

Making important decisions for Semester 2, and more



For Thursday, November 12

Hit the GLIC!

The [Grade-Level Information Center](#) has information that is relevant for each class.

An archives for this year's weekly [Mustang Minutes](#)

We know we have thrown a lot of information this way. Now you can look back and check on anything you might have missed.

Our Daily Announcements to our students

[Our website](#)

[Our YouTube channel](#)

Looking ahead to the second semester, thinking about in-person or online education, and each of us making important decisions.

As I mentioned in the last two weeks of *Mustang Minutes*, our school board is considering the possibility of providing face-to-face teaching and learning at some point in the second semester. We all know this is not an easy decision: we all understand the importance of teachers and students working together in person, and we all want to keep our sons and daughters and our community to be safe. Perhaps most importantly, we respect one another and know that each family must decide which of those two values is most important to them.

That respect we have for one another will be the cornerstone for the hard work ahead.

What the school board is considering is a plan for starting face-to-face instruction sometime in the second semester -- for those families who choose this approach. If this plan is approved,



families will also be able to say that they prefer to continue with online learning. Getting this feedback from you will be essential for all of us succeeding in carrying out this proposed plan.

One of the strengths of our community is that we have pulled together when we have needed to; I have seen this time and again in the 25-plus years I have been blessed to live and serve here. We must do that again in the weeks and months ahead. To start, if the school board approves the plan, we as a school and community will be asking you to decide whether you want your son or daughter to engage in their education online or in-person, and that decision may be needed as early as **Wednesday, December 2**.

You are right: that is not a great deal of time. So between now and then, it is our responsibility to get you all the information and implications possible so you can make the best and most thoughtful decision for your daughter or son.

How we will get you that information starts now.

Step 1 Please take a look at our Semester 2 Understandings and their Implications, which we will share with you next week

This is our effort to give you an overall sense of some of the elements that might go into your own family's decision -- and how your decisions will affect others. This is not a comprehensive take on the road ahead; instead it is to get us thinking so we are prepared for Step 2.

Step 2 An FAQ for Semester 2

We were blown out of the water by the incredibly productive and positive response to our FAQ at the start of the year. Not only was it a helpful tool for communication, truly your questions guided our thinking and work. We will send you a link for you to send us questions in next week's *Mustang Minutes*, so stay tuned.

Step 3 Keep reading our weekly *Mustang Minutes* emails for important updates.

Step 4 Parent and Student Informational Sessions

For some of you, reading the information above will be all you need to make the right decision for your daughter or son. But sometimes nothing beats a real conversation. So we will be holding the following informational sessions, so please mark your calendars. We will send links for you to sign up Thanksgiving week.

What	When	Where
In-person session	Monday evening, November 30	Stay tuned!
In-person session	Tuesday evening, December 1	Stay tuned!
Online session	Wednesday evening, December 2	Google Meet

Thanks for staying engaged in this important discussion. We will need all of us to make the best decisions for all our kids, together.

Sign up now for school pictures!

We are so grateful that nearly 25% of our students have submitted their photos so we can use them for this year's very special yearbook! But we don't want anyone left out. Plus, who doesn't want their official school pictures, to put on our school IDs and to give out to friends and family?

School pictures will be taken here on Monday, November 30, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Hit this link below, to pick the best time for you to get a socially distanced and great school picture:

<https://forms.gle/fdJxnbDEdNPFvVNt9>

This will be a day of asynchronous instruction, so you will have school work to do, but you will not need to log in to your classes on that day. You must make your selection by noon on Tuesday, November 24th. You will receive an email on your school account with your exact appointment time by Wednesday, November 25th. See you there!

Three more PC students tested positive for the virus

Thankfully they are all doing pretty well, though one has had more intense symptoms. We are also fortunate that none of these infections happened through school activities; if they had, we could have had more students with the virus. (One student caught the virus from a parent, another from a girlfriend, and a third from a brother returning home from college.)

And again, we are especially appreciative of how parents responded. They were thoughtful and quick to start isolation, so others were not at risk of infection. How our parents have responded these many months gives me a great deal of confidence when I look toward the months ahead.. When talking with county health officials, I learned that we at Portage Central have more than our fair share of reported COVID-19 cases, despite the fact that education here is occurring online. And from my perspective, these high numbers of reported cases are because parents and we as a community are taking this situation seriously, we are talking openly and honestly, and we are addressing directly the challenges in front of us -- so that we don't spread the virus further. And as always, I am so grateful.

PC's Student Council and PN's Student Senate work together to support newborns

Due to COVID safety regulations, Student Council will not be able to host the annual March of Dimes Breadlift event this November. As an alternative, the PC Student Council and PN Senate are joining forces and leading a fundraiser for Cradle Kalamazoo, an organization that works hand in hand with the YWCA and many other local organizations to fight infant mortality and to help those affected. Starting Thursday, November 19 until Sunday, November 22, Student Council will have drop-off bins outside the main entrance of the PC student parking lot where items such as diapers, wipes, crib sheets (new), and personal care items can be donated. If convenient for you, PNHS will also have a drop-off location for your items. Want to donate virtually? You can make monetary donations directly to the YWCA website:

<https://www.ywcakalamazoo.org/how-you-can-help/donate>

Student Council and Cradle Kalamazoo appreciate any donation you can make.

Is your student looking for volunteer hours?

Student Council will need student volunteers to hand out flyers in neighborhoods on Friday, November 20. If interested, please have your student contact coordinator and Student Council Vice President Eileen Schuring by email: eileen.schuring@portageps.org

This week's featured Student Club: Ski Club

PC Ski Club will be skiing and snowboarding at Bittersweet and Timber Ridge on Thursday nights in January and February. Weekly participation in the Ski Club is optional. At this point, we are not able to provide transportation for students. However, there are questions about transportation on the sign-up form below. These questions are to gauge interest levels for transportation if we can provide it down the road.

You are not required to join Ski Club to purchase discount passes. The discount passes are available to everyone. If your student has graduated, they may also purchase adult passes. Online sign-up will run from Tuesday, November 11th- Monday, December 14th, and the sign-up form is below.

[PCHS Ski Club Registration](#)

Sophomores, here's your opportunity to take the PSAT/NMSQT

We are pleased to offer an opportunity for our sophomores to take the PSAT/NMSQT on Tuesday, January 26, 2021. The PSAT/NMSQT is a great practice for the college-readiness SAT assessment. More details will follow in a separate email, along with how to sign up, so be on the lookout.

Grateful to be working
with you in the important
decisions ahead,
Eric Alburtus
calburtus@portageps.org

**COLLECTING FOOD DONATIONS
AT THE COMMUNITY GARDEN -- AGAIN**

THANK YOU We were so grateful for all the food donations that students, families and community members gave last spring and summer. More than 30 Portage families benefited during a really difficult time. So last week when the Portage Community Center asked for our help, we knew we needed to get back to work.

SUPPORT THE PORTAGE COMMUNITY CENTER Since March, the Portage Community Center has been very limited in its ability to take donations. Now that we are heading into the Holidays, the PCC needs our help even more.

DONATE For at least the next two months, we will be collecting non-perishable food and other items at our Community Garden, which is located on the east side of PC. In the Garden will be one or two large bins where you can drop off items anytime. We will be so grateful for anything you can give!

And if you want even more PC news...

[Athletics](#)

[Activities](#)