

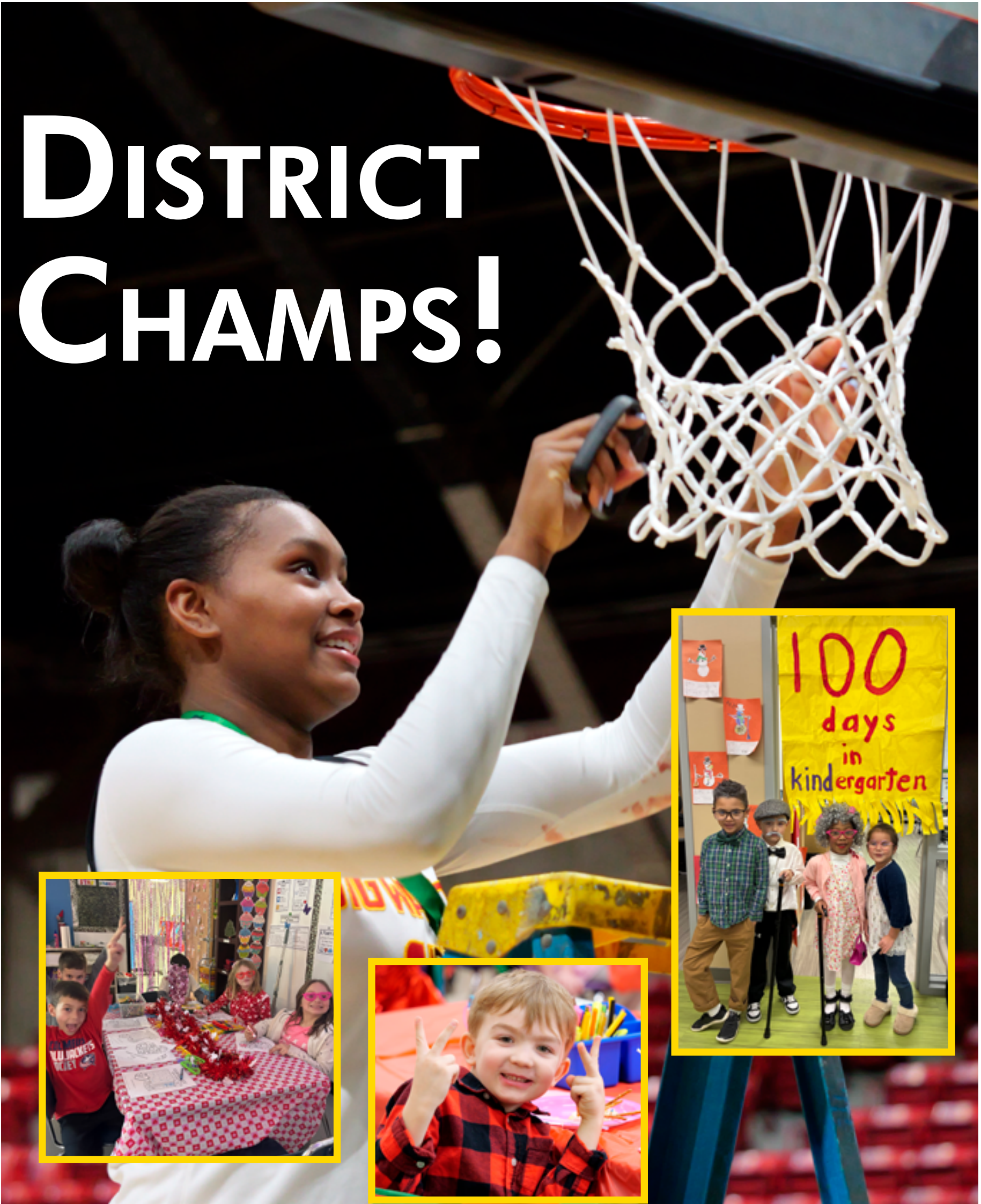
March
2026

The
Eagle Examiner



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

DISTRICT CHAMPS!





MESSAGE from the SUPERINTENDENT

This issue is packed with multiple examples of our students excelling academically, in the arts, and in athletics. Big Walnut was fortunate enough to host the OASSA Cheer State Championships in February, and our Big Walnut squad took home the state title in their division. A huge congratulations to them, their coaches, and their families on this accomplishment.

From an academic standpoint, we implemented a new English Language Arts curriculum (K-5) this school year. We are currently looking at materials for math, middle school science, and high school biology. This is part of our ongoing effort to get high-quality instructional materials in the hands of our teachers and students.

Finally, we are entering hiring season, so it is a busy time as we prepare for the 2026-27 school year. There are opportunities to join our team as a teacher, educational assistant, bus driver, or custodian. You can find more information about our [job opportunities on our website](#). If you think Big Walnut would be a great fit for you, I'd encourage you to apply.



Ryan McLane

Alyssa M. Lane

AP SPANISH STUDENTS CONNECT THROUGH ART AT COLUMBUS MUSEUM OF ART

On February 12, Big Walnut High School AP Spanish students took their annual trip to the Columbus Museum of Art for a day that blended language, culture, and creativity.

While at the museum, students had the opportunity to meet their pen pals from Dublin, bringing classroom connections to life through face-to-face conversations. What began as written exchanges became real-

world dialogue, giving students the chance to practice their Spanish skills in an authentic and meaningful setting.

Inside the galleries, students analyzed artwork through the lens of AP Spanish themes and contexts, discussing how visual art reflects identity, culture, global challenges, personal expression, and contemporary life. Surrounded by bold glass installations, classical architecture, and thought-provoking exhibits, students engaged in conversations that pushed them to think critically while communicating in Spanish.

The annual visit continues to be a highlight of the AP Spanish experience, offering students a dynamic way to connect language learning with art, culture, and community.





COMMON CENTS



Scott Gooding
Interim Treasurer / CFO

Big Walnut Schools Successfully Prices Bonds with Strong Market Support

On February 18, 2026, the Big Walnut Local School District successfully completed the pricing of \$27.055 million in bonds. The transaction included two components: refinancing existing debt to save taxpayer dollars and issuing new bonds to fund library facility improvements.

Strong Investor Confidence

The bond sale was met with exceptional demand from investors. The District received \$86.78 million in purchase orders for a \$27.09 million offering — more than three times the amount available. This strong response reflects investor confidence in the District's financial management and long-term stability and helped secure favorable interest rates.

Refinancing Saves Taxpayer Dollars

The District refinanced \$9.27 million of previously issued bonds through an \$8.055 million refunding bond issue. This refinancing will:

- Generate \$558,646 in net present value savings
- Produce over \$688,000 in total gross savings
- Deliver savings equal to 6.026% of the refunded amount — more than double the District's 3% target
- Maintain the original payoff schedule (final maturity in 2037)

Most importantly, these savings will directly benefit taxpayers through reduced future debt service payments, which support lower debt tax rates than would otherwise have been required.

\$19 Million for Library Facility Improvements

The District also issued \$19 million in Library Facilities Bonds to support improvements to library facilities and related capital needs.

Key details:

- \$19 million deposited into the Project Construction Fund
- Capitalized interest included to help moderate payments in the early years
- Final maturity in 2055
- Competitive borrowing costs, with a True Interest Cost (TIC) of 4.312%

This structure allows the District to advance important facility improvements while responsibly managing the impact on taxpayers.

Responsible Financial Management

Overall highlights of the February 18 transaction include:

- Total bonds issued: \$27.055 million
- Exceptional demand: \$86.78 million in investor orders (3.2x oversubscribed)
- Low underwriting spread: 0.599%
- Total issuance costs carefully managed

This successful bond pricing strengthens the District's long-term debt portfolio, produces meaningful taxpayer savings, and provides full funding for critical facility improvements.

The transaction reflects strong financial stewardship and continued market confidence in Big Walnut Local School District.



The Big Walnut High School Performing Arts Department is turning the volume all the way up with *Rock of Ages: Teen Edition*. Packed with big hair, bigger dreams, and classic rock anthems, this high-energy show delivers nonstop laughs, powerhouse vocals, and a whole lot of '80s attitude.

Set on the legendary Sunset Strip, the story follows dreamers chasing stardom while a beloved rock club fights to survive. Along the way, audiences will hear familiar hits, meet unforgettable characters, and enjoy a show that balances big comedy with heartfelt moments. It is a fast paced, feel good night of live theater led by an incredibly talented cast and crew of Big Walnut students.

Showtimes:

- Thursday, March 12 – 7:00 PM
- Friday, March 13 – 7:00 PM
- Saturday, March 14 – 7:00 PM



Leading with Purpose: Strengthening Leadership Across Our District

This year, our district launched Leading with Purpose, a comprehensive leadership development initiative designed to strengthen our organization from within. Developed entirely in-house, this ongoing program represents a strategic investment in the people who inspire and guide our students each day. The initiative includes our entire administrative team as well as approximately 25 staff members who volunteered to participate in the first cohort. These groups meet monthly to engage in focused learning centered on a foundational belief: effective leadership begins with clarity of purpose.

Leading with Purpose draws on a range of respected leadership perspectives, including the work of Jon Gordon and Simon Sinek, while incorporating elements of servant leadership and tools such as the DISC profile to build self-awareness and strengthen collaboration. Participants explore communication practices, decision-making frameworks, team dynamics, and the habits that contribute to healthy organizational culture.

Importantly, this work is not theoretical. Each session is intentionally connected to the real challenges and opportunities within our schools. By developing shared language, deeper trust, and stronger alignment across teams, we are building leadership capacity that directly supports student learning and system-wide coherence.

One participant reflected on the experience by sharing:

"I feel like the leadership modules have been an opportunity for me to be more centered on who I am as a leader, more connected to the team, and to recognize the strengths I can bring to the table of our team."

This type of growth — increased self-awareness, stronger collaboration, and a clearer understanding of individual strengths — is precisely the kind of development that strengthens organizations over time.

Because Leading with Purpose was developed internally, it reflects our district's unique priorities and values. It is also designed to be ongoing. In future years, we anticipate welcoming new cohorts of aspiring leaders while providing deeper, more focused learning opportunities for those who have completed the foundational experience.

"Our community expects excellence from our schools. Leading with Purpose is one way we ensure that our leadership teams continue learning, improving, and working in alignment to best serve our students and families."

Sustainable excellence requires intentional leadership development. Through Leading with Purpose, we are not only strengthening individual leaders — we are reinforcing a culture of clarity, service, and continuous growth that benefits our entire school community.



Ross Linscott
Director of Student Services

Big Walnut Student Art on Display

For the first time, Big Walnut's entire K-12 art department has partnered on a districtwide showcase at the Sunbury Community Library.

Now on display through March 27, the exhibit features artwork from elementary, intermediate, middle, and high school students. Elementary pieces greet visitors at the front entrance, while additional student work fills the children's area — transforming the library into a vibrant gallery of Eagle creativity.



This collaboration highlights the artistic growth of our students across grade levels and celebrates the incredible work happening in our art classrooms every day.

We encourage families and community members to stop by and experience the exhibit firsthand.



AROUND THE DISTRICT



Megan Weaver
Big Walnut Intermediate

Big Walnut Staff Spotlight!

At Big Walnut Intermediate, creativity is always in full color thanks to Megan Weaver. As our art teacher and Art Club advisor, Mrs. Weaver inspires students to express themselves through a wide range of artistic styles and mediums. From painting and drawing to mixed media and beyond, she encourages young artists to explore new techniques and find their unique voice.

Her passion for the arts reaches beyond the classroom walls. This year, Mrs. Weaver submitted student artwork to the Ohio Art Education Association's

Youth Art Month, where selected pieces will be recognized at the Youth Art Month Ceremony at Riverside Hospital on March 14. It's an incredible honor for our students and a testament to the high level of creativity happening at Big Walnut Intermediate.

Through her leadership, enthusiasm, and belief in every student's potential, Mrs. Weaver continues to cultivate confidence, imagination, and a love for the arts in our Eagles each day.



BWI Students Shine at Science Fair

Clipboards in hand and nerves buzzing like a well-wired circuit, Big Walnut Intermediate students recently showcased their curiosity and creativity at this year's Science Fair.

Sixteen students participated in the event, including fifteen 5th graders and one ambitious 6th grader. Their projects filled the room with trifold displays, data charts, hypotheses, and plenty of "let me show you what I discovered!" energy. From testing which brand of cleat provides the best traction to hands-on experiments exploring everyday questions, students demonstrated not only scientific thinking, but also confidence in presenting their work to judges and guests.



Of the sixteen participants, five students earned a Superior rating and eleven received Excellent ratings — an outstanding accomplishment that reflects the time, effort, and critical thinking each student invested in their projects.

Beyond the results, the true highlight of the evening was watching students explain their process: how they formed a hypothesis, gathered and analyzed data, adjusted their thinking, and drew conclusions. The Science Fair provided an authentic opportunity for students to practice public speaking, defend their findings, and engage in meaningful academic conversation.

Congratulations to all of our Big Walnut Intermediate scientists for representing BWI with pride. Your curiosity is powerful, and we cannot wait to see where your questions lead you next.





Big Walnut Heads to Iceland in 2027

Big Walnut students have an exciting international opportunity on the horizon.

In June 2027, students currently in grades 7–11 and their families are invited to travel to Iceland for an unforgettable educational experience led by Mrs. Amy Eikenberry.

Participants will:

- Chase the Northern Lights
- Visit the legendary Blue Lagoon
- Explore waterfalls and volcanic craters
- Hike between tectonic plates
- Take part in a whale watching tour



Iceland's unique landscape offers an incredible blend of science, geography, culture, and adventure. From dramatic coastlines to geothermal wonders, this trip promises hands-on learning experiences students will remember for years to come.

Families interested in learning more are encouraged to attend a virtual informational meeting:

7:00 PM - Thursday, March 17

Register for the meeting: <https://rsvp.eftours.com/x9p47et>

For questions, please contact [Mrs. Amy Eikenberry](#).



Eagles Earn Top Honors at OCC Journalism Awards

Big Walnut High School journalism students were recognized on Wednesday, February 25 at the Ohio Capital Conference (OCC) Journalism Awards held at Dublin Jerome High School.

Students from across the conference were nominated in a variety of visual and print media categories. Mrs. Horton had three students honored for their outstanding achievements and leadership within the program.

- Pyper Blackman — Rising Star: Influential Young Journalist
- Sophia Abrams — Rising Star: Best Emerging Journalist
- Ava Tackett — Distinguished Journalistic Leadership Award

These honors follow another major milestone for the Big Walnut yearbook staff. The 2025 volume was named a national "Best Of" publication by Varsity Yearbooks and was featured four times in the 2025 portfolio for theme, coverage, and design.

This marks the third consecutive year the program has earned this distinction. The award will be presented later this spring.





BWHS Students Help with Art Day at General Rosecrans



Big Walnut High School students recently spent part of their day sharing their creativity with some of our youngest Eagles at General Rosecrans Elementary.

During a special Art Day collaboration, high school students worked alongside elementary classes to guide projects and encourage young artists as they brought their ideas to life.

The experience gave BWHS students valuable leadership opportunities while providing younger Eagles with positive role models. It was a great day of art, mentorship, and Eagle pride in action.

Building the Nest: Youth Travel Basketball Teams Claim FIVE Championships

Five teams. Five trophies. One very bright future for Big Walnut basketball.

Big Walnut Youth Travel Basketball recently captured five state championships, showcasing the depth of talent and dedication developing throughout our program.

State champions include:

- 3rd Grade Boys (Doan)
- 6th Grade Boys (Brockman)
- 4th Grade Girls (Palma)
- 5th Grade Girls (Patterson)
- 6th Grade Girls (Johnson)

From early morning practices to championship celebrations, these student-athletes demonstrated teamwork, resilience, and Eagle pride every step of the way. Their success is a testament to the hard work of our players, coaches, and families who continue to invest in building something special.

The future of Eagle Basketball is not just promising. It is already making noise.





CLAY, COCOA, AND CREATIVITY IN SECOND GRADE

For a few special Fridays, the art room felt more like a cozy café than a classroom.

Our second graders recently wrapped up two engaging art projects that blended hands-on creation with digital design. Students first built and painted their own clay mugs, learning about form, texture, and glazing while crafting something uniquely theirs.

After that, they shifted to Canva, where they were challenged to design brand-new cover art for their favorite books. Students experimented with images, fonts, layout, and color to reimagine stories in creative new ways.



To celebrate the completion of their designs, students enjoyed hot cocoa served in the very mugs they created. With the lights dimmed, RGB LEDs glowing, and coffee shop jazz playing softly in the background, the art room transformed into a miniature café filled with focus, creativity, and plenty of smiles.

From clay to Canva, our second graders proved that creativity truly has no limits.



BIG WALNUT GIRLS COMPLETE ROX TRAINING



Strength is more than physical. It's awareness. It's intuition. It's voice. And at Big Walnut Intermediate, our girls recently had the opportunity to build all of it through ROX (Ruling Our Experiences) training.

During a dedicated session in the library and gym, students worked through Lesson 11, a powerful sequence focused on personal confidence and self-defense. The morning began with welcoming activities and a True/False discussion that challenged common myths and opened meaningful conversations. From there, students explored important topics including victim blame, awareness, intuition, body language, and using their voice with confidence.

The training culminated with Level 5: physical self-defense practice in the gym. With guidance from staff facilitators, students practiced stance, balance, and controlled defensive movements using padded shields. The energy in the room was focused and empowering as students stepped forward, literally and figuratively, to apply what they had learned.

The session closed with the reflective activity, "Why I'm Worth Defending," giving each student time to consider her own value, strength, and self-worth.

ROX is designed to help girls develop leadership skills, healthy relationships, and confidence in who they are. At Big Walnut Intermediate, that mission came to life in a meaningful way. We are proud of our students for their engagement, courage, and willingness to grow.

Strong. Independent. Courageous.





AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE PROGRAM

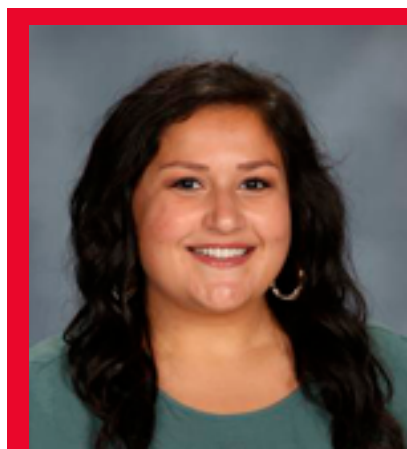
The Best of Both Worlds Learn About Animals and Plants!

Have you ever wondered how a seed blossoms into a full grown crop, or what it actually takes to raise and care for animals? That is exactly what Animal and Plant Science is all about! This class covers a little bit of everything. Students learn how to classify living things, dig into what makes soil healthy, and figure out what plants actually need to grow. We even planted 100 pieces of corn to test it out for ourselves! By the end of the plant units, students

know what goes into growing a successful crop from start to finish, and pick up some great home gardening tips along the way.

The animal side of the course is just as exciting. Students explore how livestock connects to the food we eat every day, learn what quality animal care looks like, and even get into how animal body systems work from the inside out. Most students say this content helps make them a better pet owner too! Whether you have a dog, a cat, or something a little more exotic, this class will help you understand your animals on a whole new level.

If you have an interest in plants, animals, or just want to learn how living things work, Animal and Plant Science might just be the class for you.



Christine Febes
Agricultural Sciences Instructor



Celebrating National FFA Week

National FFA Week is a nationwide celebration that highlights the impact of agricultural education and the role FFA plays in developing students' leadership, personal growth, and career success. The National FFA Organization was founded in 1928 to prepare young people for careers in agriculture and to build character, responsibility, and citizenship. National FFA Week is celebrated each year during the week of George Washington's birthday to recognize his legacy as an agriculturalist and to honor the contributions of FFA members across the country. Throughout the week, chapters host activities, service projects, and outreach events to share the importance of agriculture and agricultural education with their schools and communities.

Big Walnut's National FFA Week did not disappoint this year! Students went all in on spirit days throughout the week, including PJ Day, "We Wear Pink" Wednesday, National Blue and Corn Gold Thursday, and a Camo vs. Red, White, and Blue battle on Friday. To wrap everything up, our leadership team put together a staff luncheon on Friday to thank the teachers and staff who support the program day in and day out. At the luncheon, staff were able to enjoy some of the hydroponic grown lettuce that the students in Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources grew! A special thanks to our wonderful staff and community who support our students both inside and outside of the classroom!





MIDDLE SCHOOL SPORTS

It may be hard to believe, but the 2026 spring sports season is here. Despite the frigid temperatures, countless inches of snow and messy conditions, we are eager to see what our coaches and student-athletes have in store in what is always the busiest and craziest season of the year. At BWMS, we will have hundreds of our kids out there competing against some of the best competition in all of Ohio. And while our schedules are set for now, you know the spring weather will bring its inevitable challenges and move things around like pieces on a chessboard. Please be patient as postponements, cancellations and makeup dates come almost daily in April and early May. Gotta love Ohio weather!

It goes without saying that Big Walnut Athletics are definitely on the map thanks to the success several of our varsity teams have had. But, it's the middle school level and below where the basic skills are established and the foundation is built. Wins are always great, but growing the fundamentals, learning to play as a team and retention of players for the high school level is paramount.



Joe Rucker
Big Walnut Middle School
Athletic Director

With that being said, I'm excited to share the follow springs sports offered at BWMS and the coaches who will be leading them:

7th Grade Softball is welcoming Rachel Bonno back for her 2nd season. Rachel is an EA at BWMS.

8th Grade Softball has a familiar face returning from years ago. Lori Hayhurst is back coaching in the MS after several years working with our youth teams. Lori is an ELA teacher at BWMS.

7th Grade Baseball will see Ed Partlow back for his 4th season.

8th Grade Baseball will be led by 1st year coach Colton Lee. Colton is also an EA at Souders Elementary.

Boys Tennis once again has Kim White running the show in her final season. Kim is also a PE teacher at BWMS but will be retiring at the end of the 2025-26 school year. We will miss you, Kimbo!

Boys Lacrosse has Jason Jones returning for his 3rd season at the helm.

Girls Lacrosse is led by Lisa House who has been coaching with the team for six seasons, this being her 2nd as head coach. Lisa works at BWHS as an ELL teacher.

Co-Ed Track is commanded by Officer Justin Whiteside. Justin is the School Resource Officer at BWMS and will be going into his 2nd season as head coach of the track teams.

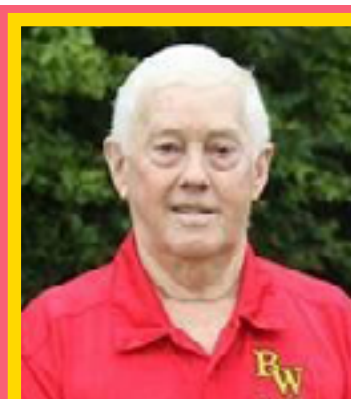
Be on the lookout for a series of podcasts we have been hosting this year where our middle school athletics department interviews all of the coaches listed above. This will give you the opportunity to learn more about our coaches and the teams they are leading. You can find these podcasts on our website at https://www.bwls.net/bigwalnutmiddleschool_home.aspx. Look for the icon on the left side of the page that reads, "[BWMS Talk School Podcast](#)".



3RD ANNUAL RED RUN

The 3rd Annual Red Edwards Run will take place on April 10 at 6:00 p.m., honoring Coach Red Edwards and his 65 years of dedication to Big Walnut Cross Country and Track. Coach Edwards poured time, care, and relentless attention to detail into generations of student-athletes, and this event continues his legacy while supporting the Red Edwards Scholarship. The scholarship is open to senior members of the track program, both male and female.

The evening features a 2-mile course that includes track, road, and grass, symbolizing a true commitment to running. A 400-meter Red Run for children and a 400-meter adult option are also available for those who prefer a shorter distance. [Register for the race here!](#)





HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS



Brian Shelton
Big Walnut High School
Athletic Director

As winter turns toward spring, Big Walnut athletics is delivering one of its most impressive postseason stretches in recent memory. Conference titles. District championships. State podium finishes. Major individual honors. And multiple teams still competing deep into tournament play.

Cheer: State Champions

Big Walnut Cheer claimed a State Championship this winter after also capturing the OCC title. A dominant season from start to finish, the squad set the tone for what has become a banner year across winter sports.



Girls Basketball: OCC Champions AND District Champions

The Lady Eagles captured the District Championship and now advance to the Regional Semi-Finals against Teays Valley on Tuesday night.

With a win, Big Walnut will advance to the Regional Finals on Friday — marking what would be back-to-back Regional Final appearances for a program that reached the State Final Four last season.

Earlier this winter, the team secured the OCC Championship, adding to a season defined by focus and momentum.

Leading the way for the ladies:

- Sydney Mobley – District 11 Player of the Year, OCC Player of the Year, and Columbus Dispatch Central District Player of the Year, plus nominations for Gatorade Player of the Year.
- Carey Largent – District 11 Coach of the Year and OCC Coach of the Year, a testament to leadership that continues to elevate the program.



Boys Basketball: Advancing to District Finals

The Eagles continue their postseason push after advancing through the District Semi-Finals on Monday night.

With that victory, Big Walnut moves on to the District Championship game on Thursday, against Westerville South, carrying momentum into one of the biggest stages of the season.

Along with the team success, comes individual success as Carson Scholl was named District 11 Player of the Year.

This group has shown resilience throughout the year, and now sits one win away from returning to regionals.



Wrestling: District Depth and Major Recognition

Big Walnut Wrestling continues to demonstrate depth across both programs.

- Eight boys wrestlers qualified for the District Tournament at Hilliard Darby.
- Five girls wrestlers qualified for Districts, hosted at Big Walnut.

Both teams posted strong sectional performances to advance athletes into postseason competition.

Highlighting the season, Victoria Gonzalez Henrique was named the Columbus Dispatch Girls Wrestler of the Year, a tremendous honor recognizing her dominance and leadership on the mat.

The boys team also secured the OCC Championship, reinforcing the program's continued strength.





HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Swimming & Diving: Competing Among Ohio's Best

Big Walnut athletes made their presence known at the State Meet.

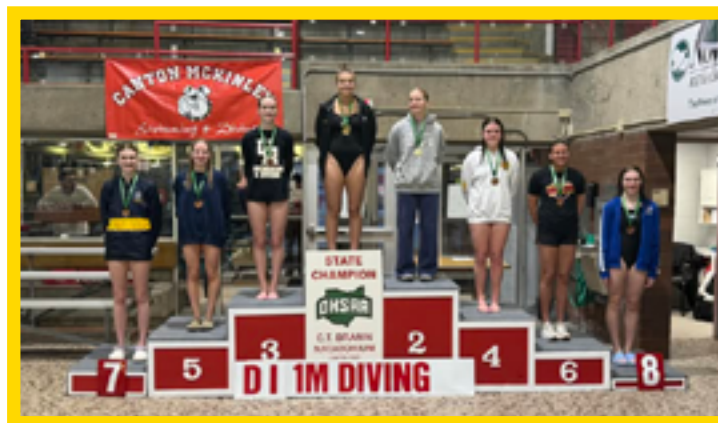
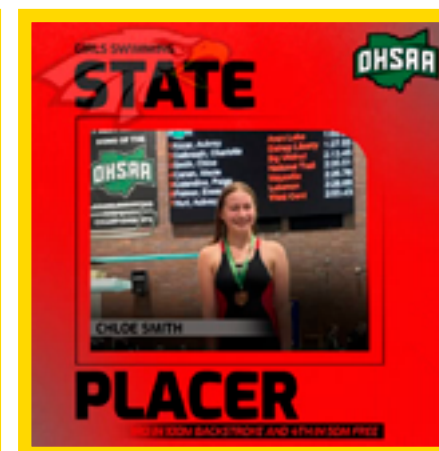
- Sarah White finished as State Runner-Up in Girls Diving, adding a podium finish to an outstanding season.
- Owen Wion competed at the State Meet in swimming and delivered strong performances against top statewide competition.
- Chloe Smith competed in Para Swimming at the State Meet, representing Big Walnut with determination and excellence.

Multiple swimmers also advanced through district competition earlier in postseason play.

Bowling: District Appearances and Top Honors

The girls bowling team qualified and competed at the District Tournament this winter.

On the boys side, Mason Woodard qualified as an individual for Districts and was named Columbus Dispatch Bowler of the Year, recognizing one of the area's top performances on the lanes.



Big Walnut Athletics

Indoor Track: Speed, Strength, and State-Level Momentum

Indoor Track added another layer of success to Big Walnut's winter season.

Both the boys and girls programs delivered strong performances throughout the indoor campaign, with athletes posting personal records, podium finishes, and qualifying marks in highly competitive meets.

From sprint events to distance races, from relays to field events, the Eagles showcased depth and development that will carry momentum into the outdoor season. Several athletes turned in performances that rank among the program's top marks, reinforcing the strength of Big Walnut's track tradition.

Indoor competition this winter demonstrated that the future remains fast, focused, and firmly in red and gold.

With district finals, regional games, and postseason tournaments still unfolding, this winter season is far from finished.

Championships have already been secured. More are within reach.

And the Eagles continue to soar.





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



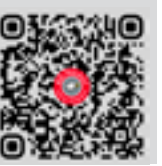
GENERAL ROSECRANS ELEMENTARY



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



HYLEN SOUDERS ELEMENTARY



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