs. She helped Drake secure the most single season wins in program history.

Beagle has been a key influence on Cisneros. The current Liberty North junior explained that Beagle's work ethic and love of volleyball helped shape Cisneros into the player that she is today.

"She is so selfless and she cares about single person on that court," Cisneros said of Beagle. "She was a physical leader and an emotional leader. I want to be like that. I try as best as I can. I try to bring the energy and pump people up."

Before each season, Cisneros spends a moment with each of her teammates. She asks them what kind of feedback do they prefer. Some



like being yelled and called out, others like being talked to in a calming voice.

With this information, Cisneros knows the best possible way to communicate with her teammates. This is a huge advantage for the Eagles. Anything can happen during a match especially when everything hinges on strong communication and trust of one another.

"When we are in the hallways at school and we see a familiar face, we go and we talk to these people," Cisneros said. "We gel together really well because we take the time to get to know everybody."

Cisneros guided the Eagles to a final four appearance this year. The Eagles lost to Lafayette in the semifinals, but Liberty North bounced back to take third place as they defeated St. Dominic. There is much to learn from this experience, according to Cisneros. Ever since that weekend, she has been eager to don the Liberty North jersey again.

"I started thinking about next season the moment that we got off of the bus," Cisneros laughed. "We are going to have almost the same team next year, we were almost there so we have got to build."

According to PrepVolleyball.com, Cisneros is ranked as the number one recruit in the nation. For now college waits, but she's determined to be a better player for the upcoming high school season this fall for the Eagles in her final season.

Sports Writer Liam Keating can be reached at [sports@mycouriertribune.com](mailto:sports@mycouriertribune.com), 389-6643 or [@mycptsports](https://twitter.com/mycptsports) on Twitter.



# LPS

## News & Notes

### LPS a Major Presence at State Conference



The Liberty North High School Wind Symphony Band, conducted by Shane Fuller, and the Liberty North High School Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Alysse Trusty, made a trip to Osage Beach, MO, in January to perform at the Missouri Music Education Association State Conference. This is a prestigious event that requires schools to submit a recording of their band a year in advance to be considered. The recordings are then compared with other ensembles around the state and only a few groups are selected each year to perform at this conference. Both the band and orchestra performed in front of hundreds of music educators, administrators, college students, and parents. They both received standing ovations at the conclusion of their performances and represented Liberty North High School, Liberty Public Schools, and the Liberty community with professionalism and outstanding musical performances. Both Liberty High School and Liberty North High School also had many individual students that were selected to represent their discipline (band, orchestra, choir) in the All-State performances as well at this conference. Those students practiced and performed with other students from all across the state in a concert that concluded the event. This was another example of the incredible talents of our Fine Arts programs in LPS!



JUNE 27 - 29, 2023  
9 AM - 3 PM

REGISTER  
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#### WHAT

The 2023 Liberty Education Foundation's THRIVE Institute will help students get life-ready with skills, tools and information beyond what you learn in the classroom! Don't miss this FREE, FUN, three-day experience! There's only space for 100 students, so sign up today!

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- networking
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- snacks
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- make new friends
- rocket your confidence
- get a badge for participating
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#### WHO

LHS, LNHS and Liberty Academy 2023-2024 sophomores, juniors and seniors

#### WHEN

June 27 - 29, 2023 | 9 AM - 3 PM

#### WHERE

The View at Liberty High School

#### WHY

Learn skills and strategies to help you thrive while in high school and as you prepare for life after high school - think practical, relevant and fun!

The THRIVE Institute is provided for free by the Liberty Education Foundation, the nonprofit dedicated to supporting Liberty Public Schools. THRIVE was created in partnership with William Jewell College's Tucker Leadership Lab, and they facilitate the three-day experience.

**REGISTRATION:** *Registration deadline: May 1*  
*But don't wait as we anticipate filling all available spaces prior to the deadline!*

[libertyeducationfoundation.org/thrive](http://libertyeducationfoundation.org/thrive)

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# 2023 EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR

## Alexander Doniphan Elementary



**Melissa Gleason**  
1st Grade  
Teacher of the Year



**Bridget Lester**  
Nurse  
Support Employee of the Year

## Discovery Middle School



**Phillip Hoover-Holthus**  
Special Education  
Teacher of the Year



**Carolyn Money**  
ISS/Recovery Room  
Support Employee of the Year

## Early Childhood Center



**Cara Lynch**  
Title I Preschool  
Teacher of the Year



**Sonia Reagan**  
Behavior Interventionist  
Support Employee of the Year

## District Administration Center



**Jill Morse**  
Building Head Custodian  
Support Employee of the Year

## EPiC Elementary

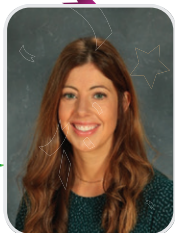


**Jenifer Poskey**  
Special Education  
Teacher of the Year



**Robin Ruhlman**  
Building Dispatcher  
Support Employee of the Year

## Franklin Elementary



**Erin Talley**  
5th Grade  
Teacher of the Year



**Samantha Whitaker**  
Administrative Assistant  
Support Employee of the Year

## Heritage Middle School



**Kara Stanley**  
6th Grade Math  
Teacher of the Year



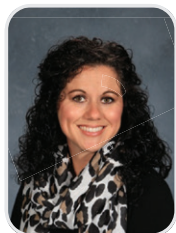
**Crissy Barner**  
Library Paraprofessional  
Support Employee of the Year

## Facilities Center



**James Cain**  
Grounds Technician  
Support Employee of the Year

## Kellybrook Elementary



**Ashley Harder**  
2nd Grade  
Teacher of the Year



**Wendy Smith**  
Social Worker  
Support Employee of the Year

## Lewis and Clark Elementary



**Jennifer Smith**  
1st Grade  
Teacher of the Year



**Erika Jennings**  
Special Education Paraprofessional  
Support Employee of the Year

## Liberty Academy



**Jodi Sipes**  
Alternative Education  
Teacher of the Year



**Shannon Richardson**  
Safety Monitor  
Support Employee of the Year

## Liberty High School



**Serena Comegys**  
English/Language Arts  
Teacher of the Year



**Kim True**  
Security Officer  
Support Employee of the Year

## Liberty Middle School



**Cory Munson**  
8th Grade Science  
Teacher of the Year



**Gabe Brandolino**  
Special Education Paraprofessional  
Support Employee of the Year

## Liberty North High School



**Brian Hartman**  
Vocal Music  
Teacher of the Year



**Mara Grayson**  
Administrative Assistant  
Support Employee of the Year

## Liberty Oaks Elementary

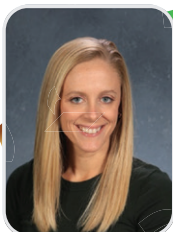


**Ashley Cline**  
5th Grade  
Teacher of the Year



**Robin Needhammer**  
Cafeteria Manager  
Support Employee of the Year

## Discovery Middle School



**Molly Pearson**  
Special Education Resource  
Teacher of the Year



**Mark Kolesik**  
Head Custodian  
Support Employee of the Year

## Ridgeview Elementary



**Kaitlyn Jameson**  
BEST Program  
Teacher of the Year



**Tammy Friend**  
Special Education Paraprofessional  
Support Employee of the Year



## Manor Hill Elementary



**Courtney Danze**  
3rd Grade  
Teacher of the Year



**Denise Wichman**  
Administrative Assistant  
Support Employee of the Year

## South Valley Middle School



**Jason Boldt**  
6th Grade Science  
Teacher of the Year



**Chellana Sowers**  
Cafeteria Manager  
Support Employee of the Year

## Warren Hills Elementary



**Mataschawa Herndon**  
Kindergarten  
Teacher of the Year



**Tom Dawkins**  
Head Custodian  
Support Employee of the Year

## Shoal Creek Elementary

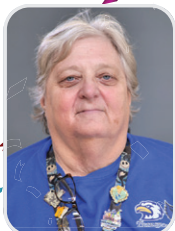


**Angela Benner**  
4th Grade  
Teacher of the Year



**Kaitlin Stegemann**  
Speech/Language Pathologist  
Support Employee of the Year

## Supportive Service



**Pat Pennhallow-Adams**  
Bus Driver - Certified Trainer  
Support Employee of the Year

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