



The Liberty Ledger

FEBRUARY 2025

ISSUE 39

By: President Elizabeth Allan– Matheson

🤔 STUDENT COUNCIL SECRETS 🤔

What's Really In Your Lunch?

The Liberty Middle School 2024-2025 student council officers have one goal and one goal alone, to make LMS way better than when we found it. Student Council Secrets is the #1 official student council news source to see all of the additions, changes, and improvements the student council is adding to Liberty Middle School.

The Truth About the School Lunch

Have you ever wondered why the cheese is wrinkly? Or why the meat look like that? Why isn't the water free? Why can't you have more than 3 wings? Or have you ever just had questions about the school lunch? Well in this article has everything you need to know about your school lunch.

The meat is "precooked." Yep, you heard it here first, the meat in the cafeteria is precooked. It didn't make sense when I first heard it, since I've been sent multiple photos of meat discoloration (the meat was literally pink) and have received multiple concerns and complaints about the colors of the meat. That's why I was concerned. Meat is generally the same color (shades of brown), not colors like pink, green, and purple. After receiving these complaints, I was confused when the lunch staff mentioned that the meat was precooked. There were also concerns about dryness, undercooked

meat, strange appearances, and more. They said they would try to fix it. When I asked Ms. Cragel, the lunch director in West Orange, how this could happen (I showed her the photos), she gave an unexpected response. She explained that it might be because they dye their meat.

The meat is dyed!

I was surprised to learn that the discoloration of the meat was due to it being dyed. At first, I thought this was strange, so I did some research and found that food dyeing is actually common to make it look more appealing. They treat the meat with gases or dyes to make it appear fresher, but it doesn't change the nutritional value.

An example of dying food is salmon. Salmon is dyed to look more appealing, and so are many other meats such as processed meats, like ham or hot dogs. They are dyed to enhance their color and make them look more appealing. Therefore, that may explain the discoloration of the food.

Wait, it's not pork !?!

Many students (including me) were complaining about how pepperoni, bacon, and other typical pork products have strange and weird tastes. Well, it's probably because all of the meat you think is pork is actually turkey. That's right, all the products, meals, and foods that you think are pork are made from turkey. The pepperoni is turkey pepperoni, the bacon is turkey

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bacon, and everything that you think is pork ...well isn't. The reasoning for this is because many students and staff cannot eat pork for religious or personal reasons. Ms. Cragel said that in the elementary schools they believe that the younger students may eat foods that their families wouldn't allow if they served them.

Whether the consumption is intentional or unintentional, Maschios deems it best to not serve pork to prevent any problems. I suppose they just felt that since they weren't going to serve pork at the elementary levels, they weren't going to serve it on the middle school levels. But she said that they do occasionally serve it at the high school, but they do make sure that it is known that it is pork being served.

Chef Mikes wings!

During the meeting, I told Ms. Cragel about the overwhelming positive feedback regarding Chef Mike's wings and requested that he return more than once. Last school year (2023-2024), he only came once or twice. Ms. Cragel mentioned that the wings and Chef Mike would be back every month (in December, we even had wings two days in a row). Just a quick tip: check the calendar for Chef Mike days so you can get to lunch early because, as we all know, the lines are especially long on those days.

THE CHESE!!!!

Let's talk about the infamous cheese for a moment. Why does it wrinkle like that? Well, here's the reason: it's canned cheese. The cheese is stored in large metal tubes with additives to keep it from sticking or hardening. So, if you ever see white powder on the cheese, it's not mold—it's likely the additive. However, if you do spot something unusual, please report it to the head of cafeteria staff (the person in the red shirt) just to be safe.



I spoke with Ms. Giovana (former head of the cafeteria (the only lunch worker in a red shirt)). She said that the next time they serve the cheese they're going to try a dif-

ferent type of cheese, white cheese, one that shouldn't wrinkle. By the time this article is published this might have already happened. But, the reason they switched from the white cheese was because the kids didn't like it. Therefore, when this new cheese is tried and tasted by the students there will be a poll to determine which is better, and the winner will be the one we stick with.

Fresh produce: Watermelon Wednesdays?

One of the most requested changes from students is a wider variety of fruits and vegetables. At least 20 people were asking for watermelon Wednesdays every week, which is actually a great idea. The current selection at Liberty is pretty basic: red and green apples, pears, peas, corn, green beans, and other steamed vegetables. Occasionally, we get treats like watermelon and strawberry cups. However, during the meeting, Ms. Cragel explained that buying out-of-season fruit is difficult and expensive, unless it's for a special event.

FDA Guidelines

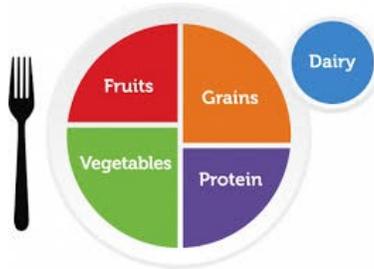
Have you ever wondered why you can't have 2 holiday cookies? Why can't you have more than three wings? Why isn't water free? Well, it's not because they don't have enough or they need to serve other students...Well not entirely at least.

I was surprised to learn that one of the main reasons school lunch isn't where we want it to be is because of the FDA (Food and Drug Administration). The FDA has strict guidelines on what can and can't be served, and

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Maschiso is simply following them. When Ms. Cragel talked about the details, she didn't mention the name, but it sounded like the MyPlate meal plan created by the federal government. The chart below shows the food recommendations, and Ms. Cragel explained that they must serve specific amounts from each food group.

For example, someone suggested having cornbread available near the fruits and



drinks. The other officers and I thought it was a good idea, and so did Ms. Cragel. However, the FDA guidelines only allow a certain portion of each

food group to be served each day. They can't just leave it out because, for example, if you buy a burger, the buns already count as your grain for the meal. From what I understood, the FDA considers that too much grain.

But, the thing that shocked me the most was why the water isn't free

When I asked for water bottles to be free and available with the other drinks, I was told they could sell them, but not give them away for free. I was shocked when I found out that, according to the FDA, water doesn't have any nutritional value, as if we don't need it to live. Since water lacks ingredients or nutrients

like milk or juice, the FDA doesn't consider it necessary to give it out for free at lunch. They said if you need water, you can use the water fountain (which, let's be honest, no one does unless it's an emergency). So, unfortunately, the best the student council could do was make water bottles available for purchase at the kiosk with the other drinks.

Lactose Free Milk

Along with the water, a new beverage has been added to the drink selection at the kiosk. Lactose free milk has been added as an alternative to milk (regular), chocolate milk, and juice for those like myself who are lactose intolerant (*cries in lactose intolerant*).

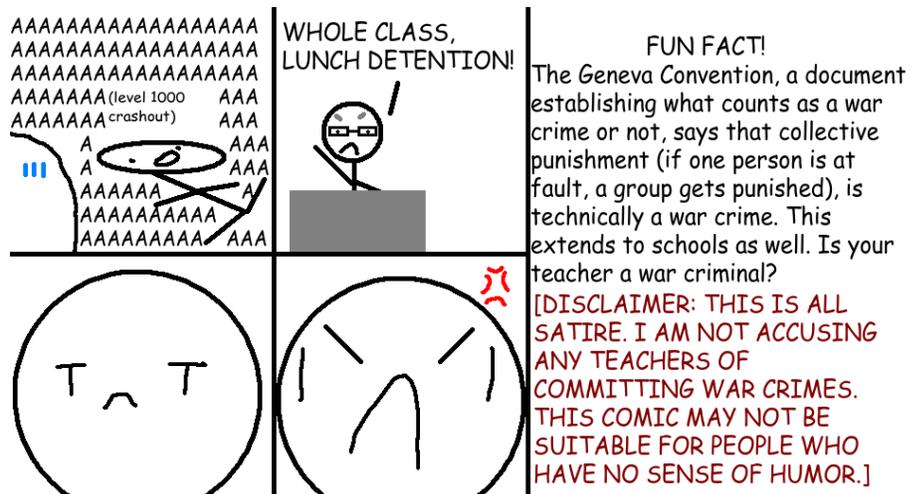
Head of the Cafeteria

Something I didn't know, but was happy to find out, is that there is a head of the cafeteria staff. It used to be Ms. Giovana, but she no longer works here. There's a new person in charge—sorry, I don't know her name, but she's the one in the red shirt (the only one in red, while everyone else wears blue). She's really nice. So, if you ever have any questions, problems, or concerns about your lunch, she's the person to talk to.

If you have any questions about anything in this article or about anything at LMS, please let me know. :)

By: Myo Balines

War Crimes



By: Sanvi Bhatnagar

Sanvi's Section

Valentines Sugar Cookie Cups Recipe

Prep Time: 30 min



Cook Time: 12 min



Total Time: 42 min

Makes 35 cookies



Preheat oven
to 350°F

Grease mini
muffin tin

sugar cookie dough

- 3/4 cup salted butter (softened)
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1/4 tsp almond extract (optional)
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 2 cups flour

buttercream frosting

- 1/4 cup salted butter (softened)
- 1 1/3 cups powdered sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 tbsp milk or heavy whipping cream
- pink/red food coloring
- valentines day themed sprinkles

make the sugar cookie cups

1. Beat the butter and sugar in a stand mixer.
2. Combine the egg, vanilla, and almond extract (if using).
3. Add the baking powder and flour and stir until combined.
4. Scoop the dough with rounded tablespoons and roll into a ball.
5. Fill each muffin tin cup with dough, flatten the top with your finger.
6. Bake for 10-12 minutes, or until golden brown around the edges.
7. Use a bottle cap to press into each cookie to form a "cup."
8. Let cool for 5 minutes in the pan, then remove to a wire cooling rack.

make the frosting and assemble

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer, stir the butter until smooth.
2. Add the powdered sugar and vanilla and stir.
3. Add the milk (or cream) and beat until smooth, adding 1/2 – 1 tbsp of milk, if needed for desired consistency.
4. Stir in food coloring.
5. Scoop the frosting into a piping bag and pipe into each of the cooled cookie cups.
6. Top with sprinkles.

Enjoy!!!

Board of Education Overview:

January 27, 2025

By: Isabela Salinas Cavagnaro

The Chinese club hosted a very successful celebration of Chinese New Year on Friday, January 24, in the Tarnoff Cafeteria. Guests were able to partake in a Chinese dinner, and they received a traditional red apple at the end of the night. There were cultural performances by students, games, a student art show, and crafts; all making this event enjoyable for all participants.

West Orange hosted their 19th Annual Color Guard invitational, where 25 color guards were able to participate. It was an exciting night where the performers wowed the audience with their talents and routines!

On January 19th, the AB Salute Boys Stem Team won the 18th annual Youth Step USA Brooklyn Borough Championship!

Upcoming Events

February is Black History Month, which celebrates the notable accomplishments and contributions of black Americans to our country. Today, they continue to serve as an integral part of our society that cannot be overlooked. To celebrate this month, West Orange High School is hosting a Black History Month dinner/celebration. There will be must-see performances by the step teams, jubilee choir, and the National Dance Honor Society. Local catering will provide delicious food as well. Tickets will soon be available, and they will be \$15 each.

A Liberty Basketball Game with Roosevelt will be held on Wednesday, February 3.

Support our school by demonstrating your Liberty spirit by attending this game, and rooting for our teams!



Points of Discussion/Overview

Superintendent Report

The initiative to bring air-conditioning to elementary school classrooms is now underway! In Washington, Kelly, and St. Cloud they have already updated the electrical systems in the buildings to meet the needs of this initiative. The other elementary schools, Mt. Pleasant, Gregory, Hazel, and Redwood will start to implement this initiative soon as well. Look out for donation campaigns from the PTA at the different schools if you want to show your support for this initiative!

Audit Report

An audit report was provided by Robert Haye, of Lurch, Vincey and Bliss. This report was a comprehensive fiscal report that comprised a larger financial report, and the smaller auditors management report. To put it simply, the district is performing at the same rate as they were last year, and they are accumulating a good surplus that is allowing them to provide their budget for the future with this surplus money. So, the reports were overall positive, and no significant advice or help was needed.

Math Interventions (Grades 6-8): In October

2024, there were district-wide classroom visits in the middle schools in order to determine what areas the students and teachers need to improve in. This proved to be an effective way to gain this necessary information, which will help students progress to a sufficient level in their math classes and prepare them for the next grade. There are also positive results that students are receiving most of their necessary instruction during class-time. This is important to enable pupils to give the time necessary to understand the essential information/content and be able to ask questions from their peers/teachers when they need it. Also, a strong emphasis is student's understanding of the content to the point where they can explain how they conduct certain problems/methods, which can allow them to develop a deeper-knowledge of the information.

This week, the i-Ready diagnostics tests have been administered in the middle school as well. The results of this assessment will determine how much growth students have been able to achieve over the course of the half of the school year, which will hopefully be positive. There would also be more classroom visits in order to analyze students as they conduct discussions with their peers, which is essential to understanding the content (being able to explain it). There will be a progress report given on mathematics from the district; the progress of students at different levels, areas of improvement, strengths/weaknesses among most pupils, among other things, at the end of the year in order to analyze how i-Ready is helping the students (or not) in the way desired.

Comments from West Orange Residents

Residents raised the concern that their taxes continue to be extremely high, especially in comparison to other districts.

However, information was presented that suggested that there is a surplus of money available for the students and schools in the district. Residents are wondering, why are they still expected to pay such high taxes for students/schools when they already have more than enough money?

This question was answered by the board. Superintendent Moore stated that it is essential for taxpayers to understand how much money is needed to fund the schools, and that although students need it, there are multiple other areas that require these funds. It is for this reason that the taxes persist at mainly the same rates.

Multiple concerned parents asked when the initiatives with the AC would be finished in the elementary schools. They were concerned that the extremely hot environments (during the summer and spring) wouldn't allow for their children to properly learn and function in school.

Superintendent Moore answered this question. He stated that since there are so many elementary schools, and there are many steps that need to be taken in order for this initiative to be successful, the estimate for the date when it will be finished is in 2026. He expressed his understanding with these worried parents, and assured them that in the event that a classroom gets too hot, students will be moved to different areas for instruction. Not only this, but they are currently fans and other portable devices being used in the school in order to combat the heat as much as possible (which will likely be needed during the spring and summer heat).

Last, some parents expressed their concern for their child's safety with the new federal regulations allowing for deportation agents to come into schools, churches, and homes. They wanted to make sure that the district

Continue... **Board of Education Overview: November 13, 2024** By: Isabela Salinas Cavagnaro

knew how to handle their students' private information, how to properly identify federal agents, and how to deal with this sort of situation in a safe way. The response from the board was that the schools in the

district are equipped with the materials in order to handle these situations, and that above all else, they are committed to protecting their students in the best ways possible.

Getting to Know Ms. Snyder

By: Hayley Smiley, Beatrice Faherty,
and Anya Hughes

What college did you graduate from and what was your major?

I went to Columbia University to learn English and creative writing.

What do you like best about your job?

The students! They're fun, kind, and make my classroom a great place to be.

What do you like least about your job?

I don't like my long commute to work.

If you had to pick another profession, other than teaching, what would it be?

I would love to be a writer/an author.

What do you like to do outside of school?

I like to cook, reading, listen to music, and spending time with her daughter.

Do you have a hobby?

Yes. My hobby is to read, write, and cook.

Do you speak another language?

I took French in school, but do not speak another language.



What is your favorite book?

My favorite author is Jane Austen and my favorite book is *Pride and Prejudice*.

What are your favorite movies and/or TV show?

My favorite TV shows are *Schitts Creek* and *The Crown* (a Netflix show about the British monarchy).

What is your favorite food?

My favorite food is soup dumplings.

Fun Fact

I used to be a tutor for the Wonder Girls. They opened a tour with the Jonas Brothers.

By: Sanvi Bhatnagar

Sanvi's Section



Student Interviews



I was asked to interview fellow students about a funny topic. So, I chose to interview some of my friends about what their favorite and least favorite meals are during lunchtime.



Me: "What is your favorite meal served at lunch?"



Lizzy Allan Matheson: "The wings, oh my god they're delicious."

Nya Howard: "Probably the wings. I LOVE the wings."

Anya Hughes: "I don't know, I'll say the french fries."

Tessa Brinkeroff: "Wings. I actually love the wings."



Me: "What is a meal you really do not like?"



Lizzy Allan Matheson: "Oh my god ew, the Turkey Ham, Egg, and Cheese Sandwich. It was so gross."

Nya Howard: "That breakfast sandwich we had, it was so so SO bad."

Anya Hughes: "Oh um, the Jamaican Jerk Chicken. Yeah. Gross."

Tessa Brinkerhoff: "Pasta, I hate their spaghetti."

POEM

Lover's Lane

By: Tahiti

A token to my fellow Aro's and Aces who don't get the Valentines Day hype. Or who do get the Valentines Day hype, but not for the romance.

The happy couples, milling about
The joyous friends, without a doubt
Families hugging, a warm embrace
These are the forms that love can take
In Lovers Lane, where we are loved
Couples, family, all of the above
And yet when a boy and a girl share a grin
and some fun
They are nothing but a couple, and would
have never won
I have a word, for those who read
This word is Platonic, so follow my lead
I am a friend, of a friend of a friend
I don't plan on dating them, ever in the end.

And yet I feel love, is that so odd?
To hold and to have, with no kiss involved?
Sometimes, I pray
For the day
When I can hug and have and hold
With my friends, whom I love, when I am old
This is Lovers Lane, where we say, I Love You
And so, I tell my friends that this is true.
We are of, this human race
Yet some only feel
Platonic Love
So this makes them, and me
Aro-Ace



There are many types of love besides romantic.
Perhaps it would do you some good to learn
about them.
I love my friends.
Do you?

By: Myo Balines

We Get It



Black History Month Search

By: Keren Selassie



Search for the word below. Words can go in any direction.

U O L E G N A A Y A M L J N T D Q F W F
 F R A N K O C E A N E N I N N V T H T T
 N I J G W S G C X B W W A A Z V V J F U
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 Y R Q T L F Z O D L R E B C A L I P H J
 P N K W S C N W A B P S Q Y X Y Q N O Q
 A S B G Z J L B E O O Q D J F K Z Z M B
 A R O R A C S B C M U H A M M A D A L I
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 Serena Williams
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