

# Portland High School Newsletter

*September 2021*

I am incredibly grateful for the smooth start of our 2021-22 school year! This past week I had the opportunity to visit classrooms and witness wonderful collaborative and group activities happening in classrooms. Students were working together solving function machines in Mrs. Green's Math class, making safety posters in Mrs. Coyne's Science class, playing alphabet icebreakers in Ms. Cloutier's English class, and building cup towers as a team in Ms. Chapko's Science class. This is just the beginning of the list! The PHS team is focused on building back the connections that are so necessary for our learning environment. I hope that your students are sharing these great stories as they come home at night. I enjoy seeing them smile and learn throughout the day here on campus!

I am excited to share these stories with you and look forward to many more throughout the year!

*Jamie DeWitt  
Principal  
Portland High School*

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In this newsletter, you'll find:

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- Pick up and Drop Off Times
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## Important Dates

- ❑ September 3 - No school (Labor day Break)
- ❑ September 6 - No school (Labor day Break)
- ❑ September 7 - School resumes
- ❑ September 7 - 17 - NWEA Fall Testing Window (Math, Science and ELA)
- ❑ September 8 - Picture Day
- ❑ September 17 - Constitution Day
- ❑ September 24 - No Students, Teacher training day
- ❑ October 8 - Half day all students
- ❑ October 13, 19/20, 26 - Optional PSAT / SAT date (see details below)
- ❑ October 28 - Ionia county college fair (Save the date!)
- ❑ October 29 - No Students and end of 1st Marking Period (Quarter 1)

## Pick up and Drop off times

Here are the [daily schedules](#) for PHS.

The school doors open at 7:15 for students to enter.

A traditional full day will start at 7:30 and end at 2:20.

## NWEA Fall Testing

Students will begin NWEA testing in their Math, Science and English classes just after the labor day break. The purpose of this testing is to establish if there are students who need extra support. The test is administered on the student computers and the test is unique and adaptive to each individual student. The NWEA happens three times a year and helps us monitor student progress and needs throughout the year.

## Picture Day

Picture day is September 8th!

Any students who need retakes, this will happen October 14. Picture packets will be sent home with your student in their cadre class later this week. We will also have extras available. Even if you are not buying pictures, please make sure your student has their photo taken for their picture ID and for Skyward.

## eLearn Classes

Any student taking an online class, called “elearn,” will remain on campus during the assigned period. Students will report daily to the Media Center during their assigned period and will be required sign-in with Mrs. Castro, Media Center Specialist, at the beginning of the period.

Students should treat this as a classroom through appropriate behavior, attendance and execution of work. Students enrolled in an elearn class are expected to adhere to all school and Media Center policies and procedures. It is critical that students progress efficiently and timely through the course. If any student struggles with any of the requirements above we may find placement for that student in a standard classroom.

## Exams and Attendance

In previous years, it was policy that students with few absences could waive their requirement to take exams in their classes. For many reasons, this policy was not upheld last year and, again, will not be policy this year. Two main reasons are as follows.

1. Students are asked to remain home when sick and when they may have been exposed to illnesses including, but not limited to, COVID19. Before the COVID pandemic, our whole culture wore our ability to push through a day while ill as a badge of honor. If anything was learned over the past 18 months, it's that all of us should stay home when we aren't feeling well to heal and to keep others free from exposure to illness. Students at PHS will not be penalized for staying home for illnesses but should also remain responsible and responsive to the learning that is happening while they are home.
2. The purpose of any end-of-course or end-of-semester exam is for teachers and students to discuss progress on learning objectives and learning goals. Any exam should be purposeful and meaningful for the learning experience. Each class and course will have a different spin on exams. Some will still give traditional exams, while others will use projects or other opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning. This may change the way that the end of semester works at PHS, but it's a change that is focused on meaningful assessment for all students.

If you have any questions about these shifts and changes, please contact Mrs. DeWitt.

## State Testing - Fall Dates

The Michigan Department of Education is offering state tests for free this fall. Students in grades 9-11 will still be taking the required tests this April. This is an additional optional test date if you are interested. We are tentatively looking at:

- Wednesday, October 13th for SENIORS who want to take the SAT
- Tuesday or Wednesday, October 19/20 for FRESHMAN who want to take the PSAT 9
- Tuesday, October 26th for SOPHOMORES AND JUNIORS who want to take the PSAT 10 or PSAT/NMSQT. The PSAT/NMSQT is only for juniors. It is the qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship.

**Interested students - please sign up in the counseling office by Tuesday, September 7th.**

PHS (and all schools) will still be giving the required assessments this spring, which include the PSAT 8/9, PSAT 10, SAT, ACT Workkeys, and MSTEP. These fall testing dates are another opportunity for testing for students who wish to take them.

## SAT and ACT Fall Dates

### **SAT National Test Date: Saturday, October 2nd @ PHS**

If you would like to test on this day, and receive free or reduced lunch and are a junior or senior, you may get a fee waiver from your counselor. This test is not offered for free to all students and usually costs about \$55.

Go to [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) to register for this test.

The deadline to register for the SAT is Friday, September 3 (Tuesday, September 21 for late registration).

### **ACT National Test Date: Saturday, October 23rd @ PHS**

If you receive free or reduced lunch and are a junior or senior, you may receive a fee waiver. All other students, the cost (no writing) is \$60.

Register for this test at [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)

The deadline to register for the ACT is Friday, September 17 (Friday, October 1 for late registration).

## Seeking Help- FIRST Robotics

PHS is seeking someone to coach our FIRST Robotics team! This is a great opportunity to get involved with the STEM efforts at PPS. This is a paid position and anyone interested can find out more by emailing Kevin Veale at [kveale@portlandk12.org](mailto:kveale@portlandk12.org).

[Check out more about FIRST here.](#)



## Skyward

All families and students should have access to Skyward, either through the app or the website. This is essential as it is the way you view student progress, attendance, class updates, and more. We have also enabled an automatic email to be generated from Skyward every Sunday that will include grades for each class. Teachers are responsible for updating grades on a weekly basis. Families are encouraged to keep an eye on student progress within Skyward.

Please call the main office if you have questions with your account!

## Absences

If your student is going to be absent for any reason this year, please give us a call to excuse their absence or you can email Mrs. Cochrane at [bcochrane@portlandk12.org](mailto:bcochrane@portlandk12.org). All absences should be excused within 24 hours.

## Requests for chromebooks

Your student had an opportunity to check out chromebooks over the past week. At any point in time, students may check out a chromebook from the media center if they have a chromebook agreement form completed.

Students are responsible for their Chromebook all semester, which includes damages. Students who check out devices will be asked to return the exact same device back in at the end of the year.

Students who are in occasional need can check out devices at any point during the year without a long-term checkout. This may be helpful for some students who do have a personal device that they can use at school and at home.