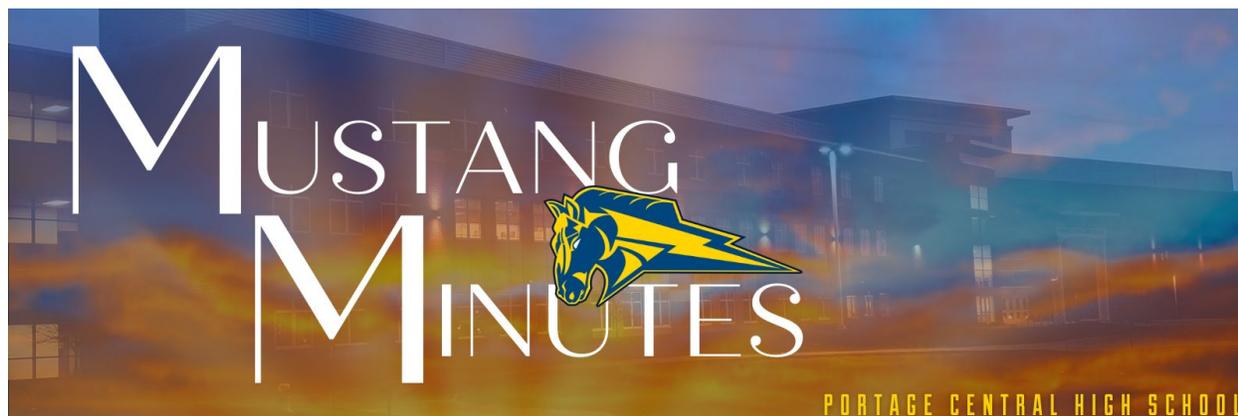


Graduation dates, and looking ahead to 4th quarter



For Thursday, February 18

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](#)

And to make it easier to find things, check out the [Mustang Minutes Index](#).

Our Daily Announcements to our students

[Our website](#)

[Our YouTube channel](#)

Every time I see a student or a parent, I want to start the conversation with two words...

Thank you.

This year has been confusing and intense; I have never seen anything like this in the nearly 30 years I have served at Portage Central. And our community has been incredible. Our students have been resilient, despite the confusion and contradictions they have faced. Parents have supported their own daughters and sons, at the same time as they supported others. Colleagues have navigated twists and turns and have worked to improve their engaging and teaching of all our kids despite the hurdles.

And, now as winter starts to loosen its grip, we look to the spring, paying keen attention to state and national directions to keep all our kids safe while also celebrating their successes. You will hear more about those things in the weeks ahead -- starting with Graduation.

Seniors and your families...

Mark your calendars for Graduation this May

For years we have graduated at Wings Stadium, and they have been gracious to open their doors for us again this spring. But, it's likely that the inside gatherings will continue to be appropriately more restricted than outside gatherings, so we are planning for an outside graduation on our original date. What that graduation will look like -- and where -- is still not set in stone. We will continue to watch state and national guidelines regularly so that we can make the best choice possible, considering safety while also working to include as many family members as possible. This balance is one of the reasons why we continue to consider a drive-in graduation, if we cannot do a stadium graduation. And we will keep you posted every step of the way in that on-going discussion.

But please lock in these dates below. As always we coordinate with Portage Northern High School.

PN: Thursday, May 27th

Our graduation: Friday, May 28th

PN's rain date: Saturday, May 29th (Memorial Day weekend)

Our graduation rain date: Sunday, May 30th (Memorial Day weekend)

More news for seniors

We are still missing the preferred diploma name and correct spelling for some of our Seniors for their diplomas. If you completed a form during book pick up at the beginning of the year, you should be all set, unless you want to make any changes. If you did not complete a form earlier this year, please email your name, as you would like it to appear on your diploma, to sschwanzl@portageps.org (Please keep in mind that using your full name on your diploma may be preferable in the future when applying for jobs or further education.)

Thanks for coming to our 8th Grade Students' and Families' Night!

We had a wonderful turnout for this online event, and we are so grateful. If you missed it though, no worries: you can access all of the information right off the front page of our website. Hit [this link](#) to take a look.

Also, on our PC YouTube channel we have a recording of our Google Meeting from Wednesday

PORTAGE CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

2021 STATE TESTING UPDATE

We are currently preparing for spring testing as normal, although we are unsure what these testing days will look like. It is not yet clear if this exam will be mandatory due to the pandemic. The Michigan Department of Education makes this decision, and we are waiting on their guidance. Stay tuned to *Mustang Minutes* for future updates!

SAT & ACT WORKKEYS	PSAT 9 & PSAT 10
APRIL 13 & 14	DATES TBD
JUNIORS	FRESHMAN & SOPHOMORES

got questions?
Contact our Test Coordinator, Jill Meyle at jmeyle@portageps.org

evening, where we had a great discussion and responded to a lot of thoughtful questions. To watch that video, just hit [this link](#). Like we said, this was just a start to our conversation, and we are looking forward to many more ahead.

8th-grade and high school scheduling postponed a couple weeks

The high school scheduling presentation for Central Middle School, West Middle School and current high school students has been rescheduled for after Mid-Winter Break.

We are finalizing high school programming details for the 2021-2022 school year. The Student Registration PowerPoint, Skyward Registration, Middle and High School Counselor Scheduling as well as the Skyward Parent Course Request Confirmations will also occur shortly after Mid-Winter Break, which is February 26 and March 1. We apologize for this inconvenience. We look forward to working with scheduling our students very soon.

Looking ahead to the 4th quarter and your family's decision for virtual or face-to-face learning

Back in December we reached out to every family to learn whether you wanted your daughter or son to continue learning virtually or to come back to the building and engage with teachers face to face. About 26% of our families chose in-person learning. If your son or daughter is currently attending classes face to face, we are presuming that they will continue in that mode for the 4th quarter as well. (If we are wrong about that conclusion, please reach out to me anytime.)

On March 4, we will be sending a decision form to the parents of our virtual students, asking if you would like your son or daughter to continue learning virtually in the 4th quarter, or if you would like to change his or her mode of instruction to face to face. The form will be emailed to the parent who is listed as “Family 1, Guardian 1” in your student’s Skyward account. This form will be open from Thursday, March 4 through Friday, March 12. Any student for whom we do not have a completed form will remain in their 3rd Marking Period mode for the duration of the 4th marking period.

Interested in becoming a part of the 2022 Yearbook Staff?

The yearbook staff is looking for some amazing people to apply to become part of the 2022 *Roundup* staff. Yearbook is not just about taking pictures. It's about so much more, including graphic design, writing, business and marketing, social media advertising, teamwork, and of course, photography. Do you want to learn more about how to become a part of this amazing group that captures history? Join Mrs. Alburtus and current staff members on Tuesday, February 23, or Wednesday, February 24 from 2:45-3:15 p.m. for a question and answer session. If you're a face-to-face learner, come to room 2120 right after school. All others can join virtually using the meeting link here: <https://meet.google.com/sgx-atuw-ytr>. Got questions? Email yearbook adviser Mrs. Alburtus at aalburtus@portageps.org.

A half day on March 3, no in-person learning on Thursday, March 4

If you have not already, you will receive an email from the district explaining a change of schedule for March 3 and 4. I just want to make sure we are all on the same page, so here is what this will look like here.

- Wednesday, March 3
 - A half day, with all seven hours, so that colleagues can receive their second doses of the vaccine.
 - All students (both in-person and virtual) will be dismissed at 10:55 a.m.
- Thursday, March 4
 - An asynchronous day for teachers and students
 - Teachers will post their lessons or classwork March 3
 - Face-to-face students will not be in the building on that day; instead they will work on their asynchronous assignments from home
 - This asynchronous day was added to our schedule with the anticipation that more teachers would not be able to teach live because of side effects from the vaccine.
 - More folks seem to be experiencing negative reactions to the second dose than they did to the first dose. And because of the strange nature of this school year, we do not have enough substitute teachers to cover the need.

I hope I explained this clearly. If I did not, please reach out to me with any questions. Thanks for your patience with this new wrinkle, and thank you, Pfizer families!

PC Performing Arts captures MIFA Division I State Theatre Title!

It is no secret that this year has been tough in all areas of school; from the classroom to athletics and activities, no event is easily orchestrated. This year's musical production, "Urinetown," was no exception. Despite challenges with rehearsing online, new safety protocols and extremely limited audiences, PC decided to take on another challenge this year: entering the MIFA State Theatre Competition. The Fine Arts Department at PC has a long record of excellence and recognition. This year, the PC Theatre Program adds State Champion to that record after winning the Michigan Interscholastic Forensics Associations Division I State Championship.

After competing virtually at both the district and regional levels, PC took on the best programs across the state and emerged victorious! Not only did our cast and crew win the overall title, but they also earned a slew of individual awards for acting, design and execution. They were also voted The People's Choice by their competitors.

The contest was held virtually and your Mustangs were evaluated by six theatre professionals from across the state. Ashley Bowen, theatre director at Portage Central, had this to say: "This was a group that could not be stopped. From our production staff, to the student crew, and full acting ensemble--- they wanted this! They worked hard, they stayed safe, and the result was an absolutely fantastic show against all odds. I am thankful to have the support of our theatre families and administrators at Portage Central."

The production can be streamed online through February 21. Buy your stream key here: <https://www.showtix4u.com/event-details/45859>. Don't miss out on your chance to see these amazing students shine.

Just a reminder...

DEI Listening Tour

Please join our District Coordinator of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) for our first ever, DEI Listening Tour! Share the experiences of you and your PPS student(s) regarding multiculturalism, diversity and inclusion.

The one hour, virtual conversation will be framed around several questions, e.g. Does your child see their background and heritages celebrated in their building? In terms of diversity and equity, can you describe your child's school experience as it is? How would you like it to be? All feedback is welcome and will be shared anonymously with your building principal.

Questions? Contact Charris@portageps.org for more details!

Portage Central High School

Thursday, February 25, 2021

6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

<https://meet.google.com/hiz-thso-rin>

Want to learn more about the county Early Middle College program?

On Wednesday, February 24 at 6:30 p.m. there will be an online informational session about the program. To learn more about this program, and to attend this session, hit this link:

<https://portageps.org/emcnight>. Then you will have an overall view of the program and will have an opportunity to ask questions.

Procedures for school assignment and transfer of resident/in-district students

Portage Public Schools and the District Board of Education have developed guidelines with the expectation that students are to enroll in school based on the location of their permanent residence (i.e. where the student regularly resides and spends the night under the supervision of a parent or legal guardian). The Board of Education approves attendance boundaries after considering recommendations made by the District's administration. The District strives to provide a consistent set of high quality programs and services at each school site so that every student's academic needs can be appropriately addressed, under normal circumstances, at any school within the District's boundaries. Want to learn more about how this works? Hit this [link](#) -- and thanks!

Featured Club of the Week: Knitting & Crocheting Club

We have student volunteers who will teach basic skills to newcomers. We also have yarn and needles available for student use. We tend to work on small projects that can be completed fairly quickly (like a poppy for veteran's day or baby hats to donate), but some students bring in larger

projects like blankets or scarves to work on over a longer period of time. When working on projects to donate (like hats or scarves), students can earn community service hours. Students in the IB program can also earn CAS hours. For more information, please reach out to Kate Phipps at khipps@portageps.org.

Grateful to the parents from Pfizer; your hard work is now in my arm,
Eric Alburtus
ealburtus@portageps.org



And if you want even more PC news...

[Athletics](#)

[Activities](#)