

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Belmont County has seven school districts. Within these districts, 18 elementary, 4 middle and 7 high schools are in operation. The county has an average pupil teacher ratio of 16.3. The Diocese of Steubenville oversees the parochial school system, which operates four elementary and one central high school in the county. There are several private schools located in the county and surrounding region.

OHIO VALLEY ATHLETIC CONFERENCE (OVAC)

This conference stimulates and promotes competitive high school athletics in the upper Ohio Valley. Today, the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference is the largest and most functional high school conference of its type in the United States. A total of 46 schools supply the upper Ohio Valley with over 1,200 athletes in various competitive athletic areas. Recent total participation of students was 17,893.

The basic objective of the OVAC is the promotion of all high school athletic and to serve in the overall development of proper school relationships, scholarship, and sportsmanship within the conference.

Some of the athletics include football, baseball, basketball, softball, track, wrestling, swimming, soccer, cross country, golf, volleyball, tennis and cheerleading competitions.

Scholarships are sponsored by Kroger, Pepsi-Cola, WesBanco, and Football Officials' organizations. The Dave Bierkorte, the Daniel M. Burke, the George Kovalick Memorial, and the James "Dead Eye" Morris Wrestling offer scholarships. Others are the Henry Lasz and the Richard Potts Basketball scholarships, the Cal Giffin Memorial Track Service award, the Samuel A. Mumley, the Douglas Pilney Memorial, the Bodkin, Wilson & Kozicki Soccer as well as the OVAC wrestling, cheerleading and swimming scholarships as well as the OVAC Foundation.

BELMONT HARRISON VOCATIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

The first class of the Belmont Harrison Vocational School was held on August 31, 1971. The school provides vocational education to 425 students at the St. Clairsville facility and 110 students at the Harrison County facility. The school provides vocational career education and training for high school students.

The economic development capabilities of the Belmont County area are enhanced through the education and training offered by the vocational school district. The Belmont Harrison Vocational School District offers a wide variety and extensive number of courses. The district has the capability to customize classes for the specific needs of local businesses and industries.

LOCAL LIBRARIES

Belmont County's public libraries provide a coordinated network of services and library materials to every part of the county. The Martins Ferry Public Library serves as the county extension library in Martins Ferry, OH. Six branch libraries are located in Bethesda, Bridgeport, Flushing, Neffs, Powhatan Point and Shadyside. The bookmobile service travels throughout the county. Additionally, the Barnesville Public Library, the Bellaire Public Library, and the St. Clairsville Public Library provide materials and services within their extended communities. Most of the county's libraries are joined through a networked automation system, providing an extensive shared collection of books and other library materials.

Belmont County's libraries provide over 300,000 book titles, hundreds of magazine and newspaper holdings, thousands of audio and video titles and a variety of electronic databases to area residents. In addition, skilled library staff provide reference services and programming for all ages. Library service is free to all residents, at any library in the county. Library hours are extensive with Bellaire and Martins Ferry providing services on Sundays. Residents can also make use of library resources at the local institutions of higher education.