

PARENT NEWSLETTER

5808 Oregon Ave. ~ Portage, MI 49024 ~ (269) 323-5700

HOME OF THE JR. HUSKIES

PORTAGE NORTH MIDDLE SCHOOL

where... "Failure is NOT an Option!"

February 2012

Now that we have one semester under our belt, the days will seem to move at record speed, so hang on! The highlights for this month begin with the 2012-2013 scheduling process and course selections. The meetings with counselors, orientations for parents, and upcoming Parent Teacher Conferences will help to outline educational plans that will ensure that each and every student is on target for high school and the journey to college and/or career readiness.

Teachers and staff have a thumb on student progress and continue to support each student at his/her point of need. This year our focus on our school improvement goals (Reading, Math, and Positive Behavior Support) has expanded to include the *Jr. Huskie* Book Club, Reading Enhancement Classes, and Mentoring Program.

With the help of a few Portage Northern High School and the Kalamazoo Area Math and Science Center (KAMSC) students, we will be piloting a *Math Counts* pilot club during the second semester. The pilot is open to all students who have an interest in math, enjoy critical thinking, and looking for a fun math challenge. The weekly club meetings will be held Tuesdays from 3:00 – 4:30 p.m., beginning January 31. Our *Math Counts* advisor is Mr. Bryan Johnson. If you and your student would like more information about *Math Counts*, view the website at www.mathcounts.org.

Our Student Leaders are making final plans for the 12th Annual Black History Contest, so remind your student to brush up on our American history and contributions of African Americans to enter the weekly cash prize drawings!

At Portage North Middle School, we are proud to be *Jr. Huskies...Where Failure is Not an Option!*

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PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences will be held:

- February 21, 5:00-8:45 p.m.
- February 22, "Early Release"
Release @ 1:20pm
Parent Teacher Conf. 2pm – 4pm
Break 4pm - 5pm
Parent Teacher Conf. 5pm – 8:15pm

For more information and tips for preparing for parent-teacher conferences see page 6.

PHOTOS FROM THE BIG EVENT—DEC. 8, 2011 (STORY ON PAGE 3)



FEBRUARY 2012

February Celebrations



Black History Month

National Freedom Day—Feb 1

Ground Hog Day—Feb. 2

Valentine's Day—Feb. 14

Random Acts of Kindness Day—Feb. 19

STUDENT LEADERS

6th GRADE STUDENT LEADERS

The current student leaders would like to extend a BIG WELCOME to the new group of 6th grade student leaders for the 2011-12 school year.

Joey Bierlein	Lauren Michelli
Lauren Chavis	Mackenzie Schaaf
Quinn Hanley	Ashlyn Suloff
Caitlyn Hose	Austin Vanderweele
Quinlan Lewis	

BATTLE OF THE BADGES

Our North Campus Police Liaison Officer Nate Slavin would like to invite everyone out to Wings Stadium for the second annual "Battle of the Badges" hockey game between Kalamazoo Public Safety and Portage Public Safety. It is sponsored by the Cuff and Ladder fund, which raises money for slain police officers and firefighters. Last year, over 700 people attended the event that ended with a PPS win in a shoot-out; how exciting! The game is just like any other with announcers for the play by play, sirens for the goals, but will also include special prizes and food pricing. Also, this year the K-Wings mascot will be in attendance and after the game you can enjoy a free kids skate with the players.

If you are interested in a good laugh come on out to Wings Stadium on Saturday, February 11th. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the game starts at 7 p.m. For more information or to buy tickets contact any of the following

Jed Wild 744-5296
 Mike Walker 312-4443
 Frank Orfin 599-8170
 Jeremy Vermeer 517-749-0999

Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 2 to 12.

BOYS BASKETBALL

TEAM UNITY = SUCCESS

It is a known fact that working together on the court can prove successful for any team, but it is how a team builds that unity that sets them apart. This year the boys basketball team was given an opportunity to attend a WMU men's basketball game, which helped create a sense of camaraderie between players. Below is an article from one of the 8th grade team members, Brayden Cullitan about his experience that night.

Making the Connection

On November 30, both our 7th and 8th grade Boys Basketball teams went to watch the Western Michigan University Men's Basketball team annihilate the Flying Dutchman of Hope at University Arena. It was



a good experience for me and my friends to see how they play and how we could relate to them. More than just watching the Broncos beat Hope, it was nice to go out with our coaches and have a good time.

Every basket they put up on the board made it more enjoyable to be there. News Channel 3 even came and got us on camera, thanks to Coach Kaylor. Going to Western Michigan's game that night was a great experience and it really showed that



our coaches cared enough to get us tickets for an event that they didn't have to. I believe each player recognized and appreciated what a great night it was to go watch and learn from experienced players.

The coaches effort in uniting their teams on and off the court certainly reinforced their successful season. The 8th grade boys A team finished their season 5-7 and managed to secure the championship title in overtime with a score of 51-45. The B team had a winning record of 11-1 and also



walked away as champions winning the final game 53-36. Congratulations to the players and coaches.

8TH GRADE



It's back! The Portage Northern High School National Honor Society is excited to sponsor the 3rd annual North Middle School 8th Grade Spelling Bee. There will *bee* an upcoming written qualifying spelling test to determine the top spellers. These finalists will then compete in the Spelling Bee to *bee* held in the Spring at the NHS auditorium. For more information check out the National Honor Society members at 8th Grade Parent Night at NHS on February 8th. Encourage your 8th grader to sign up ASAP! Sign up's will *bee* available at 8th Grade Parent Night.

MAGAZINE DRIVE—BIG EVENT:

Many students participated in the magazine drive event called "The Big Event" and we all had a fantastic time! Students enjoyed rolling around like hamsters and played laser tag with their friends. They also headed outside to play a variety of video games in the huge heated company semi trailer. A BIG thanks to our parent volunteers Cindy Vanderweele, Kristie Chavis and Colleen Stimley for joining us in the fun! Congratulations to all those students who participated. PNMS is proud of your efforts and thanks you for your continued dedication.

ALL GRADES

TALENT SHOW:

It's time to tune up those instruments, warm-up those voices and put on those dancin' shoes because North Middle School's Annual Talent Show is quickly approaching.



An introductory meeting will be held in the North Middle School "Little Theatre" on Wednesday, February 1. Auditions for the talent show will be held Tuesday, February 28 after school. The talent show will be on Friday, March 23 at the Portage Northern Auditorium. Be sure to mark your calendars! Mr. Moiles and his student leaders encourage everyone to start practicing and to be prepared.

"THE ONLY REASON YOU SHOULD STAND OVER SOMEONE IS TO HELP THEM UP."

~ MARK ROBB, SONS OF THUNDER

On Tuesday, January 24, during 1st hour our NMS students attended an assembly covering topics such as bullying, teamwork, respect, academic excellence, perseverance, etc. This presentation was brought to us by the Sons of Thunder which includes athletes such as American Gladiator Paul Rogers (Thor) & former Mr. Michigan & Mr. America Don Foor. They discussed the aforementioned subjects as well as performed



Mark Robb curling a frying pan.

feats of strength such as tearing a phonebook in half, curling an iron frying pan, & one of them even broke a wooden bat with his back. The issues discussed by the group really seemed to make an impact on the students as they were engaged in the personal stories the gentlemen told about their lives and

VALENTINE'S PARTY:

Student Leadership would also like to remind everyone that NMS will be celebrating Valentine's Day with a rocking party on Friday, February 10. The pool will also be open. The party will begin after school and run until 4:30. To be eligible all students must be free from any major referrals or suspensions to the office. We want everyone to go! The cost of the party is \$1.00 and candy and soda can be purchased for \$0.50 each. Please remind your student that the Jr. Huskie Way is expected at ALL events here at NMS.



Dr. Harris with the Sons of Thunder!

how to overcome adversity. The students and staff alike enjoyed the presentation and want to thank the Sons of Thunder for coming to NMS.

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News

The PTO is again encouraging students to strive for the best grades possible this marking period. All students who achieve an average grade of a B or higher (3.0) will be rewarded during an upcoming lunch hour after grades have been reported. Special thanks to Donna Dillon for coordinating the PTO Penny War – the 6th grade won, congrats! But a big thank you to all students who together raised \$665 for needy families. Please attend the next PTO meeting, Feb. 17, from noon to 1:00 p.m. in the Media Center.

NORTHERN HIGH SCHOOL BAND 2012-13:

8th Grade Band Parents: The Band Boosters is the official parent organization of the Portage Northern Band program. One of our most important meetings of the year will be held from 7-8:00 p.m. Feb. 8, in the band room, where we will explain how you can begin earning money for your student's account NEXT year by participating in the MEGA HUGE Band Boosters Garage Sale in the Doghouse THIS April. We realize high school orientation is also this evening, so please consider dropping by as you tour the high school, or have one parent attend our meeting while the other tours the school. For more info, contact Jenny Snyder at synsny@charter.net.

8th Grade Band Students and Parents -- Check out the new Northern band recruitment site, www.joinpnbands.org -- student videos, Q&A, lots of good stuff you'll want to check out. We hope you'll consider lending your talents to Northern next year! Also, there's a band boosters meeting on Feb. 8 from 7-8, where boosters will be discussing the upcoming garage sale -- a key fundraiser for each student's account - and 8th grade parents are strongly encouraged to attend to get in on this now, to raise funds toward your student's band fees. This takes place during 8th grade orientation at the high school, so please drop in or send one parent to the band boosters meeting while the other tours the school. Contact Julie Brown, band recruitment chair, at 217-1988 for details.

All 8th Grade Parents:
Even if your student is not a musician, there's a place for him/her in the Marching Band—as a mem-

ber of the Color Guard! The Marching Band will be creating an incredible field show with hit songs from the movie The Lion King, and they need LOTS of non-musical performers to learn dance moves and how to work with flags and props. Perfect for students who enjoy dancing and theatre. Auditions are coming up Jan. 31 and Feb. 2 from 6:30-9 at North. It is recommended that students attend both. No prior experience is necessary! You will be taught everything you need to know. For more info, go to www.joinpnbands.org.

GRAB 'N' GO BREAKFAST SUCCESS

The new breakfast program is still in its infancy, but the impact it has had on the students is far from small. With the willingness and help from staff here at North Middle School, the Grab 'N' Go breakfast program has become a part of everyday life for the six hundred plus students. Knowing that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, students are turning out in large numbers every morning. The following information has been compiled by the food service department.

- The average participation is 190 students per day - an increase of 366% over last year's average of 51 students per day.
- Of the 5702 breakfasts we have served in the past 30 days – 68% are to our meal benefit students at NMS.

MANAGE YOUR STUDENT'S FOOD SERVICE ACCOUNT ONLINE

Adding money to your child's food service account has never been easier! With the help of SendMoneytoSchool.com, parents are able to add money to food service accounts with a credit or debit card. The site also allows parents to view balance and transaction information, transfer funds between students' accounts and provides the opportunity to place purchasing restrictions on the accounts. SendMoneytoSchool.com is available to students in all grade levels. Information on how to create your account can be found on the districts website:

www.portageps.org/departments/foods.

Select the NEW! Online Lunch Account Balances from the menu on the right hand side of the page and you are on your way!

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY TIPS

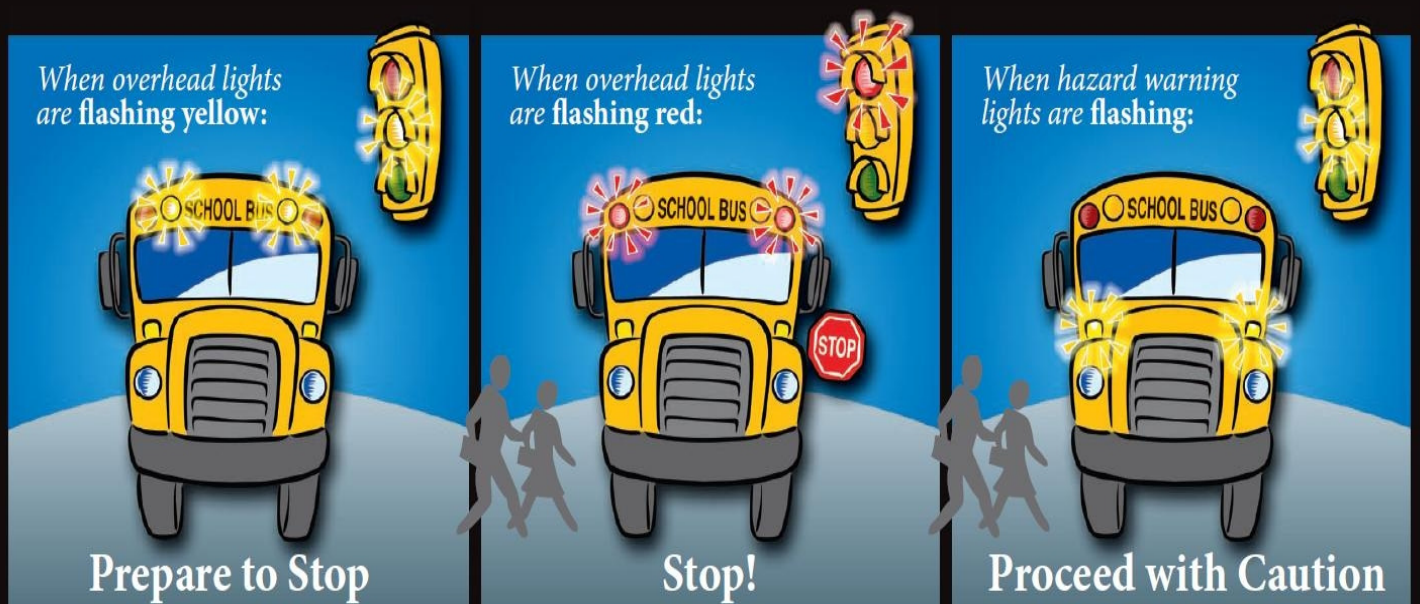
- Prepare to stop when a slowing bus has its overhead yellow lights flashing.
- Stop at least 20 feet away for buses when red lights are flashing, unless driving in the opposite direction on a divided highway.
- Slow down in or near school and residential areas.
- Look for clues — such as safety patrols, crossing guards, bicycles and playgrounds — that indicate children might be in the area.
- Watch for children between parked cars and other objects.
- Use additional caution in bad weather.

Not paid for with state funds. Paid for with funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning
4000 Collins Road, P.O. Box 30633
Lansing, MI 48909-8133
www.michigan.gov/ohsp

~For news about Winter Transportation see page 7

School Buses are Like Traffic Signals



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PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences will be held:

February 21, 5:00-8:45 p.m.

February 22, 2:00-4:00 p.m.

5:00-8:15 p.m.

Early Release on February 22, at 1:20 p.m.

There are staff members who work in more than one building for PPS. These teachers must have conference hours in each building. We have listed those teachers and their availability for NMS for your planning convenience.

The following traveling teachers will be available for conferences on Tues., February 21:

~Mrs. Goddey, Mrs. Grand

The following traveling teachers will be available for conferences on Wed., February 22:

~Mr. Bartz, Mr. Dee, Mrs. DeGroot, Mr. Hazen

PARENT TIPS FOR CONFERENCES:

Before the conference...

- Talk to your child so that he/she understands that you and the teacher are working together.
- Find out your child's favorite classes and why.
- Make a list of the questions you want to ask the teacher and any information you want to share.

During the conference...

- Ask questions - questions that you ask during the conference can help you express how you are feeling regarding a particular project, class, teacher, etc.
- Ask the most important question first.
- Expect to spend about ten minutes with each teacher. Make an appointment if more time is needed.

After the conference...

- Stress the positive things first with your middle school student that were covered during the conference
- Be direct about the problems and/or areas of improvement that were discussed.
- If an action plan is needed, develop it with your child.
- Stay in touch with the teacher by email and/or classroom phone.

5th GRADE PARENT NIGHT AT NORTH MIDDLE SCHOOL FEBRUARY 1, 2012 6:30 P.M.

Portage North Middle School is inviting all 5th grade **parents only** to an informational orientation on Wednesday, February 1 at 6:30 p.m. This orientation will introduce parents to the curriculum provided at the middle school level and they will experience the sixth grade schedule that their students will have during the 2012-2013 school year.

Parents will also receive the Parent Orientation handbook outlining middle school learning, North Middle School's policies, elementary-to-middle school transition advice, and much more information that will be helpful to new middle schoolers and their parents. Again we reiterate that this is for parents only. Students will have an opportunity to receive information during their two scheduled visits later in the year. Mark your calendar and if you have any questions, you may contact North Middle School at 323-5700.

8th GRADE PARENT NIGHT AT NORTHERN HIGH SCHOOL FEBRUARY 8, 2012 6:30 P.M. – AUDITORIUM

Eighth Grade Parents' Night is scheduled for 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, February 8 at Northern High School. The program will begin in the high school Auditorium with a brief general session, followed by your choice of several group meetings with departmental representatives. The program will conclude at approximately 8:45 p.m. Students are invited and encouraged to accompany their parents to this orientation.

If your student is considering participation in the International Baccalaureate Program during their junior and/or senior year, we encourage you to meet with Northern's IB Coordinator, Rick Searing, at an informational session on Wednesday, February 1st at 6:00 pm in the PNHS Community Rooms.

The evening is structured as a question and answer session targeted at incoming 8th graders, as well as

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current PN 9th & 10th grade students who are interested in more information about enrolling IB coursework in their Junior or Senior year.

The session will also provide a great opportunity for students and families to ask questions that they might have about the IB Diploma process before selecting their schedule for Fall 2012.

All interested students and their parents are invited. If you would like more information and are unable to attend the meeting, don't hesitate to contact the IB Office at 323.5474 or rsearing@portageps.org.

We hope that you will take advantage of this opportunity to participate in the educational planning for your son or daughter who will be attending PNHS as a 9th grader in the Fall of 2012. We look forward to seeing you at the Parents' Night program on February 8th, at 6:30 p.m.

High School Scheduling Information for Parents of 8th Grade Students

The time is fast-approaching for your son or daughter to begin preparing for their transition to Northern High School. One of the most important factors that determine student academic success at the high school level is ensuring that your child's schedule is appropriate and meets his/her needs and interests.

Your son or daughter's assigned high school counselor will be meeting with their assigned students in small groups on Wednesday February 1 during 2nd and 3rd hours. All students will receive a **copy** of the scheduling form that they will fill out the following day in each of their 8th grade core classes, receiving 8th grade teacher core recommendations (required). A follow-up question and answer session regarding 9th Grade Scheduling will take place for interested students on Tuesday February 7 during 1st hour. **It is very important that your student discuss their selections/teacher recommendations with you, get your signature, and bring back to their HOMEROOM TEACHER no later than Friday, February 10, 2012.**

Reminders from the high school counselors:

- * Choose your courses carefully. Staffing is based on student selections in the spring and schedules will not likely be changed, except in the case of class size limitations.
- * Use your *Program of Studies* and your *Registration/Selection Form* for course selection options and course requirements.
- * Seminar hour, teachers, and lunch hour requests are not permitted.
- * Check graduation requirements in the Program of Studies to make sure you are on target for graduation.

Northern High School Student Services:

High School Counselor Assignments are identified by students' last names:

A-D:	Mrs. Shari Smith	323-5527
E-K:	Mrs. Krista Hovestadt	323-5420
L-Q:	Ms. Amy DiMaggio	323-5472
R-Z:	Mrs. Cindy Figueroa	323-5424

Continued from page 5

WINTER TRANSPORTATION

"Why Is The Bus Late?"

As weather and road conditions challenge us at this time of year, our bus drivers are instructed to think safety before schedule. Therefore, some of our routes may be delayed in picking up and/or dropping off students. Our drivers will continue on their routes and service all accessible bus stops. Please have your students wait at their bus stops. For current information about your student's bus, you may call the transportation office at 323-5151. We are here until the last regularly scheduled student is delivered home safely every school day. Thank you in advance for your patience and understanding during inclement road and weather conditions.

FEBRUARY 2012

Jr. Huskie Athletics

Girls Basketball:

- February 2 7th grade vs. Maple St.
8th grade @ Maple St.
3:30pm
- February 7 7th grade @ Mattawan
8th grade vs. Mattawan
3:30pm
- February 9 7th grade @ Linden Grove
8th grade vs. Linden Grove
3:30pm
- February 14 7th grade vs. Central
8th grade @ Central
3:30pm
- February 16 7th grade vs. Mattawan
8th grade @ Mattawan
3:30pm

Wrestling:

- February 2 North & West @ **Vicksburg**
4:00 p.m.
- February 4 Tournament @ **Allegan**
9:00 a.m.
- February 7 North @ **Marshall**
4:30pm
- February 8 Linden Grove & Mattawan
@ **North**
3:30pm
- February 11 Tournament @ **Central**
9:00 a.m.
- February 13 North & Mattawan @ **Central**
5:00 p.m.
- February 15 North & Hillside @ **Maple St.**
3:30pm
- February 18 League Meet @ **West**
9:00 a.m.
- February 22 North @ **West**
4:00 p.m.
- February 25 **Gull Lake (HS) Tournament**
9:00 a.m.

LOOKING AHEAD



Swimming:

Practice will begin on Tuesday, April 10. All students in grades 6-8 may participate. The meet schedule can be found on the NMS athletic website. For additional information contact Coach Nikole Lahaie.

Track & Field:

Practice will begin on March 26, 2012. All students can participate in track however 6th graders can not run in league track meets. For further information contact Coach Stephanie Wagner.

Intramural Volleyball:

Volleyball will take place March 12-23. All students in 6th - 8th grade are welcome to participate. Practice will take place from 3-4:30 in the NMS gym. For more information contact Coach Jim Moiles.

****Attention future Portage Northern athletes.** Scheduling will be starting soon for your freshmen year. If you plan to be an athlete at Northern, your coaches recommend that you choose Power Training as one of your elective classes.

Portage Athletic Foundation's
Steppin' Out at the State

Please join us on **JAN. 28th**
Kalamazoo State Theatre
7:30pm- 12:30am

Live Entertainment from:
Al's Basement Band
2nd Shift

- Live Auction
- Silent Auction
- Free Appetizers
- Cash Bar

\$25 advance/\$30 door
Email paf@portageps.org or call 269-823-4214 for tickets

Superbowl Pre-Game Warm-Up

Portage Athletic Foundation

good music - good times - great cause



The 4th Annual “Steppin’ Out at the State” is a social event sponsored by the Portage Athletic Foundation, with all proceeds supporting Portage Public Schools’ athletics. The event will be held Saturday, January 28, 2012 from 7:30 p.m.–12:30 a.m. at the historic State Theater downtown Kalamazoo. Tickets are \$25 per person or \$30 at the door (must be 21 to enter). To purchase tickets contact a PAF Board Member, request via paf@portageps.org, or call 269.823.4214. Free appetizers, cash bar, live auction, and silent auction.

FEBRUARY 2012



Calendar subject to change with 48 hours notice.

JANUARY 2012

All-School Musical

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 Rehearsal 3-5 NMS Music Rooms Music/Blocking Pages 35-44	10 Sixth Grade Select Choir 3-4 PM	11 Rehearsal 3-5 NMS Music Rooms Music/Blocking Pages 35-44	12 Rehearsal 3-5 <u>Dance Poultry Tale</u> Mandatory Parent Meeting 7-8 PM NMS Choir Rm.	13 Participation fee due to Mr. Jordan. Dance Sectional 3-5 PM <u>Dance Joy of Motherhood; Different;</u>	14
15	16 Rehearsal 3-5 NMS Music Rooms Music/Blocking Pages 44-54 <u>Dance Poultry Tale</u>	17 Sixth Grade Select Choir 3-4 PM	18 Rehearsal 3-5 NMS Music Rooms Music/Blocking Pages 44-54	19 Rehearsal 3-5 NMS Music Rooms <u>Dance Warts and All</u>	20 Dance Sectional 3-5 PM <u>Dance Look at Him</u>	21
22	23 Rehearsal 3-5 NMS Music Rooms Music/Blocking Pages 54-64 <u>Dance Look at Him</u>	24 Sixth Grade Select Choir 3-4 PM	25 Rehearsal 3-5 NMS Music Rooms Music/Blocking Pages 54-64 <u>Dance Warts and</u>	26 Rehearsal 3-5 NMS Music Rooms <u>Dance Wild Goose Chase</u>	27 No School	28
29	30 Rehearsal 3-5 NMS Music Rooms Music/Blocking Pages 64-72 <u>Dance Wild Goose</u>	31 Sixth Grade Select Choir 3-4 PM				

PORTAGE NORTH MS

Robert Jordan, Director

Phone: 269-323-5742

E-mail: rjordan@portageps.org



**NORTH MIDDLE
SCHOOL HOME OF
THE JR. HUSKIES**

School Address:
5808 Oregon Ave.
Portage, MI
49024

Phone: (269) 323-5700
Fax: (269) 323-5790



Mission Statement:
North Middle School is an educational community that embraces learning and celebrates achievements.

Administration:
Dr. A. Celeste Shelton-Harris
Principal

Mr. Craig Medd, Ed.M.
Assistant Principal

Guidance Department:
Mrs. Jessie Bierlein, LPC
Counselor

Mrs. Alysia Lehmann, NCC
Counselor


FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Americans have recognized black history annually since 1926, first as "Negro History Week" and later as "Black History Month". What you might not know is that black history had barely begun to be studied—or even documented—when the tradition originated. We owe the celebration of Black History Month, and more importantly, the study of black history, to Dr. Carter G. Woodson.

This year, North Middle School is recognizing Black History Month by emphasizing key facts from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) to other contributions in education and in the workplace. NMS will continue to study the history of all people throughout the year, and the contributions each group has added to the growth and development of the United States.



FEBRUARY CALENDAR

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			1 Talent Show Info Meeting	2 Ground Hog Day	3	4
5	6	7	8 5th Grade Parent Night	9	10 All-School Valentine's Party 3-4:30	11
12	13	14 	15	16 Anti-Bullying Speaker 1:10 p.m.	17 PTO Mtg. 12-1:00 p.m.	18
19	20	21 Conferences 5:00-8:45 pm	22 Conferences 2:00-4:00 & 5:00-8:15 pm	23	24 Mid-Winter Break : NO SCHOOL	25
26	27	28 Talent Show Auditions	29			