

3 - Elementary

New face in fourth grade classroom

Arduser takes over after Nickles 40 year career

By
Nia Boschult-
Hoof Print Art
Editor

After 40 years of teaching fourth grade, Lori Nickles stepped down, leading Carly Arduser to take over. Arduser was the former Elementary Special Education (SPED) teacher for 13 years at McCool Junction. Yet, this is not where her journey began. After getting her degree in Elementary Education, Special Education, and Early Childhood; she started teaching fifth grade at Doniphan-Trumbull. After a couple years teaching at Doniphan-Trumbull, Arduser decided to move to McCool Junction. Arduser stated that the Special Education position was available at McCool and she knew that was where she wanted



to be. Her first year at McCool was the 2012-2013 school year, from there, she continued to teach SPED up until this school year.

This summer, Lori Nickles, the former fourth grade teacher, decided she was going to retire from teaching. Coincidentally, Arduser was ready to get back into a core classroom. Arduser stated she went to McDonald about taking over fourth grade. With a degree in Elementary Education, she ended up getting the position.

Arduser stated that the transition from SPED to fourth grade has been going great, and her class has amazing participation. "(They're) really helping me ease into the position," Arduser said, "This is a



This is Carly Arduser's 13th year teaching at McCool, but this is her first year as the Fourth Grade teacher.

really great class." The only thing different for her transitions is planning and different time schedules, but with help from other teachers she is able to handle it well. Arduser said she was most excited about the growth of students and being able to work with her students. "I love to see the growth of students," Arduser stated "(And) work on team building, which is something I can do in the classroom."

Book checkouts are soaring through McCool Elementary

By
Joanna Carver
McCool Jct.
Librarian



Breaking News from the McCool Junction Public School Library!

By Your Friendly School Librarian
Something extraordinary is happening in the McCool Junction Public School Library.

No, the books haven't learned to alphabetize themselves.

And no, we still haven't found out who keeps rearranging the biography from least to greatest importance, in their opinion. But we have uncovered a mysterious correlation that would make even a seasoned detective swoon: Book Checkouts Are Soaring!

Students are checking out more books than ever before! Return Times Are Shrinking!
Students are actually bringing them back

faster than any school librarian thought possible! After careful observation, multiple sticky-note graphs, and a deeply scientific "hmm," we believe we've cracked the case: the newly enforced and upheld cell phone policy that was put in place at the start of the 2025 school year.

Some stats for fun:
2024-2025: total book checks for the entire year for grades K-12 were 1,641 checkouts, with an average time of keeping a book for 7-12, was nine weeks, which translates into keeping a single book for an entire quarter.

First semester of the 2025-2026 school year, the total number of checked-out books was 867. The average checkout time for 7-12 to have a booking has dropped to just TWO WEEKS! In other words, students are either getting better at faking reading or they are finishing their reads and coming in for seconds.

A Final Word

To all the smartphones waiting sadly in lockers:

Thank you for your sacrifice.



Elementary Librarian, Joanna Carver, said that more than 800 books were checked out first semester.

Your boredom has given rise to a golden age of reading.

To our students:

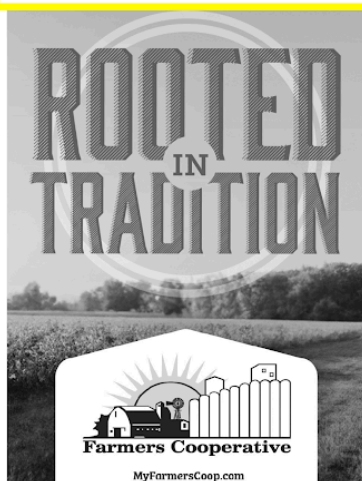
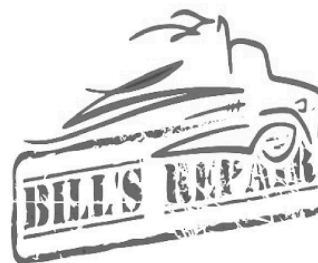
Keep checking out books.

Keep bringing them back.

And please, for the love of Dewey, stop returning them with suspicious crumbs inside.

Happy Reading, McCool Junction!

Where literacy is up... and screen time is down (at least until 3:22 PM).



4 - Activities

Top three finish

McCool One Act places third at class D1 state competition

By
Trey Perry
MJSM Advisor

The McCool Junction One Act team proved to be one of the top programs in the state once again this year. The group finished in third place in Class D1 at the 2025 NSAA State Play Production Championships in Norfolk on Dec. 10.

This was the second year in a row that McCool's One Act team qualified for the state competition, after bringing home the state runner-up trophy in Class C2 last year. On top of that accomplishment, the team has been to State three times out of the last five years, also punching its ticket to the state stage back in 2022.

"Gums", written by Bryan Denbow, was this year's script for McCool's production. The story was a parody of the 1975 blockbuster movie "Jaws" and focused on the catastrophic events happening in a seaside town while it is being terrorized by a gigantic salmon called Gums.



The play was full of hilarious comedic moments and huge characters that were played by a variety of McCool upper and lowerclassmen.

Between cast and crew members, the team's numbers boasted well over 50 students that traveled to and from competitions throughout

the season, which included over half of McCool's high school students. The team continued its winning tradition of previous years Head Coach Cherri Thieman said.

"Our students from all areas of our team worked really hard to bring this hilarious spoof to life," Thieman said. "They were the Central Valley Festival champions, CRC conference champions, District D1-2 Champions, conference and district Tech Team champions." Thieman was joined by Assistant Coaches Brandy Strobe, Joanna Carver, Elliott Dall-



McCool's One Act performs their play, "Gums!" at the state competition in Norfolk.

man and Sabrina Ellenwood throughout the season as well.

Thieman added that by the end of the season, the show grew immensely, which is always a great process to witness.

"I really loved how it evolved every week and also how the set and costuming and makeup all came together so well," she said. "We really had a lot of students step up into leadership roles across the board, and it paired very well with a super involved new freshmen class who are all hard workers."

New student ran FFA business launches

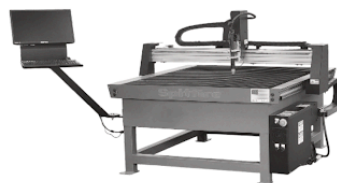


By
Teigin Peterson
MJSM Social Media Manager

A group of McCool FFA students is on the cutting edge of a new student-run

business with a lot of technology. This piece of technology lasers metal and turns it into beautiful art pieces that are worth being sold. The plasma cutter was granted to the FFA through multiple years of grants towards the chapter. Thousands of dollars later, the FFA was able to get this new piece of equipment and turn it into a business.

The advisor of the FFA chapter, Dana Hall, stated, "The hope is that it will not only impact the FFA chapter, but also impact the students with life skills and business running". The system that works the cutter itself requires a grid of what the design will look like. It then tells how big



This is almost an exact replica of what the FFA Chapter has in their welding shop.

this piece of metal needs to be, where it is supposed to be placed, and many more interesting functions to help create the design.

This fun new business has been named "Mustang Metal Works". Hall said that the promotion of the business will be with metal signs, custom-made signs to promote other businesses, Mustang-related signs, and most likely windmills. Hall also said that this will be the only use of the plasma cutter. They have made signs for

the McCool Junction Multimedia booth in the gymnasium, to cut strips of metal to practice welding, as well as thinking about signs for a wall-mounted medal display rack.

The group of individuals involved in this business includes: Senior Claire Brugger, marketing; Senior Bennett Turner, welder; Junior Aaron Morner, machine operator; Sophomore Charlie Hoarty, machine operator and welder; Sophomore Nia Boschult, design; and Sophomore Emma Hall, design. This group went with Dana Hall to UNL's campus to launch this new business on Dec. 4, 2025.

Over the last few weeks of Nov., the FFA had their annual Holiday Sales for Christmas coming around. The FFA sells fruits, candles, customizables, and the new laser-cut signs from their business. This year, the FFA gained close to \$15,000 from all the total Holiday Sales. During spring, the State Convention in Lincoln FFA will be held at Pinnacle Bank Arena. The people who gained money and qualified for the State Convention use the money they earned from the Holiday Sales towards covering expenses for food and housing.