The Mustang RideOut for seniors
The 2018 PCHS Senior Academic Achievement Awards and Mustang Ride Out will be held at McCamley Field at 1 p.m. on Monday, May 21. Department award winners will be announced, honor cords will be presented and those students who have shown the greatest Academic Improvement will be recognized. In addition, National Merit finalists, IB Diploma candidates, and senior Athlete and Activities award recipients will be recognized. While not all seniors will receive an award, everyone is invited to celebrate the achievements of the Class of 2018. If there is inclement weather on May 21, the alternate site will be the PCHS gymnasium.

Underclassmen Awards Ceremony
The Underclassmen Awards Ceremony will take place in the morning on Tuesday, May 1. Awards based on accumulated weighted GPA will be presented as well as awards honoring students who have shown significant academic improvement in the past year. Students who have earned the Community Service award for volunteerism will also be honored. Freshman recipients will be honored at 8:30 a.m., sophomore recipients will be honored at 9:30 a.m., and junior recipients will be honored at 10:30 a.m. You should be receiving a postcard in the mail soon if your son or daughter will be receiving an award.

Prom is here!
Portage Central High School’s Prom will be held on Saturday, April 28, from 8-11 p.m. at the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts. The theme is “A Moment in Time.” Tickets are $30 per person and will be available at the Welcome Center from April 9-April 27. Tickets at the door are $40 per person.

Student leaders meet with Rep. Upton
By Samhita Sunkara
Central Stampede News Editor
U.S. Rep. Fred Upton visited Friday afternoon to initiate a discussion about school safety and gun violence with Portage Central students and staff. Upton talked to leaders of Republicans Club, Democrats Club and Student Council, as well as some teachers and local law enforcement regarding their thoughts on the topic.

U.S. Representative Fred Upton visits Portage Central to gain insight on student and teacher positions regarding gun laws and gun control.

Upton began the discussion by briefing students and staff about the current efforts he is working on to push gun safety and control in Congress. Upton, a Republican from St. Joseph, was newly elected as a co-chair of the school safety task force.
Leave your name at McCamley - for decades ahead

Before we started construction on the new Portage Central High School, we knew that we had jobs we had to get done that we should never use tax dollars for. We had conference-championship pictures displayed since the 1930s, many of which were decimated over the decades by moisture and UV rays. We had graduation pictures dating back to 1924, some of which we had to find in the basements and closets of friends and graduates who had borrowed them over the decades. And we hoped to find a symbol, a sign of what it meant to be a Mustang, that all our kids in the decades ahead could see and learn from.

We accomplished all those things because of the generous donations of members of our community. Indeed more than 820 Mustangs purchased bricks that tell their stories, that share their values. You can find them today under the prayer pole by the Visitor Entrance. Together we raised just over $40,000 to fund all our special projects that you can see today: the newly-printed conference-championship pictures, the recovered pictures of all our graduates, and the incredible bronze Mustang near the Athletic Entrance.

Now we would like to do that again.

As we prepare for the construction of the new McCamley Field, we are again selling commemorative bricks to friends and families so that they can leave their mark where tens of thousands of Mustangs have had wonderful experiences for decades. These bricks will be displayed at the entrance of the new McCamley, so families and friends will be able to leave their mark here for decades into the future. If you would like to be a part of our history and our future, visit this site: https://www.pcbricksale.com/

Your brick would make a wonderful graduation gift to kids and grandkids or to entire families. All proceeds will go toward projects that will help us remember and respect our history and that will provide additional resources for our kids on the field and in the stands, performing at halftime and celebrating their myriad accomplishments. Thank you for being a part of us today, and thank you for being part of our kids’ lives tomorrow.

The same is true for the new McCamley as when we built the new Portage Central:

From our community today, For our community tomorrow.

Symphonic band to perform at WMU’s Miller Auditorium

PC band played there last in ‘91

The Portage Central High School Symphonic band accepted the invitation to perform a one-hour feature concert at the 50th Anniversary of the WMU Spring Conference on Wind & Percussion Music at Miller Auditorium on Thursday, April 19 at 2:45 p.m.

The featured composer is Michael Markowski from Brooklyn, New York, and the band has selected to open their concert with his “joyRiDE” composed in 2005 with a final revision in 2014. The first version of this work he wrote as a senior in high school when his high school band played at Carnegie Hall.

The 2:45 p.m. concert is free and open to the public. It is part of a one-day conference featuring a 120-member All Star Band consisting of students from all across Michigan, high school band directors throughout Michigan, the full School of Music faculty, WMU ensembles and the WMU Symphonic Band.

With Mr. & Mrs. Flynn and Miss Allison Patrick all graduates of WMU, it makes this 50th Anniversary performance even more special. The chance to play at Miller Auditorium is a once in a lifetime opportunity for the students. The PCHS Symphonic Band last performed at this conference in 1991.
# Spring testing season is here

Our spring testing schedule includes the Michigan Merit Exam for juniors, which has three components, the SAT with Essay, the ACT WorkKeys, and the M-STEP Michigan online testing. Also in the spring our 9th and 10th graders will be taking the PSAT.

Because of the difference in length for the PSAT 9 and SAT tests, the 9th grade PSAT 9 will not begin until 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, April 18. Ninth graders should plan to arrive in preparation for a 9:30 a.m. test start time, but if they have to ride the morning bus, 9th graders will stay in the PC Commons prior to testing.

Juniors will also be taking the M-STEP online Michigan tests in science and social studies the week after the SAT, on Tuesday, April 17. There will be no change in the school schedule during this testing, as juniors will be called down out of class as a group to test in various testing rooms.

### Reminder about the upcoming testing schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Tuesday, April 10</th>
<th>Wednesday, April 11</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9th grade</td>
<td>PSAT for all 9th grade</td>
<td>No school in the morning</td>
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<td>*Late start - testing begins at 9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Late start for classes (see below)</td>
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<td>Classes start after testing and lunch</td>
<td>If you have to ride morning bus, you will need to stay in PC Commons during testing</td>
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<tr>
<td>10th grade</td>
<td>No school in the morning</td>
<td>PSAT for all 10th grade</td>
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<td>Late start for classes (see below)</td>
<td>7:45 a.m. testing begins</td>
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<td>If you have to ride morning bus, you</td>
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<td>testing</td>
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<tr>
<td>11th grade</td>
<td>SAT for all 11th grade</td>
<td>ACT WorkKeys for all 11th grade</td>
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<td>and lunch break</td>
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<td>12th grade</td>
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<td>testing</td>
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<td>All students</td>
<td>Classes begin at 1:25 for all students</td>
<td>Classes begin at 11:36 for all students:</td>
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<td>1:25-1:54 1st Hour</td>
<td>11:36-1:04 5th Hour</td>
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<td>1:59-2:27 2nd Hour</td>
<td>1:09-1:43 4th Hour</td>
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<td>2:32-3:00 3rd Hour</td>
<td>1:48-2:22 6th Hour</td>
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<td>2:27-3:00 7th Hour</td>
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## Mustangs write letters to support Stoneman High students

By Kayla Mathieu  
National Honor Society  
Member

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families and students of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High school. Every parent’s and school colleague’s nightmare became a reality that morning.

As a Portage community we saw a need and felt that we could help support the students in Florida. “We cannot empathize with them, we can only sympathize,” as expressed by teacher Mrs. Katie Eichsteadt.

Scores of students wrote letters to the students when we were contacted by PTO President Stacey Vogl. She saw a request on social media from a teacher at Marjory Stoneman who wanted letters to welcome the students back to school. We joined forces with Portage Northern’s “Out of the Box” club and got to work collecting as many letters expressing our care and support.

“It is helpful for them to

Continued page 4
force in a bipartisan group called the “Problem Solvers.” The group is set to look at 25 bills and pieces of legislation regarding guns and safety. Upton hopes that this meeting will bring some momentum to make changes to gun control.

“I’m hoping at a minimum we can get an expanded background check,” Upton said. “It’s something I have always supported.”

Upton also said he aims to review these bills in a bipartisan manner. “We’re trying to build a consensus that moves the ball down the field on this issue,” Upton said.

Regarding gun control, Upton assured students that he is willing to go against the status quo and speak out when he disagrees with them. “I’m not afraid to take on the NRA when I think they’re wrong,” Upton said.

Upton also mentioned implementing a “red flag” system, which would allow individuals to report suspicious behavior of a person and would be investigated by law enforcement. This could result in taking away guns from the person if anything suspicious is uncovered during the investigation.

“Indiana has this law, and I’m told that in some places in the country, it is used two to three times a week,” Upton said. Many students during the discussion agreed that this law should be implemented in Michigan, as it may allow high schoolers to report suspicious behavior that may compromise the school’s safety. However, there is some doubt in defining the parameters of suspicious behavior.

“There is a difference between exhibiting antisocial behavior versus dangerously exhibiting this behavior,” said Mitchell Harpenau, co-founder of Democrats Club.

Another issue brought up by Upton was an idea from President Donald Trump, who proposed that teachers who undergo background checks and training may be given bonus salaries for keeping guns in their classrooms.

Many students, including Student Council President Colin Palmer and Secretary Ashriya Patel, expressed opposition to this idea, arguing that this is not a teacher’s job and that students might fear having a gun in their classrooms.

“Teachers are selfless people, and I don’t want them to feel responsible for protecting their class with a gun,” Palmer said.

“I think it would be odd to have more guns than defibrillators in our school,” Patel said.

Activities Director Nikki Smith expressed that there are methods other than guns that can protect schools from shootings and intruders. Smith specifically referenced the newly implemented ALICE system, designed to better prepare schools for attacks.

“More [ALICE] training is better than teachers carrying firearms, in my opinion,” Smith said.

Another idea Upton raised was increasing the age requirement to purchase guns to 21 (except for military purposes). Upton said that he has seen agreement on this idea in the government, and personally agrees with this change himself. Students at the meeting unanimously agreed with this rule.

Molly Podiak, founder of Republicans Club, voiced her agreement for this idea, and added that an age increase may prevent high school shootings because the age to purchase a gun is beyond the average high schooler’s age.

Ultimately, Upton assured everyone that he is willing to work with children and adults alike to combat this current issue regarding gun safety and violence.

“I’m not a rubber stamp for anybody,” Upton said. “I’m not afraid to fight President Trump if I think he’s wrong.”

Upton also encouraged students, reminding them that their voice matters greatly in this issue. “You need to be involved in the community because you are the future,” Upton said. “We need to encourage your participation and thoughtfulness.”
Dear Mustang families,

Last November and December we administered the Parent Satisfaction Survey. I am really grateful that 404 parents or guardians took their time to respond to this survey. The survey provides parents or guardians in all our schools an opportunity to share their perception of the school experience. The feedback we received allows us to recognize the good work that staff does every day, and it helps us to see more clearly the areas where we want to improve.

Parents responded to 17 questions, and the wording of some of the questions differs to match different school level, from elementary to middle school to high school. Responses use a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. The mean for all the schools in the district was 4.08, while the mean score for Portage Central High School was 4.03.

The areas where parents and guardians said we should improve:

• I regularly receive feedback from school staff on how well my child is learning.
• I receive positive phone calls, emails, or notes about my child from the school.

Related to these two areas, we also noticed in the comments section that many parents gave us feedback about the need to improve parent-teacher conferences. We shared this feedback with all colleagues in early March, and we talked about this in our School Effectiveness Team, which for more than 20 years has helped to make improvements to our work here. At this spring’s parent-teacher conferences we asked parents to give us even more feedback on a survey specifically on how to improve this important opportunity for communication, and we hope you will notice some improvements next fall.

Our goal is to continue to build on where we are having success and to work especially hard on the areas where we know we need to improve – so that we can provide the healthiest place possible for our kids to live and to learn. We are so grateful for the feedback you have given this far, and we look forward to the conversations ahead.

With appreciation,

Eric Alburtus
Principal for Portage Central High School

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**Construction reminders**

When school resumes after spring break on April 9, parents and students will find new drop-off and pick-up points on the Portage Central High School and Middle School campus as crews get ready for construction. Student safety during drop-off and pick-up is a top priority during construction. The planning teams have been working over the past several months to come up with a safe and least disruptive plan to accommodate traffic during the two-year construction process. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we anticipate increased congestion and inconvenience during this time. We also understand that plans made on paper often work very differently in real life, so we will be monitoring for safety and traffic issues and will make modifications if possible.

When you have a moment, please go to the Portage Central website, and take a look at these maps:

• Bus pick up in the morning: https://portageps.org/chs/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2018/03/PPS-CMS-C001-Pick-UP-03.jpg
• Bus pick up in the afternoon, with specific bus numbers: https://portageps.org/chs/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2018/03/PPS-CMS-C001-Pick-UP-Numbered-Bussing-01.jpg

Each of these maps is explained below.

**Morning drop-off plan**

• The current parent loops off S. Westnedge in front of PC and behind Central Middle will be removed to make room for a new, temporary bus lane that runs through the campus.

**Afternoon pick-up plan**

• A new parent drop-off loop near the northwest corner of PC will be accessible from the stop light entrance off S. Westnedge. The parent loop accessed from Mustang Drive will remain unchanged.
• The temporary bus lane will be a one-way route from the south entrance of the campus going north to the stop light. It will not be open to non-bus traffic during the school day for safety reasons. It will be accessible after school hours.
• All high school drivers will access the student lot from Mustang Drive off Centre Avenue.
• Central Middle school parents will be asked to use the normal drop-off loop and parking lot.
• Central Middle School bus riders will enter the building on the northern most entrance of the school to avoid walking behind buses. The crossing areas will be monitored during drop-off and pick-up.
• Afternoon pick-up plan
• Pick-up locations will be the same as drop-off locations.
• If your student rides the bus, please note the bus number and where it is parked. This is where it will be parked each day for after school pick-up.
• What can I as a parent do to help?
  • Give yourself extra time in the morning and afternoon to drop off and pick up your student.
  • Consider carpooling with neighbors.
  • Consider having your student ride the bus if it is available to her or him.
  • Encourage high school drivers to arrive at school a few minutes early to avoid traffic.
  • Use extra caution and patience when driving on campus.

Thank you so much, in advance, for all your patience.
Central Middle School Musical presents...The Addams Family Musical Jr.
The Central Middle School Musical will be held on Thursday, May 3rd through Sunday, May 6th in Portage Central High School’s Auditorium. Please go to pchsperformingarts.org for more information. You won’t want to miss it!

Student Talent Show provides fun entertainment!
The Portage Central High School Student Council Talent Show will be held on Friday, April 13 from 7-9 p.m. in the School’s Auditorium. All are welcome!

Please use the newest Athletics Physical Form
Please remember to use the newest physical form that has been issued by the MHSAA for your student’s school physical. This form can be found at www.pcmustangssports.com under Forms and Links. Copies of the form are also available in the athletic office. Unfortunately, we will no longer be able to accept physicals that are handed in using any other type of form. Please make sure to not only use this new form, but also make sure to sign all areas; it has a total of four signatures for student and either a parent or guardian. Lastly, the physical must be dated after April 15 for use in the 2018-2019 school year. As always, a physical form must be turned in before an athlete is able to try out, practice or to participate in a sport.

Seniors, don’t forget to request final transcripts
For those of you planning on attending a college or university this fall, you will need to request your final transcript to be sent to that particular school. Colleges and universities require a final transcript as proof of graduation. Please use our online service at www.parchment.com to request your final transcripts. NOTE: if you are planning to attend a college or university that you applied to through the Common Application, please request your final transcript to the Common Application, and NOT the school directly. If you have any questions, please contact Trish King at 269-323-5282 or by email at tking@portageps.org.

Teacher requests
The opportunity for turning in teacher/schedule requests for the 2018-2019 school year is the week following Spring Break. The forms will be available from Monday, April 9, through Friday, April 13. Please turn in your forms to Portage Central High School’s Counseling Office. The deadline for schedule requests is 3:00 pm, Friday, April 13, with no exceptions. The forms may be picked up in the high school or middle school Counseling Offices. You are allowed to request two scheduling considerations. Those considerations may include a request for a specific hour or for a specific teacher. Please understand that we cannot guarantee that we can carry out your requests. But, as always, we will do our best.

Hey, Juniors, our college-planning workshops are coming
In May, the Counseling Staff will present their annual College Planning Workshop to all 11th-grade students. Students will receive information about procedures for college applications, procedures for having their transcripts electronically sent to colleges, helpful tips for the college search process, and many other useful handouts. They will also have the opportunity to hear from our current seniors who will talk about their experiences with the college application process. Please be sure to go over these materials with your student. Many of the handouts and instructions will also be posted on the PCHS Counseling web page. If you still have questions, please do not hesitate to schedule an appointment to meet with your student’s counselor.

PC Choirs invite you to Broadway!
Portage Central High School Choirs will present their Broadway Cabaret 2018 “Comedy and Tragedy” on Friday, April 20 and Saturday, April 21 at 7 p.m., and Sunday, April 22 at 2 p.m. at Portage Central High School. Audience members will be treated to gourmet desserts and beverages prior to the show, in an intimate, café-style setting. “Comedy and Tragedy” will feature solos as well as small- and large-group numbers and will include some of the funniest songs from current and past Broadway shows as well as songs that will absolutely tug at your heartstrings.

Tickets are available on the Portage Central High School website or at https://www.pchsstudentactivities.com/box-office
Do not wait: only 120 seats are available for each performance. You do not want to miss what has become the PCHS Choirs favorite performance of the year!