

Celebrating the Class of 2020

Pittsford Central School District found new ways to honor its graduates during this unique time in history when the COVID-19 pandemic cut the 2019-20 school year short and eliminated most of the usual time-honored senior class traditions. Special recognitions included Class of 2020 yard signs, a Facebook frame honoring Pittsford graduates, a motor vehicle parade down Main Street Pittsford on June 6, and outdoor live-streamed graduation ceremonies on July 25, by appointment, for each senior. Speeches from Superintendent Pero and the class presidents kicked the graduations off and were aired two more times throughout the day.

A video of the parade is posted to the Pittsford Central School District channel on YouTube, and a photo album of the parade is on the District's Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/PittsfordCentralSchoolDistrict.

To view videos of the graduations, visit the Pittsford Central School District channel on YouTube.



Reopening School Plans

On August 7, 2020, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that all NYS schools can open if daily infection rates stay at 5% or lower in a region over a 14-day average and don't exceed 9% in a given region over a seven-day average.



Following Governor Cuomo's July 13 announcement of the NYS guidance for the reopening of schools, Pittsford Central School District constructed and submitted its reopening plans to the state, incorporating the mandatory elements outlined in NYSED's School Reopening Guidance Document, in compliance with the governor's July 31 deadline. To view the plan and any ongoing updates, visit www.pittsfordschools.org/reopeningplans.

Instructional Road Mapping

This summer, teachers from all grade levels and nearly all courses came together to engage in the creation of modified instructional road maps for the unique school year ahead. Teachers considered the REAL criteria (Readiness, Endurance, Assessments, Leverage) from Larry Ainsworth to come to agreement on the "super hero" essential standards while constructing their instructional road maps. Consideration was also given to places within the curriculum where teachers will need to pay particular attention to pre-assessments and supports needed in order to fill the known and unknown learning gaps.

Making time in teaching plans to re-acclimate students after nearly six months of being out of school buildings, providing students with instruction on the use of the District's common technology platforms, and attending to the social/emotional needs of learners through the thoughtful building of relationships and classroom culture will take priority during the first few weeks of the school year.

All of these factors, combined with the realities of what learning models will look like this year, require teachers to think carefully about what, in each of their respective curricula, is most essential and how best to effectively engage students in that learning. The collaborative work towards these goals resulted in a shared understanding of, and commitment to, an instructional road map for this school year.

Pittsford Ranked as Top School District for 10th Consecutive Year

Pittsford Central School District has been ranked the top school district for the tenth consecutive year in Business First's 2020 academic rankings for the Rochester Area, which consists of eight counties and 67 school districts. PCSD has earned this number one position since Business First debuted these rankings for Rochester's eight-county region in 2010.



Among 88 public high schools in the Rochester Area, Pittsford Mendon High School and Pittsford Sutherland High School were ranked number one and two, respectively, based on four years of Regents test data and graduation rates from NYSED. Both schools also received Subject Awards for ranking in the top 10 percent in English, math, science and social studies.

Among 99 public middle schools rated in the Rochester Area, Barker Road Middle School and Calkins Road Middle School were ranked number one and two, respectively.

PCSD's five elementary schools were ranked among the top 10 public elementary schools in the Rochester area out of 164 schools rated by Business First.

Five Students Named 2020 National Merit Scholars

Five Pittsford Central School District graduating seniors were named National Merit Scholarship winners for 2019-2020. They were chosen from more than 15,000 finalists and an initial pool of over 1.5 million U.S. students who took the PSAT/NMSQT, a qualifying test, to compete for approximately 7,600 National Merit Scholarships worth more than \$31 million. Congratulations to the following 2020 PCSD graduates who earned these awards:

Mendon High School:

- Megan Deuel
- Kyle Owlett

Sutherland High School:

- Sierra Bornheim
- Hannah Kim
- Elise McCamant

Congratulations also to the following PCSD Class of 2020 students who were among the fewer than 1% of the nation's high school

seniors to advance to the finalist level: Mendon High School students Kanhai Amin, Patrick Dai, Christopher Kukla, Anthony Mazzacane, Meera Pandya, Paul Soliman, Sadie Wallis, Hanna Wiandt; and Sutherland High School students Caroline Hoy, Cody Uman, William Wang.



The National Merit Scholars were selected by a committee of college admissions officers and high school counselors who appraised information submitted by both the finalists and their high schools, including academic records and the difficulty level of subjects studied and grades earned; standardized test scores; contributions and leadership in school and community activities; student essays; and a recommendation written by a high school official.

PCSD Board of Education President and Vice President Announced

The Pittsford Central School District Board of Education elected its president and vice president at the Board reorganization meeting on July 14, 2020. Amy Thomas was re-elected as president, and Ted Aroesty was elected as vice president.



Amy J. Thomas



Ted Aroesty

In her fourth term on the Board of Education, Mrs. Thomas has served as president since 2017 and previously served as vice president from 2016-17. Mr. Aroesty is serving his third term on the Board of Education. For additional Board of Education information, please visit the District website at www.pittsfordschools.org.

Mendon and Sutherland High Schools Ranked in the Top 1% Nationwide by U.S. News & World Report

Pittsford Mendon and Sutherland High Schools were among the top 1% of U.S. high schools in U.S. News & World Report's 2020 Best High Schools Rankings. Sutherland and Mendon High Schools were ranked number one and two among Rochester area high schools, respectively. Sutherland High School was ranked 27 in New York State and 240 in the nation. Mendon High School was ranked 30 in New York State and 253 in the nation.

U.S. News evaluated more than 17,700 public high schools across the U.S. and more than 1,200 in New York State. Schools were evaluated based on six indicators, including college readiness, reading and math proficiency, reading and math performance, underserved student performance, college curriculum breadth and graduation rates.



New Roof at Barker Road Middle School

Over the summer, construction teams replaced the roof of Barker Road Middle School, a project that was funded by existing funds in the General Capital Reserve Fund and was authorized by voters as part of the 2020-21 budget vote.



Allen Creek Elementary, Park Road Elementary, Calkins Road Middle, and Sutherland High Schools to Receive Title I Funds

Pittsford Central School District is receiving Title I Targeted Assistance funds again this year. For this reason, the District is required to publish its "Program and Projects Funded by Title I" policy (#8260) adopted by the Board of Education on May 23, 2005. The policy is as follows:

Programs/ Projects Funded By Title I

Parental Involvement

The Board of Education recognizes the rights of parent/guardians to be fully informed of all information relevant to their children who participate in programs and projects funded by Title I. The District shall ensure parental involvement in these programs and projects by:

- Providing such support for parental involvement activities as required by law;
- Convening an annual meeting to which all parents/guardians of participating children shall be invited;
- Providing parents/guardians with reports on their children's progress;
- Providing opportunities for regular meetings of parents/guardians.

In addition to the above, the District shall, jointly and in agreement with parents of students receiving Title I services, establish expectations for parent involvement in Title I programs in accordance with Section 1118(a) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Similarly, each school receiving Title I Targeted Assistance funds shall establish building level school/parent involvement policies in accordance with Section 1118(b). Such school/parent policies shall include, where applicable, school-parent compacts outlining how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help students achieve the state's high standards.

Comparability of Services

The District shall ensure equivalence among the schools in the District of the same grade span and levels of instruction with regard to teachers, administrators and auxiliary personnel as well as equivalence in the provision of curriculum materials and instructional supplies in the schools receiving Title I Targeted Assistance.

Cultural Proficiency Programs and Initiatives

While the pandemic upended in-school learning and has temporarily changed life as we know it, Pittsford Central School District has continued on its steady course in leading the way towards a fully inclusive and culturally proficient school community. Our passion for continuous improvement and building relationships so that every child experiences equity, validation and a sense of belonging, is unwavering and stronger than ever. During the 2019-20 school year, administrators and staff participated in numerous activities around cultural proficiency.

The Dignity for All Students Act: Overview and Practice (August 2020)

On August 12, the Pittsford District PTSA hosted "The Dignity for All Students Act: Overview and Practice" online event with presentations from Dr. Patricia Vaughan-Brogan, Ed.D., PCSD Director of Student Services and Dignity Act Coordinator, and Dr. Shaun Nelms, Ed.D., the William and Sheila Konar Director for the Center for Urban Education Success at University of Rochester's Warner School of Education. The event provided the history, purpose and objectives of New York State's Dignity for All Students Act (The Dignity Act or DASA) which seeks to provide the State's public elementary and secondary school students with a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property, a school bus and/or at a school function. Discussion included the challenges with the implementation and practice of DASA, what types of incidents necessitate DASA reporting, how to file a DASA report, district follow up and responsibilities for investigating and mitigating further bullying, and why reporting is crucial to creating an equitable learning environment for all students.



Curriculum Modifications (ongoing)

Over the past several years, the District has taken a focused look at the representation of diversity throughout curriculum resources, particularly in the areas of English/Language Arts and Social Studies. New text selections for English classes have been made to provide additional opportunities for all students to see themselves represented in those texts while also having a window into the lives of others. As all 12th grade English courses have been revised to become full-year courses, teachers have had the opportunity to incorporate diverse texts throughout all of the offerings. In addition, an entirely new course "English 12: Visibility" has a unique focus investigating race, class, ability, and gender in language and literature.

In reviewing the K-12 social studies curriculum, units of study have been identified that lend themselves to engaging students more purposefully with historical documents representing diverse perspectives, social justice, and civic-mindedness. This summer, U.S. History teachers for grades 7, 8, and 11 reviewed current textbook resources through the lens of diverse representation and identified new resources that will be used to supplement, or replace, existing texts.

In addition, as part of the commitment made by all area Superintendents to develop curriculum specific to the history and impacts of racism in our local community, PCSD is participating in the collaborative work led by BOCES and the University of Rochester on the writing and piloting of lessons for eighth and eleventh grade U.S. History classes. These standards-aligned inquiries will address local issues like "red lining," which refers to local, state and federal housing policies beginning in the 1930s that mandated segregation and the Federal Housing Administration's refusal to issue mortgages in and near African-American neighborhoods.

Cultural Proficiency Training (July 2019 – ongoing)

District administrators and staff continued to engage in workshops and training with Generation Ready national experts in cultural proficiency during the 2019-20 school year. In addition to a series of workshops staff members participated in throughout the school year, "equity learning walks" were conducted in Pittsford schools to evaluate cultural proficiency and make recommendations for areas of improvement. Generation Ready experts visited secondary schools and classrooms and participated in a variety of activities including meetings with principals, conducting focus groups for teachers, students and parents, and reviewing classroom and building processes and procedures. They will visit elementary schools in 2020-21 (if conditions allow due to COVID-19).

This comprehensive review, diagnostic, planning and implementation process supports schools in closing the achievement gap by ensuring that the teaching and learning process and experience:

- Is free from bias, stereotyping and prejudice (whether intentional or unwitting)
- Is inclusive
- Values and celebrates diversity
- Supports the statutory requirements and duties placed upon schools and colleges to promote equality, challenge discrimination and unequal treatment, and eliminate discrimination

Professional Development (2019 – ongoing)

PCSD administrators and staff members participated in numerous professional development seminars and workshops in support of the District's initiative towards continuous improvement and continual cultural competency and proficiency, including:

- Classes on "Cultural Competency and the Classroom: Improving Social, Emotional, and Academic Outcomes for Students of Color"
- Culturally Responsive Teaching & the Brain* Book Study
- Classes on "Microaggressions - What are they and how do I respond to them?"
- Nineteen staff members completed training and became certified to Conduct Community-Building Restorative Circles.
- Building-level workshops were conducted on the topic of "Cultural Proficiency in our Schools" during a Superintendent Conference Day and was offered as part of a PEOP academy for clerical staff.
- PCSD administrators and key personnel attended a full-day training session offered by Generation Ready on "Assessing Student Opportunities and Access."

Code of Conduct Review (2018-2020)

In August of 2019, a committee comprised of representatives of stakeholder groups who hold a natural interest in the Code of Conduct, including PCSD administrators, staff, students, community partners, and PTSA parents/guardians was formed to perform a comprehensive review of the District's Code of Conduct. The goal of the committee was to offer short-term revisions and longer-term recommendations to the Board of Education, with a focus on building the Code of Conduct's policies around racial issues, inclusive culture and climate, restorative practices, discipline processes, vaping and alcohol investigations.

The District engaged two partner agencies to support the committee's work on the Code of Conduct review: Partners in Restorative Initiatives (PIRI) and The Children's Institute. These partners brought valuable expertise in restorative practices and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) to the review process, facilitated community circles at committee meetings and assisted the Director of Student Services with facilitation and document development.

During Phase I, which began in the 2018-19 school year, changes were initiated and new language was added outlining the connection of the Code of Conduct to the District's commitment to Social Emotional Learning and to employing restorative practices, in alignment with the Mission, Vision and Values of PCSD. Other work completed during Phase I included a review of the Code of Conduct by Superintendent Pero's Student Advisory Council and the development of anti-slur language to be incorporated into the Code of Conduct and other policies.

Phase II, which took place during the summer of 2019, included a more expansive review of the Code of Conduct with more guidance for students, staff and parents/guardians.

Phase III, which took place during the 2019-20 school year, involved a deeper and more comprehensive review of the Code of Conduct as well as benchmarking like districts and a more detailed look at language and guidance to address high priority issues. During this phase, final recommendations were presented to the Board of Education for review and approved in January 2020. The Code of Conduct is reviewed and approved annually by the Board of Education. To view the Code of Conduct, visit www.pittsfordschools.org/Page/956.

Equity Policy (2019-ongoing)

Pittsford Central School District's Board of Education and administration are developing an Equity Policy to align with current efforts and initiatives. Work began on a comprehensive equity policy that serves to affirm the District's commitment to equity and to practices which will guide decisions throughout the District, such as in recruitment and retention practices, instructional material purchases and professional development. This work will continue into the 2020-21 school year when students can become active in the process to assure their voices are represented, as has been done with the recently revised Code of Conduct. Staff and parents/guardians will also participate in the development of the Equity Policy.

Pittsford Schools' Library Media Specialist Honored for Library Diversity Audit

In June, Pittsford Schools Library Media Specialist Toni Baller was recognized as a 2020 Library All Star by the Rochester Regional Library Council for leading the Diversity Audit of the PCSD library collections. The goal of the audit, which began in 2017, was to ensure that Pittsford Schools' library collections are progressive and representative of PCSD's many student backgrounds so that students can see themselves in books and instructional materials and have a window into the life experiences of others.

Nearly 25,000 titles were reviewed by District librarians who used a common spreadsheet to review each title in their building's library for theme, setting, and multiple characteristics related to diversity including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, culture, religion, neurodiversity, and gender identity of the author, main and supporting characters in a book. By conducting the audit, PCSD librarians have an increased awareness of titles within their collections as they work through the annual process of reviewing and adding to their building's book collections and ensuring the books represent an array of diversity for students and teachers who seek to expose students to more diverse titles and authors.



National and Local Awards Recognize Excellence in District Communication

Pittsford Central School District's Communication Office was recognized nationally in July with five School Communication Awards from the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA). In recognition of "exemplary work in all aspects of school public relations, communication, marketing and engagement," a 2020 Golden Achievement Award, the highest level of recognition, was awarded for the District's comprehensive communication campaign for the "ROC2Change Student Summit on Race." The ROC2Change social media campaign also received an Award of Excellence, the top award in its category. Additionally, Honorable Mentions were awarded to the District's Budget Newsletter, Quarterly Print Newsletter, and the "Barker Blend" Video.

In recognition of communication work that "meets the highest standards of performance in public relations," PCSD's Communication Office also received two PRISM Awards from the Rochester Public

Relations Society of America: one in the Events and



Observances category for its comprehensive communication program for the "ROC2Change Student Summit on Race," and one in the Research and Evaluation category for its "Social Media Comparative Analysis of Benchmark Schools." An Award of Excellence was also given for a photo submitted of the "Barker Blend" coffee cart operated by special education students. Rochester's PRISM Awards, an Anvil Awards Program, recognize complete public relations programs and tactical elements incorporating sound insights and analysis, planning, execution and evaluation.

Pittsford Students Recognized with Scholastic Art and Writing Awards

Pittsford Central School District students won a combined 34 Scholastic Art Awards and 13 Scholastic Writing Awards during the 2019-20 school year.

The Scholastic Awards are administered by the Alliance for Young Artists and Writers in New York City. PCSD students participate in the "Northeast Region at Large" group which included approximately 7,000 entrants from New York State, Maryland and Pennsylvania.



Mendon and Sutherland High School Recognized as Scholar-Athlete Schools of Distinction by NYSPHSAA

Mendon High School and Sutherland High School have been recognized as 2019-20 Scholar-Athlete Schools of Distinction by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA). Only 56 high schools throughout New York State were honored with this award.



In order to receive a School of Distinction Award, a school must have all of its varsity teams qualify for and receive the Scholar-Athlete team award during their respective sports seasons. To be recognized as a Scholar-Athlete team, 75% of a team's roster must average a grade point average (GPA) of 90.0 or greater.

Regional Scholastic Art Awards

- **Gold Key Art**
 - **MHS:** Annesha Dasgupta, Jenny Li, McKenna Owen, Joyce Shi, Abby Short and Mina Stevens who was also an American Visions Nominee.
- **Gold Key Writing**
 - **MHS:** Joyce Shi.
- **Silver Key Art**
 - **MHS:** Anna Belyablya, Lena Berry, Sara Berry, Madeleine Eckhardt, Soleil Ricketts, Joyce Shi, and Abby Short.
 - **SHS:** Dharma Wyatt.
- **Silver Key Writing**
 - **MHS:** Sean Li and Joyce Shi.
- **Honorable Mention Art**
 - **MHS:** Teagan Allart, Sydney Brister, Annesha Dasgupta, Holy Kim, Sierra Krienke, Nicolas LeDuc, Jenny Li, Melissa Rosen, Joyce Shi, Mina Stevens, Lauren Wan, and Amy Zhou.
 - **SHS:** Jasper Owen.
- **Honorable Mention Writing**
 - **MHS:** Jenny Oh, Joyce Shi, Mina Stevens, and Kathy Yan.

The National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Foundation named Pittsford Central School District one of the "2020 Best Communities for Music Education." PCSD is among 754 school districts nationwide to receive this award in recognition of outstanding support of music education and the role it plays in enriching the lives of children and advancing student achievement.



Vaccination Requirements for Public Schools

New York State legislation (Public Health Law 2164) eliminated religious, non-medical exemptions from school vaccination requirements, effective June 13, 2019. The revised law specifies that children in a public, private or parochial school, without a medical exemption, must receive the required immunizations to attend or remain in school. The District will be required to exclude a child from school if these provisions are not in place. If you have questions about immunizations, please call your school nurse.

Free and Reduced-Priced Meals Forms Due

New applications for free and reduced-priced meals are required for each school year. Applications for the 2020-2021 school year are available in the District calendar, as well as on the District website at www.pittsfordschools.org on the Food Service page. Please send completed applications, along with an original copy of a direct certification letter or income verification, to PCSD Food Service Department, 100 Mendon Center Road, Pittsford, NY 14534.

Consent for Use of Photographs/Videos

Throughout the school year, photographs and/or video may be taken of students for use for broadcast news purposes and in district-produced publications, digital communication including social media, videos, podcasts, webpages or by the news media. Please consult the Board of Education policies on the website for more information.

Complaint Resolution Process for Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Funded Programs

The New York State Department of Education (NYSED) has a complaint resolution process for Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Funded Programs. To access the process outlined by NYSED to file complaints and allow for the timely resolution of such complaints, visit www.nysed.gov/essa/new-york-state-essa-funded-programs-complaint-procedures. The procedures meet the requirements of ESSA Section 8304(a)(3)(C) and 34 CFR Part 299, Subpart F - Complaint Procedures.

Join the Pittsford PTSA



The Pittsford Parent Teacher Student Association invites parents and staff to register for membership and support the important work carried out during the school year. Members work on special events, after school clubs and activities, instructional materials and community service programs. The membership drive is one of the PTSA's major fundraisers, and your support makes PTSA programs possible. With this year's Super Sale canceled due to COVID-19, this membership drive is more important than ever. Membership registration is offered in an insert in the school calendar and in each school building's back-to-school mailing to families. Registration for PTSA e-News can be completed on the PTSA website at www.pittsfordptsa.net.

2020-21 District Calendar and Event Cancellations

Most of Pittsford Schools' special events and activities have been canceled, until further notice, due to COVID-19 and restrictions on group events. This includes things like concerts, plays, musicals, the PTSA Super Sale, and Fall Homecoming. To keep up to date on any changes to our calendar and events that may occur during the school year, please refer to the District's online calendar by visiting www.pittsfordschools.org and selecting the calendar icon at the top left of the homepage.



Demissie, Higgins Honored as Outstanding Seniors

Two Pittsford Central School District Class of 2020 students were honored as Outstanding Seniors. Samson Demissie (MHS) and Sydney Higgins (SHS) were selected by Superintendent Pero to receive these awards which are sponsored by the Monroe County Council of School Superintendents and presented annually to an exceptional senior from each of the county's high schools based on character, service and scholarship.



The Pittsford Central School District does not discriminate in access, admission, employment, or treatment of participants in any of its programs and activities on the basis of race, religion, age, sex, color, handicapping condition, or ethnic or national origin. This is in compliance with Title IX, OCR Guidelines, and other applicable federal and state laws and regulations. Inquiries regarding compliance issues may be addressed to: Michael Leone, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, Administration Building, Pittsford Central Schools, 75 Barker Road, Pittsford, New York 14534.

Pittsford Central Schools

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State and National Award
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Pittsford

School District News

Fall 2020

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