

April 1st,
2025

The
Elf Examiner



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

BIG WALNUT CHANGES NAME



**SUPERINTENDENT
LOVES THE
CHANGE TO
"LITTLE CASHEW
ELVES"**



April
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The
Eagle Examiner



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APRIL FOOLS!





MESSAGE from the SUPERINTENDENT

I went to college to become an accountant. I was interested in business, was decent at math, and knew I could make a pretty good living. Around Thanksgiving Break of my sophomore year, I knew this wasn't something I wanted to do for the rest of my life. When I met with my professor to thank him and to let him know I was changing majors, he was disappointed and tried to convince me to stick with it. When he realized there was no changing my mind, he asked, "What are you going to do, become a teacher?" I laughed and told him, "Yes." Accounting just wasn't for me.

One of our overarching goals at Big Walnut is to prepare each student for life after high school. Whether they plan to *ENLIST* in the military, *ENROLL* in a post-secondary education option, or become *EMPLOYED* in the workforce, we want them to be prepared for whatever decision they make. A large part of that is by providing them with opportunities that expose them to those options. I believe this is an area we have made tremendous strides in this year. We have made connections with businesses and corporations, some local, some regional, and others that have established a global footprint. Our high school students have multiple opportunities to listen to career talks during Eagle Time, and they even had the opportunity to attend a career fair held in our academic commons. This has led some students to set up an opportunity to job shadow. Not all of these career opportunities require a college degree. Some do and some do not.

We are also making a concerted effort at the elementary, intermediate, and middle school levels to provide more opportunities for students to experience career-focused and career-awareness activities. At the end of the day, we want our students to know what is out there so they can make the best decision possible for themselves when they choose what to do after high school.

In the end, I made the right decision as a 20-year-old sophomore in college, but if I had an opportunity to shadow an accountant or learn more about that career when I was in high school, I may not have wasted a year and a half on that career pathway. Sometimes, learning about a career can lead a person to pursue that pathway. However, having the opportunity to learn about a career and determining it's not for you can be just as valuable, maybe even more.

Ryan McLane



Ryan McLane

BWMS STUDENTS RAISE OVER \$900 FOR WATER FOR SOUTH SUDAN

After reading *A Long Walk to Water*, the 6th grade ELA team at Big Walnut Middle School led an inspiring initiative to support clean water efforts in Africa. From March 17–21, students across all three grades participated in a friendly "Coin War" competition to raise funds for Water for South Sudan, a nonprofit organization that builds wells in underserved communities.

Students brought in coins throughout the week, with each grade competing to see who could collect the most. The energy was high each day as students weighed their coin totals, checked the leaderboard, and worked together to support this meaningful cause.

Sixth grade students took the lead in organizing and promoting the event, creating colorful signs that were displayed around the school and managing coin tables during lunch and advisory periods. Their hard work paid off—not only in teamwork and school spirit—but also in generosity.

In total, BWMS students raised \$915.85 for Water for South Sudan, coming just shy of their ambitious \$1,000 goal. It was a powerful demonstration of what students can achieve when they come together with purpose and passion. Great job, Eagles!





COMMON CENTS



Scott Gooding
Executive Director of
Financial Services

Ohio School District Income Taxes

Ohio is unique in offering school districts the option to levy an income tax to generate local funding for public schools. This tax is designed to supplement funding from state aid and property taxes, ensuring adequate resources for the education system. Currently, more than 200 of Ohio's approximately 600 school districts have adopted this form of taxation, reflecting its importance in meeting budgetary needs.

Key Features of Ohio School District Income Taxes:

1. Tax Base Options:

- Traditional Income Tax: Applied to all taxable income, including wages, business income, capital gains, and retirement income.

- Earned Income Tax: Limited to wages and self-employment income, excluding retirement income and investment earnings.

2. Implementation Process:

- School districts must secure voter approval through a ballot initiative.
- Revenue collected is earmarked for educational expenses such as salaries, infrastructure, and operational costs.

3. Tax Rates:

- Rates are determined by the district and typically range between 0.5% and 2%.
- The tax is administered by the Ohio Department of Taxation, which ensures compliance and distributes the revenue to school districts.

4. Impact on Residents:

- Taxes are assessed based on the school district of residency, not employment.
- Residents file this tax along with their state income tax return, and non-residents are not subject to the tax unless they live in the district.

Advantages:

- Provides a flexible, locally controlled funding source for schools.
- Offers an alternative to property tax increases, potentially easing the burden on property owners.
- The earned income tax option reduces the impact on retirees and low-income residents relying on non-wage income.

Challenges:

- Tax reliance can disproportionately affect working residents, as it excludes non-wage income sources in some cases.
- Districts with lower-income populations may struggle to generate sufficient revenue.
- Voter approval requirements can create funding uncertainty for schools.

Trends and Implications:

The use of school district income taxes is growing as districts seek diversified funding sources amid fluctuating state budgets. However, the balance between equitable taxation and sufficient revenue remains a critical consideration. Ongoing community engagement and transparent resource allocation are essential for maintaining voter trust and support for these initiatives.

This localized approach to school funding highlights Ohio's commitment to empowering districts while ensuring fiscal responsibility and community involvement in educational investment decisions.

Big Walnut High School Theatre Closes Season with *Noises Off*

The Big Walnut High School Theatre Department is wrapping up the season with *Noises Off*, a side-splitting comedy about a dysfunctional theater troupe's disastrous attempt to stage *Nothing On*. Packed with love triangles, forgotten lines, and out-of-control props, this production is a fast-paced, laugh-out-loud tribute to the chaos of live theater.

Get ready for doors slamming, sardines flying, and nonstop hilarity! Tickets go on sale TODAY—don't miss your chance to see this wildly entertaining show.

Showtimes:

- Thursday, April 24 – 7:00 PM
- Sunday, April 27 – 2:00 PM





PURPLE STAR AROUND BIG WALNUT

BW FAMILIES AND BUSINESS OWNERS... PLEASE JOIN IN OUR

PURPLE STAR DONATION DRIVE

MARCH - MAY 2025

Donations Serve to:

- fund scholarships
- support deployment
- gather families at the district level: Annual Fall Tailgate & Winter Dinner
- gather students at the building level: Quarterly Purple Star Parties
- acknowledge students during April's month of the Military Child

How to Donate:

- click the QR CODE or Link
- access PaySchools
- enter as a guest
- follow the prompts
- add a fundraiser fee to the cart
- use a valid email as the email ID



<https://payschoolscentral.com>



BIG WALNUT LOCAL SCHOOLS

CONTACT
kimcastiglione@bwls.net

Celebrating Our Military-Connected Students: Purple Star Grant Recipients, Spirit Week, and Community Support Drive

Big Walnut Local Schools is proud to celebrate and support our military-connected students and families through our ongoing commitment as a Purple Star District. This spring, we are especially excited to highlight two outstanding students and several upcoming opportunities for our school community to get involved.

Purple Star Donation Drive: March–May

To further support these efforts, we’re inviting all Big Walnut families, staff, and local businesses to participate in our Purple Star Donation Drive, running now through May 2025.

Your generosity helps us continue building a strong, supportive network for students who give so much simply by being part of a military family.

For more information, please contact our district’s Purple Star liaison, [Kim Castiglione](#).

Together, we are proud to support, celebrate, and stand with our military-connected students.

Congrats to Our Purple Star Grant Recipients

We’re thrilled to announce that Big Walnut High School students Ellie Gochenour and Sam Stewart have been selected as recipients of the Purple Star Grant! Both Ellie and Sam are members of military families and have shown exceptional leadership in making sure our schools remain welcoming and supportive environments for their peers who share similar experiences.

These grants recognize students who go above and beyond in their commitment to service and support for others. Ellie and Sam exemplify what it means to lead with compassion, strength, and a deep understanding of the unique challenges faced by military families. We are so proud of them and grateful for the positive impact they continue to make across our district.

Ohio Military Family Spirit Week: April 21–25

As part of our Month of the Military Child celebration, Big Walnut is excited to participate in Ohio Military Family Spirit Week, scheduled for April 21st through 25th. Each day offers a fun way to show support and appreciation for military families.

We encourage all students and staff to join in the daily themes and help shine a light on the resilience and strength of our military-connected community.

CELEBRATING MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD

Ohio Military Family Spirit Week

APRIL 21ST-25TH

★ ★ ★

Monday 4/21: Hat/Hero Day
Tuesday 4/22: Camo Day
Wednesday 4/23: Purple Up Day
Thursday 4/24: Red, White, & Blue Day
Friday 4/25: R.E.D (Remember Everyone Deployed) Day







AROUND THE DISTRICT



Chelsea Heban
Prairie Run Elementary

Big Walnut Staff Spotlight!

Chelsea Heban, school psychologist, is a vital part of Prairie Run Elementary, bringing unwavering dedication to students, teachers, and families. With an open-door policy, she is always available—whether guiding students, collaborating with teachers, or offering support to parents. Her deep understanding of student growth and learning makes her an invaluable resource in the school community.

Chelsea is constantly present in classrooms, working with teachers to develop strategies that help students thrive. She ensures each child receives the support they need, making a lasting impact on their education and well-being. Her

perspective on student success is unmatched, and she is always willing to step in to help whenever needed.

Beyond her role as a school psychologist, Chelsea is also the Vice President of the PTO, playing a crucial part in planning and organizing school events. Her dedication to fostering a positive school culture extends beyond the classroom, strengthening connections between students, staff, and families. Her office is never empty because she's always assisting someone—ready to pause whatever she's doing to help a student or staff member in need.

Thank you, Chelsea, for your hard work, compassion, and commitment to the Big Walnut community!



Students Weigh In on New Noodle Bowl Lunch Option

On Friday, March 14, students at Big Walnut High School got the chance to try something new during lunch: yakisoba noodle bowls, thanks to a special sampling event by Schwan's Food Service in partnership with the Food Services Department.

The event, held during regular lunch periods, offered students a build-your-own bowl experience with yakisoba noodles, chicken, vegetables, and a choice of sauces including teriyaki, sweet and sour, and sriracha. The response was overwhelmingly positive—by a nearly 2 to 1 margin, students said they'd like to see the noodle bowls added to the regular menu.



Students also appreciated the opportunity to provide input on school meals. The Food Services team received feedback that many students enjoyed the experience, though some thought the dish could use more flavor. There were also a few who gave it a definite "no."

Based on the feedback, the team is exploring ways to tweak the recipe to enhance the flavor. Once reworked, the noodle bowl could become a regular lunch option depending on how students respond to the updated version.

Stay tuned—yakisoba might be coming to a lunch tray near you soon!





Family Art Night – April 24

Mark your calendars for Family Art Night at BWI!

This fun-filled evening will include an Art Show and an optional String Art craft. Families are welcome to come enjoy the artwork without registering, but if you'd like to participate in the String Art activity, registration is required.



Big Walnut Intermediate Shines at Regional Science Fair

On the weekend of March 15, several Big Walnut Intermediate students traveled to Columbus State Community College to compete in the Regional Science Fair—and they did an outstanding job!

These talented young scientists presented creative and thoughtful projects, earning high marks and praise from judges. The following students represented Big Walnut with excellence:

- Noah – Understanding the Process
- Kaley – Tub vs. Shower: Battle of the Water
- Madeline – Frozen Facts
- Maddie – Glowing Pickle
- Abigail – The Power of Pressure: How Air Affects Force
- Brecken – Does It Measure Up?
- Edie – Glowing Pickle
- Piper – Catch Your Breath, Calm Your Heart
- Emery – Heart Rate Mystery
- Mallory – Baking Soda: Will It Rise to the Occasion?

Every student received either a Superior or Excellent rating from judges, and all earned an A rating on their projects. Congratulations to these outstanding students for their hard work and dedication! If you see them, be sure to give them a well-deserved high five!



2nd Annual Don "Red" Edwards Color Run

Don "Red" Edwards was a valuable member of our Sunbury Community. His contribution to our Big Walnut Track and Field program, as well as our Cross Country program is unmatched. We want to continue to honor his memory with our second annual Red Run. This year the run will take place at Big Walnut High School. All proceeds go to a Big Walnut Education Scholarship in Red's name. Please join us on April 11, 2025 the evening before the Red Edward's Golden Eagle Relays to celebrate his life.





AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE PROGRAM

Big Walnut–DACC Agricultural Science Students Excel at Spring Skills CDEs

Students from the Big Walnut–DACC Agricultural Science Program delivered outstanding performances at the Spring Skills Career Development Events (CDEs), held on Saturday, March 22 at the Ohio Expo Center. Competing in five areas, these students demonstrated dedication, preparation, and a strong commitment to excellence.

High School General Livestock

In the High School General Livestock division, Big Walnut was represented by a young team of three sophomores and two freshmen. The team placed 59th out of 200 teams. Sophomore Joey McMillen led the group individually, finishing 38th out of 1,043 students. Additional team members included Ava Anderson, Teagan Bryant, Travis Edwards, and Rosemary McCaulla.



Middle School General Livestock

While the program did not have a full team of four, eighth-grader Kensley Fox represented Big Walnut in the Middle School General Livestock CDE and placed 35th out of nearly 150 participants.



High School Equine Management

The High School Equine Management team, composed of just three students—two freshmen and one sophomore—performed exceptionally well in a competitive field of 379 students.

- Aubrey McClary placed 14th
- Mackenzie Green placed 29th
- Morgan Miller placed 50th

Middle School Milk Quality & Products – State Champions

The Middle School Milk Quality & Products team earned top honors, placing first in the state. Individual rankings included:

- Ben Reckner – 3rd place
- Landen Legg – 9th
- Paashv Soni – 5th
- Soncat Nguyen – 12th
- Max Shearer – 7th



High School Milk Quality & Products – State Champions and National Qualifiers

The High School Milk Quality & Products team also secured a first-place finish at the state level, earning a score 17% higher than the second-place team. Individual results were as follows:

- Riley Norling – 1st place
- Joshua Schutt – 2nd
- Lainey Soule – 3rd
- Paris Anderson – 6th
- Aashvi Soni – 7th
- Ava Debolt – 14th
- Madi Dible

With this result, the team has qualified to represent Ohio at the 98th National FFA Convention & Expo in Indianapolis this October.

Both the middle and high school Milk Quality & Products teams will be recognized on stage at the Ohio FFA Convention in May.

Congratulations to all of the students involved in these events. Their success is a testament to their hard work and the strength of the Big Walnut–DACC Agricultural Science Program.



BIG WALNUT SPORTS

Spring has arrived, and our student-athletes are back in action! At both the Middle School and High School levels, spring sports are getting started, with several high school teams already having begun competition. We're excited to see what our Eagles accomplish during the final stretch of the 2024-25 athletic season—just two months remain!

Due to ongoing issues with the athletics website, we encourage families to contact their school directly for the most accurate and up-to-date schedules, especially as weather-related changes become more common in the spring.

At the Middle School, all spring teams are launching into games, matches, and meets this week. A reminder for our boys tennis families: all Middle School boys tennis matches are played at Big Walnut Intermediate School's courts (777 Cheshire Road).

While we're looking ahead, we're also celebrating an incredibly successful winter season. Big Walnut athletes brought home a number of impressive honors, including a third-place state finish in swimming, a Final Four state finish in girls basketball, and state runners-up in cheerleading. In addition, our teams and individual athletes earned numerous OCC and district titles across multiple sports.

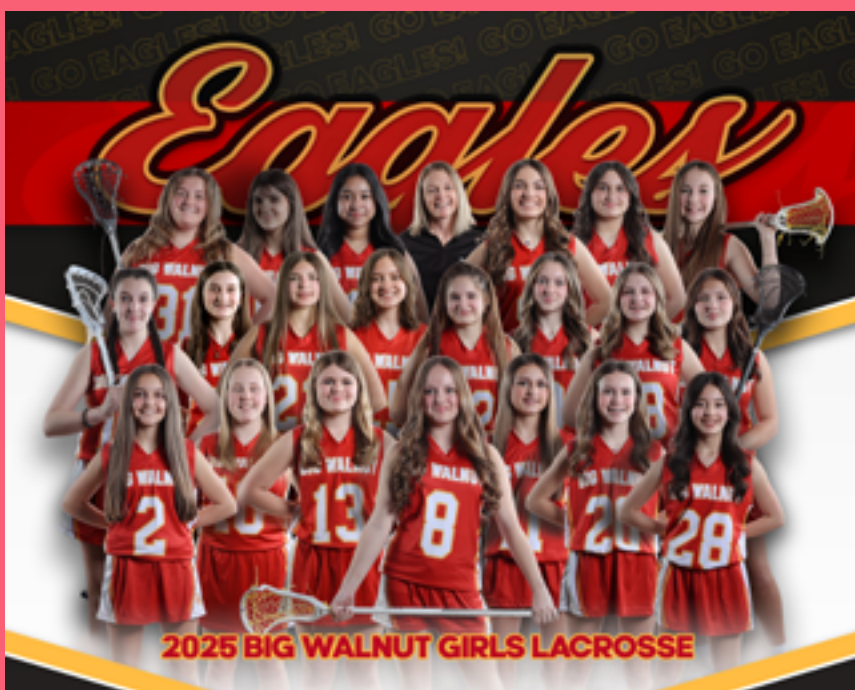
Be sure to check out the full gallery of spring team photos below. Best of luck to all of our Eagles competing this season—we'll be cheering you on every step of the way!

MIDDLE SCHOOL SPORTS





MIDDLE SCHOOL SPORTS





HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS



Varsity Boys Lacrosse



Varsity Baseball



JV-A Baseball



JV-B Baseball



Varsity Softball



JV Softball



HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS



Varsity Boys Tennis



JV Boys Tennis



Boys Track & Field



Girls Track & Field



Varsity Boys Volleyball



JV Boys Volleyball



BIG WALNUT HIGH SCHOOL



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BIG WALNUT MIDDLE SCHOOL



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43074



BIG WALNUT INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL



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BIG WALNUT ELEMENTARY



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