

COVID-19 Updates

MCDPH COVID-19 Post-Vaccination Guidelines for Schools

Due to some known symptoms that may occur 24-48 hours following the COVID-19 vaccine, the Monroe County Department of Public Health (MCDPH) provided COVID-19 vaccination guidelines for school staff members and students to help determine which post-vaccine symptoms are typical, may be typical or are unlikely to be caused by the vaccine. A flowchart developed by MCDPH helps individuals distinguish between symptoms from the vaccine and symptoms that may be indicative of a COVID-19 infection which would require isolation. To view this flowchart and learn about the symptoms that may be caused by the vaccine, visit the District's COVID-19 website at www.pittsfordschools.org/COVID-19Information, and select "Health Protocols" under the "School and Safety Protocols" tab at the top of the page.

What to Do While Waiting for a Contact Tracer to Call

The Monroe County Department of Public Health has indicated that there may be delays in the contact tracing process. To help individuals know what to do if they have tested positive for COVID-19 or been in close contact with someone who is infected, the MCDPH has developed a document for schools to share with families and staff members that outlines the steps these individuals should take to limit potential spread of the virus while they wait for further guidance from the MCDPH contact tracing team. To view the document, visit the District's COVID-19 website at www.pittsfordschools.org/COVID-19Information and select "PCSD Updates."

COVID-19 Vaccinations

The Monroe County Department of Public Health opened up vaccination opportunities to NYS teachers and staff in late January and, although the supply is very limited across the state, PCSD staff members have begun the vaccination process.

Social Emotional Well-being Survey

As remote, hybrid and in-person learning models continue in the midst of the pandemic, PCSD educators and mental health staff have been working tirelessly to meet the social and emotional needs of students each day. While routines have been disrupted and how we learn and live has changed during this period, the District has remained resilient, keeping schools open and finding ways to stay connected while needing to be distanced.

In an effort to better understand the well-being of students, staff and families, PCSD recently conducted a brief social, emotional and behavioral check-in survey. The results of the surveys will help to determine where to target resources, supports and interventions in order to further promote a safe and supportive environment in the Pittsford Schools community. The surveys were anonymous and only identifiable by basic demographic information.

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Governor Cuomo Allows Return of Higher-Risk Sports

On January 22, 2021, NYS Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that higher-risk high school sports could start back up in February with the consent of local public health directors. Following approval by Monroe County Commissioner of Public Health Dr. Michael Mendoza, and in line with the guidelines issued by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYS PHAA), PCSD High School Basketball, Hockey and Wrestling seasons began February 1 and will conclude on March 14.

The 2020-21 Section V Sports schedule was modified due to COVID-19 and also includes a Fall Season II which starts March 1 and includes Football, Cheer and Volleyball as well as the Spring Season which starts April 19 and includes Baseball, Boys Golf, Lacrosse, Softball, Boys Tennis, and Track and Field.



Photo from 2019-20 Season

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Music Students Thrive Despite COVID-19 Protocols

As one of the many areas that had to modify common practices due to the pandemic, Pittsford's Music Department found innovative ways to keep the music beating while following New York State health protocols to protect students and teachers. Using collegiate articles and research studies, District music teachers worked together to institute new protocols and develop best practices for how to run the middle and high school bands, choruses and orchestras during the COVID-19 pandemic.

These protocols include wearing masks, spacing band and chorus students 12 feet apart, spacing orchestra students 6 feet apart, and using some non-traditional spaces for practices in order to accommodate room for social distancing, such as auditoriums, cafeterias and multipurpose rooms. Additionally, band students wear special masks that allow for a mouthpiece and use bell covers on their instruments to create a barrier for aerosols and droplets. Brass players use absorbent pads, and percussionists use disposable gloves.

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Budget Development Meetings

During the budget development process, there are a variety of meetings held by the Board of Education prior to the May 18, 2021, vote. Budget Work Sessions were held on February 8 and 23, and there are several budget development meetings remaining, as listed below. The 2021-22 budget will be unique as it will reflect expenses related to COVID-19 and other costs associated with funding materials, supplies, technology and staffing for hybrid and remote learning during the pandemic as well as potential reductions in Federal and NYS aid.

For more details and to review the 2021-2022 Budget Guidelines, click on the Budget Quick Link on the home page of the District website at www.pittsfordschools.org.

- **March 9 Budget Work Session** 6-7 p.m., Barker Road Middle School (BRMS) McCluski Room
- **April 19 Budget Adoption and Regular Board of Education Meeting** 7 p.m., BRMS McCluski Room
- **May 6 (New Date) PTSA Meet the Board of Education Candidates Night** 7:30-9 p.m., BRMS McCluski Room
- **May 10 Budget Hearing and Regular Board of Education Meeting** 7 p.m., BRMS McCluski Room
- **May 18 Budget Vote and Board Election** 7 a.m. - 9 p.m., BRMS Gymnasium

Due to COVID-19, public attendance/participation at Board meetings may be virtual. On the day of a Board meeting, links will be posted to the District website at www.pittsfordschools.org for the public to use for viewing/listening, participation in the public comment section of the Board meeting, and closed captioning.

Dr. Patricia Vaughan-Brogan, Director of Student Services, to Retire

Pittsford Central School District Director of Student Services Dr. Patricia Vaughan-Brogan has announced her plan to retire, effective July 1, 2021.

Dr. Vaughan-Brogan has been with the District since 2002. She initially served as Director of Special Education, and since 2014 has served as Director of Student Services. Prior to coming to the District, she was a special education teacher in New York, and Director of Education, Director of Children and Family Services and Assistant Superintendent in Ohio.

Superintendent of Schools Michael Pero said, "Dr. Vaughan-Brogan has been an incredible colleague, mentor and friend to so many students and staff members. Through her work with social emotional learning, mental health initiatives, and trauma and grief teams, she has built a robust amount of community partnerships for the District. She has led the charge for equity and inclusion from her involvement in ROC2Change and the Urban-Suburban program, and partnerships with Rochester charter schools and ROCKids Connect. She is a champion for education, and for this and many more reasons, I am forever grateful."

In her announcement, Dr. Vaughan-Brogan shared her love for the District and said, "It's been an honor for me to work with PCSD for 18 years and to contribute to work that serves a greater purpose, impacts the lives of young people and inspires the best in all. The work of every educator is important, and members of the PCSD community are unsung heroes in the quest for excellence and equity—that's what Pittsford is all about. As a resident of Pittsford, I know firsthand of the great value of a PCSD education as my two children are graduates of Mendon High School."

Although Dr. Vaughan-Brogan is retiring from PCSD, she plans to continue her work in education as an Assistant Professor at the University of Rochester Warner School of Education and Human Development where she will teach aspiring school leaders.



Leah Kedley Appointed Principal of Jefferson Road Elementary School

The Pittsford Central School District Board of Education appointed Leah Kedley as Principal of Jefferson Road Elementary School, a position she began on February 15, 2021. The appointment followed a thorough search and interview process. Kedley replaced Shawn Clark who was promoted to Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources.

"Ms. Kedley brings more than five years of outstanding leadership experience from Victor Central School District and the Rochester City School District (RCSD). She is a lifelong learner and is currently completing her doctoral program in Executive Leadership at St. John Fisher College," said Superintendent Michael Pero.

Kedley began her administrative career as Assistant Principal at RCSD's Roberto Clemente School No. 8. She also served as the ELA instructional coach for K-6 schools across RCSD, and most recently was Assistant Principal at Victor Primary School.

She started her career at RCSD's Virgil I. Grissom School No. 7 as a kindergarten teacher and then became an academic coach. Kedley earned a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood and Special Education from SUNY Geneseo, a Master's Degree in Literacy Education at St. John Fisher College, and will be completing her Doctorate Degree in Executive Leadership at St. John Fisher College this year.



NY-ALERT System for Sex Offender Notifications

Residents of New York can register to receive alerts when moderate or high risk sex offenders move into or out of their area. The NY-ALERT System will send alerts through email or as a text message, fax or telephone recording.

Subscribers can register for up to three areas for notification. Areas are defined by county, zip code or a specific address. If a specific address is selected, the subscriber designates a radius from a quarter-mile to 25 miles around that address.

Registration can be completed at <http://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/nsor/>. Subscribers will receive sex offender relocation notices when a Level 2 (moderate risk) or Level 3 (high risk) sex offender listed on the public subdirectory moves into or out of a community of interest. By law, the state can only provide information about Level 1 (low risk) offenders or those with a pending risk level through a toll-free number (1-800-262-3257).

This service is possible through a partnering of the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) and the New York State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) which manages the NY-ALERT system.

Transportation Requests Due April 1, 2021

Residents whose children plan to use Pittsford Central School District's transportation next year for private or parochial school attendance are required by the State Education Department to file an application with the District by April 1, 2021, in order to receive transportation services.

The Transportation Request Form is available online at www.pittsfordschools.org in the Parent Center under Transportation, or by calling the Pittsford Central School District Transportation Office at 267-1480.

MHS Students Win 1st and 3rd Place in Contest Honoring Wife of Frederick Douglass

Holy Kim and Mina Stevens, Mendon High School students in Ms. Zakalik's Drawing & Painting II class, won 1st and 3rd place, respectively, in the high school entry category of the "Anna Murray Douglass: 'Life in Portrait'" Contest. The contest was sponsored by the Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives (FDFI), headquartered in Rochester, NY, as a way to honor Frederick Douglass's wife, Anna Murray Douglass, during the Centennial of the 19th Amendment. With only two known images of Anna Murray Douglass, the FDFI asked Rochester area students to submit artwork of how she may have looked at different stages of her life.

Holy Kim's winning portrait depicts a scene of Anna Murray Douglass as she brings Black people who escaped slavery into her home which served as a station on the Underground Railroad. Mina Stevens' artwork, which placed third in the contest, depicts Anna Murray Douglass as the North Star—a symbol of freedom and hope for slaves.

Some of the contest entries were selected for display as banners at the headquarters of the Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives. Pittsford students with banners on display include, Amy Zhou (Gr. 12), Holy Kim (Gr. 11), and Danielle Strauf (Gr. 11).

A gallery of the Anna Murray Douglass artwork created by MHS Drawing & Painting II students can be viewed on the District's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/PittsfordCentralSchoolDistrict>.



2021 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards

Pittsford Central School District students received a combined 57 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards after being selected from approximately 7,000 entrants in the "Northeast Region At Large" group which includes New York, Maryland and Pennsylvania. Regional awards include Honorable Mention, Silver Key, and Gold Key. Regional Gold Key winners will continue to the national competition. The Scholastic Awards are judged by contemporary artists and organized by the Alliance for Young Artists and Writers in New York City.

Congratulations to the following students:

Gold Key

Shuwen Ding, Madeleine Eckhardt, Jenny Oh, McKenna Owen, Tianyue (Joyce) Shi, Mina Stevens, Ashley Trott, Ellie VanHouten

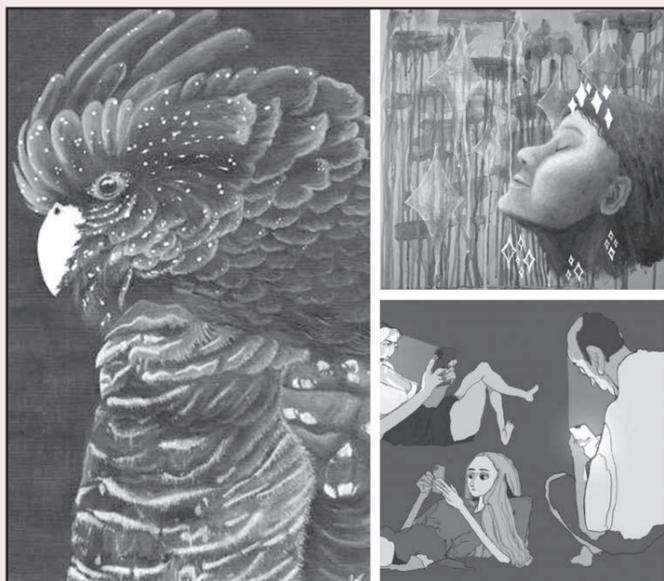
Silver Key

Natalie Cincotta, Shuwen Ding, Madeline Fernandez, Grace Fox, Isabella He, Jenny Li, Sean Li, McKenna Owen, Melissa Rosen, Tianyue (Joyce) Shi, Thomas Spruill, Mina Stevens, Ellie Van Houten

Honorable Mention

Merilyn Arikkat, Shuwen Ding, Madeleine Eckhardt, Grace Fox, Isabella He, Holy Kim, Jenny Li, Sean Li, Rose Majeed, Kira Niemi, Jisu Oh, Melissa Rosen, Tianyue (Joyce) Shi, Thomas Spruill, Ashley Trott, Piper Wilson, Maureen Zhang, Amy Zhou

To view an album of award winning Scholastic Art pieces, visit the District's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/PittsfordCentralSchoolDistrict/>.



Scholastic Art & Writing Awards

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Rapid Testing

PCSD voluntarily administered COVID-19 rapid tests to 20% (approx. 1,200 tests) of students and staff members in all buildings and departments from the week of January 18 through the week of February 1 in an effort to support the health and wellness of our school community. With the rise in the COVID-19 regional infection rate in early January, the District determined it was a prudent time to re-administer COVID-19 rapid tests to serve as a scanning tool and assess the extent of exposure to COVID-19 across the District. Testing was on a voluntary basis.

Return to Physical Activity after COVID-19 Infection

Pittsford Schools will follow the American Academy of Pediatrics' (AAP) recommendation for a Graduated Return to Play Progression for students age 12 and up who are engaged in competitive sports or intense physical activities. The recommended progression helps ensure a safe return to physical activities after a COVID-19 infection and is based on a child's medical history, COVID-19 symptoms, severity of illness and previous level of activity.

After a child with a positive COVID-19 test result has been released from isolation by the Monroe County Department of Public Health, their health care provider will help determine when it is safe to begin the Graduated Return to Play Progression to help increase activity level and allow parents to monitor any lingering symptoms of COVID-19 infection. With a physician's clearance, students may begin Stage 1 of the Graduated Return to Play Progression at home once they are able to complete activities of daily living (i.e. walking around the house, dressing, daily hygiene tasks, etc.) without worsening of symptoms.



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Governor Cuomo Allows Return of Higher-Risk Sports

"The District will strictly adhere to Dr. Mendoza's recommendations and the guidance provided by the state, as it has done throughout the past year," said Superintendent Pero who added that PCSD will also advocate with the state and public health experts for visual and performing arts programs to begin again along with other enhanced student opportunities. The District has also requested that New York State provide school districts with what the metrics would be for schools to fully reopen in-person learning.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, PCSD has carefully monitored the District's infection rate data and shared these data points with New York State and the Monroe County Department of Public Health. These data points include in-person school transmission between students (no evidence of this to date), mandatory testing (which yielded zero positive cases), voluntary testing (which is ongoing), and transmission between athletes involved in sports (zero positive cases during Fall season). The District will continue to track athletic transmission rates and hopes that all of these data points will shape future decisions regarding some of the mandatory protocols.

Board of Education Honors Pittsford Pride Recipients



PCSD students received the Pittsford Pride Citizenship Recognition Award during the November 23 and February 8 Board of Education Meetings. These students were selected by their schools for demonstrating excellent citizenship and positive leadership. Students are chosen for this award three times a year.

The November 2020 honorees included:

Selin Akbas, Gr.12, SHS; Aryana Camilo, Gr. 12, MHS; Zach Canning, Gr. 8, CRMS; Karthik Jaligama, Gr. 7, BRMS; Ryan Johnson, Gr. 5, JRE; Teddy Kendall, Gr. 5, TRE; Sydney Knapp, Gr. 4, MCE; Victoria Preble, Gr. 5, ACE; Liam Randle, Gr. 5, PRE.

The February 2021 honorees included:

Anson Ardieta, Gr. 12, MHS; Alison Baleno, Gr. 5, TRE; Robert Harrington, Gr. 5, PRE; Christopher Johnson, Gr. 8, CRMS; Cody Judd, Gr. 7, BRMS; Ian Pennington, Gr. 3, ACE; John Rodriguez, Gr. 12, SHS; Joseph Roussell, Gr. K, JRE; Daniel Shi, Gr. 3, MCE.

For more information about Pittsford Pride, visit the District website at www.pittsfordschools.org. To watch the videos of the virtual ceremonies, visit the Pittsford Central School District YouTube channel.

Celebrating Black History Month with Curriculum-connected Activities and Events

PCSD students and staff members honored Black History Month during the month of February by participating in curriculum-connected activities and events as a way of sharing, celebrating and understanding Black heritage and culture. Superintendent Pero kicked off Black History Month with a reading of “The Undefeated,” a poetry picture book by Kwame Alexander with watercolor illustrations by Kadir Nelson, that was recorded and shared with multiple elementary school classes.

While cultural diversity is included in curriculum and programs throughout the school year, special activities and events were planned in Pittsford schools during Black History Month. Some of those activities included classroom read-alouds and discussions; a month-long reading challenge culminating in presentations about books written by Black authors or about historical Black figures and history; reading books by Black authors who have received Coretta Scott King Book Awards for demonstrating an “appreciation of Black culture and universal human values;” and reading highly acclaimed books such as “The Undefeated” by Kwame Alexander, and “Carter Reads the Newspaper,” a picture book biography, by Deborah Hopkinson, of Carter G. Woodson who is known as the Father of Black History Month.

Students also read portions of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s speeches and shared important moments in Black history during the morning announcements, learned about the influence of Black musicians on various musical genres during music classes, and celebrated Black athletes’ contributions to society beyond their sport during physical education classes.

In celebration of Black History Month, schools also showcased commemorative galleries of significant figures in Black history; posters that feature Black artists and raise awareness about the Harlem Renaissance; and interactive bulletin boards, including one with a focus on “The Hill We Climb,” the poem which was read by National Youth Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman at the 2021 Biden Presidential Inauguration.

Additionally, school librarians have curated an online collection of books and resources for educators to use year-round with special highlighted material for use during Black History Month, and the District hosted online workshops from the Smithsonian Institution that focused on Black artists, for teachers.



Superintendent Michael Pero

Student Musicians Create and Share Music

Students Compose Their Own Music with New Software

Using Soundtrap software, Barker Road Middle School students are now able to compose their own music by using loops, original sounds and recordings along with a sound bite from their favorite movie, television show or video game.

Middle school music teacher Michael Wahl describes the software as a “music studio in a box” that is “inspiring our highest musicians and our ‘creative listeners’ equally.” It appeals to the diverse interests of his students and allows them to collaborate in new ways. For example, one of his students who has aspirations of being a professional oboist collaborated and created music with another student who “thinks it might be cool to be a professional DJ,” he said.

To listen to student compositions, visit Mr. Wahl’s webpage on the District website at: <https://www.pittsfordschools.org/domain/530>

Students Perform Virtual Concerts for Nursing Home Residents

Joy and Cheer

Pittsford Middle School Orchestra Director Julia Plato worked with Barker Road and Calkins Road Middle School orchestra students to put together a mini virtual concert titled “Joy and Cheer!” for some area nursing homes to spread joy and ease the feelings of isolation residents may be experiencing.

The students featured include:

- CRMS: George Huang, Jason Hsu, ShuShu Wu, Sarah Gargano, Nevaeh Joseph, and Friana Engineer
- BRMS: Karthik Jaligama and Vasu Jaligama

View the virtual concert at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aa4tnYzRIP0>

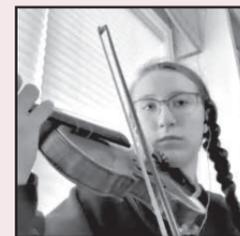
Music for Love

Students from Pittsford Schools organized a virtual holiday concert in December for St. John’s and Cloverwood senior living communities as part of the Music for Love community concert series program, a student-run network of young musicians that brings live music to the community and supports music education through teaching, performing and fundraising. The group has regularly held concerts at nursing homes since 2015 and has been holding outreach events virtually during the pandemic. Their next concert is coming up in the spring.

Pittsford students include:

- BRMS: Tristan Zhang
- CRMS: Joe Arikkat, Neel Stancampiano
- MHS: David Wang
- SHS: Pratham Bhamare, Vittal Bhargava, Toby Busick-Warner, Amy Feng, Saishaa Gupta, Daniel Kinney, Aiwen Li, Zachary Moore

View the virtual December 2020 concert at: <https://youtu.be/f4wTak3SWLg> and the June 2020 concert at: <https://youtu.be/HGJ9BV0JDN4>



Kindergarten Registration



Families who have registered an incoming kindergarten student for the 2021-22 school year will receive a kindergarten registration packet in the mail by mid-March.

Kindergarten parents can view a video about the kindergarten screening process, registration materials, curriculum and the guiding principles for the kindergarten program, at <https://www.pittsfordschools.org/StudentRegistration>.

Families who have not yet registered their children for kindergarten in the 2021-22 school year should contact the District Registrar at 585-267-1027 to begin the registration and kindergarten screening process. To be eligible for kindergarten, children must be five years old on or before December 1, 2021.

Kindergarten Screening is mandated by New York State and assesses children in the areas of motor skills, concepts such as counting/object naming skills, and language skills. During Kindergarten Screening appointments, registered nurses will also conduct vision and hearing tests.

PCSD looks forward to welcoming the class of 2034!

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Music Students Thrive Despite COVID-19 Protocols

With the hybrid learning model cohorts split alphabetically, the instrumentation of all ensembles has changed dramatically, and music teachers have rewritten and arranged music to fit the specific needs of each ensemble and highlight the strengths of each group.

As a result of the smaller ensemble sizes, more students have had the opportunity to lead their sections. “I’m so proud of the students who have stepped up to become leaders. These students have risen to the challenge and developed confidence as both a musician and young adult,” said Music Standards Leader Tammy Keller.

The smaller instrumental lesson groups have also offered students more individualized attention. “We are not only getting to know each student’s musical strengths and areas in need of improvement, we are also learning more about what motivates them, their interests and how we can support their personal growth through music,” said Mendon High School Music Director Paul Maguda.

“Despite all of the changes this year, our resilient music students are still finding ways to contribute to and connect with each other in these ensembles,” said Barker Road Middle School Music Teacher Michael Wahl. “Students want to feel a sense of connection, support and value, and our Music Department is still able to offer that sense of community and belonging for students,” he added.

Fall & Winter Sports Wrap-up

Section V Championships

Fall Season

- Sutherland Girls Tennis
- Sutherland Boys Soccer
- Pittsford Gymnastics

Winter Season

- Pittsford Boys Swimming and Diving
- Pittsford Girls Alpine Ski

Section V Individual Champions

Fall Season

- Tennis Class B1 Singles – Josie Libby (Gr. 12 SHS)
- Tennis Class B1 Doubles – Selin Akbas (Gr. 12 SHS) and Minjee Kim (Gr. 9 SHS)
- Gymnastics Overall Champion – Katie Kull (Gr. 9 SHS)

Winter Season

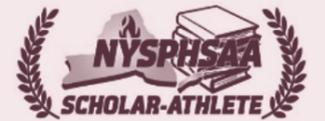
- Class A Diving Champion – Daley Fraser (Gr. 11 MHS)
- Class A 200 Yard Medley Relay Champions – Aaron Kusch (Gr. 12 MHS), Alexander Korshunov (Gr. 11 MHS), Patrick Lang (Gr. 11 MHS), Giovanni Williams (Gr. 10 MHS)
- Girls Alpine Ski All Around Champion – Shannon Hughes (Gr. 12 MHS)



Scholar-Athletes

All Pittsford Mendon and Sutherland High School Fall Athletic Teams were recognized as Scholar-Athlete Teams by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA), including Boys and Girls Cross Country, Boys and Girls Soccer, Field Hockey, Girls Golf, Girls Swimming/Diving, Girls Tennis, and Gymnastics. Additionally, 251 Pittsford Central School District students were recognized as Scholar-Athletes for the Fall 2020 season.

To receive Scholar-Athlete team recognition, the team's average GPA for 75% of the roster must be greater than or equal to 90.0. Individual student athletes earning a minimum GPA of 90.0 are recognized as Scholar-Athletes even if their team did not qualify for an award.



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: Shawn Clark, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, Administration Building, Pittsford Central Schools, 75 Barker Road, Pittsford, New York 14534.

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State and National Award
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Pittsford

School District News

Spring 2021

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