

THE LIBERTY BULLETIN

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF SCHOOL DISTRICT #25



Whether it's in line at the cafeteria, or brought from home, lunch is an important part of the school day. School lunch is critical to student health and well-being and ensures that students have the nutrition they need throughout the day to learn.





Message from the Interim Superintendent



Families are moving into our communities at a rapid pace, and our schools continue to grow just as fast. Since 2019, Liberty Elementary School District No. 25 has experienced a 23 percent increase in student enrollment across the district. Additionally, we project another 32 percent increase in enrollment (around 1,400 students) by 2029.

Dr. Cort Monroe
Interim Superintendent

We are now a couple of months into the 2023-2024 school year, and we are so grateful to have our students and teachers back in our classrooms. The energy is electric and the passion for learning is at an all-time high. We've welcomed the four-day school week and have already seen its positive impact on having quality teachers in every classroom. We are proud to only have one full-time teacher opening during a teacher shortage where other districts have many, many more. As we are closing the gaps on one issue, a few more are coming to a head - having classroom space for students to learn and keeping our schools maintained and up to date.

We are so lucky to be located in such vibrant, growing communities in Buckeye and Goodyear, but with growth, comes more students. Families are moving into our communities at a rapid pace, and our schools continue to grow just as fast. Since 2019, Liberty Elementary School District No. 25 has experienced a 23 percent increase in student enrollment across the district. Additionally, we project another 32 percent increase in enrollment (around 1,400 students) by 2029. The growth projections alone would fill the max capacity of at least two more schools. It's clear that LESD25 needs to build more schools to accommodate the growth of our communities.

Additionally, our current school buildings are aging faster than we've been able to repair them. Our buildings are in desperate need of repairs to plumbing, landscaping, roofing, flooring, shade structures, parking lots, furniture, and technology - the list can go on and on. These necessary repairs will not only help the day-to-day operations but also enhance the safety and security of all of our campuses.

To ensure that we can build new schools and make necessary repairs, the Governing Board approved the district to seek a bond in the November 2023 election. Please go to our bond information page for more information on this important election, and to have your frequently asked questions answered: <https://www.liberty25.org/about-liberty/election-information>

Dr. Cort Monroe
Interim Superintendent

Liberty 25 seeks bond approval

Voters will decide the fate of \$97.4 million proposal that aims to accommodate growth

Liberty Elementary School District voters will decide the fate of a \$97.4 million bond that aims to address rapid growth throughout the district's boundaries.

ACCOMMODATING RAPID GROWTH

23%

GROWTH SINCE 2019

LESD25 has grown by approximately 834 students since 2019, which reflects a 23% increase in enrollment.

PROJECTED ADDITIONAL GROWTH BY 2029

LESD25 projects student enrollment will increase by approximately 1,409 students by 2029, which would reflect a 32% increase in enrollment.

32%

If approved, the bond will fund:

- New school construction to accommodate student growth, including two new schools;
- Construction and renovation of current school buildings;
- Purchase of pupil transportation vehicles;
- Districtwide safety, security, and capital upgrades for schools;
- Improvement to school grounds including landscape, playground and athletic surfaces;
- Site improvements that include parking lots, roofing, flooring, plumbing, shade structures and fields;
- Build Phase II of the District Complex;
- Supply school buildings with furniture, fixtures, equipment and technology upgrades.

The average annual cost to an owner of a home valued at \$250,000 for tax purposes is estimated at \$214.05. The cost for the average homeowner would be approximately \$13.88 per month.

If the bond fails, the effects of that failure will include:

- Overcrowded classrooms;
- Possible school boundary changes;
- Inability to renovate facilities;
- School buses and technology will continue to age and breakdown, resulting in greater maintenance costs;
- Facilities, plumbing, flooring and roofing will continue to age.



Growing Up Fast

Demographic report predicts growth of 2,200 students for LESD25 over next 10 years

You don't have to look far to see the growth that's happening in the Liberty Elementary School District — and that growth is coming fast.

New housing developments are going up rapidly throughout LESD25, and a recently commissioned demographic study confirms that those new homes will also lead to even more students attending district schools. Having begun in 2022-23, and continuing for at least the next 10 years, LESD25 can expect to add nearly 11,400 new households, and with those households come children . . . a projected 2,200 new students.

The demographic study was completed by Applied Economics, a Valley research firm that specializes in school district enrollment projections.



The group recently reported its findings. Among the conclusions of the report:

- LESD25 is expected to experience a 75 percent increase in population by the 2032-33 school year, resulting in a total population of nearly 80,500 people. An additional 11,400 households are expected to be created over the 10-year period due to the addition of almost 13,000 new housing units to the District's inventory.
- It is estimated that by 2032-33 6,600 K-8 students will call LESD25 home.
- Total enrollment in LESD25 is expected to increase by nearly 1,200 students in the first five-year period and by about 1,000 students during the second five years, for a total increase of roughly 2,200 students by 2032-33.
- With combined enrollment increases of nearly 1,600 students, the Liberty, Westar and Las Brisas attendance areas will account for 70 percent of the total enrollment increase in the District over the 10-year period.
- During the next five years, the most significant enrollment increases are expected in the Las Brisas (+400 students) and Liberty (+280 students) attendance areas. Only the Freedom attendance area is projected to experience nominal enrollment growth.
- Nearly 53 percent of the enrollment increase projected for the 10-year period is expected to occur by 2027-28.
- During the second half of the projection period, enrollment gains are expected to decrease significantly in the Las Brisas attendance area, while strong growth will continue in the Liberty attendance area. The strongest enrollment gain in the second five-year period is projected for the Westar attendance area, which is expected to add more than 500 students between 2027-28 and 2032-33. This will account for 50 percent of the total increase projected for the second half of the 10-year period.

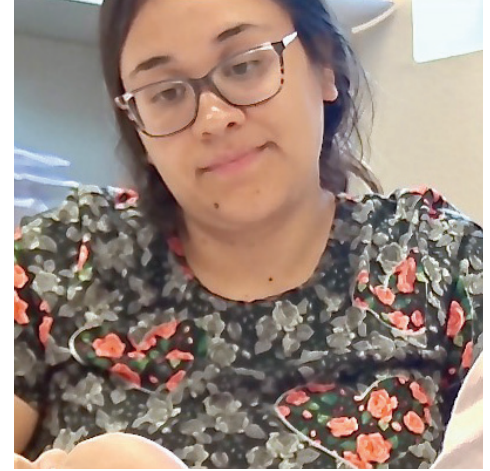
Source: Applied Economics, October 2022

It is estimated that by 2032-33 6,600 K-8 students will call LESD25 home



Homecoming

Three Rainbow Valley graduates return as teachers to lead the next generation



They say you can't go home again.

Rainbow Valley Elementary School Teachers Hailey Blahnik, Bishop Burdine and Sierra McMahon say you're wrong. All three aren't your typical Rainbow Valley teachers. They're also graduates of the school.

"My favorite thing about Rainbow Valley is the community," said K-4 resource teacher McMahon about her return to the school where she attended sixth through eighth grade. "A lot of teachers have been here for a while. They know their students, and they know their siblings. When kids are getting dropped off in the morning you see those teachers greeting their students, but you also see them greeting their older siblings who they also taught, which is pretty neat."

"I know I wanted to be part of the [Liberty] District," said Blahnik, a third-grade teacher. "As I was going through college doing internships and student teaching I kept coming back to Liberty. When I applied there was an opening for third grade, and that's what I wanted, so I took the chance while I could."

All three teachers agreed that the perspective from a teacher's point of view is quite different from that of a student's.

"In a student's eyes you think a teacher just comes here, gives you stuff to do and then goes home," said sixth-grade teacher Burdine. "On the teacher's side, you do all of that, but you also go home and grade, evaluate their data, and you have to figure out what you're going to do tomorrow. There are a lot of things you do in the background that I never thought of when I was a student here."

Blahnik, Burdine and McMahon recall their time as students fondly, and now get to work with some of the same people who taught them.

"It's super weird," said McMahon.

"Yeah, seeing them in school and out of school is a little weird," Burdine said. "I still call them by their teacher name, not their first names."

The trio also credits their experience at Rainbow Valley on influencing their choice to become teachers, with two of them mentioning current eighth teacher Vicki Johnson specifically.

"When I had to pick what I wanted to be I thought back to when I was a student and I struggled," said Blahnik. "I had that one teacher who did something a little different and it just opened me up and made me realize I can do things. I wanted to be that teacher."

They all did. And now they are.



I had that one teacher who did something a little different and it just opened me up and made me realize I can do things. I wanted to be that teacher.

Hailey Blahnik
Rainbow Valley Third Grade Teacher



LESD25 Earns Certificate of Financial Excellence for the 28th Consecutive Year

The Liberty Elementary School District business office has earned the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting Award from the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) International for the 28th consecutive year.

"This award represents a significant achievement and reflects your commitment to transparency and high-quality financial reporting," ASBO International Chief Operations Officer/Interim Executive Director Siobhan McMahon said. "The Annual Comprehensive Financial Report informs stakeholders about the financial and economic state of the district, making it an important communications tool for building trust and engaging with the school community."

The recent report marks nearly three decades of responsible financial management in LESD25.

"Our team works extremely hard to maintain high standards for financial spending and reporting. This award is a testament to our commitment to transparency and accountability," said Beth Strickler, the district's Executive Director of Business Services.

"We're proud to receive this prestigious award. Transparency is key to everything we do, and we're grateful to be recognized once again," Interim Superintendent Dr. Cort Monroe said.



Five Liberty 25 science teachers named ASAP Fellows

Five Liberty Elementary School District science teachers were named Arizona STEM Acceleration Project (ASAP) Fellows after they completed year one of the ASAP program.

ASAP Fellows from LESD25 are Josh Kolopanis, Shawna Matteson and Janelle Moran, Westar Elementary School; Sue Matteson, Freedom Elementary School; and Christi Mendoza, Liberty Elementary School.

"We are so proud to have such talented teachers across the district," said Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services Natasha Camp. "Their participation in this fellowship speaks volumes to their commitment to STEM education and to their students."

Supported by Arizona State University's Center for Science and the Imagination and Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College, ASAP is a grassroots effort to enhance and accelerate science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) activities in schools across Arizona. This project connects educators with professional development organizations and funding partners to build a more collaborative, more imaginative foundation for developing and delivering STEM resources and training opportunities to educators statewide.

"At Liberty, we pride ourselves on having top talent, and these science teachers emulate that. Their ambition and dedication to the teaching profession shine through their classrooms. We are lucky to have them as part of our LESD25 team," said Interim Superintendent Dr. Cort Monroe.

ASAP provides vital funding and guidance to schools and professional development organizations, increasing their ability to foster engagement, update curricula, and acquire materials needed to improve STEM education for Arizona's students.

ASAP STEM Fellows receive the following benefits:

- **STEM Supplies:** Fellows receive a \$2,000 stipend to purchase STEM supplies for their projects.
- **Funding:** A \$4,500 stipend is given to all ASAP Fellows.
- **Professional Development Opportunities:** Fellows have access to a broad range of STEM professional development opportunities throughout Arizona.

Blue Horizons Awarded Computer Science CS100 'All In' Certificate

Blue Horizons Elementary School was awarded the Computer Science CS100 "All In" certificate by CS For Elementary and CS For All for excellence in computer science.

"We are honored at Blue Horizons to be the recipient of the CS100 award for coding. It is an example of what happens when talented educators extend their learning in order to support our children," said Bruce Nieminski, principal at Blue Horizons. "This will benefit our students in moving forward in our career exploration program."

The CS100 "All In" awards the top computer science elementary schools in America that commit to teaching at least 10 hours of computer science to every K-5 student in the 2023-24 school year. CS "All In" Schools have aligned instruction to meet all state or district standards for computer science. Blue Horizons Elementary School is committed to providing 100 percent of their K-5 students with education in computer science for the 2023-24 school year.

"Building foundational computer science skills for 100 percent of K-5 students is a major achievement," said LESD25 Interim Superintendent Dr. Cort Monroe. "Computer science plays an important role in Blue Horizon's signature program — career exploration. With our world being so heavily reliant on computers, it's imperative to educate our students to be well-versed in computer science. This speaks to the commitment of our outstanding staff and teachers."

The award was presented to three other schools in Arizona, placing Blue Horizons among high-performing science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) schools and gifted academies in the nation.

"Our school community places great value on providing a high-quality education that inspires and aids our students' understanding today," said Alyssa Shelly, Blue Horizon's coding teacher. "As a school, we are also looking forward to the future that students will forge upon the foundations created at BHES. Much of that future will be technological. Our world is digital. Therefore, classrooms must adapt to be computer science-based to ensure students are ready to enter the workforce and continue their education," Shelly said.

Assistant Superintendent Natasha Camp Receives Distinguished Administrator Award

Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services Natasha Camp was selected as the Arizona School Administrators Distinguished Administrator for the Educational Services Division.

"I'm honored to receive this recognition," Camp said. "It's really a testament to the outstanding work the LESD25 team does every day and the accomplishments we earn together. We strive to build and strengthen our schools as their communities grow. I do this for the students and their future."

Camp has been with Liberty 25 since 2018 and has more than two decades of experience in the education field. She supervises multiple educational programs and their respective directors. Camp has led the rollout of new curricula across the district, in addition to introducing innovative approaches to professional development to strengthen District educators.

"I feel very fortunate to join a team of world-class administrators and educators in Liberty and look forward to working alongside them," said Interim Superintendent Dr. Cort Monroe. "Natasha truly is one of a kind and we are lucky to have her lead our educational services efforts."

Camp was presented with the award at the ASA Summer Conference in June.





**Liberty Elementary
School District No. 25**
19871 West Fremont Road
Buckeye, AZ 85326
(623) 474-6600
liberty25.org

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PHOENIX, AZ
PERMIT NO. 1841

*****ECRWSEDDM****

Postal Customer

2023 Liberty 25 Governing Board



Michael Todd
President



Mark Aguire
Member



Paul Bixler
Member



Kristopher Kenyon
Member



Bryan Parks
Member