

October
2025

The
Eagle Examiner



Our mission is to inspire and guide each student to his or her maximum potential



HoCo 2025!





MESSAGE from the SUPERINTENDENT

It is hard to believe we are almost through the first nine weeks of the school year. At the elementary and intermediate levels, our students are utilizing the new English Language Arts curriculum, CKLA. Students at the middle school and high school have access to additional electives as well as college offerings from our College Credit Plus Program.

Our students are taking advantage of opportunities outside of the classroom as well. We hosted an evening cross country event earlier this year, our girls golf team qualified for the district tournament as a team for the first time ever, and we have several individuals in a variety of sports who will look to make deep postseason runs.

As a district, we celebrated the military at our Purple Star Military Night, welcomed back many alumni at Homecoming, and look forward to seeing many guests as we induct our newest members into the Big Walnut Athletic Hall of Fame this Friday, October 10th.

Ryan McLane



Ryan McLane



BIG NUT STRUT

5K | 1 MILE FUN RUN | VIRTUAL

The 16th Annual Big Nut Strut brings our community together helping raise support for all Big Walnut Preschool, Elementary, Intermediate, Middle School and High School PTOs. These committees enrich our students educational experience through support of additional programs and materials to their curriculum.

You can participate in-person or virtually for the 5K race or 1 mile walk. We are excited to announce our new location for the race this year at Prairie Run Elementary (701 North Miller Dr, Sunbury)! Come join us to show your EAGLE PRIDE!



Scan to Register!

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12TH | 2:00 PM | @ PRE/BWHS



COMMON CENTS



Scott Gooding
Interim Treasurer/CFO

As part of our commitment to transparency and long-term planning, Big Walnut Local Schools has completed its updated Five-Year Forecast. While Ohio law now only requires districts to submit a four-year forecast, we continue to prepare a five-year projection so that we can plan responsibly for the future.

Strong Revenue Picture, but Challenges Ahead

- Local Property Taxes remain our largest source of funding. Recent increases from the 2023 countywide reappraisal boosted revenues, but state discussions about property tax reform could negatively impact schools in the future.
- School District Income Tax collections have rebounded and are expected to grow as new housing developments bring more families.
- State Funding provides about 18% of our budget. Current levels are stable, but future state budgets will determine support beyond 2027.
- Other revenues such as casino funds, tax increment financing (TIF) payments, and investment income continue to provide steady contributions.

“Our commitment is clear: to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars while ensuring every student has access to a high-quality education.”

Managing Rising Costs

- Wages and benefits are our largest expenses, growing as we add staff to serve a growing student population.
- New labor agreements through 2028 include annual increases.
- Health insurance premiums will drop by 20% in 2026, providing short-term relief, but costs are projected to rise again later.
- Rising costs for utilities, instructional materials, and services add pressure to the budget.

Financial Outlook

- The district will remain financially stable through 2027.
- Beginning in 2028, expenses are expected to outpace revenues, requiring use of cash reserves.
- By 2030, reserves will continue to decline unless new revenue or cost adjustments are made.

Looking Ahead

Big Walnut Schools is fortunate to be in a strong financial position today. However, as a fast-growing district, we must prepare for the future. Enrollment growth, state funding decisions, healthcare costs, and property tax reform could all impact our finances. We will continue to update our community as conditions change and decisions are made.

A Greek Feast to Wrap Up Ancient Greece!

Students at General Rosecrans Elementary wrapped up their unit on Ancient Greece with a festive celebration!

Dressed in togas and leafy crowns, the students sampled a variety of Greek-inspired foods — including hummus, pita bread, olive oil, and grape juice (not wine!). A few adventurous students even gave olives a try

During the feast, they shared their “professions” and talked about some of the most famous historical figures of Ancient Greece. It was a fun and tasty way to bring their studies to life!





AROUND THE DISTRICT

Fifth Graders Kick Off the Year with Elephant Toothpaste!

To start the school year, Mrs. Mix's fifth-grade Science classes dove right into the Scientific Method, with a foamy twist!

Students put the steps of the Scientific Method to the test by creating *Elephant Toothpaste*, a bubbly chemical reaction that never fails to wow. In their first trial, they used just two packets of yeast, but they quickly discovered that the more yeast they added, the bigger the reaction became.



The activity sparked curiosity, teamwork, and lots of excitement as students hypothesized, experimented, and observed the results firsthand. While they may have gotten a little messy in the process, they also learned that science can be both educational and fun.

The smiles (and surprised reactions) say it all. What a fun and memorable way to kick off a year of science!



BWI Goes *Intergalactic* for Homecoming!



Big Walnut Intermediate joined in the Homecoming fun by bringing the spirit of the cosmos right to their hallways! This year's schoolwide theme was "*Intergalactic Intermediate*," and students in Miss Clary's advisory class went above and beyond to match the vibe.

Their creativity shined through in a vibrant door display titled "*Rise to the Stars*." The design features colorful planets, spaceships, and even photos of students piloting their own UFOs.

The project was more than just decoration. It showcased teamwork, imagination, and Eagle Pride as the students transformed their classroom door into a space-themed celebration of Homecoming week.



Students Go Wild for Fat Bear Week

Ms. Nigl's students at Big Walnut Intermediate joined the global excitement of Fat Bear Week, the online tournament celebrating Katmai National Park's brown bears as they bulk up for winter hibernation.

The highlight of the experience was a live Google Meet with Ranger Maura from Katmai's Education Division. She shared the story of the event, taught the students about the bears and their habitat, and even showed them the ranger station, fresh bear tracks, and a bear in the distance!

Back in the classroom, students posted bear bios, matchups, and Katmai fun facts in the library windows and cast daily votes in both the Fat Bear and Junior Fat Bear brackets.

This year's champion? Chunk ("32 Chunk")—one of the class favorites, known for his resilience and his massive hibernation prep, even with a broken jaw!

The week sparked curiosity about wildlife conservation and ecosystems while adding plenty of fun and schoolwide engagement.





AROUND THE DISTRICT

A closer look at our Big Walnut Social Workers

Big Walnut Local Schools is fortunate to have a dedicated team of social workers who go above and beyond to support students, families, and staff every day. These three professionals are a vital part of our schools' safety and support network—bridging the gap between the classroom and community resources.



Amber Bennett
9th - 12th Grade

Amber leads social work services for our high school students, helping them prepare for life beyond graduation. She joined Big Walnut after her time with The Buckeye Ranch, where she focused on school-aged children. Amber is passionate about guiding students as they step into adulthood, offering practical support for college, careers, and life skills.



Sonia McNutt
PreK - 3rd Grade

A Big Walnut graduate (Class of 2014), Brooke supports students in grades 4–8. Before returning to BWLS, she worked extensively with the National Youth Advocacy Program (NYAP), specializing in youth and family services. Outside of her social work role, Brooke stays connected to students as the JV volleyball coach—fostering teamwork both on and off the court.



Brooke Hatfield
4th - 8th Grade

A proud Big Walnut graduate, Sonia serves our youngest students in grades PreK–3 across the elementary buildings. A Licensed Independent Social Worker Supervisor, she brings extensive experience from her time with Nationwide Children's Hospital. Sonia works closely with our school counselors to ensure students and families receive the early support they need to thrive.

Together, Sonia, Brooke, and Amber play a crucial role on the front lines of our school safety teams. They step in when challenges go beyond the scope of our school counselors, offering guidance, connecting families with outside resources, and collaborating closely with the community on projects that make a difference every day. Through their expertise and compassion, they provide direct services to students, parents, and staff—helping every Eagle thrive.



Lauren Marter
Early Learning Center

Big Walnut Staff Spotlight!

Lauren Marter shines as a dedicated educator who builds genuine, lasting relationships with her students. Her classroom is a place filled with care, laughter, and learning—where every child feels seen and supported.

A true leader among her peers, Lauren is always ready to lend a helping hand and share her expertise. She serves on several important teams, including the Building Leadership Team (BLT), Purple Star, and the Resident Educator program, demonstrating her commitment to supporting students and staff across the Early Learning Center.

Lauren is known for her innovative and creative approach to teaching, offering hands-on experiences that spark curiosity and inspire learning. She consistently thinks outside the box to meet the unique needs of her students and models patience, positivity, and lifelong learning for everyone around her. Through her advocacy, care, and collaborative spirit, Lauren makes a lasting difference for both her students and her colleagues.





AROUND THE DISTRICT

Celebrating Ms. Jill: 27 Years of Warm Welcomes at Big Walnut Elementary

Last week, Big Walnut Elementary said goodbye to a familiar and beloved face as Ms. Jill marked her last day as the school's Office Assistant.

For 27 years, Ms. Jill has been a constant source of warmth and positivity for students, staff, and families. From the first morning greeting to the countless bandages, phone calls, and reassuring smiles, her presence has been woven into the daily rhythm of the school.



"Ms. Jill has been the heart of our front office," said her cohort in the front office, Diana Inscho. "Her kindness has touched generations of Eagles. I don't know what I'm going to do without her with me."

During her tenure, Ms. Jill witnessed thousands of students walk through the doors of Big Walnut Elementary—always ready with a cheerful hello and a helping hand. Her dedication and compassion made her more than just an office assistant; she became a trusted friend and a bright spot in each day.



The entire Big Walnut Elementary community gathered to celebrate Ms. Jill's incredible service, expressing gratitude for her nearly three decades of commitment to the school and its families.

Thank you, Ms. Jill, for your years of service and for helping shape a welcoming and supportive environment at Big Walnut Elementary. We wish you all the best in this next chapter of life!

Ceramics 1 Students Create Joyful Magnets

Miss Chico's Ceramics 1 classes kicked off the semester with a colorful first project: handmade ceramic magnets inspired by "people, places, and things that bring them joy."

The project introduced students to the stages of clay, shaping, smoothing, and glazing techniques, all while creating three unique magnets to take home. Each one reflecting their personality and interests.



Ceramics 1 includes a mix of freshmen through seniors, and while these magnets are the first to be displayed, two more projects are already completed and waiting to be fired in the kiln, with a fourth underway this week.

This magnets project offers a first glimpse of the creativity coming from all six Ceramics 1 classes. On the left is the full display and the right features artists who went above and beyond!





AROUND THE DISTRICT

Christmas Gift Assistance for Big Walnut Families

The holiday season is a time for joy, but it can also bring extra challenges for families. To help ease the stress and spread a little cheer, two programs are working together to make sure Big Walnut children experience the magic of Christmas. Whether your family needs a little help this year or you know someone who does, these opportunities can make the season brighter.

Links to fill out your wish list are provided below. If you are unable to fill out your wish list with these links, paper copies are available in your school's main office!

For Families at Hylen Souders Elementary – SidebySide Christmas Assistance

SidebySide, a partnership of local churches and community organizations, is offering Christmas gifts to families with students at Hylen Souders Elementary.

Forms Due: Monday, November 3, 2025 (return to the Hylen Souders Elementary office)

Gift Pick-Up: Friday, December 12, 2025, from 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. at Church of the Saviour UMC (11239 Fancher Rd., Westerville)

Coat Pick-Up: Sunday, December 7, 2025, from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. at Church of the Saviour (for families who request a coat on the form)

Most gifts will be unwrapped; wrapping paper will be provided.

[Click here to sign up for the SidebySide Souders program](#)

[Haga clic aquí para inscribirse](#)

For Families at All Other Big Walnut Schools – Big Walnut Holiday Wish List

Big Walnut Local Schools will again coordinate gift assistance for families with students in all other Big Walnut schools (ELC, Big Walnut Elementary, General Rosecrans Elementary, Prairie Run Elementary, Intermediate, Middle, and High School).

Forms Due: Monday, November 3, 2025

Gift Pick-Up: Saturday, December 13, 2025, from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at the Transportation Building (117 Kintner Pkwy)

Families will only be contacted if their Wish List *cannot* be fulfilled, so please provide a current phone number and email address.

[Click here to sign up for the Big Walnut Holiday Wish List program!](#)

If you have any questions about either program, or would like to help as a Wish Granter, please contact Linda Johnston-Klamfoth at (740) 965-7788.

Let's come together as a community to ensure that every Big Walnut child enjoys a warm and joyful holiday season!





VEX ROBOTICS WORKSHOP

SATURDAY,
NOVEMBER 1

8:30 AM -
12 NOON

WORKSHOP
INCLUDES:

Registration open for Grades 4-5.
Limited spots available.
Workshop fee: \$35 (payable on day of
workshop by cash or check)

Big Walnut High School. Dropoff/Pickup
at Main Entrance

- Introduction to VEX V5 Robots
- Robot Challenges
- Light Snack provided

Preregistration Required.
Scan QR Code
or
Email lisadanne@bwls.net



SCAN to
REGISTER



Sponsored by: Big Walnut High School Competition Robotics Team



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**BIG WALNUT
LOCAL SCHOOLS**



AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE PROGRAM

The Agricultural, Food, and Natural Resources (AFNR) class is celebrating a major milestone: the completion of their first harvest from the indoor vertical grow tower! The successful cultivation of crisp lettuce marks an exciting start to hands-on learning in cutting-edge agricultural technology. This project



is a deep dive into the world of hydroponics, a method of growing plants without soil, which represents a significant and growing segment of modern food production. Harper W., an ANFR student, said, "I really like working with the lettuce. It's fun to measure the pH and the nutrient levels with the TDS meter."

The students have been involved in every stage, demonstrating key scientific and agricultural skills. The journey began with planting seeds before carefully transplanting them into the vertical tower. A critical part of their work involved



nutrient management, as students regularly monitor and adjust the water's pH and EC to ensure the lettuce receives optimal nourishment. After weeks of dedicated care, the class celebrated by harvesting and processing the fully grown produce. They then had the pleasure of enjoying the fresh lettuce together and sharing their sustainable bounty with other teachers in the building, giving the school a taste of locally and sustainably grown food.

"Bringing this technology into the classroom is about giving our students real-world experience in a rapidly evolving field," explains the teacher, Mrs. Febes. "They aren't just reading about future food systems; they are operating one." This vertical grow tower is more than just a piece of equipment; it's a living laboratory that connects classroom theory to practical application. It's providing our students with skills in sustainability and modern food production that will serve them well.



Student Spotlight - Brandon Edwards

Brandon Edwards is this month's Student Spotlight. Brandon has been a member of the Big Walnut-DACC Agricultural Science Program since his freshman year of high school.

Brandon's favorite part of agricultural science classes is the opportunities they provide—especially the career development events, like the Food Science & Technology CDE, in which he participated. His favorite memories include standing on stage at the National FFA Convention when he and his team were named National Champions in Food Science & Technology, as well as traveling to Atlanta for the International Production & Processing Expo after his team earned the chance to attend.



Brandon Edwards
Senior, Big Walnut High School





BIG WALNUT ATHLETIC BOOSTERS

We Need Your Help.

Behind the scenes of every athletic event are many hands working to support Big Walnut's student-athletes and provide a great Game Day experience for families and fans. Big Walnut Athletic Boosters (BWAB) is proud to be a part of that effort. Today, we need your help so we can continue supporting all student-athletes, on all teams, during all seasons, on and off the field of play.

Serving on the BWAB board is an opportunity not only to give back, but to shape the vision and legacy of Big Walnut athletics for many years to come. We rely on dedicated volunteers who share a love for high school athletics and a desire to give back to the Big Walnut community to give of their time and talents. Today, several board positions are open, each with its own responsibilities:

Vice President

A great coaching staff includes great assistant coaches, too. In addition to acting in the place of the President when needed, the Vice President serves as the point of contact for the Season Directors, who work with the high school teams on their financial needs and goals.



Season Directors

Our Season Directors bring together the board, athletic department, coaches, and parent reps as one team, working to streamline communication and financial oversight in each sports season – fall, winter, and spring.

Fundraising Director

Fundraising is part art and part science. We're looking for a Fundraising Director who is passionate about developing fundraising opportunities for our teams and BWAB and knows a thing or two about non-profit fundraising.

Alumni Director

If you wish you could relive your high school days, you sound like our new Alumni Director, charged with bringing together former student-athletes, developing alumni events, and celebrating the amazing history of Big Walnut athletics.

Youth Liaison

We hope every youth athlete sets their sights on competing in high school as a Golden Eagle. The job of the Youth Liaison is to bring Big Walnut youth athletic programs together with our high school teams to help bridge that pathway from youth to varsity sport.

These roles are all central to the success of BWAB and Big Walnut athletics. If you are interested in serving in one of these open BWAB roles, please plan to attend our next board meeting at the high school on Sunday, November 16th, to learn more.

We are making a difference.



Big Walnut Boosters



BIG WALNUT HIGH SCHOOL



Office: 740.965.3766 713 N Miller Dr
Fax: 740.965.1954 Sunbury, OH
Guidance: 740.965.2243 43074



BIG WALNUT MIDDLE SCHOOL



555 S Old 3C Hwy Office: 740.965.3006
Sunbury, OH Fax: 740.965.6471
43074



BIG WALNUT INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL



Office: 740.965.7800 777 Cheshire Rd
Fax: 740.965.7801 Sunbury, OH
43074



BIG WALNUT ELEMENTARY



940 S Old 3C Hwy Office: 740.965.3902
Sunbury, OH Fax: 740.965.3168
43074



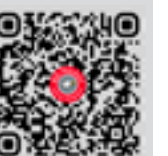
GENERAL ROSECRANS ELEMENTARY



Office: 740.965.8900 301 S Miller Dr
Fax: 740.965.8993 Sunbury, OH
43074



HYLEN SOUDERS ELEMENTARY



4121 Miller Paul Office: 740.965.3200
Rd Fax: 740.965.3986
Galena, OH
43021



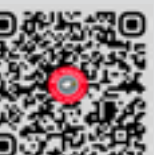
PRAIRIE RUN ELEMENTARY



Office: 740.965.7850 701 N Miller Dr
Fax: 740.965.7851 Sunbury, OH
43074



EARLY LEARNING CENTER AT HARRISON STREET



70 Harrison St Office: 740.965.7862
Sunbury, OH
43074