

# CUSTER SCHOOL DISTRICT #15

## NOVEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

www.custerschools.org



### THANKSGIVING VACATION

We will dismiss school on Tuesday, November 25 at 3:40 p.m. for our Thanksgiving break. Our buses will transport our students home at that time. There will be no school Wednesday, Thursday or Friday. School will resume on Monday, December 1. Have a great Thanksgiving weekend!

### BPA NEWS

Our BPA organization will be selling wreaths and pastries. These orders will be delivered the first week of December. We are getting ready for our first competition Monday, December 8th in Baker (Regionals).

I am looking forward to great things from our students. If you have any changes to the calendar, please let us know as soon as possible.

### NOVEMBER MUSIC NEWS

Tri-County Honor Band Try-Outs are November 3th in Joliet. After the live auditions, a select group of students will be chosen to practice and go on tour with the 2026 Tri-County Honor Band. This year the group will be traveling to Salt Lake City. Many fun adventures are planned for the trip including college visits and tourist destinations. Being involved in Tri-County has been a privilege that Custer musicians have been involved with since the 1970s. What an amazing opportunity!

### CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Please join us on Thursday December 18th at 6:30pm for our Winter Music Concert. This event will include K-12 grades. A special guest will be there as well, as long as nobody is on the naughty list! Ho Ho Ho!!

### CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

Our Students of the Month for September

Elementary ~ Jackson Hazlett & Tenley Strecker

7-12 ~ Hunter Buller & Teagen Ruff



### (CHANGE) - HALLOWEEN PARTY

This year's Halloween party will be **Wednesday, October 29**. 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!

### PARENT/TEACHERS CONFERENCES

Parent/Teachers Conference will be held Monday, October 27 from 4-7 pm. Lasagna will be served from 5-6 pm for our visitors.

## SUPERINTENDENT NOTE

Allow me to geek out for a second about the success our students have shown this year. This year's first quarter results have shown a continued massive reduction in absenteeism over past years. In the elementary, students have averaged 1.06 absences for the quarter which is less than half the rate three years ago of 2.21. The High School has led the way averaging just .76 absences per student in the first quarter, which was 2.52 three years ago (Junior High was 2.29, now .98 and elementary was 1.98 now 1.21). This does not include school-related absences due to extracurricular and other school activities.

Extracurricular activities per student have also increased showing that students are excited about being involved. In the High School, 68% of the students were involved in a fall sport and the percentage was even higher in the Junior High with 73% of the students involved in either football, volleyball, basketball, or a combination thereof!!!

The drop in absenteeism and strong extracurricular participation positively correlate with academic performance and overall student well-being. We are seeing the results at the school with increased test scores; higher quality work; and increased honor roll recipients despite the increased standards and rigor in the classrooms. Staff and students are pushing to see students graduate as prepared for the future as possible. I'm proud to say that this year's senior class is exemplary showing what our students are capable of!!! Half of our seniors plan to attend college next year and of those, all of them will have earned at least a full semester of college credits prior to graduation. The other half of the seniors have specific career plans and are involved in meaningful work study positions this year.

This is only the first quarter; we are looking forward to further success in the next three quarters. Thank you, community members, for inspiring our students to even greater success in the future!!

## THANK YOU

We would like to thank those people for taking care of the chains and down box for our home football games and for our line judges at all of our home volleyball games. Also, we thank everyone who took gate tickets during the season.

You are so much appreciated for everything you do for our school.

We appreciate all of the different organizations that helped with the concessions at all of our home games.

A **big thank you** goes out to our parents and fans for supporting and encouraging our young people this season in volleyball and football. Your support of our students and school is greatly appreciated.

## SCHOOL VISITORS

ALL PARENTS and VISITORS to the Custer School **must** sign in at the front office desk each time they enter the school building. We are making every attempt to protect our students from any unknown visitor and to prevent interruption of the classes.

## PHONE CALLS

School telephones are business phones and should be used as such. Children will be permitted to use the phone **only when necessary**. Plans for after school activities should be made at home, before the child comes to school for the day. Parents may call the school anytime and messages will be delivered to the child or the teacher. Please do not ask teachers or children to come to the phone during the time that school is in session as this disrupts the learning process.

## ATHLETIC GAME CHANGES

Rebel athletic schedules are always changing. A great way to check our announcements everyday is by going into our website and looking under announcements or under athletics in our weekly bus schedule. There you will find out information better about what is happening everyday in our school. Our website is: [www.custerschools.org](http://www.custerschools.org)  
There you can also find other news and sports schedules.

## **CLASS OF 2028**

Big thanks go out to all who supported the pink/senior night concessions and 50/50 in Custer, the Cowpie Bingo, and the Rebels yard sign sale (we do still have 15 signs available--contact a sophomore if you need one). Due to the wet weather and JHBB games, we ended up having to do an online name picker to get our Cowpie Bingo winner: Wade Keller! We also appreciate the parents who were willing to help out in the concession stand and sell tickets.

Thanks again! --Class of 2028

## **DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME**

On November 2, remember to change your clocks back one hour.

## **5th & 6th Grade**

We are continuing our study of Mesopotamia and physical science. Kids are powering through math and we are starting our historical fiction novel, *The Golden Goblet*. 2nd quarter has begun so make sure we are handing in our assignments. Swim days are over for this fall, they will resume next semester. Make sure your kids have scissors and glue! We use them daily in class. Grades are also going to be posted on Wednesdays in class so encourage your kid to find their missing assignments before they are late!

## **Counselor Corner**

Students in grades K–6 have been working with the Character Strong social-emotional learning curriculum this year to build strong character and healthy life skills. In September, students focused on Respect, and in October, they explored Responsibility. During November, our theme is Gratitude—choosing to appreciate the people and things in our lives. Practicing gratitude has been shown to increase overall well-being and happiness, and it is one of three traits we will focus on this year to help students *Be Well*. Throughout the month, students will continue developing important skills such as emotion regulation, positive self-talk, and stress management. Families can support this learning at home by starting simple conversations such as: What is something you are grateful for every day? or How does it feel when someone shows you gratitude—and why? We look forward to growing in gratitude together this month!

## **Mental Wellness Screening – November 4**

On Monday, November 4, students in grades 6–12 will have the opportunity to participate in the Rural Behavioral Health Institute (RBHI) mental wellness screener. This brief and confidential digital screening helps identify students who may be experiencing anxiety, depression, or suicidal thoughts so that we can connect them with appropriate support if needed. The screening takes 5–15 minutes to complete and is conducted on a secure, HIPAA- and FERPA-compliant platform. Participation is voluntary, and parents received an opt-out consent form with quarter grade reports if they do not want their child to take part. Our goal is to support student well-being and ensure early access to help when needed. Please contact Jasmine Torralba with any questions. Full text information can be accessed

at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xqcMUsRqaHiXZHZJ1CUL14EeIJmAtg1se/view?usp=sharing>

## **Supporting Student Wellness: Free & Low-Cost Mental Health Resources in Montana**

At Custer Schools, we know that student success is directly connected to emotional well-being. When families have access to mental health support, students are better able to learn, form healthy relationships, and develop resilience. Fortunately, Montana offers a wide range of **free and confidential mental health resources** for students and families. Below is a guide to trusted organizations available to anyone in Montana.

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### Crisis Support – Available 24/7

These services provide immediate help during emotional distress, suicidal thoughts, or mental health crises.

- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**  
Call 988 anytime for immediate, confidential support. Available for youth and adults.
- **Crisis Text Line – Text 741741**  
Text HELLO to 741741 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.
- **Trevor Project (LGBTQ+ Youth Support)**  
Call 866-488-7386 or text START to 678678.
- **Montana 211**  
Call 211 or visit [montana211.org](http://montana211.org) for statewide mental health and social service referrals.

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### Behavioral and Mental Health Services

These resources offer therapy, counseling, or behavioral health support for children, teens, and families.

- **RHBI (Rural Behavioral Health Institute)**  
Provides free school-based mental health screenings and follow-up support for students.  
Website: [www.ruralbh.org](http://www.ruralbh.org)
- **Embark Behavioral Health**  
Offers virtual counseling sessions and therapy options for teens struggling with anxiety, depression, or trauma.  
Website: [embarkbh.com](http://embarkbh.com)
- **Montana Cares**  
Directory of school mental health resources, behavioral health providers, and tools for families.  
Website: [montanacares.org](http://montanacares.org)
- **Montana Cares eTherapy**  
Access to online mental health services for rural families and students.
- **NCRSMH (National Center for Rural School Mental Health)**  
Provides mental health screening tools and early intervention resources used in many Montana schools.  
Website: [ruralsmh.org](http://ruralsmh.org)

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### Family & Parent Support

These tools help parents support children struggling with anxiety, bullying, stress, or emotional regulation.

- **ParentGuidance.org**  
Free online parenting courses developed by mental health clinicians. Includes confidential “Ask a Therapist” feature.  
Website: [parentguidance.org](http://parentguidance.org)
- **Mental Health Collaborative**  
Offers mental health literacy education for families, schools, and communities.  
Website: [mentalhealthcollaborative.org](http://mentalhealthcollaborative.org)

- **NAMI Montana (National Alliance on Mental Illness – Montana Chapter)**  
Free support groups for families and individuals impacted by mental illness.  
Website: [namimt.org](http://namimt.org)
- **Youth Dynamics**  
Provides outpatient therapy, case management, and family support services for Montana youth.  
Website: [youthdynamics.org](http://youthdynamics.org)

Mental health is just as important as physical health. Reaching out for help is a sign of strength, not weakness. If you have questions or would like help accessing any of these services, please contact the school counseling office. Together, we can support the well-being of every student in our community.

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### **SMORGASBORD DINNER AND BAZAAR**

The Custer Congregational Church Smorgasbord Dinner and Bazaar will be on November 9<sup>h</sup> from 12-4pm. There will be a quilt raffle and prices are \$13 for adults and \$7 for 6-12 and 5 and under is free. Please come join us for a wonderful meal.

### **COLD WEATHER DRESS**

As we get later into the fall and the temperatures begin to drop, parents need to make sure their children are adequately dressed to travel on our buses. Students should have a coat, gloves/mittens and boots when riding our route and activity buses. It is also a good idea for our student athletes to carry a blanket with them when they travel on activity trips. We want to make sure our students are adequately prepared as they travel on our buses. Although we hope it never happens, should a bus become inoperable, they cool very quickly

## **BUS TRANSPORTATION RULES & REGULATIONS**

**Drivers are not to text or talk on the phone while driving the school bus. Please don't attempt while drivers are on duty. Thank you.**

### Prior to Boarding the School Bus

1. Be on time and waiting for the bus at the approved school bus stop.
2. Stay out of the road while waiting for the bus.
3. Do not participate in horseplay or destroy surrounding property.
4. Wait for the school bus to come to a complete stop before attempting to board the bus.
5. Do not run toward the bus in an effort to be the first to board the bus.

### While Riding the School Bus

1. The driver is in full charge of the bus and students. Students will comply promptly and cheerfully, with any request made by the driver.
2. At the discretion of the driver, students will observe classroom conduct while on the bus.
3. Students must be on time. The bus cannot wait for those who are tardy.
4. Unnecessary conversation with the driver is prohibited.
5. Outside of ordinary conversation, students will observe classroom conduct while on the bus.
6. Students will not throw waste paper or other debris on the floor of the bus.
7. Arms or heads will not be extended out of bus windows at any time.
8. Students will not get on or off, or move about within the bus while it is in motion.
9. Any damage to the bus will be reported to the driver at once.
10. Students may not reserve seats.
11. Students will adjust windows only when instructed to do so by the bus driver.
12. Students must be absolutely quiet while the bus is stopped at a railroad crossing.
13. Students may not board or depart the bus at a stop other than their own without parental permission.
14. Students will not eat any food or snacks or drink beverages on the bus unless permitted to do so by the driver. There will be no sunflower seeds at any time.
15. Students will not exit from the emergency exits.

### After Leaving the School Bus

1. Do not rush or push while unloading from the bus.
2. When crossing in front of the bus, always watch for the driver to give the "all clear" signal before crossing.
3. Students should go directly from their bus stop to their home.

### What Can Parents Do?

The interest and assistance of each parent is a valued asset to the Transportation Program. Your interest on safety and your emphasis on proper behavior while riding a school bus are appreciated by your school bus driver. The following suggestions are ways in which you can assist the Transportation Program.

1. Assist your student in planning a route to and from the bus stop, what the student should do at the stop until the bus arrives, and what to do if the bus does not arrive.
2. Be sure that your student is at the bus stop five minutes before the bus arrives and appropriately dressed for weather conditions. Consider severe weather conditions if the bus is stalled or delayed.
3. Inform the school personnel if you plan to pick up your student at school or wish to have your student leave the bus at a point other than the regular stop.
4. Encourage your students to go directly to the bus stop and come home immediately after getting off the bus. An unusual delay should be immediately investigated with a phone call to the person in charge of school transportation.
5. Encourage your student to behave properly on the bus and respect the driver; begin by knowing the driver. The driver of the bus is knowledgeable and skilled in bus operation. Safe bus operation is dependent on the behavior of those being transported.
6. In case of illness of your student, the driver or school official will notify you