November 2026

The Eagle Examiner

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

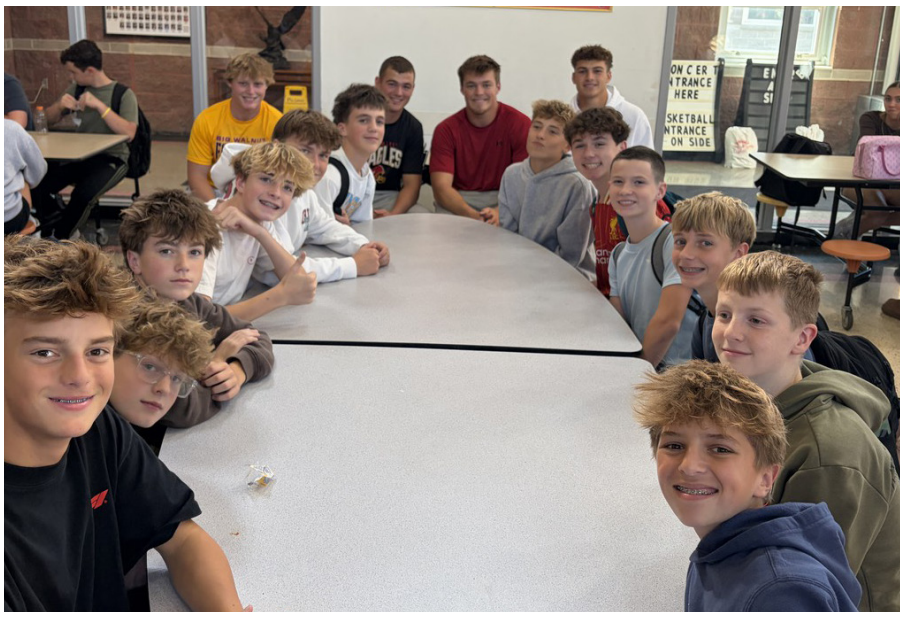














Message from the Superintendent

As the late, great Yogi Berra once said, "It's déjà vu all over again." I typically check previous years' editions of the Eagle Examiner to make sure I'm not repeating myself, but this month, I find it difficult not to. Celebrating the accomplishments of our kids is one of the best parts of this job.

Our high school FFA program excelled once again at the National FFA Convention & Expo, bringing home a national title in the Food Science & Technology category. Our athletic programs continue to shine in the postseason. Both our boys' and girls' cross country teams have qualified for the state meet; boys' soccer, girls' soccer, and girls' volleyball all captured district titles; and our football program will host a second-round playoff game this Friday.

Our younger students stayed busy, too. Elementary and Intermediate students enjoyed harvest party activities, and our Enlist, Enroll, Employ days are underway. During these days, community volunteers visit classrooms to talk about their careers, giving students a firsthand look at the many paths open to them.

So yes, I may be repeating myself. As long as our students keep giving us this much to celebrate, I'll happily keep doing it.



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 student's 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

Common ¢ent$



Scott Gooding
Interim Treasurer/CFO

Gooding Elected to ASBO International Board

Big Walnut treasurer/CFO will bring nearly three decades of school business experience to the association's 2027 Board of Directors.

J. Scott Gooding II, Big Walnut Local Schools' interim treasurer and chief financial officer, has been elected to the 2027 Board of Directors of the Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO International). His term begins January 1, 2027.

Gooding brings 28 years of school business experience, serving districts ranging from small rural communities to some of Ohio's largest. He has also spent nine years on the Ohio Association of School Business Officials Board of Directors, serving in roles from secretary-treasurer to president.



In 2025, ASBO International recognized Gooding with its Distinguished Eagle Award for his contributions to his district and the school business profession.

ASBO International provides professional learning, research, advocacy, and resources for school business officials. As a board director, Gooding will help guide the association and advocate for the profession while continuing his work at Big Walnut.







Around the District

Stone Soup Brings Learning Together

First graders in Mrs. Pyles' class at Big Walnut Elementary brought a folktale to life with a healthy twist during a culminating activity connected to their CKLA Knowledge Unit on the human body.

Mrs. Novatny, Mrs. Snodgrass' mother, planned and presented the lesson. Together, the class made healthy "stone soup," turning the familiar story into a hands-on learning experience. As students took part in preparing the soup, they connected their earlier lessons about folktales with their current learning about healthy eating.

The activity also helped set the stage for what comes next. In a future unit, students will explore retellings of similar stories, building on the ideas and storytelling traditions they have already encountered. The soup lesson brought those threads together through a story students could hear, discuss, and experience as a class.

Thank you to Mrs. Novatny for sharing her time and creativity with the students. Her lesson offered a memorable way to connect literacy, health, and learning together.

















Big Walnut Staff Spotlight!



Rachel Potkanowicz
General Rosecrans Elementary

Ms. Rachel is an exceptional educational assistant who consistently goes above and beyond to support the needs of all students and staff. She is always willing to lend a helping hand and is often the first to respond to a radio call or offer assistance wherever it is needed. Her willingness to step in, her dependable nature, and her ability to recognize when someone needs support make her an invaluable member of our school community. No matter the situation, Ms. Rachel approaches each day with a positive attitude, a team-oriented mindset, and a genuine commitment to making a difference.

Ms. Rachel is a natural problem solver who approaches every challenge with patience, compassion, and a solutions-focused attitude. She consistently puts students first, making decisions with their best interests at heart and ensuring they feel supported, valued, and cared for. Her ability to anticipate needs, think on her feet, and jump in wherever she is needed reflects her dedication to our school and all of our students. Ms. Rachel truly embodies what it means to be a team player and an advocate for children. Her hard work, selflessness, and unwavering "kids first" mentality do not go unnoticed, and our school is incredibly fortunate to have her.

Around the District

A Taste of Ancient Greece at General Rosecrans Elementary

Mrs. McGreal's second grade students recently brought ancient Greece to life during a classroom celebration. Dressed in togas and handmade green crowns, they gathered to enjoy foods inspired by Greek cuisine, including pita, fruit, and other traditional favorites.

The experience gave students a hands-on way to connect their learning with the culture and daily life of ancient Greece. Between the special outfits, shared meal, and conversation around the table, history felt a little closer than it does in a textbook.















Big Walnut Seeks Community Members for Facilities Committee

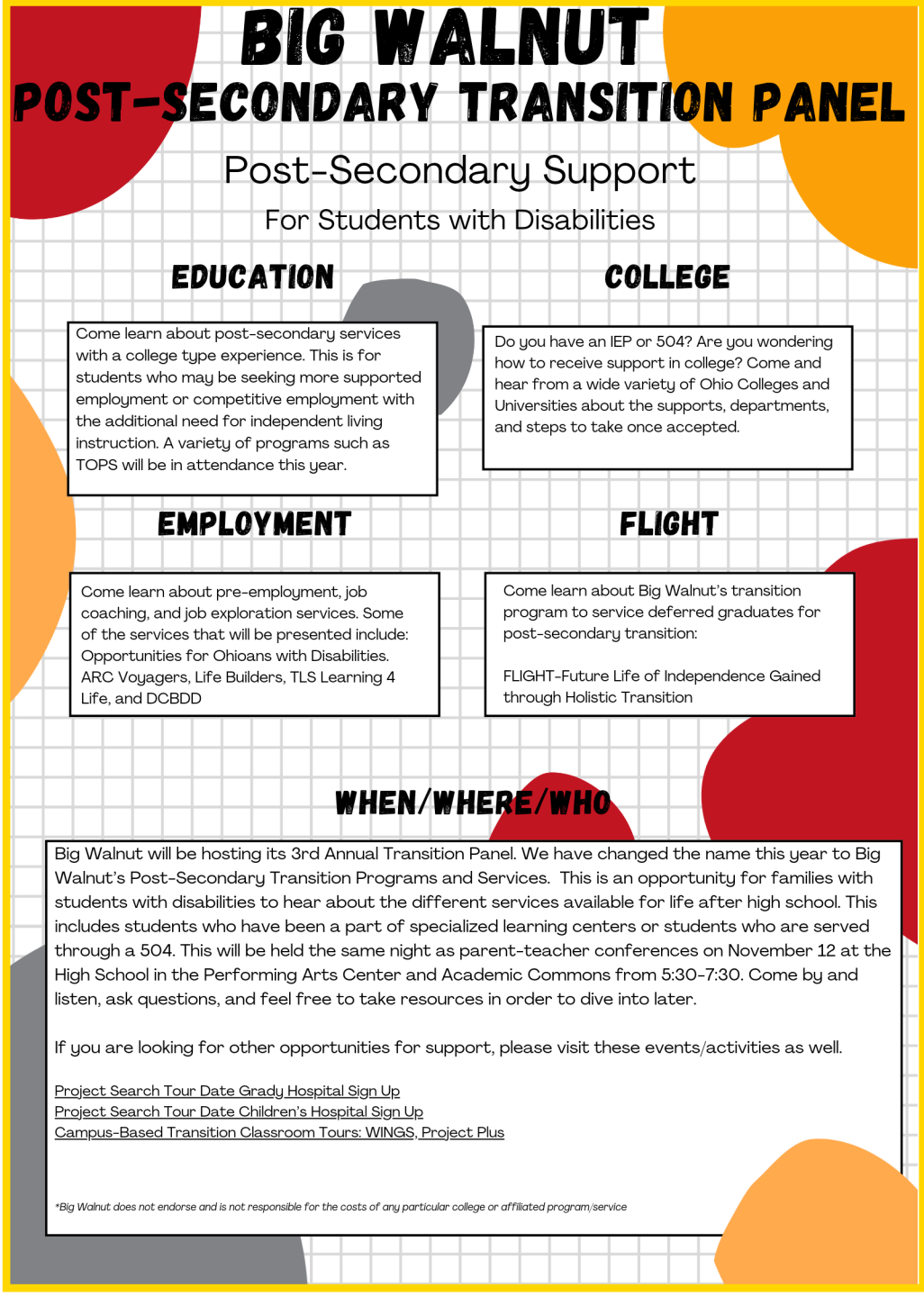
Big Walnut Local Schools is inviting community members to apply for a place on the district's Facilities Committee. The committee will study facility needs and make recommendations to the Board of Education. It will serve in an advisory role; final decisions will remain with the Board.

The committee will help the district continue thoughtful conversations about its buildings and properties. Big Walnut's facilities vary in age, and planning for their upkeep and future needs requires looking at factors such as building conditions, enrollment, and the district's educational and operational goals. The district's recent facilities planning process included assessments and community engagement to help guide future discussions.

Community members can contribute their knowledge, experience, and perspectives by applying to serve. Applicants may share why they are interested and what background or viewpoints they would bring. The Board President and committee chairpersons will review applications as they work to form a well-rounded advisory committee.

Applications are due Wednesday, December 9. Learn more and complete the Facilities Committee application.

Committee meetings are public and will be listed on the district's committee webpage.



Around the District

BWE Students Explore Careers on Enlist, Enroll, Employ Day

Big Walnut Elementary students took part in Enlist, Enroll, Employ Day in October, learning about the many career paths available to them. The day began with an assembly featuring Mayor St. John, followed by speakers who shared their careers and helped students learn about different kinds of work.

Thank you to the BWE staff who organized the event, and to all the volunteers who took time to share their experiences with students.

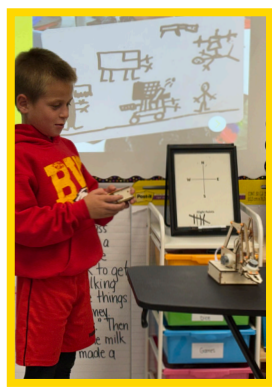
















District Business Partnership Team Connects Schools and Local Employers

Members of the District Business Partnership Team gathered in September, bringing together representatives from Big Walnut and the local business community. The conversation introduced team members, shared an update on Big Walnut's career awareness initiatives, and explored ways to expand work-based learning and other opportunities for students from preschool through graduation.

The district thanks the partners who have committed to serving on the team: Big Walnut Apparel, Elford Construction, Emergency Plumbing, Astemo, Intel, Kokosing, KOOI Structural Engineers, OhioHealth, Ohio Living, OhioMeansJobs Delaware County, OSU Wexner Medical Center, Performance Columbus, Stark Tax Planning & Financial, the Sunbury Chamber, Vaughn Industries, and Yearling Solutions.

Around the District

Helping Big Walnut Families This Holiday Season

The holidays can bring extra expenses for families. Big Walnut schools are coming together to help, with a Thanksgiving food drive and two holiday gift assistance programs.

Thanksgiving Food Drive

Donations collected at Big Walnut schools will help provide Thanksgiving meal kits for Big Walnut families and other families served by Delaware County United to Fight Against Hunger. The drive runs through Friday, Nov. 6.

Learn more: bwls.net/thanksgiving-food-drive

Holiday Gift Wish List

We've extended the deadline to sign up. Forms for both programs are now due Friday, Nov. 6!
This page includes information about both holiday gift assistance programs and how to sign up.

Visit the Holiday Wish List page.

For Families with Students at Hylen Souders Elementary – SidebySide Holiday Assistance

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

Forms Due: Friday, November 6, 2026

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

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: Friday, November 6, 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!






Harvest Parties









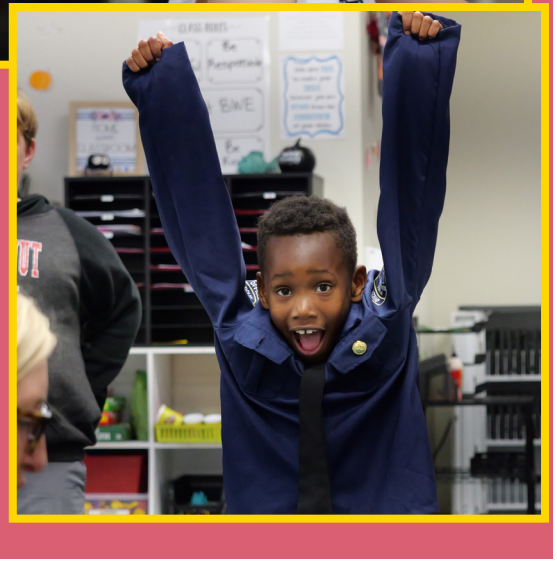












Agricultural Science Program

Big Walnut - DACC FFA Soars at National Convention

National Champions - Food Science & Technology

Big Walnut's Food Science & Technology Team captured first place in the nation at this year's National FFA Convention, earning a gold rating and the title of National Champions. Each student will receive a $1,000 cash award and an all-expenses-paid trip to the International Production & Processing Expo in Atlanta this January, sponsored by the U.S. Poultry & Egg Association.



Team Members

Preston S. – Gold Rating, 1st Individual Overall

Gabby B. – Gold Rating, 5th Individual

Erin H. – Gold Rating, 26th Individual

Ava D. – Bronze Rating, 105th Individual

Special Thanks

The Ohio State Department of Food Science and Technology Faculty & Staff • Miss Madi Dible • Dr. Mary Kay Pohlschneider



3rd Place Overall - Conduct of Chapter Meetings

Big Walnut's Conduct of Chapter Meetings Team earned third place in the nation, earning a gold rating and proudly representing Ohio. Each student will receive a $450 cash award for placing third in the competition. The team tied for 1st on the overall test score component of the competition with Paashv S. scoring 2nd place overall on the exam. This team was composed of students in both the middle school and high school agricultural courses.

Team Members

President -
Ben R., 9th Grade

Vice President -
Paashv S., 10th Grade

Secretary -
Austin Paige F., 10th Grade

Treasurer -
Olivia W., 8th Grade

Reporter -
Ella A., 10th Grade

Sentinel -
Landen L., 10th Grade

Student Advisor -
Claire A., 10th Grade

Alternates -
Kensley F., 10th Grade
Olivia P., 10th Grade

Special Thanks

Mrs. Heather Altizer • Mrs. Julie Debolt • Mrs. Kaci Fox • Mr. Ronald Legg • Mrs. Sheila Reckner

4th Place Overall - Food Products & Processing, Division 5, National Agriscience Fair

Congratulations to Big Walnut's own Erin H. for placing 4th overall in the nation for her work on her Agriscience Fair project titled "A Quantitative Analysis of Baking Soda and Baking Powder Levels on Sugar Cookie Color, Texture, and Freshness," which covered the effects of the Maillard Reaction in sugar cookies. Erin placed first at the State Competition in May 2026 and was announced as a national finalist in August 2026. This was Erin's first time completing an agriscience fair project.

She would like to thank The Ohio State Department of Food Science and Technology faculty and staff, and Dr. Mary Kay Pohlschneider, for letting her use department equipment to conduct her experiment and for providing insight into the report.



High School Sports



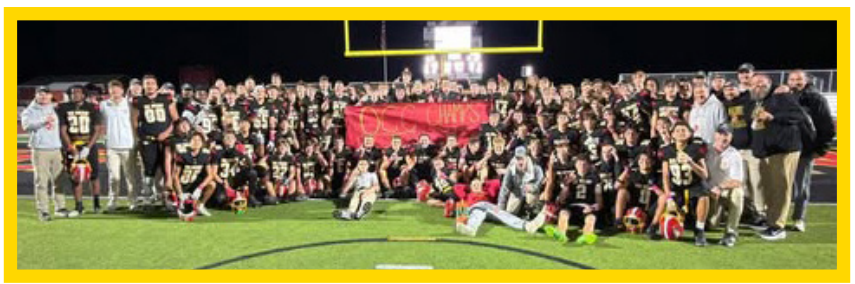
Brian Shelton
Big Walnut High School
Athletic Director

A Fall to Remember for Big Walnut Athletics

Big Walnut's fall teams gave the community plenty to celebrate, with conference championships, undefeated records, state meet appearances, and postseason runs. As several Golden Eagle teams move into the next round, the season's success reflects the hard work of student-athletes, coaches, and everyone who supports them.

Big Walnut Athletics

Football finished the regular season 10–0, captured the OCC-Capital title, and earned the No. 2 seed in Division II, Region 7. After a first-round bye, the Golden Eagles host Louisville on Friday, Nov. 6, at 7 p.m. With a win there, Big Walnut would host the regional semifinal Friday, Nov. 13, against the winner of Massillon Washington and St. Francis DeSales.





Girls Volleyball completed an undefeated regular season and continued its run through the postseason. The Golden Eagles won the OCC championship and their second consecutive district title, improving to 24–0 with a 3–0 victory over Mount Vernon in the district final. Big Walnut is set to play in the Division II regional semifinals Thursday, Nov. 5 with a neutral site match against Bishop Watterson.

Both **Girls and Boys Cross Country** teams qualified for the state championships after strong regional performances. The boys captured the regional team title, and Ethan Schultz won the individual regional championship. The girls finished as regional runners-up, just two points behind Granville, 85–87. Both teams will compete at the state meet Saturday, Nov. 7, at Fortress Obetz.





Girls Soccer captured the OCC title with a 6–0 win over Westland, then defeated Watkins Memorial 5–1 to claim its third consecutive district championship. The Eagles' season ended Tuesday, Nov. 3, with a 5–1 loss to Bishop Watterson in the regional semifinal.

Boys Soccer defeated Dublin Scioto in a penalty-kick shootout to win the district championship, the program's first since 2009. Connor Huston scored both goals in regulation as the teams finished tied 2–2. After two scoreless overtime periods, Big Walnut advanced with the shootout win. The Golden Eagles will face New Albany in a regional semifinal on Wednesday, Nov. 4.



A few fall sport seasons end earlier in the calendar year. **Girls Tennis** won the OCC championship with a perfect 6–0 conference record. Sophomore Lane Rothhaar qualified for the Division I district tournament. **Girls Golf** claimed its third consecutive OCC title and set a school record with a 313 at sectionals, earning a district berth. The **Boys Golf** team also advanced to districts after shooting a 294 at sectionals.



Big Walnut Boosters

Winter Sports Are Underway

Swimming and Diving began Oct. 23. **Girls Basketball, Gymnastics, and Bowling** began Oct. 30. **Boys Basketball** begins Nov. 6, and **Boys and Girls Wrestling** begin Nov. 13. Visit the Big Walnut Athletics website for schedules and updates.

Middle School Sports

The 2026 fall season has officially ended at BWMS, but not before our student-athletes and coaches experienced a tremendous amount of success. Thank you to all of the volunteers, event workers, custodial and maintenance teams, and spectators for all of the help and support. We couldn't do it without you!

While I could write an entire Eagle Examiner listing all of the achievements our teams experienced during the fall, I will try to provide the biggest highlights. The 8th grade girls Volleyball team ended the year with a tournament championship at Gahanna. Boys and Girls Cross Country came home with several trophies from Invites at Watkins, London and Fairfield Union. The 7th- and 8th-grade football teams combined for a 15–1 record, with the 7th-grade team finishing undefeated. While the cheerleaders brought tons of energy in front of varsity game sized crowds. I could go on and on, but the biggest accomplishments were that our student-athletes all made growth, represented themselves and their schools admirably and showed the rest of Central Ohio that Big Walnut athletics are at THE top of the mountaintop. And speaking of success and representing themselves the right way, good luck to all of our HS teams still competing in the postseason... BWMS is very proud of you!



Joe Rucker
Big Walnut Middle School
Athletic Director





Big Walnut Athletics

Now, things move into the winter season and I cannot tell you how excited I am to watch our student-athletes get back into action. Please check out the revamped athletic website for schedules and important information.

The following coaches will be leading our athletic teams this winter:

7th Grade Boys Basketball - Carter Dancer (1st year)
8th Grade Boys Basketball - Mark Adams
7th Grade Girls Basketball - Nicole Huffman
8th Grade Girls Basketball - Kristina Palma (1st year)
Boys Wrestling - Ryan Coletta (HC) and Adam McCardle
Girls Wrestling - Jack Reall (HC) and Olivia DaLuz
8th Grade Cheer - Kaylee Yarnell
7th Grade Cheer - Brianna Lawless
Diving (Club) - Jen White
Indoor Track (Club) - Dave Ishler

Competitions will begin in mid-November and go into February, so please be sure to come out and support these amazing student-athletes and the coaches who lead them.







As always, if you have questions, feel free to call BWMS at 740-965-3006. The best MS athletic secretary in the business, Stephanie Kreager, or myself will be happy to assist you.

GO EAGLES!!!



BIG WALNUT
HIGH SCHOOL

Office: 740.965.3766
Fax: 740.965.1954
Guidance: 740.965.2243

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BIG WALNUT
MIDDLE SCHOOL

Office: 740.965.3006
Fax: 740.965.6471

555 S Old 3C Hwy
Sunbury, OH 43074



BIG WALNUT
INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

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Fax: 740.965.7801

777 Cheshire Rd.
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BIG WALNUT
ELEMENTARY

Office: 740.965.3902
Fax: 740.965.3168

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Sunbury, OH 43074



GENERAL ROSECRANS
ELEMENTARY

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Fax: 740.965.8993

301 S Miller Dr.
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HYLEN SOUDERS
ELEMENTARY

Office: 740.965.3200
Fax: 740.965.3986

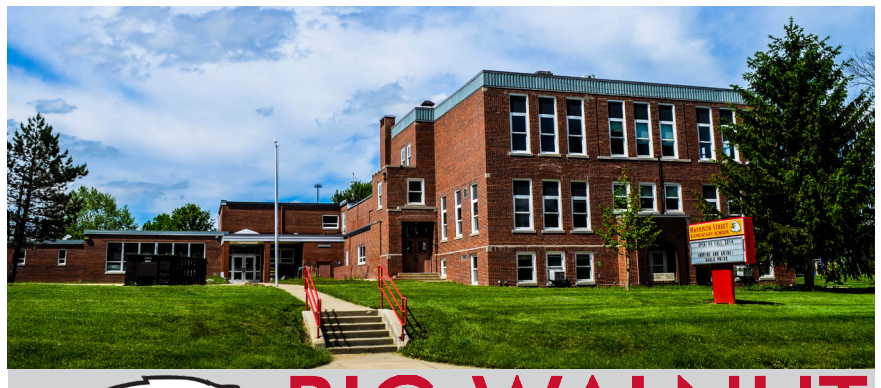
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PRAIRIE RUN
ELEMENTARY

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EARLY LEARNING CENTER

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