

BIG WALNUT SCHOOLS: NEEDS FOR CLASSROOM SPACES AND UP-TO-DATE SECURITY

At Big Walnut Local Schools, enrollment increases are already posing a need for more space, and will continue to do so in the future - we expect to be at or over capacity at three of our buildings next school year, and the rest of our buildings, except the middle school, are estimated to be at or over capacity within the next two years. We are in the process of purchasing a double-classroom trailer at General Rosecrans Elementary and renovating an aging trailer at Big Walnut Elementary for use next school year.

Other needs exist at Big Walnut as well. Despite the fact that the high school was built in 1991, it does not contain the type of security advances needed in 2017. There have been many improvements in securing schools over the past 25 years. Much of that has to do with the introduction of upgraded technology for surveillance and more secure entrances. Five of our seven school buildings are in need of more secure entrances.

At this time, we do not have a permanent improvement (PI) fund - a fund that can be used to make long-term repairs - so we must prioritize needs and choose what to fix as they arise. The money for this comes from our daily operating budget, which is intended to be used in the classroom, for the benefit of our students.

Fortunately, the past two winters have been mild, and we have not had the kind of weather-related problems happen that often occur with the cold, snow and ice. This has lessened the blow of our current facility needs. But the need for a permanent fix still exists.

There are needs beyond building capacity and security that we still have to address. Examples of these repairs are electrical updates, aging HVAC equipment, and roof repairs.

Our district has a history of being fiscally responsible. Coming up with a suitable plan for our future is a definite need. The aforementioned issues are all contributing to being a strain on our daily operating budget and in the process our ability to continue to educate our students at the level we have all grown accustomed.

Please do not hesitate to contact the district with questions or thoughts on district growth and other needs at facilitymatters@bwls.net.



Mark Cooper
Assistant Superintendent