

October
2026

The
Eagle Examiner

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



HoCo 2026!





MESSAGE from the SUPERINTENDENT

I hate to admit it, but this month marks my high school's 32nd homecoming since I graduated. And I've attended...zero. It's not that I had a bad experience or wouldn't love to be able to go back, but life just gets busy.

On October 2nd, we celebrated Homecoming at Big Walnut, and it was great to see so many alums make it back. Many people associate Homecoming with high school festivities, and that's a big part of it. At its heart, though, Homecoming celebrates the alums who take the time to come back home. Maybe it's seeing that the English teacher you had in high school is still teaching English at Big Walnut High School.

Homecoming week reached every corner of our district. Our youngest Eagles got to participate in our annual Homecoming Carnival, and some of our middle school musicians made their marching band debut at halftime of the football game by playing "APT." by Rosé and Bruno Mars with the high school marching band.

So what keeps people coming back? Big Walnut keeps growing, but it still feels like the same place. Teachers who remember former students, neighbors who show up for one another. Small-town feel, big-time opportunities.

To our alums who made it back this year, thank you. To those who couldn't, we'll save you a seat next fall. And maybe someday, I'll make the trek back to Pittsburgh for one of mine.

Ryan McLane



Ryan McLane



BIG NUT STRUT

5K | 1 MILE FUN RUN | VIRTUAL

The 17th 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're back at Prairie Run Elementary (701 North Miller Dr, Sunbury) this year! Come join us to show your EAGLE PRIDE!

Scan the QR code to register today!



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8TH | 2:00 PM | @ PRE/BWHS

Sign up by 10/9 to be guaranteed your race shirt.



COMMON CENTS

Big Walnut's Five-Year Forecast: Strong Today, Planning for Tomorrow



Scott Gooding
Interim Treasurer/CFO

Big Walnut Local School District recently adopted its updated Five-Year Forecast, providing our community with a transparent look at the District's financial outlook through fiscal year 2031. While Ohio now requires a shorter forecast period, Big Walnut continues to prepare a full five-year projection because looking further ahead is good financial planning.

The forecast is a planning tool, not a prediction. It combines current information with reasonable assumptions about enrollment, staffing, property values, state funding, healthcare costs, inflation, and other factors.

Big Walnut enters the forecast period from a position of financial strength. General Fund revenues are projected at approximately \$77.1 million in FY2027, compared with \$68.9 million in expenditures and other financing uses. Positive operating results are projected at approximately \$8.2 million in FY2027 and \$1.1 million in FY2028.

Beginning in FY2029, expenditures are projected to exceed revenues by approximately \$3.0 million, increasing to \$10.3 million by FY2031. The District would begin using accumulated cash reserves to support operations but is still projected to end FY2031 with an unencumbered General Fund balance of approximately \$21.6 million.

Identifying this potential imbalance several years in advance gives the Board and administration time to monitor trends and make thoughtful decisions.

Approximately 77.8% of District resources come from local sources and 22.2% from the state. Property taxes are our largest revenue source, followed by the District's 0.75% income tax, which is projected to generate approximately \$15.4 million in FY2027.

Our reliance on local revenue means changes to Ohio's property tax system can significantly affect Big Walnut. The forecast includes estimated impacts from recent legislation. HB129 is estimated to reduce projected property tax collections by approximately \$10.17 million through FY2031, while HB186 inflation cap adjustments are estimated to reduce collections by approximately \$20.46 million. These estimates will be refined as additional information becomes available.

Approximately 54% of FY2027 operating expenditures are wages and another 19% are employee benefits. Nearly three-quarters of General Fund operating expenditures therefore support the people who educate, transport, serve, and care for our students.

As enrollment grows, the forecast anticipates additional staffing while also accounting for pressures from healthcare, utilities, special education, transportation, technology, instructional materials, and facility maintenance.

Big Walnut is projected to have 215 True Cash Days in FY2027, declining to 88 days by FY2031 under current assumptions. Maintaining adequate reserves provides financial stability and gives the District time to respond thoughtfully as conditions change.

Significant variables remain, including two future state biennial budgets, the future of the Fair School Funding Plan, changing property tax laws, continued community growth, and rising operating costs.

The message from the forecast is straightforward: Big Walnut is financially stable today, but maintaining that strength requires continued planning and discipline.

Our responsibility is not simply to balance next year's budget. It is to make decisions today that preserve opportunities for students tomorrow. We will continue monitoring our finances, communicating openly with our community, and responsibly stewarding the resources entrusted to us as we Inspire & Guide every student.

DACC
DELAWARE AREA
CAREER CENTER

COFFEE CHAT

With the Delaware Area Career Center

**PARENTS OF 6TH - 10TH
GRADE STUDENTS**

Learn more about the opportunities that will be available to your child in high school

- College Credits
- Industry Credentials
- Career Exploration
- Resume-Building Experiences
- Professional Contacts

Register online:
www.DelawareAreaCC.org/coffee

In-Person:	Virtual:
October 13th	October 20th
October 15th	October 22nd



AROUND THE DISTRICT

Five BWHS Seniors Earn National Merit Honors

Five Big Walnut High School seniors have earned recognition through the 2027 National Merit Scholarship Program for their outstanding academic achievement.

Grace Vandeusen was named a National Merit Semifinalist, placing her among more than 16,000 high school seniors nationwide selected for the honor. Semifinalists represent less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors and include the highest-scoring entrants in each state on the 2025 Preliminary SAT/ National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT).

Grace now has the opportunity to advance to Finalist standing and compete for one of approximately 6,700 National Merit Scholarships that will be offered in the spring. More than 95 percent of Semifinalists are expected to advance to the Finalist level.



Grace Vandeusen
National Merit Semifinalist

Four additional BWHS seniors, Maclan Day, Suhaas Katta, Samantha Rippe, and Madelyn Smolinski, were named Commended Students in the 2027 National Merit Scholarship Program.

Approximately 34,000 students nationwide received Commended Student recognition. Although they will not continue in the competition for National Merit Scholarships, Commended Students placed among the top 50,000 students who entered the 2027 competition by taking the 2025 PSAT/NMSQT.

Congratulations to Grace, Maclan, Suhaas, Samantha, and Madelyn on this outstanding academic achievement!



Maclan Day
Commended Student



Suhaas Katta
Commended Student



Samantha Rippe
Commended Student



Madelyn Smolinski
Commended Student



Jenny Horman
Big Walnut Elementary

Big Walnut Staff Spotlight!

Jenny Horman brings joy, energy, and a whole lot of fun to the classroom each day! Big Walnut has been lucky to have her as a kindergarten teacher for over 30 years!

Jenny has a special gift for creating a classroom where our youngest Golden Eagles feel excited to learn, comfortable taking risks, and eager to discover something new. She fills her classroom with fun and purposeful learning experiences that help students build confidence while developing a true love for learning.

Beyond her classroom, Jenny is a positive light for our staff. Her experience, enthusiasm, and willingness to support others make her a valued member of our BWE family. She brings a wonderful perspective to our team and reminds us of the incredible impact we have on students during their very first year of school.

Jenny's impact reaches far beyond kindergarten. The relationships she builds and the foundation she helps create stay with our Golden Eagles for years to come. After all, you know what they say... everything you need to know, you learned in kindergarten!





AROUND THE DISTRICT

Souders First Graders Celebrate Fall at Lehner's

First graders from Hylen Souders Elementary embraced the sights and sounds of fall during a visit to Lehner's Pumpkin Farm.

Students explored the pumpkin patch, played in the corn pit, rode pedal tractors, and met some of the farm's animals. The trip gave students a chance to enjoy the season and make special memories with their classmates outside the classroom.



Friendship Takes Center Stage in Steel Magnolias

Laughter, friendship, and resilience will take center stage when the Big Walnut High School Theatre Department presents Steel Magnolias on Thursday, October 8, at 7 p.m. and Saturday, October 10, at 3 p.m.

Set inside a small-town Louisiana beauty salon, Steel Magnolias follows a close-knit group of women as they support one another through life's greatest joys and most difficult moments. Filled with memorable characters, sharp humor, and plenty of heart, the story reminds audiences that true strength is often found in the people who stand beside us.

The cast includes Abigail Bauder, Ronan Harruff, Alivia Gavaghan, Sophia Koerner, Colleen Reinking, Kinsley Anderson, and Ava Valenzuela. They are joined by a dedicated student crew whose behind-the-scenes work helps bring every part of the production to life.

The cast and crew have been working hard to prepare and are excited to share this beloved story with the Big Walnut community.

For tickets and additional information, visit bwhs.bwls.net/theatre.





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 the Holidays. 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 with Students at Hylen Souders Elementary – SidebySide Holiday Assistance

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

Forms Due: Monday, November 2, 2026 (return to the Hylen Souders Elementary office)

Gift Pick-Up: Friday, December 11, 2026, from 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. at

Church of the Saviour UMC (11239 Fancher Rd., Westerville)

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](#)



SidebySide Form



Big Walnut Form

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 2, 2026

Gift Pick-Up: Saturday, December 12, 2026, 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 or LindaKlamfoth@bwls.net.

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





AROUND THE DISTRICT

Meet Our Newest Assistant Principals



Amy Smock
Big Walnut Middle School

Family

I am a wife and mom of two. My son is 18 and my daughter is 8, so our home is always busy and full of adventure. I love spending time with my family, whether we are exploring new places, cheering one another on, or enjoying a quiet night at home. They are my greatest source of support and give me plenty of reasons to celebrate the little things.

Outside of School

I enjoy running, reading, visiting the library, and listening to true-crime podcasts. I love being outdoors, spending time with family, enjoying a beach vacation, and drinking a good cup of coffee. I also appreciate a cozy night at home and being present for the people I love.

Work Experience

This is my 14th year in education after spending the past 13 years as a secondary intervention specialist. I earned my bachelor's degree from the University of Rio Grande, where I competed in cross country and track, and my master's degree in Educational Leadership from Concordia University Chicago. I have also served as a Special Education Department Head, high school girls basketball coach, and member of a PBIS Implementation Team. Big Walnut's strong community and commitment to meeting the needs of every student drew me to the district.

Inspire and Guide

To Inspire and Guide starts with relationships. Students need to know they are seen, valued, supported, and believed in before they can reach their potential. We inspire students by helping them recognize their strengths and guide them through encouragement, high expectations, and opportunities to grow from successes and challenges. As a leader, I want to listen, advocate for students, and help create a school where everyone belongs. It means helping people see what is possible and walking alongside them as they pursue it.

Family

Originally from the Wooster area, I have lived in central Ohio for 24 years, including the past 15 in Delaware with my husband, Jake. We have a busy blended family with six children. Jude, 24, works full-time and attends college part-time. Sydney, 22, recently graduated from Ashland University and plans to pursue a doctorate in chemistry. Elise, 21, lives near Knoxville, works as a medical office assistant, takes online classes, and is mom to our grandson, Colson. Dylan, 19, works full-time and attends college part-time. Avery, 19, lives in Tennessee and hopes to become a teacher. Brooklyn, 9, is entering 4th grade and keeps us on our toes!

Outside of School

I enjoy spending time with family, helping my parents with the goats on their small farm, and serving as a 4-H advisor. I also love gardening, sewing, hiking, and bike riding. This spring, I took stained-glass classes and hope to continue learning more.

Work Experience

During 24 years in education, I have taught in public and private schools, helped start and grow a preschool and kindergarten program in Dublin, directed an educational research study at The Ohio State University, and led state and multistate projects with Battelle for Kids. Most recently, I served as Academic Dean and Head of Lower Division at Marburn Academy.

Inspire and Guide

To inspire and guide means building a school community grounded in strong relationships, personal growth, and authentic partnership. We inspire students by meeting them where they are, removing barriers, celebrating their strengths, and helping them recognize their potential. We guide students and families through open communication, active listening, and evidence-based support. By building trust and focusing on each learner's individual path, we create an environment where every student can thrive.



Lori Vu-Miller
Big Walnut Intermediate

HOCO
COURT





HOMECOMING CARNIVAL





AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE PROGRAM

Hungry for a Challenge? Try Applications of Food Science!

If your student loves getting hands-on in the kitchen and wondering about the science behind it, Applications of Food Science is the perfect class for them. This isn't your typical cooking class; it's a hands-on, experiment-driven lab where students trade standard recipes for real scientific discovery. From brewing cold brew to test extraction chemistry to exploring fermentation with sourdough and yogurt, students dive deep into the science of food. They even get to showcase their skills in "The Great Big Walnut Baking Show" challenge right before winter break!

During the second semester, students take the driver's seat. They design a brand-new food product from concept to prototype, engineer the packaging and nutrition labels, scale up batch sizes, price out costs, and pitch their final product to a panel of judges. Along the way, they learn the essential food safety and industry labeling standards that keep the food world running.

Looking to build a strong foundation? We strongly recommend starting with our introductory Food & Culinary Class, which provides the ideal springboard into Applications of Food Science.



Beyond the classroom, students can put their knowledge to the test through Ohio FFA's Food Science & Technology Career Development Event, a competition where our local chapter holds a phenomenal record by winning the National Championship five times since 2018!

Whether your student is aiming for a future in food science, agriculture, healthcare, or business, they will walk away with real-world skills and industry knowledge that employers notice. Encourage your student to sign up in January during scheduling.



Student Spotlight - Madi Dible

This is Madi's 4th year in the agricultural science program. In that time, she has been on the 1st place National Food Science team, as well as competing in many CDEs at the state level. She has been on first place teams at the state level in Agricultural Biotechnology and Small Animal Grooming, and placed 5th and 8th individually. She was also the 4th place individual in the state for Milk Quality & Products contest. Her favorite part about taking agriculture classes is all the different opportunities she has experienced through being in ag classes, including participating in CDEs, being a part of chapter leadership, and going different places such as state convention, national convention, International Poultry and Processing Expo, Greenhand Camp, and Ohio Leadership Camp. This year Madi is serving as the chapter president.



Madi Dible
Senior, Big Walnut High School





HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS



Brian Shelton
Athletic Director
Big Walnut High School

Big Walnut High School's fall athletic teams have given the community plenty to celebrate, collecting conference championships, district berths, state rankings, and undefeated records.

The girls tennis team captured the OCC championship with a perfect 6-0 conference record, completing its title run with a 5-0 victory over Westland. Seniors Emma, Allie, Casey, Elli, Natalia, and Madelyn were recognized as part of the championship celebration. Sophomore Lane Rothhaar extended the team's postseason success by qualifying for the OHSAA Division I District Tournament. After receiving a first-round bye, Rothhaar earned straight-set victories of 6-2, 6-4 and 7-6, 7-5 to secure her district berth.



Big Walnut Athletics Website

Girls golf also claimed a third consecutive OCC championship before advancing through the sectional tournament. The Golden Eagles shot a school-record 313 at Blacklick Woods Golf Course to finish second and qualify for the OHSAA District Tournament. Gloria Giordano led the team with a 75, followed by Ella Altizer with a 78, Stella Reed with a 79, Joslyn Shaver with an 81, and Charlie Burgess with an 83.



The boys golf team punched its ticket to districts with a 294 at Denison Golf Club, tying Upper Arlington for second place at sectionals. Jake Nieset shot a 72, while Anthony Castiglione and Spencer Rice each carded a 73. Owen Mika added a 76, and Abe Kerr finished with an 81.



On the volleyball court, the Golden Eagles remained perfect with a thrilling five-set victory over Westerville South. Big Walnut won the deciding set, 16-14, to improve to 18-0 and build a two-match lead in the OCC with four conference matches remaining.

The football team kept its own undefeated season alive with a memorable 35-28 Homecoming victory over previously unbeaten Worthington Kilbourne. Nolan Buirley rushed for 288 yards and three touchdowns, while Eli Stumpf passed for 116 yards, rushed for 99 more, and accounted for two touchdowns. Big Walnut totaled 503 yards of offense, including 387 on the ground, to improve to 7-0 overall and 3-0 in the OCC Capital. Following the victory, the Golden Eagles held the No. 1 position in Division II, Region 7 in Joe Eitel's unofficial rankings.

Big Walnut's success has continued on the soccer course and cross country course as well. The boys soccer team entered October with a .500 record, while the girls soccer team had an opportunity to secure an OCC championship with a victory over Westland. In the latest Ohio Association of Track and Cross Country Coaches poll, the Big Walnut girls were ranked seventh in the state, and the boys were ranked eighth.

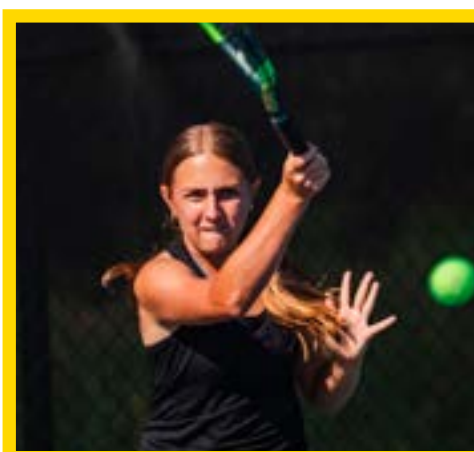
Big Walnut Athletics also celebrated its newest Hall of Fame class this fall. Kaley Rammelsberg, A.J. Fleak, Jeff Hatfield, and Adam Shaheen were inducted in recognition of their outstanding accomplishments and lasting impact on Golden Eagle athletics.



A special thank you goes to Joey Thomas, Above the Light, and Nicole McCray for serving as the official photographers and videographers of Big Walnut High School Athletics and helping capture the moments that make each season special.



Big Walnut Boosters





High School Sports



Marching Band



Freshman Cheer



JV Cheer



Varsity Cheer



Boys Cross Country



Girls Cross Country



Freshman Football



JV and Varsity Football



JV Boys Golf



Varsity Boys Golf



HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS



JV Girls Golf



Varsity Girls Golf



JV Girls Soccer



Varsity Girls Soccer



JV and Varsity Boys Soccer



JV B Girls Volleyball



JV A Girls Volleyball



Varsity Girls Volleyball



JV Girls Tennis



Varsity Girls Tennis



MIDDLE SCHOOL SPORTS



Boys Cross Country



Girls Cross Country



Boys Golf



Girls Golf



7th Grade Football



8th Grade Football



7th Grade Girls Volleyball



8th Grade Girls Volleyball



7th & 8th Grade Cheer



Girls Tennis





BIG WALNUT
HIGH SCHOOL

Office: 740.965.3766
Fax: 740.965.1954
Guidance: 740.965.2243

713 N Miller Dr
Sunbury, OH 43074





BIG WALNUT
MIDDLE SCHOOL

Office: 740.965.3006
Fax: 740.965.6471

555 S Old 3C Hwy
Sunbury, OH 43074





BIG WALNUT
INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

Office: 740.965.7800
Fax: 740.965.7801

777 Cheshire Rd
Sunbury, OH 43074





BIG WALNUT
ELEMENTARY

Office: 740.965.3902
Fax: 740.965.3168

940 S Old 3C Hwy
Sunbury, OH 43074





GENERAL ROSECRANS
ELEMENTARY

Office: 740.965.8900
Fax: 740.965.8993

301 S Miller Dr
Sunbury, OH 43074





HYLEN SOUDERS
ELEMENTARY

Office: 740.965.3200
Fax: 740.965.3986

4121 Miller Paul Rd
Galena, OH 43021





PRAIRIE RUN
ELEMENTARY

Office: 740.965.7850
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701 N Miller Dr
Sunbury, OH 43074





BIG WALNUT
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