



Like to Bake?  
See page 2

# MUSTANG MINUTES

September 2016

The official monthly publication of Portage Central High School

Portage Central High School • 8135 S. Westnedge Ave. • Portage, MI • 49002  
(269) 323-5200 • [www.portageps.org/schools/high/chs/](http://www.portageps.org/schools/high/chs/)

minute  
by  
minute

## Getting student schedules

All schedules will be available in the Skyward family access portal during the morning of Monday, August 29. Paper copies of the schedules will be included in the enrollment room boxes, on the first day of school. These paper copies will include the full year schedule, along with the locker combinations.

## Did you complete community-service hours over the summer?

If so, that's terrific – thanks for all the work you did! Too, make sure to turn in your community-service forms sometime before Tuesday, September 20. Any forms received after that date will not count toward the community-service awards that students receive this spring at our academic awards presentations. Please drop off your forms to Adam Laroy at the Welcome Center. Thanks for that too!

# We're back!

*Freshmen, new students welcomed by Student Ambassadors, Staff*

We are extremely excited to welcome you to Portage Central High School! The first step in the process is freshmen orientation, where you will spend an afternoon getting to know PCHS. This year, you will have an opportunity to meet your Student Ambassadors for the 2016-2017 school year, get a tour of PCHS, visit with all the clubs and athletics we offer, have an opportunity to purchase Mustang Gear, yearbooks and athletic passes, and ask questions of staff and students about PCHS. This year's event will be held on Monday, August 29 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at Portage Central High School. Parents, if you've attended our freshmen orientation in the past with an older son or daughter, please realize that this event changes every year! So, it's important that you make time to be there for the full two hours as we have a packed

schedule for the afternoon.

Each freshman family will be receiving a packet of information that will walk you through your group's schedule for orientation day (each group has a different schedule), give you your group assignments for the day along with directions including where to report and when, and allow you to get to know your Student Ambassador and the program a bit better.

We will also have this information posted on the school website soon so be sure to check there for more information! We look forward to welcoming you to PCHS!

If you have any questions, please contact Nikki Smith, Student Activities Director, at 269-323-5265 or [nsmith@portageps.org](mailto:nsmith@portageps.org).

Thanks, and Go Mustangs!

## Congratulations, Marie!

PC parent and band booster Marie McLeieer (standing here with long-time band director Pat Flynn) was honored for a Lifetime Achievement of Community service this summer by WOTV at the Maranda Park Party in Kalamazoo. Her incredible efforts include 42 years of volunteering with the Portage Central Bands, doing everything from providing food and water for our kids to making sure that preparation for competitions went smoothly. It was wonderful for colleagues and students to surprise her – and to thank her for the time and effort she has given for decades. She was joined by her son Michael McLeieer as well as daughter Cathy McLeieer Scott.





# Lots of support from Counseling Department

## From freshmen to seniors, info we all need

### High School visits by area colleges and universities

Many area colleges and universities are coming this fall for presentations to high school students, and these visits start early in September. Please visit the Counseling link on the PCHS website for dates and times, and encourage your students to come down to the Counseling office and sign up.

### Testing schedule

#### PSAT

The 2016 PSAT/NMSQT will be an optional test this fall, and only open to juniors (freshmen and sophomores will take the PSAT in the spring—see below). Test date is Saturday, October 15, in the morning, and cost for the test is \$20 (check must be made payable to Portage Public Schools). Signups will be announced and will begin after school starts. More information to follow. To learn more about the PSAT/NMSQT, please visit [www.nationalmerit.org](http://www.nationalmerit.org).

### 2016 Michigan Merit Exam

All juniors are required to take

## Counselor Assignments

### Mary Scott

Last Names (G-L)  
323-5277  
[mscott@portageps.org](mailto:mscott@portageps.org)

### Todd Tarnutzer

Last Names (A-B, F, M-N)  
323-5275  
[ttarnutzer@portageps.org](mailto:ttarnutzer@portageps.org)

### Lisa Jepson

Last Names (C, D, E, O, P, Q, R)  
323-5288  
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### Carla Kelly

Last Names (S-Z)  
323-5278  
[ckelly@portageps.org](mailto:ckelly@portageps.org)

### Jodi Shearer

General Information and Appointments  
323-5282

### Trish King

Registrar (Test coordinator, Transcripts)  
323-5283  
[tking@portageps.org](mailto:tking@portageps.org)

the Michigan Merit Exam as part of State Testing, and this test is a Portage Public Schools graduation requirement. The exam has three parts: SAT (college readiness test), given on Tuesday, April 11 ACT's WorkKeys (career readiness test), given on Wednesday, April 12 M-STEP online examinations (Michigan components), given in April

### Current 9th and 10th graders:

As preparation for the SAT that you will take in your

junior year, 9th and 10th graders will take the PSAT on either Tuesday, April 11 or Wednesday, April 12 (exact date for each grade to take each test has not been finalized). More information to come in the months ahead.

Please check out the PCHS website for much more information in the weeks to come regarding testing dates, letters, resources, and more. Please also see [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) and [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) for national testing dates for the ACT and

the SAT.

### College Applications and Transcript Requests

**College applications**  
Back in May (when your student was finishing up their junior year), our counselors met with our 11th graders to begin talking about the college application process. During these meetings, all 11th graders were given a red folder that had many important 'college info' handouts in it, and we encouraged students to share this with parents. So if you would like to 'read all about applying to college', ask your student where their red folder is! And this fall, during the 2nd week of September, the counselors will be giving presentations to the seniors in their English classes that will again outline the college application process, deadlines, recommendation letters, transcripts, test scores, and more. Students will receive handouts, and much of the information will be on the Counseling link of the PCHS website. If you have any questions or concerns about any part of the process, just let the Counseling office know.

*Continue on page 3*

# Love to Bake? *Then join us Sept. 25!*

If you love to bake, or to eat, then the Great Portage Bake-Off is for you. This community event will be happening on Sunday, September 25, from 1 - 4 p.m. in the Portage Central Commons. You may enter as many baked goods as you want, but make sure there is enough of the baked good available for those attending the Bake-Off, as they will be voting for the best in each category.

You can enter into one, or more, of the four categories. The categories are cakes, cupcakes, pies (including tarts

and cheesecakes) and cookies. There will be a winner in each category and each winner will receive a gift card. Please make sure you bring a print-out of all your ingredients to the event so people with allergies know what they can and cannot eat.

The Great Portage Bake-Off's proceeds will go directly to the Kalamazoo Loaves and Fishes food pantry. So, those who don't like to bake, but love to eat, are welcome to attend the event to try all the foods. In addition, you will get to vote for

their favorites.

A canned good, or other non-perishable items will grant you entry to taste all the food. Taste testers will vote for the best treat, but ultimately the treats you're baking are for a greater cause. Anyone is welcome to enter, not just high schoolers. So, encourage your family members, friends, colleagues and teammates to get involved in the Great Portage Bake-Off.

To enter your baked goods, contact Lorie Saunders [lorie.saunders@portageps.org](mailto:lorie.saunders@portageps.org). All entries must be in by September 18.



# Turning PC into a home

## *PC Ambassadors help freshmen, new students*

The Student Ambassador Program is designed to give freshmen a positive first-year experience through peer mentoring and camaraderie. The program has three main goals: promoting involvement in the school through extra-curricular activities; promoting citizenship, unity and school spirit amongst the freshman class; and encouraging academic success throughout the freshman year and beyond.

The Student Ambassadors meet with groups of freshmen throughout the year. The meetings take place during the school day 9 to 10 times a year. The Student Ambassadors answer questions and give guidance on various issues. The goal is to help freshmen find the most successful path for them as early as possible. Every meeting topic is determined by a joint committee of

students and staff, and Student Ambassadors are trained on each topic before meeting with their freshman group.

The ambassadors themselves are juniors and seniors who have gone through an extensive review process and are held accountable throughout the year for the high standards of the program. Each freshman will be placed into a group of 10 – 14 other freshmen and each group is led by two ambassadors, one male and one female.

As with everything we do at Portage Central, our ultimate responsibility is to make sure students are safe and comfortable, so they can focus on all the other fun and important things they will do while in high school. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact our Student Activities Director, Nikki Smith, at 269-323-5265, or nsmith@portageps.org.

## Check out the school store for your Mustang gear

*You can be among the first folks to get items with our new PC.*



## Counseling

*Continued from page 2*

### Process for requesting transcripts.

PCHS is excited to announce a much faster process for sending transcripts for seniors as they fill out those college applications. The State of Michigan's Department of Education has partnered with Parchment, a company specializing in sending transcripts electronically.

•Once your student has applied to a college or university, they need to register at [www.parchment.com](http://www.parchment.com) (your student received a red folder with this information included back in May at a college planning presentation), then simply enter and select the college or university they are applying to, and submit (see note below for requesting transcripts to schools that use the Common Application, as the process is different). Transcripts are then delivered electronically to the college or university in a matter of days. In addition, if your student intends to play sports at the college level, you can send their transcript to the NCAA Clearinghouse through Parchment as well by typing "NCAA" in the search box. And for your student who will be applying to colleges that use the Common Application, transcripts can be sent through Parchment by typing "Common Application" in the search box, and then entering your Common App ID #. If you have any questions, please contact Trish King at [tking@portageps.org](mailto:tking@portageps.org).

•Another great feature this year for our current seniors, electronic transcript requests will be free! That includes requests to schools out of state, NCAA, and the Common Application. Note that if you use Parchment to make your request, but you request a paper transcript to be mailed, there will be a small handling fee (this should be only in rare cases).

•High school transcripts will be released to Parchment beginning the 3rd week of the school year. For individual concerns, please contact your student's counselor directly.

•If your student will need a paper transcript to be sent to a

college, military, or a scholarship, please note that there is a charge of \$1 per paper transcript.

### Letters of recommendation

If your college application requires a counselor letter of recommendation (for example all colleges using the Common Application requires letter of recommendation), you will need to fill out the Student Questionnaire for your counselor. This form is available in the counseling office. Counselors will need to have this form in order to complete their recommendation. A "student resume," listing all activities, honors and awards, is also helpful.

### Schedule Change Policy

The following is the schedule change policy for the 2016-2017 school year. Schedule changes, meaning adding new courses, are allowed during the first week of a semester. For first semester, beginning on Tuesday, September 6, a student may drop or add a new class until Monday, September 12, 2016. After September 12, a change in course level or a new seminar will be the only options allowed until October 3. (Only one seminar per semester is allowed for credit.) After October 3 a student may not make any schedule changes. In most cases, any change will be recorded as an Early Withdrawal (equivalent to an E) on the student's transcript.

The policy for second semester will follow first semester. The first week will allow dropping and adding of new classes. A level change and a new seminar will be allowed through week four. There are no schedule changes after week four. For concerns beyond this date, please contact your child's counselor directly.

In addition, please understand that we will be unable to honor specific teacher requests, specific seminar hours or lunch requests. We work hard to maintain a minimum class size in order to provide the best learning environment for all students.



# Accident insurance available to all students

During this school year the Portage Board of Education made available a voluntary student accident insurance program. Since the District has made this insurance available, an increasing number of parents/guardians have been taking advantage of this inexpensive policy. This fact dictates that as a community service, we will continue to offer this voluntary insurance.

The District offers this program because of trends in rising family health and dental insurance costs, increased

deductibles, and co-payments. Furthermore, in an attempt to limit the District's rising insurance costs, this program provides an alternative for claims due to accidental injuries that unfortunately occur on our property. This is the case for both during and after school hours.

Plan information and the enrollment forms are available and respond to diverse family insurance needs. Coverage provided can help decrease the burden of unexpected medical and dental expenses, including

those left unpaid due to family insurance deductibles and co-payments.

As it relates to middle and high school interscholastic athletics, this voluntary insurance plan also provides coverage for all sports except grades 9 through 12 football. In that the District requires athletic insurance, you should consider this policy for the coverage it will provide you and your child.

A separate policy for high school interscholastic football is also made available before

practice begins in August.

A link is provided on the District's home page under the parent/visitor tab, or you can go directly to [www.1stAgency.com](http://www.1stAgency.com). Go to "Find Your School;" select the state; hit "Go." Select Portage Public Schools.

From there you can download and print the brochure/enrollment form PDF and enroll via the mail with a check or money order, or enroll online with a credit card.

## All the facts you need about Mustang Cafe

The meal prices for 2016 – 17 are as followed:

- High School Breakfast - \$1.50
- High School Lunch - \$2.75
- High School Premium Lunch - \$3.00
- Ala Carte Entrée - \$2.75 / \$3 (depending on the station)
- Milk - \$.50

Meal Benefit Applications are now available for the 2016-17 school year. Please log onto [www.lunchapp.com](http://www.lunchapp.com) to complete your application. Remember, benefits from last school year are only available until October 17. Are you hungry and want to see what's for lunch? Need carb counts? Want to know how many calories your favorite school lunch has? Have a food allergy and need to find a safe meal? Then check out Portage's exclusive Nutrislice website! <http://portageps.nutrislice.com>



## Prepared for winter already!

Portage Central art student were grateful to put a little art into the hard work of removing snow. Portage Department of Public Services superintendent Mike Wise reached out to art teacher Joe King and his students about painting one of the city's snow plows – and they readily accepted. As Wise said in the Kalamazoo Gazette, "I think they did a fantastic job. I can't draw a stick figure, so I appreciate what the students have done. We already have had teachers asking if they can do it again." Stop by to see how the different schools' work near City Hall this fall, and watch out for them again on the roads this winter.

or download the app to your smart phone and have the info at your fingertips each day before lunch!

Tired of last minute texts or emails asking for lunch

money? Sign up for our low balance email alerts. When your student's balance falls below \$5, you will receive an email that lets you know you need to replenish funds on

their account. You can sign up at [www.sendmoneytoschool.com](http://www.sendmoneytoschool.com) or call our office at 323-5155 to sign up.

Your student can pay cash for his or her lunch each day,

*Continue on page 6*



## Thank you for supporting our Day of Kindness

A great big thank you to the following people, businesses and organizations for helping to make our annual spring Day of Kindness a big success. This day would not be possible without your kindness and generosity.

- Bob Walker
- Doug Fuller
- Deb and Craig Ross
- Our Portage Central PTO
- Student Council
- Meijers on Shaver Road
- Tom and Janie VanDerHorst from Chicken Coop
- Ed's Breads
- Kalamazoo Specialty Plants
- Mr. and Mrs. Ernie VanOrman and V & V Quality Meats
- Greg and Tricia Garner and their Sweetwater Doughnuts
- Hardings in Woodbridge
- Patti Chen
- Kelly Rorabaugh
- Kim Maystead
- Gail Kristin
- Jodi Drews
- Sharon Longman
- Moms in Prayer



## Thanks to the Garden Club Crew!

Despite our neighborhood deer raiding our tomatoes, these students and many others worked hard all summer pulling weeds and harvesting vegetables to provide for community members through our Portage Community Outreach Center. Portage has long been a farming community that has supported its citizens – and these Mustangs prove that we still are.

# THE Mustang ASSOCIATION



## 2016 Arts, Crafts, and Gifts Show

The Mustang Association is hosting its Annual Arts, Crafts, and Gifts Show on Saturday, November 5, 2016 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Portage Central High School.

This show is extensively promoted through our parent newsletter, community newsletters, and traditional and social media including Craigslist, and the school website. Please know that there is limited space available for home-based

party plans and only one vendor from each company is allowed. Hand-crafted items are preferred, and no resale items are permitted.

To apply, please go to our website, [www.portagecentralalumni.org](http://www.portagecentralalumni.org), click on events, and then click on the 2016 application. Please complete and mail to: Portage Central High School  
Attn: The Mustang Association

8135 S. Westnedge Ave.  
Portage, MI 49002

A Check for the full amount should be made payable to The Mustang Association and an email address is required for confirmation (no refunds after confirmation).

If you have any questions, please call or email Nikki Smith at 269-323-5265, [nsmith@portageps.org](mailto:nsmith@portageps.org).

We look forward to working with you!



Portage Public Schools  
Portage Central High School  
8135 S. Westnedge Ave.  
Portage, MI 49002

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## Mustang Cafe

Continued from page 4

or they can bring in a check or cash to put on account, but did you know you can add money to your student's lunch account electronically? Simply sign on to SendMoneyToSchool.com, setup your account (you will need your child's student ID number—they should know it), and then you can add funds,

see their order history, set up email low balance alerts, and even transfer funds if you have more than one student.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Susan Livingston, Director of Dining Services at 323-5155 or via email at [slivingston@portageps.org](mailto:slivingston@portageps.org).

## Planning ahead for pay-to-participate

If your student is planning to play a fall sport this school year, it is imperative that you plan ahead for the Pay to Participate fee that is due prior to first competition of the

particular sport your student is in. For more information, check out the district website: <http://www.portageps.org/paytoparticipate/default.aspx>

## School to start ten minutes later

We are starting our school day ten minutes later this year, so that will change our daily schedule a little. So here are the times for when each class begins and ends.

First Hour	7:45 - 8:37 a.m.
Second Hour	8:42 - 9:34 a.m.
Third Hour	9:39 - 10:31 a.m.
Fourth Hour	10:36 - 11:31 a.m.
Fifth Hour	11:36 a.m. - 1:04 p.m.
A-Lunch	11:36 a.m. - 12:06 p.m.
B-Lunch	12:34 - 1:04 p.m.
Sixth Hour	1:09 - 2:02 p.m.
Seventh Hour	2:07 - 3:00 p.m.



*Mustang Minutes* is a publication of Portage Central High School. It is published monthly and distributed to parents and faculty members. If you have information you think should be considered for *Mustang Minutes*, please call 323-5165. You may also write to Mustang Minutes, PCHS, 8135 S. Westnedge Ave., Portage, MI 49002. The deadline for the October issue of *Mustang Minutes* is September 16.