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THE LIBERTY BELL

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Liberty High School Academy For Newcomers

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School Edition

First Issue

Liberty High School

VOTE



**Leading the Way...
Seydina's Story as Our
Student Government
President**

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Leading the Way... Seydina's Story as Our Student Government President

Seydina Sow is the new president of the Student Government at Liberty High School for the 2025–2026 school year. He is an active member of the school community and has been involved in many opportunities, including the newspaper club and My Brother's Keeper. He has taken several AP courses, participates in the Learning to Work program with Catholic Charities, plays on the soccer team, supports student recruitment, and now serves as president of the Student Government. He shared with us his reasons for running, the improvements he hopes to make, and what inspires him.

"I ran for president because I wanted to inspire others to chase their dreams and to not be afraid to take risks. Just because I am an immigrant doesn't mean I am not able to accomplish great things. I wanted to prove myself that I can succeed in anything I plan on pursuing. I wanted to point out the importance of integrity. Segregation shouldn't be accepted. I wanted to show students that it is possible and important. People from different backgrounds could be together, live alongside each other and accomplish great things together."

One of his goals is to make the school more welcoming. He explained, "My first goal was to create a new Boys Club, as we only had a club for Hispanic boys. I felt like the other boys were being discriminated against. Everyone needs a safe space where they can be themselves, talk about how they feel and feel heard. I had to fix that. I was thinking more of a revolution. I wanted to change the course of the school. I'm tired of being treated like an outsider. I do belong. I want to create new clubs, and I've already started. I want to make the school more fun and inclusive. Our school is very diverse, which makes it special."

When asked who inspires him, he said, "Myself. When I think about my journey, I feel really proud of myself. Knowing that where I'm from we don't speak English, I had to work very hard to be able to speak and communicate properly. I wasn't born speaking English, I had to teach myself. In less than two years, I've made so much progress. I had to trust the process and believe in myself. I was even bullied sometimes for being from another country. That made me stronger and motivated me to become the best version of myself."

We can't wait to see all the amazing things Seydina accomplishes at Liberty and beyond!



"Once You Learn To Read, You Will Forever Be Free."
~Frederick Douglass~

Spirit Week at LHS!

By Adam Zooabi

This year, the Liberty High School Student Government selected the Spirit Week themes. Each day had a special theme, and everyone in the school community participated. Check out each day and hear what they have to say!



Pajama Day!

We asked Ms. Kim, a math teacher at Liberty High School, if she noticed any changes in students' moods during Pajama Day. She said, "Actually a lot of students and teachers participated that day. I saw many happy faces. Students were more confident and participating better, and teachers were enjoying their time with their students. It was a good day, and we all liked it!"



Teacher-Student Switch Day!

We asked Ms. Edyta, a counselor at Liberty High School, whether she expected to see students dressing like teachers and teachers dressing like students. She said, "I saw a few students dress like teachers, which was very nice, but I wish there had been more participation. Nobody dressed like me, but maybe next year!"



Sports Day!

We asked Damian, a student at Liberty High School, what he noticed this day. He said, "Many people were happier than usual while wearing their favorite jerseys. Most of the students wore soccer and American football jerseys."



Twin Day!

LHS Spirit Day!

It was great to see everyone wearing their Liberty gear.

We all really felt like a community.

The Effect of the Phone Ban on Students

By Dan Diba

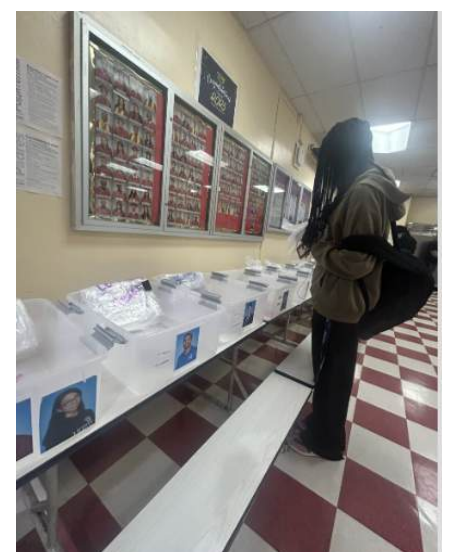
Since New York State banned cellphone use in schools, researchers found the positive effect it has on students. In 2023, a UNESCO report found that "Phones are disruptive in class and that banning such technology in schools 'can be legitimate if [it] does not improve learning or if it worsens student well-being.'" Three people from Liberty High School were interviewed to hear their perspectives on the matter.

The phone ban has had a positive impact on students' grades and overall classroom experiences. Dr. Suzanne Epstein, a teacher and the college advisor at Liberty High School, describes the consequence of banning phones. "It makes students focus more and pay attention in class, which can help them to improve their grades and academic performance."

Ms. Edyta Kwiecień, a counselor at Liberty High School, said that it is great because not only does she see an improvement in students' grades, but also a change in student life outside of the classroom. "In the cafeteria, I see students playing Chess and Uno, which shows that there is greater interaction amongst students, which will also help develop their English language skills."

Another perspective is from Seydina Sow, a senior at Liberty High School. Similar to the opinions of Dr. Epstein and Ms. Edyta, "Since the cell phone ban started, I noticed better test scores, and it helped me to socialize more with other people and pay more attention in class. It is a great, positive policy because it helps me and other students focus on what they should focus on. It makes it easier to avoid distraction."

To conclude, phones are a big distraction for students. Without phones, students are excelling both in and outside the classroom.



Meet Liberty's Newest Staff Members!

Ms. Shah, Special Education Teacher

Interview with Ariana Perez

Q: Can you tell us a little about yourself and what brought you to Liberty High School?

A: I have been a teacher since 2009. I've taught in Brooklyn and in the Bronx and in Manhattan at all very different kinds of schools. I was at a transfer school for students who were overage and undercredited in the Bronx, and I really loved getting to know those students. And so what brought me to this school was it seemed like a very supportive environment for students who needed a little extra support graduating from high school. And I went to high school in three different countries. So I am a tiny bit familiar with how it feels to be in school in another country, in another language, in another culture. I was not with my parents either. So it seemed like a really unique opportunity to get to meet some very interesting young people.

Q: This is so interesting. Why did you choose to become a special education teacher?

A: I wanted to be a psychologist when I was growing up. I wanted to help people who were having a difficult time in their life. And I knew I wanted to work with teenagers. I didn't want to work with young children, and I didn't want to work with adults. I wanted to work with the high school-aged population. After college, I decided to become a teacher in New York City because it seemed like a good way of getting to know teenagers who needed some extra support in their lives that I could help every day. I could get to know them Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. As a psychologist, you only see the person that you're working with once a week, once a month, and for maybe a year, maybe two years. But I wanted a more consistent relationship with the people that I was trying to support. And special education, I think, is a very important career because students who need extra support in school deserve to have a fair education, and they deserve to have a full school experience.

Q: This is interesting to me also, because I want to study psychology in college. What advice would you give to students learning a new language?

A: Be patient and don't be embarrassed to ask questions. Don't be embarrassed when you don't understand. Don't say yes to things you don't understand. It's okay to communicate confusion, frustration, being overwhelmed if you need somebody to repeat it, or to say it in a different way, or to use different words, or to communicate what you need out of a conversation, whether it's with a teacher, or a classmate, or a doctor, or somebody in the world. It's okay to say, *I don't understand. Can you help?* Because people will want to help you, but they can't if they don't know that you need help. So don't be afraid to ask.

Q: I think maybe some people don't know how to ask for help.

A: Yeah. And, you know, especially for teenagers. I think little kids, maybe it's easier to say, *I don't understand*, and grownups to say, *I don't understand*. But I think for teenagers, it's hard to say, *I don't understand*, and they feel shame, or embarrassed.

Q: I think that's true. Is there anything that you would like to add?

A: I just want to thank everybody at the school for being so welcoming of me in my first year here at the school. Everybody has been so nice, friendly, and hard-working. I'm still learning how the school works, where things are, and who people are. I don't know everything yet. I'm still learning too, so we can all kind of learn together.

Q: I agree with you because everybody is always continuing to learn new things. Thank your attention, and your time!

A: Thank you!



Mr. Salane, Science Teacher

Interview with Marzuqeu Suleman



Q: Can you tell us a little about yourself, and your time as a student here at Liberty?

A: My name is Moustapha Salane, and I am from Senegal. I came to the U.S. in 2017 and graduated from Liberty High School in 2019. During my time at Liberty, I received a lot of support, affection, and inspiration from my teachers and the staff in general. I played on the soccer team during all my years at Liberty, and I cannot express enough how grateful I am for the fact that I attended Liberty during my high school years.

Q: What made you want to become a science teacher? What is your favorite part about teaching science?

A: I became a science teacher mainly because I love science. Another reason is that I love helping others in the best way I can, and this what got me into teacher science to make sense of life on earth and how it works, not only for students, but for myself also out of constant curiosity about how living things work. My favorite part about teaching science is having the opportunity to learn about science while my students also learn it along with me. I could not have known many topics and intricacies about science if I only worked in certain labs or did other types of job. To put it short, being in the classroom, though stressful at times, is truly rewarding and experimental.

Q: How did your experience as a student here help you understand your students better?

A: As one who attended Liberty, I feel the struggle many students go through daily, not only with the language learning but also with personal life issues and you name it. This knowledge has made me more empathetic towards them and more understanding towards matters regarding how they are constantly trying to figure life out and get a better future.

Q: What advice would you give to students who are learning science in English for the first time?

A: To students who are learning science in English for the first time, I would first tell them to be curious because science lives so long as curiosity is alive. Next, be bold! Bold in saying "I don't know!", or "I will try to know through exploration!", or "I want to know, please explain to me!". Last, always be ready to make assumptions, then mistakes, then assumptions, then mistakes until you come to the realization of the truth (i.e., success) or a proximity to it. Only through this way, I believe, have many successful people succeeded in life wherever they are on this planet.

News From Teachers...

LGBTQ+ at Liberty!

Mx. Factor and Ms. Cohen are the advisors for Liberty’s LGBTQ+ Club. We meet on Thursdays in room 409 after school. Below are some questions you may have about the club- and our answers!

What is this club about?

The LGBTQ+ Club is meant to be a safe space to discuss and celebrate LGBTQ+ topics. For example, maybe you are curious what the LGBTQ+ community in New York City is like, or how to navigate friends or family who do not accept the LGBTQ+ community.

Who can come to the club?

Everyone is welcome! If you identify as LGBTQ+ or you are an ally (someone who supports the community, but is not LGBTQ+), you are welcome to join.

What do you do in the club?

We discuss LGBTQ+ topics, learn important terminology, watch videos with important stories, learn about the history of the community, go on field trips to LGBTQ+ landmarks in NYC, and welcome special guests to tell us about their experiences!

I work sometimes on Thursdays. Can I still come?

It is not required to join every week. You can come on any Thursday that you are able to!

Why is this club important?

LGBTQ+ youth are at a high risk of mental health issues and a supportive environment is one way to help support this community. By having this club at Liberty, we are demonstrating that our school supports all identities and you are safe here, no matter how you identify.

Any other questions? Come on by room 409 and ask! You are always welcome!



Running Team Spotlight

Alpha Diallo is the top runner on our Cross Country team, consistently finishing within the top 10 at meets against other schools and earning two medals this Fall season. He recently impressed on a bigger stage, placing 18th out of 337 boys at the NYRR Kids Kickoff race in Central Park. Alpha’s dedication to our team, work ethic, and leadership have made him a key contributor to our team’s success.



Liberty Basketball Wins Season Opener!

A congratulations is in order for our boys basketball team and Coach Cassano on an outstanding 66–54 victory over Manhattan HS in our season opener!

Mamadou Sow led the way with an impressive 25 points, followed by Yepherson Vásquez Peña with 19 and Fallou Djigal with 9. Our dominant frontcourt—Fallou Diop, Mamadou Balde, Aliou Ndiaye, and Dan Diba—controlled the boards throughout the game. Marc Raymond and Carlos Rivera Galvez also did an excellent job managing the offense.

Great teamwork all around and a great team win! Let’s carry this momentum into the next game and give the team the props they deserve!



Liberty Robotics FTC Team 22053

This year, our team, Liberty Robotics – FTC Team 22053, currently has 7 dedicated members, and we are still welcoming new students interested in robotics, coding, engineering, or just being part of a supportive team. For context, FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) is an international robotics program where students design, build, and program a robot to compete in an annual challenge.

Teams:

- Brainstorm and design their robot
- Build and wire it using metal parts, motors, and sensors
- Program it (usually in Java) to complete tasks on a game field
- Work on teamwork, problem-solving, outreach, and branding



It’s a great opportunity for Liberty students, especially our newly arrived immigrants, to develop technical skills, build confidence, and find a community.

Karate Champions!

Congratulations to Mouhamadou Toure and Serigne Seck, who competed in the Mazando Teams Cup in Senegal and took home a medal! We are so very proud of you both and all of your hard work.



Notes from the College Office...

The College Office would like to congratulate the seniors who finished the difficult and competitive Macaulay Honors College application!

- Jadira Chuquichaico
- Sokhna Diop
- Bintou Toure
- Yuanhong Wu

Remember: College Application Deadlines Dec. 10th and Jan. 15th!



More News...

The Power of Tutoring

By: Mr. Segura

Every school year, I offer students extra tutoring support. I know that taking an AP class can be difficult for some, but I believe that as long as students have the extra support, they can succeed. Because of tutoring, many of my students are able to succeed and gain higher grades than without it. In fact, students who perform the best in my class usually come to tutoring in the morning, or whenever I offer it. I have truly seen the power of tutoring. Students who were failing my class passed it after obtaining extra support. Tutoring has even helped students pass their regents exams. Tutoring offers students the opportunity to catch up on their work, practice their skills, or just relearn a lesson. For immigrant students, having the opportunity to revisit/relearn a lesson is important due to language barriers.

I remember my own struggles with math as a high school student. My math teacher, Ms. Singh, would come to the cafeteria during breakfast with worksheets, and I would practice with her. She would re-explain how to solve the equations, and I felt comfortable asking her questions since it was a small group setting. This helped me to succeed in the class and eventually pass the math regents with the highest score in the school. Not bad for a terrible math student! As a matter of fact, her breakfast tutoring was a turning point for me. It helped me enjoy math for the first time and I use that same strategy with my students. My students know they can come in morning for extra support.

I want to highlight the following students in my class (see below). These students struggled with their first essays but attended tutoring. Their grades, especially their essay grade, improved dramatically. All students obtained a grade on the AP LEQ Rubric of 80 or higher.

- Yefferson De La Rosa
- Jimmy Fernandez
- Jhon Tenemaza
- Leslie Carate
- Ndeye Niasse
- Nicolas Barreno



I encourage all Liberty students to attend tutoring if their teacher offers it.

Catholic Charities:

To celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday, the Catholic Charities team hosted a dessert luncheon on November 25th and a BINGO game on November 26th during the lunch periods.



Guidance Department:

Attend Saturday Academy to prepare for the Regents exams. First session is **December 6th, 2025 at 8:00AM.**

SATURDAY REGENTS ACADEMY DEC 06, 13, 20 & JAN 10, 15			
TEACHER	SUBJECT	SESSION 1 (8:00AM-10:30AM)	SESSION 2 (10:30AM-12:55PM)
MR. JUDD SESSIONS ON: 12/06, 12/20 @ 8:00	ALGEBRA 1	ROOM 400	ROOM 400
MR. HENBROOK SESSIONS ON: 12/13 @ 8:00	ALGEBRA 1	ROOM 316	ROOM 316
MS. CHAITRAM	ALGEBRA 2 (TRIGONOMETRY)	ROOM 309	ROOM 309
MS. LEI	BIOLOGY	LIVING ENVY = 8:00AM - 9:00AM BIOLOGY = 9:30AM - 10:30AM ROOM 508	BIOLOGY ONLY ROOM 508
MS. TAJAE 01/10/25 - NO SESSIONS	EARTH SCIENCE AND SPACE	ROOM 610	ROOM 610
MS. LOZANO	ENGLISH	ROOM 620	ROOM 620
MS. VAZQUEZ	ENGLISH	ROOM 602	ROOM 602
MS. SEPULVEDA	GLOBAL	ROOM 301	ROOM 301
MR. SEGURA	AP US HISTORY	ROOM 201	ROOM 201

Meet with your counselor to review your scheduled Regents exams!

New Vocabulary! **Transcript:** a school record of all your grades and classes.

Nurse Gabrielle



First Aid
Medical & Mental
Health Care

Reproductive Health
CONDOMS, PREGNANCY TESTS
PLAN-B (Emergency Contraception)
Referrals for TESTING + TREATMENT of
STI's (Sexually Transmitted Infections)
& Pregnancy COUNSELING

PSAL & Working Papers

Medical ROOM 516

Recruitment Team:

The recruitment team would like to recognize the following students for their unwavering support of our recruitment efforts this Fall. They attended fairs across New York City, spoke with prospective students and families, and always had a positive attitude throughout!



- Kiandra Fernandez Calderon
- Rafael Hernandez-Bautista
- Seydina Sow
- Marc Raymond
- Crystal Salcet
- Yulissa Aleman
- Emily Maliza
- Aboubacar Toure



Your December Horoscope!

Aries: This month focuses on your career. Your ideas are strong, so share them confidently.

Taurus: This month teaches you about money and value. Trust yourself and your abilities more.

Gemini: You balance your needs with your relationships. Learn to be honest and not give too much.

Cancer: You may feel mixed or confused at first, but things become clearer later in the month.

Leo: You learn the truth about your friendships. A new creative opportunity may appear.

Virgo: A new career chance may open. You realize you have more talent and power than you thought.

Libra: Life feels fast and busy. Later, you slow down and feel more grounded.

Scorpio: Your voice is strong this month. Ask directly for what you want.

Sagittarius: You feel more like your true self. Your dreams feel possible and exciting.

Capricorn: Your month starts busy. Your birthday season brings a fresh new beginning.

Aquarius: You feel creative and inspired again. Your dreams grow bigger and more hopeful.

Pisces: Family healing and important talks may happen. Later, a new career opportunity arrives.



Words of the Month:



self-care (*noun*): The practice of taking action to improve your own **physical health** and **mental well-being**. It means deliberately taking time to **care for yourself**.

Example: Doing yoga and reading a book for thirty minutes every day are important parts of my self-care routine.



perseverance (*noun*): Continuing to **try** to do something even when it is **difficult** or **takes a long time**. It is about **never giving up**.

Example: Through sheer **perseverance**, she practiced every day and finally learned to play the challenging piece on the violin.

Regents Multiple Choice Practice:

Show your answers to your teachers to see if you're correct!

1 The expression $\frac{10}{\sqrt{2}}$ is equivalent to

(1) 5

(2) 20

(3) $5\sqrt{2}$

(4) $10\sqrt{2}$



Source: Nelson Harding, "A Threatening Situation," *Brooklyn Eagle*, December 4, 1912

2 Which event occurred as a result of the situation illustrated in this cartoon?

- (1) the sinking of unarmed ships by France
- (2) the installation of the Weimar government
- (3) the rejection of the Treaty of Versailles
- (4) the assassination of the archduke of Austria

13 Based on this cartoon, which statement best describes the cartoonist's point of view?

- (1) European militarism prevented conflict.
- (2) European peace relied on collective security.
- (3) A system of European alliances caused the escalation of tension in Europe.
- (4) Serbia was able to avoid getting involved with other European countries.

Sports

Discipline: The Liberty High School Running Team

By Pedro Say Alvarez

The running school team at Liberty High School has many races in different places across New York City every week. The runners compete and show their hard work throughout the season and do a great job representing our school.

Mr. Cheema, the running coach at Liberty High School, explained how he runs the team. He said, "I create a set routine and schedule races in advance so students can prepare physically and mentally. Give students frequent feedback on what they do well and what to improve to emphasize consistency and team culture over results." He also says, "Everyone on our team is new to running. We emphasize the progress over the result. If everyone practiced well and ran with their best effort, we had a successful race."

Priscila Aguilar, the captain of the running team at Liberty High School, explained how she supports the team. She said, "I support the team by helping with information. If they need anything I explain it to them. For example, if we have a race, they might ask what time we have to be there, and I tell them." Moreover, she claims that "To win a race the team must practice hard, and each runner must do their best in practice and in races to show their efforts and represent Liberty High School."

Wuilianys, another member of the running team at Liberty High School, shared her experience on her team. "There is no limit to the number of participants who can join the team. Everyone is welcome, but for a race, it is necessary to attend training and be responsible in order to progress." She also mentioned that to be a good runner, "We have to be strong mentally and physically because we have to keep in mind that if we want to be the best runners, we should train hard and be motivated."

Overall, as mentioned in the interviews, discipline is necessary if we want to be successful in any sport. Discipline helps us grow into the best version of ourselves.



The Thriving Season of the Liberty High School Soccer Team

By Marzuqeu Suleman



Liberty High School Academy for Newcomers is a school located in Chelsea, Manhattan. It is a school for students from different parts of the world who want to study English and other fields of study. This school does not only offer educational opportunities, but it offers life skills which can benefit a student in the future or even in his everyday life. This school also has a variety of activities to participate in, specifically sports such as soccer, female volleyball, and basketball for boys. Soccer, in particular, is thriving at Liberty High School.

Mr. Kassim, the coach of the soccer team at Liberty, tells us about what he believes is the most important component the team should focus on to improve this season. "I believe the most important thing we should focus on is communication during games. When everyone talks and supports each other on the field, it helps us stay organized and play better as a team." It is clear that finding the right team captain is critical in this process. He explains, "When selecting a team captain, I look for leadership, good communication skills, a positive attitude, and someone who leads by example both on and off the field. To develop these qualities, focus on encouraging your teammates, staying disciplined in practice, and always giving your best effort. Volunteering to help others and showing respect to everyone also goes a long way."

The captain of the team, Mamadou, shared what he enjoys most about playing soccer. He responded with, "I really enjoy working together with my teammates and the excitement of competing in matches. I think it would be helpful if we could spend a bit more practicing set pieces, like corner kicks and free kicks since those situations come up often in games. I also appreciate when we end practice with a fun scrimmage-it keeps everyone motivated." This means we have to practice the most necessary tricks during our practice so we can play better on match days.

Similar to Mr. Kassim, Mamadou also believes, "The most important thing we should focus on is communication during games. When everyone talks and supports each other on the field, it helps us stay organized and play better as a team."

The assistant captain who plays defense, Mamadou Bah, responded to the following: "Hey, I noticed you always seem really pumped before a game. Do you have any pre-game rituals or routines that help you get in the zone?" He replied by saying "Yeah, actually! Before every game, I listen to my favorite playlist and do some stretches with the team. It helps me relax and focus. Plus, we always encourage and give each other the morale to do better on the field." When asked about the key to the team's success this season, he responded, "Honestly, I think it's our teamwork. We've all gotten a lot closer this year, and we trust each other more on the field. Our coach also changed up our training sessions, so we're working on communication and strategy a lot more than before."

What pushed the Liberty High School soccer team was the strong communication that they focused on and the support the players received from the school and everyone who watches the games.