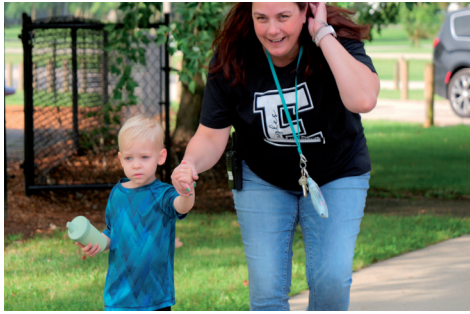


September
2023

The
Eagle Examiner



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



I hope you all had an enjoyable summer break. It is hard to believe that we are at the start of another school year. Actually, we made it through the Labor Day weekend, so the school year is in full swing.

One of the best parts of my job is visiting the schools and seeing the kids. From the smiles and excitement of our preschool and kindergarten students to the lunchtime conversations I have had with our seniors, I am constantly reminded of how great this community is.

The start of a new school year brings new opportunities for our kids. It is a chance for them to experience new classes, electives, and perhaps extracurricular activities. It's also a time for our kids to build new friendships with classmates they've never had the chance to be with. From the visits I have made to classrooms, the kids seem to be adjusting quite well.

We have plenty of students participating in extracurricular activities and if you have not had a chance to see our kids compete or perform, I'd invite you to do so. Whether that is an athletic event, music performance, or a production by our drama club, I think there is something for everyone. I hope to see you around, and if you see me, please say hello.

MESSAGE from the **SUPERINTENDENT**



Ryan McLane

Ryan McLane



MESSAGE from the BOARD PRESIDENT

Doug Crowl

I believe I speak for the whole board when I say, welcome to all the students coming back to school for the 2023-2024 school year. Also, a big thank you to all the staff of the district for all you do to provide services and meet the educational needs of our students!

While the paper edition of the Eagle Examiner served as a good communication tool for the Big Walnut District in the past to keep the community in the know, it was not a very cost-efficient use of the district's funds. Knowing the need for a communication tool still exists, the administration and board believe that a more efficient and effective use of the district's funds would be to move the Eagle Examiner to this digital format and deliver it to the public in this medium.

As a lifelong resident of this community, I cannot remember a time when a Big Walnut School Board has been faced with the multitude of challenges that our current board has faced over the last 18 months or so. I thank all my fellow board members for their hard work in facing those challenges as effectively as we have. A small recap of the challenges includes the replacement of our Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Treasurer, Director of Facilities and other various positions. We also filled a school board member vacancy while addressing many other issues, some seen and some unseen. We have been working on enhancing safety and security in all of our buildings, increasing School Resource Officer coverage in our buildings, as well as working with other entities on possible development issues just to mention a few. Our top priority as a board is the safety and security of our students and buildings. Our second priority is to provide the greatest educational environment for our students, balanced with the most efficient use of the

funding provided by the residents of our district. Several years ago, a paid consultant advised the district that we would need to pass an additional three levies in order to maintain the operations of the district. Due to the current board and administration focusing on our second priority, we're able to increase the cash on hand for the district without additional levies. In the fall of 2022, cash on hand was projected to be \$7.7 million dollars at the end of the fiscal year ending in June 2023. The district ended with a cash on hand balance of over \$25 million dollars. This increase of cash on hand has allowed the district to complete and plan for some much-needed repairs and enhancements to the district properties.

Lastly, I will address the change in plans for converting the Baughman Street building into an elementary. First, while the previous administration planned to convert the building into an elementary school, there were no funds planned or appropriated to pay for the conversion. It would be my guess that it would cost around \$2-5 million to upgrade and convert. In addition, it would cost \$2-5 million per year to operate it once opened. Second, our current district wide enrollment is just under 4,400 students. Our district wide capacity is currently around 5,700 students, without taking Baughman Street into account. The administration and the board believe it is a more reasonable response to any possible growth in the elementary buildings, to do a grade balancing utilizing our current buildings beginning with the 2024-2025 school year. The board will continue to monitor the growth in our area, the enrollment of our schools, and any impact that Intel may have on our area, while keeping a close eye on our current and anticipated revenues. Let's have a great school year!



Stephen P. Fujii, Alice Nicks, President Doug Crowl, Vice President Angela Graziosi, and Todd Smith





SPORTS

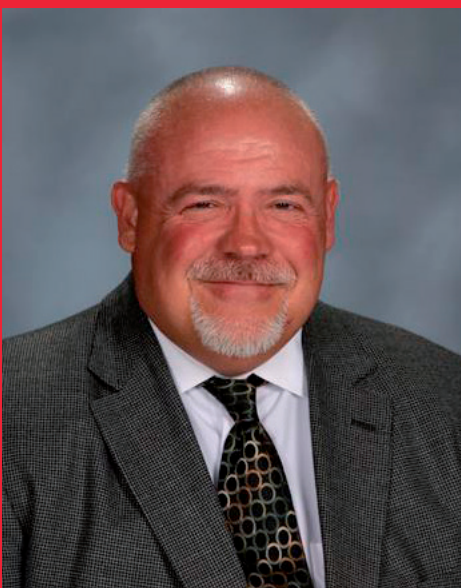
HIGH SCHOOL

High school fall sports are in full swing, with many of our teams off to a great start. Thank you to everyone who attended our first-ever fall Eagle Madness on August 8th. The event was a huge success, and we hope to see it grow every year. Keep an eye out for winter and spring Eagle Madness dates, which will be announced later this fall.

Please scan the QR code on this page in order to visit our athletic website, bigwalnutathletics.net. We receive over 40k website hits per month and consistently rank in the top 10 in Ohio and the top 50 nationally. Thanks to our entire athletic team for keeping the website up to date.

Our student-athletes not only excel at athletics but also in the classroom. In the 2022-23 school year, our team GPAs were as follows: fall 3.57, winter 3.46, and spring 3.59.

High school is a crucial time in a student's life, and navigating it can be challenging. High school coaches have the opportunity to make a significant impact on students' lives through sports during this critical time. With outside pressures and influences that can pull students away from sports and those who want to help them grow, high school coaching is more than just improving athletic ability/performance.

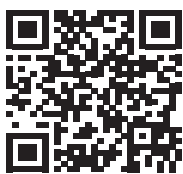


Brian Shelton
Big Walnut High School
Athletic Director



With the 2023-24 school year off to a fantastic start, we are excited to share about the amazing student-athletes at BWMS. This fall, there are 235 individuals participating in football, volleyball, cheerleading, girls cross country, boys cross country, girls tennis, girls golf and boys golf. Each group has gotten off to a hot start and a major reason is due to the dedicated group of coaches we have.

- Doug Eckelbarger and Jeff Fuller - 7th Grade Football
- Jacob Houston, Ron Truax, Mason Shelby, Derek West and Zac Taylor - 8th Grade Football



MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Danielle Horsley - 7th Grade Volleyball
- Tim Kafka - 8th Grade Volleyball
- Kristen Carty and Kaylee Yarnell - 7th/8th Grade Cheerleading
- Jen White, Kelly Mazzi, Dannie Crace, Lindsey DeLoss and Dave Ishler - 7th/8th Grade Cross Country (Boys/Girls)
- Kim White - Girls Tennis
- Tyler Beam - Girls Golf
- Rich Smith - Boys Golf

BWMS Athletics prides itself on hard work, mental toughness and a willingness to fight through adversity. As much as our coaches teach the fundamentals of each sport our student-athletes participate in, it's the life lessons they learn along the way that pay off the most.

Two things that stick out to most who know BWMS is that we have a top tier MS facility and the best athletic trainer in the business, Landon Bentz. Nearly every visiting school we compete with mentions each of these and we are very proud of both.

If you are ever looking for information about the goings-on with BWMS Athletics, please scan the QR code and visit bigwalnutathletics.net. If you have questions, please feel free to call us at 740-965-3006. Stephanie Kreager, our superstar athletic secretary, or myself, Joe Rucker, will be more than happy to help you with any questions or concerns.



Joe Rucker
Big Walnut Middle School
Athletic Director

GO EAGLES!!!



BANK'S NOTE



Darren Jenkins
Treasurer

The school district has two prevailing objectives for long-term financial management.

First, the school district must carefully monitor the revenue stream provided by real estate taxes, income taxes, and state funding to ensure sufficient revenue to maintain an excellent education system within the next five years. The current financial forecast for the general fund operations over the next five years demonstrates that the ending cash balance at the

end of the fiscal year 2023 is projected at \$23,610,140 with positive balances through the fiscal year 2028. The school district utilizes a five-year forecasting model to monitor the district's financial health and implement appropriate actions to maintain a positive cash balance. The school district's diminishing balance reflects the challenge of Ohio school district financing.

Even though the school district continues to see student growth, we are on the guarantee for state funding which has maintained the same level as the fiscal year 2017. With minimal help from state funding, more responsibility is placed on local residents to support education. The Board of Education was successful in renewing a five-year substitute emergency levy in March 2020 for a continuous period of time. The original substitute levy was approved to collect approximately \$4.9 million annually in 2015 and has increased annually due to new construction in the Big Walnut

community. Resources provided by the substitute levy in fiscal year 2022 were approximately \$5.51 million. The school district also benefits from the American Electric Power substation located within its boundaries. The school district

receives over \$3 million in additional revenue from that AEP substation which will continue for many years. However, the amount is anticipated to decline over time as the transmission infrastructure depreciates. While these current resources are very helpful for day-to-day operations, the school district's five-year forecast shows that to continue providing current services and have an ability to expand opportunities for students, the school district will need additional funds in the future.

Secondly, the school district must carefully monitor personnel expenditures for salary and benefits. While the school district has direct influence over salary during negotiations, the cost of providing quality health care becomes increasingly challenging. The school district insurance committee, composed of representation from each bargaining unit, the Board of Education, and the administration, continually monitors plan design, coverage, and cost in an effort to maintain a sustainable benefit and avoid the additional charges as a result of the Affordable Care Act. This committee and school district leadership will need to work together to maintain sustainable insurance benefits and ensure the long-term financial stability for the school district. During fiscal year 2021, the school district moved all employees to a high deductible health plan with a health savings account. The goal of which was to help stabilize insurance costs. The school district began the process in fiscal year 2024 of performing a request for proposals to further work toward a cost-effective and sustainable health insurance plan. The movement to a high deductible plan has had the desired effect of stabilizing premiums, at least in the short term.

In fiscal year 2022, the effective class I millage rate for the school district was at the 20-mill floor, which will be reflected in general property tax revenue as growth continues. Calendar year 2020 was an update year for Delaware County which positively impacted the district for fiscal year 2021(second half) and beyond. The next update occurred in 2023; it is anticipated that values will continue to increase. A county reappraisal or update does increase the amount of property tax dollars the district receives because the school district is on the 20-mill floor.

Careful prudent planning and monitoring of enrollment and expenditures will be critical to continued district success.







MEET OUR NEW PRINCIPALS



**Principal
Jessica Shelton**

**Big Walnut Early Learning
Center at Harrison Street**

Hometown: Delaware, OH

Family: My husband Brian Shelton is the Athletic Director at the high school. We have 2 children. Nate and his wife Lauren live in New Albany and work at One Church in Gahanna. Our daughter Rylee just graduated from Cleveland State University and has returned to play her COVID year of soccer. We also have two dogs, Remi and Milo.

Hobbies: One of my other passions besides teaching is coaching. I love the game of soccer and enjoy sharing that. I also enjoy watching sports, working out at the gym, and traveling.

Work Experience: This will be my 21st year in education at Big Walnut. I am proud to say I have worked as an intervention specialist at the middle school, intermediate school and at Prairie Run Elementary as well as head many building leadership roles. In addition, I am the Director of Coaching for the Barca Juniors program at Toca Soccer Center of Columbus.

What does #InspireAndGuide mean to you?

To me, inspire and guide means providing an environment that fosters a love of exploration and discovery. It sparks our youngest learners curiosity, creativity, and an enthusiasm for learning. My role is to help facilitate engaging and stimulating experiences to ensure they develop foundational skills, social awareness, and a positive attitude. When children are inspired and comfortable, they will explore new ideas and ask questions to deepen their understanding of the world around them.



**Principal
Nick Powell**

Big Walnut Elementary

Hometown: Camden, OH

Family: I met my beautiful wife, Kaitlyn, on both of our first days as teachers in 2013 and we were married about a year later! We have 2 unapologetically rambunctious boys at home and another that will be joining the wild rumpus around December.

Hobbies: I enjoy spending my free time outdoors on a lake with a fishing pole in my hand! As a decorated wing eating champion, I enjoy honing those championship skills by visiting the sauciest of wing spots around town and judging them with my wife and boys! I also enjoy hunting, reading, and playing vintage baseball for the Columbus Capitals Base Ball Club.

Work Experience: I have been in education for over 10 years now, including the last 5 in administration. I began my career as a moderate-to-severe intervention specialist working at Bexley High School through the ESCCO. After that year, I accepted a job at Buckeye Valley East Elementary as a mild-to-moderate interventions specialist. I began my work in Big Walnut in 2015 as a science co-teacher at the middle school, and eventually took over as the assistant principal/athletic director. I have coached football, baseball, and girls basketball for Big Walnut! Other work experiences include hay bailer, horse stall cleaner, bartender, mover, concrete worker, and contractor's hand!

What does #InspireAndGuide mean to you?

Ultimately, as an elementary school principal, my role would encompass both inspiring students and guiding BWE students through their educational journeys, all while fostering a positive, safe, and inclusive learning environment where every individual feels valued, empowered, and courageous enough to achieve their full potential.





MEET OUR NEW PRINCIPALS



**Principal
Dr. Nicole Carter**

Big Walnut High School

Current Hometown: Westerville, OH

Family: I currently reside in Westerville with my husband, Brian. We have three children, Haylee, Hanna, Dylan, and grandson, Oliver.

Work Experience: Beginning 28th year in education, 20 years of high school teaching experience in the Canal Winchester Local School District and 7 years of administrator leadership in the Reynoldsburg City School District.

What does #InspireAndGuide mean to you?

My passion for relationships, academic success, and growth are all a part of my plan to continue the district's mission to inspire and guide students. As I begin my journey in the Big Walnut Local School District, my hope is to not only prioritize a strong focus on academic achievement, but develop business partnerships that serve and connect our students to the Big Walnut community. With this plan, the goal is to embrace and drive real world opportunities that include, but are not limited to, the 21st century competencies that students need for future success. It is important as we strive to inspire and guide our students, we nurture and maintain collaborative relationships with all stakeholders to support a tradition of excellence at Big Walnut High School.



**Assistant Principal
Paul Hershberger, Jr.**

Big Walnut High School

Hometown: St. Paris, OH

Family: I met my wife, Kristen, while in college at Capital University and we married after graduation in 2006. We have three lovely children Abby, Ellie, and Trey.

Hobbies: We are a very busy family, involved in many sports. I still enjoy playing basketball and softball as well as coaching my kids whenever possible. My wife and I enjoy traveling and hiking. We have run 16 half marathons together with the dubious goal of running one in every state.

Work Experience: I spent the first 9 years of my career teaching social studies (favorite classes were World Religions and Geography) and coaching basketball. I shifted to administration in 2014 and spent the first 6 years as principal of Mechanicsburg High School. The past three years I was an assistant principal at Westerville North High School.

What does #InspireAndGuide mean to you?

Inspire and Guide to me is a way to support our students through the exciting and challenging years of high school. Many times in life the best way to learn is trial and error, our goal is to inspire students to keep trying when they fail and guide them in positive directions towards success.



**Assistant Principal
Justin Grieger**

**Big Walnut
Intermediate**

Hometown: Kalamazoo, MI

Family: My family has lived in Sunbury for eleven years. My wife Jody (PE teacher at GRE) and I have three kids, Gavin (6th), Emy (4th), and Carson (2nd). We stay active with all of our kids' activities and enjoy spending time together as a family. Our three pets Gus, Frank, and Betty-Jo also keep life entertaining.

Hobbies: There is not much time for hobbies at this stage of life! I enjoy coaching my kids in youth sports and supporting them in all of their activities.

Work Experience: This school year marks the start of year nineteen in education for me. I am passionate about learning, creating a positive learning environment, and building positive relationships with students, staff, and the community. I first taught Health and Physical Education at the middle school level and coached high school sports in the New Albany Plain Local District. For the last eight years, I have been with the Northridge Local School District in a variety of administrative roles.

What does #InspireAndGuide mean to you?

To me, inspire and guide means having a positive impact on students that will help each student develop skills, find their passion, and foster growth for their future!





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BIG WALNUT MIDDLE SCHOOL



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BIG WALNUT INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL



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BIG WALNUT ELEMENTARY



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GENERAL ROSECRANS ELEMENTARY



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PRAIRIE RUN ELEMENTARY



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EARLY LEARNING CENTER AT HARRISON STREET



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