



# MUSTANG MINUTES

March 2011

The MME will be given this month. Schedule inside on page 3...

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/

minute by minute

### EFE Job fair

There will be more than 50 employers on Thursday, April 21, at WMU's Bernhard Center seeking 11 and 12th grade students for full-time, part-time, and summer employment. Sign up in the counseling office, space is limited.

### AP Test Registration

We are currently accepting registrations for the May 2011 Advanced Placement (AP) exams. The cost is \$87 per exam. The registration window closes on March 31, if any registration is received after March 31 there is an additional charge of \$50 (AP policy not ours). IB and AP test schedules are posted on the CHS web page. Registration forms are on the CHS website, with your AP teacher, in the Counseling Office and in the AP/IB Office. If you notice a conflict between an IB and an AP test that is being taken, please contact Chuck Schira (323-5274), prior to March 31, to make arrangements.



## Thank you, eighth-grade parents!

We were wonderfully and happily overwhelmed with the terrific turnout at last month's Eighth-Grade Parents Night! So many of you were there to understand better the choices yours on or daughter was making as they prepare to come to PC. And after the initial presentation, we had so many valuable

conversations with you in the hallway and classrooms. It was such a great night – and you made it that way. Thank you.

And remember, this is an ongoing conversation. Let's keep talking and deciding together that all our kids are ready to have a high-quality freshmen year.

## A look to May, the future

Countywide enhancement millage renewal on May 3 ballot – no tax increase

Voters throughout Kalamazoo County and the nine school districts will see a school funding renewal question on the upcoming May 3 ballot.

This millage brings approximately \$3 million a year to Portage Schools, or about \$340 per student. In our District, these funds support a variety of instructional offerings and help limit class sizes.

The ballot question is for a three-year renewal of the existing 1.5 mill property tax. Taxpayers will be paying the same rate for this millage as they have paid for the past six years.

The millage was first passed in 2005, with Kalamazoo County becoming the first county in the State to have a countywide school millage to support general operations. The millage was renewed by voters in 2008. Operations spending, which supports instructional programs, is separate from funds raised through bonds for construction and renovation of facilities.

Absentee voting begins on March 19, and the deadline to register to vote is April 4.

### Financial Stewardship: 2003-2011

Portage Schools has made more than \$5 million in cuts since 2003 in response to reductions in state funding, while working hard to ensure minimal impact to instruction and student achievement. During these years, the District has kept necessary cuts as far away from the classroom as possible.

Last year, to help balance the budget and avoid layoffs, all employees in the District agreed to a pay cut, with increased insurance costs.

Meanwhile, the District continues to be recognized for being good stewards of the community's resources, receiving national recognition for financial reporting from the Association of School Business Officials and the Government Finance Officers Association.

### A Countywide Focus on Education

This millage question was placed on the countywide ballot by the Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency (Kalamazoo RESA), which provides countywide educational services to the nine area

*Story continued under "Millage" on page 2*

## Tell us what you think?

The one thing I have always worried about in my role is if folks, students, parents, community members – stop talking with me. If that were to happen, I would stand no chance at helping Portage Central High School continue to get better at supporting our students and their learning. Fortunately over the years many have shared their thoughts with me.

And now there's a new way to give your input with this link [www.surveymonkey.com/s/9PJWPPJ](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/9PJWPPJ)

Sometime between now and tax day – April 15 – to give your thoughts about our work here. This input will help us as we begin to plan for next year. Thanks, in advance, for your help!

## Attendance Policy Reminder

If your student is absent from school, please remember to call the attendance office and/or send a note to excuse the absence. All students must obtain an admit slip from the attendance office immediately upon their return to school, whether they are absent a whole day or only part of a day. Failure to do so will result in consequences for truancy. Once those consequences are issued they will not be revoked, even if the absences are later excused.

# “Millage”

*continued from page one*

school districts.

Kalamazoo RESA does not retain the enhancement millage revenues. State law dictates that all of those funds go to local school districts with revenue generated distributed on a per-student basis throughout Kalamazoo RESA's nine public school districts.

The enhancement millage was first approved for three years in 2005, when it passed with 51 percent of the vote. It was renewed in 2008 with support from 57 percent of voters. A recent survey conducted by Kalamazoo RESA showed that approximately two-thirds of county voters support renewal of the millage.

“Economically, the state's ability to fund its public schools is worse today in 2011 than it was when we initially placed this millage on the ballot in 2005,” said Kalamazoo RESA Superintendent Ronald Fuller. “The survey results have reaffirmed my belief that the citizens of Kalamazoo County truly get the value of education for all to the benefit

## Camps, summer programs and contests

Portage Central's student services tab contains a category for camps, summer programs and contests. Below is an example of one of the many opportunities for students.

The 2011 Alexander Hamilton Citizenship Achievement Award. Open to juniors with a strong record of community service and academic studies. Applications can be found at [www.hamiltonfriends.org](http://www.hamiltonfriends.org) and the deadline is April 15.

of the community.”

### Bond Construction Update

District voters approved a \$119 million bond in 2007 for new and renovated school buildings and district wide technology upgrades. Bond funds cannot be used for operational funding, such as instruction, which is the purpose of the countywide enhancement millage.

Meanwhile, PPS taxpayers will likely see a raise in the debt millage by ½ mill starting in the summer of 2012. Due to declining taxable values and property taxes collected, many cities, counties, and school districts throughout Michigan have found this necessary in order to pay off principle and interest on bonded debt. This ½ mill rate adjustment would be approximately \$37 in property taxes per year for an average home in Portage.

### For More Information

Read more online at [portageps.org](http://portageps.org) or call 323-5167.

See this link for frequently-asked-questions, [www.kresa.org/kresa/site/default.asp](http://www.kresa.org/kresa/site/default.asp)

## Portage Community Center dress drive

The Portage Community Center is collecting gently used formal dresses, jewelry, and shoes for young women to enjoy their prom with no worries of cost. The mission is to bless girls who cannot afford a dress with the opportunity to pick out, try on, and take home their own beautiful gown. The dates for everything are as followed:

March 28- (dresses in) Drop

off day at PCC 3-7 p.m.

March 29- Portage Community Center will attend Community high to give girls a chance to get the dresses at school (cutting the problem of transportation).

March 30 and 31-(dresses out) A party for all girls to come and try on dresses and take them home. The event will run from 3-7 p.m. at PCC

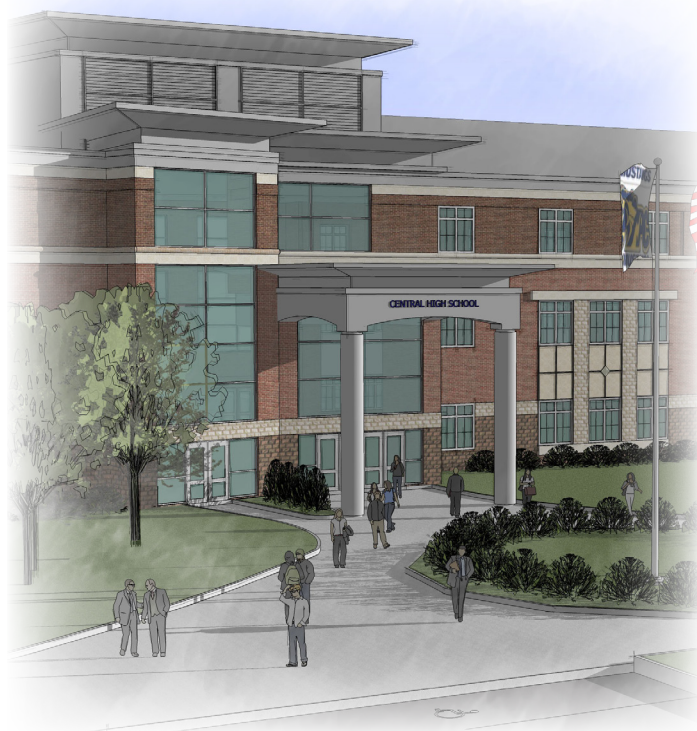
## Brick Sale and Sock Hop information

In a little more than a month, Portage Central will host a special Sock Hop event to give parents, alumni and community members one last celebration of the high school building opened in 1953. The event will take place on Saturday, April 16, but dinner reservations for the event must be submitted by Friday, April 1 to Kent White. Printable invitations are available on the PC website located in the Organizations--Alumni tabs on the left. For more information on the event, please

contact White at 323-6573 or by e-mail, [kwhite@portageps.org](mailto:kwhite@portageps.org).

### Brick Sale

The PC brick sale will conclude on May 30, so time is running out to have a specially inscribed brick placed at the new high school. Order forms are available online under the alumni tab. So far, more than 250 bricks have been inscribed for the outside landscape feature for the new building. Thank you to everyone who has donated to the project.



## A reminder about the MME

Day 1 – Tuesday, March 1 (ACT Plus Writing)  
*Only juniors report to school on this day. Juniors must ride regularly scheduled buses or provide their own transportation.*

7:45 a.m. Testing begins  
12:30 p.m. Approximately when testing will end. Juniors are dismissed home and must provide their own transportation or report to the cafeteria.

Day 2 – Wednesday, March 2 (ACT WorkKeys)  
*Juniors report for the morning tests at 7:45 a.m. and all other students start school at 11:00 a.m.* Schedule for remaining

day of classes for all students grades 9-12, after testing:

11:00–11:25 1st hour  
11:30–1:00 5th hour  
1:05–1:55 3rd hour  
2:00–2:50 4th hour

Day 3 – Thursday, March 3 (Michigan Components)

*Juniors report for the morning tests at 7:45 a.m. and all other students start school at 10:30 a.m.* Schedule for remaining

day of classes for all students grades 9 – 12, after testing:

10:30–11:25 2nd hour  
11:30–1:00 5th hour  
1:05–1:55 6th hour  
2:00–2:50 7th hour

## Scholarship opportunities

Now is the time to check the scholarship information on the student services tab on the PC website. Many deadlines are

approaching, but it is not too late to submit entries for many of the opportunities. Stop by the counseling office for help.

## Scheduling request for 2011-2012

The opportunity for turning in schedule requests for the 2011-2012 school year is the week following Spring Break. The forms will be available from Monday, April 11, through Friday, April 15. Please turn in your forms to Portage Central High School. The deadline for schedule requests is Friday, April 15. The forms may be picked up in the high school or middle

school Counseling Offices. You are allowed to request two scheduling considerations. Those considerations may include a request for a specific hour or for a specific teacher. Please understand, though, that with the current economic constraints, there may be no way for us to carry out your requests. But, as always, we will do our best.

## Important dates in March

Date	Event	Location/Time
Tues., March 1	MME	PC
Wed., March 2	MME	PC
Thurs., March 3	MME	PC
Mon., March 7	Choir Concert	PN auditorium
Wed., March 9	Grad Bash meeting	PC/6:30 p.m.
	Band Concert	PN auditorium
Fri., March 11	Big Band Bash	West Middle/7-8:30 p.m.
Tues., March 15	Blood Drive	PC
Tues., March 22	Give Back Night	Chili's Restaurant/all day
Thurs, March 31	No School	
Fri., April 1	No School (start of spring break)	

For full calendar please visit...

[www.portageps.org/schools/high/chs/calendar/school/default.aspx](http://www.portageps.org/schools/high/chs/calendar/school/default.aspx)

## News Briefs

### Congratulations!

Portage Central had all 12 chamber singers who auditioned for the 73rd annual Southwest Michigan Vocal Festival Honors Choir earn a spot in the event at Western Michigan University.

There were 13 schools that sent students to audition, and 12 out of the 69 to make the choir were from PC! The students will perform on Thursday, March 17 at 7 p.m. at WMU's Miller Auditorium.

### Great job students!

The Portage Central student body raised more than \$1,100 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society during this year's second "Penny Wars" class competition during homecoming week.

"It never ceases to amaze me how well such a large body of students can get together behind a selfless cause and act as one cohesive, effective and efficient instrument of betterment to the greater community around it," said student council advisor Mark Sutherland. "These kids really did a tremendous job!"

### Grad Bash 2011

We need all parents (parents of seniors as well as underclassmen) to help make this event possible for the Graduates! If you are interested in volunteering contact Terri Veldman (372-2140 or [biltervel@sbcglobal.net](mailto:biltervel@sbcglobal.net)) or Marti Phelps (327-4783 [mphelps48@charter.net](mailto:mphelps48@charter.net)). We need around 50 volunteers total for the evening. There are shifts – so if you can only help for a few hours we can use you!

Grad Bash is also selling Schuring Greenhouse Daisy Dollars which are \$ 10 vouch-

ers to buy products from Schuring Greenhouses. Please help out your class of 2011 and beyond by buying these vouchers in support of the Grad Bash fund. You may purchase them at the school from Mrs. Morrissey in Athletics.

## Thank you, Sweetwater's!

Haley Garner and other National Honors Society students are raising money for more furniture in our common areas at the new Portage Central High School by selling Sweetwaters Donuts. And Sweetwaters is providing these for free so that all proceeds will benefit students for years and years to come. Thank you, Sweetwaters, for supporting all our students and our entire community!



## How to host an exchange student

Northwest Student Exchange is beginning the 2011 programs and is looking for culturally interested host families, and to learn more about our study abroad program for high school students ages 15 to 18.

They have hosting opportunities of an exchange student from Sweden, Germany, Brazil, Russia, Mongolia, & South Korea and many other countries.

Please contact Miriam Fleming at [mafleming@juno.com](mailto:mafleming@juno.com) or by telephone at (269) 746-4032. For more information please visit the website [www.nwse.com](http://www.nwse.com)

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# up to the minute

## Chili's in Portage to hold Give Back Night for Grad Bash

Chili's is teaming up with the Portage Central Grad Bash committee to help raise money for the post-graduation event. Chili's, located on S. Westnedge Ave. in Portage will be hosting a Give Back Night from 11 a.m. to closing on March 22.

Chili's Restaurant will donate 10% of the dining checks generated between 11 a.m. and closing to Grad Bash. To be eligible for the donation, the dining check must be accompanied by a copy of the Give Back

Night event voucher. Vouchers can be picked up in the athletic office, or printed off online through the PTO link under "organizations" on the Portage Central website.

For addition information or questions about the give back night please contact Julie Morrissey at 323-5361 or e-mail [jmorrissey@portageps.org](mailto:jmorrissey@portageps.org).

Thank you in advance for helping support Grad Bash, which celebrates the accomplishments of the graduating seniors.

## PC Band News

### Kalamazoo Symphony Soloist:

Congratulations to Joe LeFevre who is the Youth Artist soloist with the Kalamazoo Symphony. He will perform in a series of concerts for area schools.

### Annual Big Band Bash:

PC Jazz Band & Middle School Jazz Band will host the Annual Bash on Friday, March 11 from 7-8:30 p.m. in the cafeteria at West Middle. Come out to hear some great music and maybe dance a little. \$5 ticket and includes a dessert and drink.

### Solo & Ensemble State Qualifiers:

Symphonic Band

Saxophone Quartet, Symphonic Band  
Woodwind Quintet, Symphonic Band  
Brass Quintet, Joe LeFevre-Tuba soloist, Alex Ayerdi-Piano, Brianne Hughes-Flute soloist, Mary Russell- Flute soloist, Jeremy Kuo-Saxophone soloist, Alicia Williams-Saxophone soloist, Austin Durham-Bassoon soloist.  
State is March 26 at Holland West Ottawa.  
**Band Garage Sale... April 16 at Waylee Campus**

No computers, appliances, large furniture or adult clothing. Items donated will help fund the program and remaining items will be donated to charity.



*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 April issue of *Mustang Minutes* is March 15.