



# MUSTANG MINUTES

September 2011

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/

Information to be mailed soon about the new pay-to-participate program.

minute  
by  
minute

## What Should I Wear to School?

As you get ready to buy clothes for the new school year, we want to remind folks that we believe that student dress is a factor in the establishment of an educational atmosphere and reflects the quality of the school, of student conduct, and of student work. The following specific guidelines are reprinted from the student planner:

1. Hats/headwear/hoods are not to be worn in the building.
2. No bandanas.
3. Footwear is required in the building.
4. Clothing will not be permitted which:
  - a. Advertises or supports drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.
  - b. Is profane or vulgar.
  - c. Is revealing, suggestive or otherwise distracting.

Please help us keep our focus on learning by talking with your son or daughter about what they choose to wear to school. Thanks as always for your support of your children and of PCHS.

# The Historic Grand Opening

Communitywide celebration set for Friday, August 26 from 4-6:50 p.m.

What an incredible two years since it has been since we came together as a community to officially break ground on our new building. To say thank you to our community for all of your support, we will be throwing a Grand Opening Celebration for all of Portage Central's community, students, and alumni. Everyone is invited! Whether you graduated

in 1959 or 2009, this is a new home for all Mustangs and our hope is you will continue to feel at home. The event will kick off with a balloon let-go at 4:15 and, of course, tours of the new building by staff and students. You will have the opportunity to sign up to be a member or our newly created alumni association, the Mustang Association. We will also be selling t-shirts and a DVD hon-

oring the history and memory of our former building. Several area businesses will be sponsoring the event and they will be here to sell their food, so be sure to come hungry! We would like to thank the incredible generosity of our event underwriter, Cole Gilmore, and our sponsoring restaurants: Noodles and Company, Red's Grill, and A Pizza Yen.

## Event Details

### Date

Friday, Aug. 26

### Time

4-6:50 p.m.

### Location

High school parking lot off Mustang Drive and Centre Ave.

### Agenda

- Welcome address by Principal Eric Albur-tus and ceremonial balloon release at 4:15 p.m.
- Several local busi-nesses will sponsor the event and have food available for purchase.
- School tours and technology demon-strations.
- Home opening foot-ball game at 7 p.m.



# A few things to keep in mind as we start the year

o **Homework requests:** If your student is home ill for three or more days, please go to our website's teacher contact page ([www.portageps.org/schools/high/chs/staff/directory](http://www.portageps.org/schools/high/chs/staff/directory)) and call or email those colleagues. They will email back assignments or will notify you that they will leave those assignments in the administration office for you to pick up. By doing this, your son or daughter will be able to avoid falling too far behind. Thanks for your help and teamwork.

o **Pre-arranged/Vacation Homework Requests** are available in the front office. The 10th day Absence Policy applies for all pre-arranged absences, including vacations.

o **If your child has an appointment during the day,** please give him or her a note so that your child can come to the Attendance Office to fill out an Early Dismissal

for the time allowed. When your child returns to school, they must come back to the Attendance Office to fill out an Admit Slip, allowing them back into class.

o **The 10th Day Absence Policy** remains in place and enforced throughout the school year if a student accrues 10 or more absences. Students who have 10 or more absences may earn credit in a class through demonstration of proficiency in the class by passing the final exam with a score of 77.5% or better.

Also, students can "earn back" the time for absences over 10 by studying in the Learning Center after school. Two hours in the program will earn back 1-3 hours on a particular date. Four hours in the program will earn back one full school day on a particular date. So for example, a student who missed 1st through 3rd hours on

a particular date could earn back that time in one 2-hour session, while a student who missed 1st hour on three separate dates would need three 2-hour sessions to earn that time back. If you have any questions, please call your student's assistant principal. Students with a last name starting with A-K: Jason Frink at 323-5262 Students with a last name starting with L- Z: Kim Lummis at 323-5281.

o **Freshmen and sophomores are not allowed to go out to lunch** with anyone but that student's parent. Early dismissals are still needed as well as Admit Slips.

o **We understand that emergencies come up** and you need to call in an Early Dismissal ASAP. Please understand that we do not have many staff members per hour who can get your student, and the Attendance Office does not have the capability

*Continued on page 3*

# Mustang Kick-off

*Special day to welcome freshmen and new students for 2011-12*

We invite you and your incoming freshmen student to join us for an afternoon of orientation activities here **on Thursday, Sept. 1 from 1-3 p.m.** To provide the best possible experience for you and your student, we will be offering a useful format: you choose the activities and workshops you wish to participate in at times that are most convenient! Here's a sampling of our activities:

**In Gymnasium (2 p.m.)**

- Administrator Mini-Workshop (20 minutes): Welcome & introductions, "Mustang Expectations," First day of school, Student Planner, Attendance/Behavior Policies and other elements of starting the year off right

**In Front Hall**

- Guided School Tours led by PCHS students (1-1:50 p.m.).
- Class Schedule Pick Up: Freshmen and New Students can pick up their schedules in the Front Lobby.

**In the Mustang Commons**

- International Baccalaureate program
- Athletic passes available for purchase
- School Store: Will be open for business with T-shirts, sweatshirts, and more!
- Breakfast & Lunch Line Tour: Opportunity to pre-pay for meals
- Meet with advisers of many extracurricular activities
- Yearbook: The 2011-2012 Yearbook will be on sale at a cheaper price
- Newspaper: Subscriptions will be on sale
- And much more. We look forward to seeing you there! Please keep in mind, this is a special day for our incoming freshmen, new students, and their parents. **In order to keep this day special for them, we are asking that only incoming freshmen, new students, and their parents attend the event.** We will have a separate day for upperclassmen. More information on that day on page 4.



# New backpack policy

As we all hustled about last spring and moved everything we needed to the new building, our students were incredible. Hundreds helped teachers pack, pushed carts and hauled boxes, and showed their patience and dedication to this place in the final hours. And it was great to see the look in their eyes as they walked through the new Portage Central High School. With all their questions, though, among the most common was, is it true that we can't carry our book bags from class to class in the new building?

The answer: Yes. Book bags, purses, backpacks and items such as that will stay in lockers during the school day next year.

## The History

Their question makes perfect sense. In the 17+ years I have been here, students had to use book bags and such to navigate about the old PC. It was almost an 1/8 mile from one end to the other. Students did not have their own lockers. And during construction over the past two years, backpacks were even more necessary as kids had to hike out to Waylee Elementary, Central Middle School and the Administration Building.

## What has changed

We designed the new PC to do a few things differently. First, every student will have his or her own locker. This is huge: no longer will students have to wonder if their things are safe, because they will be the only ones issued their own locker and combination. Too, nearly 90% of the classes will be in the two academic wings, so although the new PC looks bigger, it is far less spread out. In a five-minute passing time between classes, students will be able to stop at their lockers and make it to their next classes easily.

Along with their backpacks and purses and such, we will be asking students to keep their electronic devices in their backpacks and thus in their lockers. Theft has always been a problem in high schools; PC is no exception. What has changed is, when you and I were in high school and we had something stolen, an item could be replaced for a few bucks. But today, iPods and cell phones can cost hundreds of dollars. We need our kids to keep their possessions safe.

Finally, for all the years our kids have schlepped around here with bags, we know it was hurting them. Over the years, I have talked with so many incredible parents who work in the health professions, and they explained the damage we are doing to kids' growing bodies as they haul about heavy bags. It would have been unconscionable for us to build a new high school where bags would still be used – for the short- and long-term health of our kids.

## Enforcement

Our expectation is that kids will come to school, will put their packs and purses into their lockers, and will take them home at the end of the day. We will not be barking at kids in the halls to demand they put their bags away. Instead, if they walk into class with a pack or a purse, their teacher will tell them to return it to their lockers, and the student will be tardy to class that period. In a semester, a student receives four "freebie" tardies. After that four, each tardy results in a detention.

Thanks, as always, for your support of your students and their education. And we look forward to seeing you at our Grand Opening, August 26th!

# Seniors recognized for outstanding community service

Shortly after last school year, seniors Jermaine Harris, Fatima Mirza and Sarah Surna earned the Michigan Student Service Award for their dedication to community service. Sponsored by Volunteer Centers of Michigan, the Michigan Student Service Award is a premier, statewide program that recognizes high school graduates who volunteer more than 400 hours, during the course of their high school career.

Harris volunteered more than 400 hours at organizations such as Cheff Therapeutic Riding Center, WoodsEdge Learning Center, Kalamazoo Gospel Mission, Kalamazoo Valley Museum, SPCA, Portage District Library, Kalamazoo Drop-In Child Care Center, Kalamazoo Civic Theatre, Sherman Lake YMCA Camp, the Race Exhibit and others.

Mirza logged more than 420 volunteer hours at places such as the Portage District Library, Van Buren County United Way,

and Kalamazoo Lend-a-Hand. She also helped to found the Portage West Elementary Science Olympiad and the Kalamazoo Muslim Youth Group, donating hours of time as a leader in both of these groups.

Because of her extraordinary work, in 2010 she was chosen as the recipient of the Volunteer Center and Kalamazoo Gazette's STAR Award in the Youth Volunteer category for her outstanding volunteer service.

Surna volunteered more than 517 hours at organizations such as the Portage District Library, Girl Scouts, Portage YMCA, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Salvation Army and American Cancer Society.

Because of these students' extraordinary work and dedication to volunteering, they were presented with the Michigan Student Service Award, a medallion and a Certificate of Excellence signed by the Governor.

## Keep in mind *continued*

to call into a classroom for the Early Dismissal. Please use discretion when calling in an emergency Early Dismissal, and the folks in the Attendance Office will do everything they can to accommodate you.

o We understand that students will forget things at home and will call parents to bring them up to school. **However, we are only able to make deliveries at 10 a.m. and at 1 p.m.** Please have the item clearly marked and what hour the student needs it by; this will make it easier for delivery. Students who forget things frequently will be encouraged to

wait in the office for the items, therefore missing instruction time. If this were to occur regularly, the office will not deliver items to these students.

**o Money that is dropped off for a student will not be delivered.** Instead, a note will be sent to the student to pick it up in the front office. The front office is not responsible for money that is not picked up. **o All visitors must enter through the circle drive, sign in at the Welcome Center and get a visitor's pass.** At times this might be inconvenient. But our students' safety is our number-one concern.

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

NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
KALAMAZOO, MI  
PERMIT NO. 36



## Thank you for your support

Thank you to the parents, relatives, alumni and community members for contributing to the more than 500 inscribed bricks sold for the new Portage Central High School during the two-year brick sale that ended last May.

The school raised nearly \$38,000, which will be used to fund special projects such as improved conference championship and graduation photos, custom racks to display photos and other memorabilia, new state championship banners for the gymnasium and flags for the parking lot light posts.

The goal of the project was to build an area near the entrance where members of the graduating classes of 1949, 1989 or 2009 could all come back and still feel a part of the school.

"We're proud that the new Portage Central High School will be a place where all students, current and former, will feel at home now and in the years to come," said special projects coordinator Kent White. "This is due to the overwhelming generosity of our community and alumni. It's without question this feat could not have been accomplished without their incredible support."



## Private celebration planned for returning students

Your students are incredible. They've handled themselves with complete maturity and grace as they've spent the past two years traveling between Central High, Central Middle, and Waylee for classes. They have watched as their building and school get transformed and have seen, from the sidelines, their new home get built, brick-by-brick, without the opportunity to even see inside. Now we would like to say thank you. On Monday, August 29th from 11 am to 1 pm we will be hosting a student-only open house for

our incoming 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students. This will be their opportunity to spend some time to get to know their new building and take a minute or two to enjoy the outcome of several years of hard work. Of course, no event is complete without food! So we will be providing lunch. Be sure they bring their schedules so they can find their way around for the first day of school.

**Please keep in mind, this is a special day for our upperclassmen students; therefore we ask that only upperclassmen students attend this event.**



*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 email information to Kyle Herm at [kherm@portageps.org](mailto:kherm@portageps.org). The deadline for the October issue of *Mustang Minutes* is Sept. 16.