

Conferences and collecting food donations -- again!



The internet is up and running again

Thanks for your patience with us and our network hardware this morning. Thanks to our smart colleagues in the Tech Department, the network was back up and running by mid-morning.

As we just completed our first marking period of this crazy year, we are so proud of the work of our students, teachers, coaches and staff. Despite the pandemic we were able to see several of our teams move forward in post-season tournaments, we were able to enjoy PC's first-ever outdoor theatre production, and most importantly even with remote learning our students are overwhelmingly performing on par academically with last year's class at this time. That is remarkable and worth celebrating.

We will be asking for your thoughts as we look at the second semester

As I mentioned in last week's email, this Monday the school board is considering next steps about what teaching and learning might look like in the second semester. Whatever choices we as a district make in the weeks ahead, we will need your feedback and decision making.

In next Thursday's email we will be giving you specific information for you to mull over, to talk with your daughter or son about, and to weigh pros and cons for your family. Then, depending on what the board ultimately decides at a November 23 meeting, we will give you more information and considerations so you can make the best decisions for your son and daughter and your entire family. So please, stay engaged with us, keep watching your email, send any thoughts or questions my way, and we will keep you in the loop all along this conversation so we can make the best decisions possible -- together. Thank you so much for this.

Don't forget...

Parent-Teacher Conferences are next week, November 9, 11 from 3:30 to 7:15 p.m.

And obviously this year will be a lot different in that we cannot have these face to face. But we are fortunate that we have colleagues who have learned a great deal about how to use Google really effectively so that we can have open and productive communication. When you have minute, hit this link:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aUTAE2a7Mlk1gmknSZ4chdGk1C_e6JEYZgtCPJxBHjA/edit?usp=sharing

It will walk you through how to sign up for conference sessions with your daughter or son's teachers. Keep in mind -- the sooner, the better. The sooner you sign up for sessions, the better chance you have of making it all work out for your schedule.

If you have questions for our Main Office or our Counseling Office during or about Conferences, please submit your question and sign up for a place in the queue here:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSce8wm61I7BK6-3dJybUEJlbF1JrQdAxVFbyy2ZrWbrYoUqsw/viewform?usp=sf_link

We are hopeful that we will be able to respond to everyone on the nights of conferences, but if we have a large number of questions it may take us a day or two to get to everyone. You can check your position in the queue here: [Queue](#)

Thanks for connecting with colleagues here, so we can work together to support all our kids and their success.

Collecting food donations at the Community Garden -- again

We were so grateful for all the food donations that students, families and community members dropped off at the bins in our Community Garden last spring and summer. Through these donations, 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.

For a variety of reasons since March, the Portage Community Center has been very limited in its ability to take in donated food and other items. And now that we are heading into the Holidays, the PCC needs our help even more. So our incredible Student Council kids organized two food drives last week: one at our Drive-In Movie Night and the other at our Friday play-off game (which our football players won!)

And 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 sure to empty the bins at least once a day, and each week we will get the items over to PCC. We will be so grateful for anything you can give! And if you have any questions or thoughts, please let me know anytime.

Our thanks go out to PCTV with this cool feature about our food drive! Check out their work: https://youtu.be/C3aVQ_MlC6g

Virtual Arts, Crafts, & Gifts Show!

Since we are not able to do an in-person Craft Show this year, the Mustang Alumni Association has decided this event will be going VIRTUAL! Between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. this Saturday, November 7, vendors will be going live every 15 minutes to talk about their unique products. If you are looking to get ahead on your holiday shopping - this is the place to be! The best part is, you can do it all while sitting at home.

2020 Virtual Craft Show Information

When: November 7

Time: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Where: Facebook event: "Virtual PCHS Craft Show"

Link to Event: <https://fb.me/e/fQKMzMTwS>

Do you want to learn more about how to use Gmail well?

Our PCTV student, along with some help from colleagues in the Tech Department, made some really useful videos that will help you make it easier to handle all the information you receive through this important tool. When you have a minute, take a look! Here is the link:

<https://sites.google.com/portageps.org/familytechtips/google-mail>

Just checking...

Are you signed up to receive notifications from Skyward?

Skyward (our online student information system) offers parents electronic access to their children's academic records, including things like attendance and grades. It is a great tool for communicating with your son or daughter about how things are going academically. When you create an account, you will also be able to sign up for notifications and alerts that you can adjust based on your needs. Conveniently, Skyward has a mobile app as well. If you haven't already signed up for parent access, visit the link here: <https://portageps.org/parents/skyward-access/skyward-first-time/> And, if you already have an family account and need technical support for Skyward, reach out to our Help Desk at help@portageps.org

What's going on around here on Fridays?

As you know, teachers do not give direct instruction on Fridays this semester. But, there are a ton of other activities going on behind the scenes to give students what they need. Here's a sampling:

*Teachers check on students' social-emotional welfare via email, one-on-one Google Meets, and calls home.

*Students engage in a variety of extracurricular activities.

*Teacher-led PLCs for improvement of virtual instruction.

*Collaborative teacher planning.

*Working to connect with chronically absent students.

*Leading small group or individual study sessions for re-teaching.

