

April 13, 2023

Dear Voter:

The Custer Board of Trustees passed a resolution to request an increase in local taxes to support the general fund. The maximum amount allowed by vote is \$87,079 per year which is approximately 38.30 mills. Passage of this proposal will increase the taxes on a home with a market value of \$100,000 by approximately \$51.70 and on a home with a market value of \$200,000 by approximately \$103.40. The durational limit of the levy is permanent once approved by the voters, assuming the district levies that amount at least once in the next five years.

In the permissive levies (non-voted levies), the Custer School District needs to increase the Transportation Fund levy. We are proposing to offset the increase with a decrease in Bus Depreciation and Tuition Funds. The net result is a decrease in the permissive levies by a total of \$5,000 or 2.30 mills. This will make the impact of the voted levy less impactful on the voters.

The voted levy is intended to offset some of the inflationary pressures that we have all been experiencing. Without the successful passage of the voted levy, the General Fund used to run the school would only increase a maximum of \$20,311.82, or a 1.55 % increase over the current year. The increase without a vote would not maintain the same level of services without budget cuts by the time increased expenses are considered. One of the problems facing all schools is the shortage of teachers. In order to compete for teachers, the District must compete financially. While the levy is not a cure all, it would help the District try to compete to some extent. Here are the current salaries of some of our competition to the west for starting salaries and teachers at 10 years of experience with a BA and a Masters.

Starting BA Salaries: Custer - \$34,846; HP - \$36,787; Lockwood - \$40,583; Shepherd - \$36,179; Laurel - \$41,982 .

BA Salaries at 10 years: Custer - \$39,116; HP - \$46,532; Lockwood - \$49,697; Shepherd - \$46,151; Laurel - \$47,821.

Masters Salaries at 10 years: Custer - \$41,831; HP - \$52,863; Lockwood - \$59,967 ; Shepherd - \$52,786; Laurel - \$56,391.

The Custer School District has been frugal with your taxes. Here are some of the projects that were done in the district without raising taxes:

Total remodel of 5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade & Science Rooms (Funded with a competitive \$321,438 grant)	
Promethean Boards, laptops, & document cameras (Primarily funded with grants)	
Downstairs locker room & bathroom sewer pipe replacement (This Summer)	
New Home Football Stands (The old stands were a safety issue.)	
Computer Room total remodel	Apartments – New siding & remodeling
Addition to the Bus Barn (this summer)	Daktronics Message Board
Breakfast Grab & Go Salad Bar & Cooler (grant)	New Water Fountains
New Water Well - when the old one went bad	Many upgrades to cabinets and rooms.

Custer Public Schools, PO Box 69, Custer, MT 59024 (406) 856-4117

The ballot is a mail ballot.

**Be sure and voice your opinion by voting!**