

A new, half day next Wednesday, and welcome 8th-grade students and your families!



For Thursday, February 4

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](#)

Welcome, families of 8th-grade students, to our weekly *Mustang Minutes*!

Before last March, Mustang Minutes was a monthly publication to all our families and students. But obviously things have changed a lot since last spring, and we have had to race to keep up. So each Thursday you will receive this Mustang Minutes to keep you in the loop on everything going on around here. And for you, things will really start to pick up with our 8th Grade Students' and Families' Night.

In a normal school year all of us families and students and colleagues meet in the gym in mid-February and talk through your decisions ahead for classes and extracurriculars for next fall. Given the world we live in, again we are all working creatively to still get you the information and ideas you need to make the right decisions for all our daughters and sons. So here are the next few steps:

1. Take a listen to this [introductory video](#), which gives you a sense of what lies ahead.
2. Next Thursday in *Mustang Minutes* you will receive the program for our virtual 8th Grade Students' and Families' Night, with links to a host of resources that will help you make your decisions.

3. Then we will have two online Question and Answer Sessions -- an evening and a morning session we hope will accommodate your schedules.
 - a. Wednesday evening, February 17 at 6:30 p.m.
 - i. Click [here](#) for the link for that conversation
 - b. Thursday morning, February 18 at 7:30 a.m.
 - i. Click [here](#) for the link to that morning conversation

And of course this is just the beginning, a start to the conversations we will have ahead. Of course I wish we could be together in person -- and together we will figure out the paths ahead for all our kids.

Next Wednesday, February 10 will be a half day, for vaccinations of PPS colleagues

We were just contacted by the local health department that colleagues will be vaccinated next Wednesday starting at noon and running into the evening. The day will start at the normal time and will end at 10:55 a.m. Thanks for your patience on this unexpected schedule change.

Link Crew: Looking for terrific upperclassmen to lead freshmen next year

It is that time of you to start recruiting students for our Link Crew program. Link Crew is an opportunity for Juniors and Seniors to build relationships and encourage participation with our incoming 9th grade students. Link Crew leaders set the tone not only for the freshman class but also for all of PC because of each Link Leader's commitment to modeling what it means to be a Mustang and an active, integral part of this special place.

Link Leaders are expected to be out of class periodically throughout the school year to meet with their freshman groups and may be asked to meet before or after school with the freshman class as a whole. Link Crew's goal is to integrate the freshman class into the "Mustang Way" and to be role models in the areas of academics, involvement, and citizenship. Therefore, it is mandatory that they attend Freshman Orientation (Monday, August 23rd, all day) and the training (August 22nd) the day before. If they cannot, they should not apply.

This application has two essays and may be easier to fill out on a Chromebook. It requires that you upload a photo (preferably a head shot) to aid in identification during the interview process. You may want to save your photo to your Google Drive to make uploading easier.

The Link Crew application goes live on Monday, February 8th, and you can find it on the [Portage Central website](#). The deadline to submit an application is Monday, February 15th at 3 p.m. And, there are no exceptions, because of the number of applications we receive. Thanks for considering to be a part of this important program!

Black History Month

February 1st marked the start of Black History Month. A number of student groups have contributed this year, including National Honor Society and our Justice, Equity, Diversity and

Inclusion team. Some of this work includes posting daily on PC's [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts (@PortageCentral) and adding educational components to our [PC Virtual Bulletin Board](#).

SAT-prep sessions for juniors

If you are a junior who wants some extra practice for the SAT, consider joining us for Friday afternoon SAT prep sessions starting February 12, 2021. Mrs. Rearick (math) and Ms. Kubinski (English), with the help of other PC staff and students, will explain the test structure, teach basic strategies that can help improve your score, and answer individual questions as you complete practice exercises. Each week we will focus on a different aspect of the test, and have time for practice. Sessions will be held in the **Mustang Commons** at the following dates and times:

February 12th: 12-1 p.m. (introduction to the SAT--no practice)

February 19th: 12-2 p.m.

March 5th: 12-2 p.m.

March 19th: 12-2 p.m.

April 9th: 12-2 p.m.

We ask that you fill out this [form](#) if you are interested so that we know how many students to expect. Make sure to check out the junior GLIC page and daily announcements for updates about the individual sessions.

Thinking about spring and our special events

I know that the depths of winter may not seem to be the normal time to be thinking about spring events -- but this is exactly the right time for us. In normal years our springs are filled with activities, from prom to softball, the Mustang RideOut senior academic presentation to Forensics, IB Recognition Night to graduation. We must plan ahead to be ready and to communicate effectively.

This is even more true now, in the middle of this very intense year.

Of course there is so much we do not know right now about the months ahead. We don't know how the vaccine roll out will progress. We don't know what the state restrictions on outside gatherings will be. And of course we all hope infection and hospitalization rates continue to decline. Despite all of these uncertainties, we want to be clear that we are thinking a great deal about how we could still do something to recognize our incredible seniors through a graduation, and we are already visiting with our Student Council about some kind of prom-like activity -- as well as the other events that are an important part of our school community. All along the way we will keep you in the loop, so you can make the right plans for your daughter or son as well as your whole family. As always, please share any thoughts or ideas with me anytime; as always, feedback from our kids and families helps to guide our work.

Thank you -- and I look with hope to the months ahead.

Were you not able to attend our IB Informational Meeting?

If not, no worries! You can watch it all right here by hitting this [link](#). We also included the presentation we used that evening as well; just click [here](#) for that. Too, if you have any thoughts or questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to either of the Erics:

Eric Lancaster elancaster@portageps.org 323-5248

Eric Alburtus calburtus@portageps.org 323-5255

Thanks!

Thank you for keeping us in the loop when your kids are diagnosed with the virus

Please reach out to me by email (calburtus@portageps.org) or by phone (323-5255), and we would so appreciate you connecting with teachers by email as well. This will allow us to be helpful to the local health department for contact tracing, so all of us can work together to keep one another safe. This is particularly important for students who are here at school during the day and those who are involved with Activities and Athletics. Thanks so much for your help!

Punctuality

Now that we have moved to school routine where students are coming into contact with many more students in the halls, it is more important than ever for students in the building to make haste from class to class. Keeping hallways clear is part of our school's overall face-to-face safety plan.

Just a reminder that the deadline is coming soon...

Seniors, interested in money for college?

There is still time to apply for the Portage Education Foundation scholarships. The deadline is February 15, 2021. Learn more about the PEF and apply [here!](#)

In a great deal of gratitude for the folks at Pfizer,

Eric Alburtus

calburtus@portageps.org

And if you want even more PC news...

[Athletics](#)

[Activities](#)