

**CUSTER SCHOOL DISTRICT #15**  
**OCTOBER 2025 NEWSLETTER**  
[www.custerschools.org](http://www.custerschools.org)



**PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Parent-Teacher Conferences will be held from 4:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. on Monday, October 27. Elementary parents will receive a scheduled time to meet with their child's teacher. Junior high and high school parents may come in at any time from 4:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.

Parents that cannot meet with our teachers on this day can call the school office for a scheduled appointment with your child's teacher or teachers.

**TEACHERS' CONVENTION**

There will be no school on Thursday, October 16 and Friday, October 17 so that our teachers can attend professional development workshops in various communities throughout our state. The last day of the first quarter will be Wednesday, October 15.

**FALL CONCERT**

Our annual Fall Concert will be held Tuesday, October 14 at 6:30 PM in our old gym. This concert will feature all music students in grades K-12. We will be selling caramel apples during the concert.

**NEW STAFF**

Mr. Nikos Theotokis

Hello, my name is Nikos Theotokis the new math teacher at Custer school. I was born in Athens and I graduated from MSU Bozeman. I have my Master of education with my bachelor from University of Crete. I love hiking, sports and music, but most of all chess and bridge. I have the opportunity to meet great kids in our school and I am looking forward to supporting their hopes, expectations and dreams. Go Rebels!

Mrs. Nicole Samuelson

Nicole Samuelson is the Vocational Agriculture teacher and FFA Advisor at Custer High School. She began her education at Dawson Community College in Glendive, MT, where she studied Animal Science while playing both softball and volleyball for two years. She then went on to Hastings College in Hastings, NE, earning her bachelor's degree in Community Health and Wellness.

Nicole grew up on her family's farm and ranch in Hardin, MT, where she continues to live and work. Her FFA journey began in high school, where she served as Secretary, Vice President, and President, and she went on to earn the Discovery, Greenhand, Chapter, State, and American Degrees.

This is Nicole's first year teaching, and she is excited to start her career in Custer. She strongly believes in the saying, "*You never stop learning,*" and looks forward to growing and learning alongside both her students and fellow staff members.

## Red Ribbon Week will be Monday, October 27 thru Thursday, October 30



This year's theme is Life Is a Puzzle, Solve it Drug Free.  
Dress up days will be determined at a later date.  
When dressing up for these days, all school dress code guidelines must be followed.

## HALLOWEEN PARTY

This year's Halloween party will be Thursday, October 30, because we will have no school the day of Halloween. The party will begin at 2:00 to 2:15 for preschool and kindergarten students. The other grades will join us in intervals of 10-15 minutes. So, mark your calendars and join us for the Halloween fun!



## ADDRESS CHANGES or NAME CHANGES

If any family has an address or name change, please contact Shari in the office to get it changed. If you would like to receive the newsletter, please call Shari or Ana at the school to give us your e-mail address.

## ACTIVITY ACCOUNTS

Parents that have not paid your activity accounts in full please note that we will be requiring payment prior to allowing your students to participate in activities or prior to you receiving any orders through the school. This includes payments for band instrument rentals, goods ordered through our school groups, and any other fees associated with school activities. Please get these paid up as soon as possible so your child may participate in all activities. Instrument rental fee of \$40.00 is due by **October 6**.

## LUNCH BILLS

In an effort to keep our daily lunch program viable, we have determined that we need to take steps to collect lunch bills that are overdue. Essentially, if we don't get paid for food that we serve in a timely manner, we won't have funds available to pay for food in the future. Our lunch bill policy is as follows: When a family's lunch bill exceeds more than \$50.00 per student, we will notify you that your bill is overdue and that the bill must be paid within 30 days, or you must have established a plan to pay with the superintendent. Failure to pay, may result in your bill being turned into the collections service. Lunch bills will need to be paid separately from all of the other accounts. All checks can be made to the Custer School

## EXTRA-CURRICULAR BUS PROCEDURES

In order for a parent to get his/her child off the extracurricular bus, the parent must, in writing, tell the coach/advisor that he/she is taking the child off the bus and assuming responsibility for the child. School personnel do not have the authority to allow a child to go home with another adult, even with a written note from the child's parent. If you are not going to be attending the extracurricular activity and plan to have your child ride home with another adult, please notify our superintendent prior to the bus departure time from our school.

In order for a parent to get his/her child off the extra-curricular bus, the parent must, in writing, tell the coach/advisor that he/she is taking them.



## **STUDENT BEHAVIOR AT EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

It is the parent's responsibility to monitor your children at extra-curricular activities. Children should not be running along the sidelines in the gym or at the football field while athletic contests are in session. We would appreciate children not being unsupervised in the lunch room, hallways and classrooms during activities.

**PARENTS, PLEASE HAVE YOUR CHILDREN SITTING WITH YOU AT THE EXTRA-CURRICULAR EVENTS.** If we continue to have children running around unsupervised during activities, we will ask them to leave.

## **YEARBOOKS**

We have a limited number of the 2024-2025 yearbooks left. If you are interested, please contact Ms. Heil. Yearbooks sell for \$30.00 each.

## **ITALIAN SODAS AND PUNCH CARDS**

Our senior class is selling Italian cream sodas to students every other Wednesday this year during the high school lunch time. Elementary prices, no cream or whip cream will be for a single drink for \$3.50 – Cream and/or whip cream single drink for \$4.00.

Grades 7-12, no cream or whip cream for a single drink for \$4.50 – Cream and/or whip cream for \$5.00. Mix 3 flavors for free, each additional flavor is \$0.25.

Punch cards are available \$50.00 & \$40.00 for grades 7-12 and grades K-6 will be \$35.00 and \$40.00.

A senior will distribute the order form on Monday, all orders need to be paid by Tuesday, and orders will be delivered on Wednesday. You can also give the money to any one of the seniors. If you have any questions, contact Mrs. Tunnell at the school.

## **JH BASKETBALL**

Practice for junior high girls and boys basketball will start Monday, October 13, for grades 4-8. Athletes need to have a physical form, training rules and a concussion form turned into the office before the first practice. They will not be able to practice until these forms are turned in. Also, student athletes need to purchase an activity ticket from the office before their first game. The basketball schedule will be on our website soon.

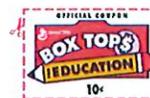
## **5th and 6th Grade**

Students have been working through the Stone Age, density, water properties, and Holes. Make sure your student is handing in their work by Thursday mornings and putting their name on stuff, I have a huge no name pile! If your child does not have scissors or glue sticks, please send some ASAP. We use them a lot with our interactive notebooks. I apologize I was hired after the supply list had already gone out. My website

is <https://sites.google.com/custerschools.org/5thand6thgrade/home> it has schedules, announcements, infinite campus link, and spelling words! It will be linked on the school website soon but this is the direct link. The end of the quarter is October 15 so keep working hard!

## **BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION**

Earn Cash for our School! No more clipping! All you need is your smartphone. The new and improved Box Tops mobile app uses state of the art technology to scan your store receipt, find participation products add instantly and Box Tops to our school's earnings online. This money is put into the Elementary Fund and is used for field trips and our annual Field Day. Please download your Box Tops app today and help us earn money for our school!



## **Join Theater Club This Semester!**

Do you love being on stage, or are you curious about learning the art of acting? Theater Club is the perfect place to explore your creativity and build confidence in a fun, supportive environment!

### **Meeting Dates (Fall Semester):**

- October 7 & October 21
- November 4 & November 18
- December 2 & December 16

The club is open to all students in 5th grade and up—no prior theater experience is needed, and you can join anytime! This fall, we'll be following the national 4-H Theater Curriculum, which introduces students to the fundamentals of acting, stage presence, and teamwork.

Looking ahead, auditions for the spring show will take place on February 10th (title to be announced soon!). The performance is scheduled for April 30th—mark your calendars!

For more information or questions, please contact Mrs. Torralba.

We can't wait to see you on stage!

## **Attention Seniors and Parents: FAFSA Opens October 1st**

The **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** will open on **October 1st**. Completing the FAFSA is an important first step in accessing federal, state, and college-based financial aid opportunities for postsecondary education.

Seniors will begin working on the FAFSA process during class to help them get started and feel confident with the application. Parents and guardians are encouraged to support their students by gathering necessary financial documents ahead of time, as this will make the process smoother.

In addition, please remember to check the Senior Google Classroom regularly for important updates. Scholarship opportunities, college planning activities, and other resources will be posted throughout the year to help seniors prepare for their next steps after graduation.

If you have questions or need assistance with the FAFSA, please reach out to the counseling office—we're here to help!

Please see the attached Testing notification.

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Custer School is preparing for the *Montana Aligned to Standards Through-Year (MAST) assessment* through the Montana Office of Public Instruction. Students in **Grades 3-8** will take Math and English Language Arts (ELA) assessments in 3 administration windows as indicated in the chart below:

	Window 1	Window 2	Window 3	
	October 13 – December 5 (8 weeks)	January 12 – March 6 (8 weeks)	March 30 – May 22 (8 weeks)	
<b>Math</b>	3-5 Testlets	3-5 Testlets	3-5 Testlets	1 Math OR ELA Anchor Test
<b>ELA</b>	2 BOY Testlets	2 MOY Testlet 1 Performance Task Testlet	2 EOY Testlets	

*\*The actual number of testlets your child(ren) takes each testing window will be contingent on your district’s local curriculum sequence.*

**What is the purpose of the MAST assessment?**

The Montana OPI in partnership with New Meridian has developed an improved assessment system that will reflect the needs of our students, teachers, and administrators while providing useful flexibility in terms of test administration. The MAST Assessment implements “through-year” assessments across the state that satisfy federal testing requirements and better align assessments with instruction.

**The ultimate goal of the “through year” model is to support the formative instructional process, which is closer to the local decisions required to support teaching and learning needs.** Rather than a single end-of-year assessment, the MAST assessment is divided into smaller testlets administered throughout the academic year. The “Through-Year Assessment” design benefits students, teachers, parents, and administrators by more closely aligning assessment with instruction while providing actionable data throughout the school year.

It is important to remember that statewide assessments provide only one measure of student learning, but when combined with grades, classroom activities, unit quizzes and tests, and district-level assessments, statewide assessments can complete the picture of a child’s abilities and help him/her down a path toward academic success in reaching Montana’s Content Standards.

**Details about MAST administration:**

- **Participants:** 3-8 Grades Math and ELA
- **Administrations:** 3 administration windows throughout the year
- **Total Estimated Testing Time:** 15-30 minutes per testlet
- **Technology:** Computer-based test delivery via secure site
- **Reports:** Student reports will be available weekly after completion of each testlet. Individual student reports will provide results from each testlet and will be made available to parents/guardians on the MAST Parent Portal.

**Here are some things to note about the MAST test:**

- Your child's privacy will be protected. State and federal laws, such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), ensure these data remain confidential.
- Students with Individual Educational Plans (IEPs), Section 504 plans, or English Learner plans will be assessed based on individual student needs, consistent with all state and federal laws and regulations.

**Here are some things you can do to help:**

- Encourage your child to do their very best on everything they do in school, including the MAST assessment.
- Make sure he or she gets plenty of sleep the night before each test and has a healthy breakfast.
- Support your child by explaining the purpose of the tests and helping with homework and test reviews.

**Learn More:**

To learn more about MAST development, follow this [link](#) to the Montana OPI MAST webpage. New Meridian is a nonprofit organization that creates high-quality, innovative assessment solutions focusing on the skills that matter most for success in school and in life. You can learn more about New Meridian [here](#). Parent MAST resources can be found on the [MAST Portal](#) under *Resources for Parents*.

We appreciate your partnership in helping Custer school fulfill the state and federal requirements for statewide assessments and supporting your child to do his/her best.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have about MAST. Questions can be directed to Counselor/Testing Coordinator Jasmine Torralba at [couns@custerschools.org](mailto:couns@custerschools.org)

Sincerely,

**Jasmine Torralba**

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she/her  
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