

Thornell Road Elementary School Principal DeBell to Retire



Thornell Road Elementary School Principal Roger DeBell has announced his retirement effective June 30, 2022 after 12 years of service in Pittsford CSD. Mr. DeBell began his 31-year career as a music teacher in Marcus-Whitman CSD, Manchester-Shortsville CSD and Hilton CSD. His administrative career began at Penfield High School and Churchville-Chili Middle School.

“These past 12 years at Thornell Road have been the highlight of my career. My greatest joy has been working with students and it has been an absolute privilege to work with such a dedicated and caring group of professionals who always give their best,” said Principal Roger DeBell.

“The Board of Education and I want to thank Mr. DeBell for his 12 years of leadership at Thornell Road Elementary School. His focus on what’s best for students was always consistent,” said Superintendent Michael Pero. “We all wish Mr. DeBell a long and healthy retirement.”

The District’s search for a new principal of Thornell Road Elementary School is a collaborative process, including feedback from students, staff and parents, with a goal for the new principal to start on or before July 1, 2022.

Sutherland High School Student Amy Feng Named One of Nation’s Top Science Scholars



Pittsford Sutherland High School senior Amy Feng was named one of the nation’s top 300 scholars in the Regeneron Science Talent Search 2022, the nation’s oldest and most prestigious science and math competition for high school seniors. The 300 scholars and their schools will be awarded \$2,000 each. Feng’s original research project is titled “Extending Choice Probability to

High Dimensional Neural Data.”

Feng was among 1,804 applicants from 603 high schools across 46 states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico and eight other countries. Scholars were chosen based on their exceptional research skills, commitment to academics, innovative thinking and promise as scientists as demonstrated through the submission of their original, independent research projects, essays and recommendation.

Community Members Gather for Update on PCSD Equity Plan

Families and community members joined District administrators on February 17 to learn about what has been accomplished in the areas of equity and inclusivity, what is in process, and what’s ahead. Attendees had the opportunity to ask questions about the District’s equity goals and meet PCSD’s newly appointed Coordinator of Equity and Inclusivity Vincent I. French.



To learn more about equity and inclusion activities and initiatives, visit the District website at www.pittsfordschools.org/EquityandInclusion. To view a recording of the February 17 event, visit the Pittsford Central School District’s YouTube channel.

60 Days In: Leading by Listening

By PCSD Coordinator of Equity and Inclusivity Vincent I. French



As I reflect on my first 60 days as PCSD’s Coordinator of Equity and Inclusivity, the thing that stands out most is how united this community of students, families and staff are in their desire for everyone to feel welcome, respected and heard. One of my first priorities and objectives in my new position was to connect with people, develop positive relationships, and share about my role – which is to serve as a resource for supporting the District in increasing opportunities for equity. During my first 60 days in this new role, I have connected with district-level and building-level administrators, toured each of the nine schools in our

District, and met with students and staff including Transportation Department personnel.

During multiple walk-through visits to the school buildings, I aimed to understand each school’s culture better and see the fantastic work that each school is doing. What’s been consistent at each school is their unwavering commitment to fostering a more equitable and inclusive learning environment for all students.

These listening tours also included connecting with members of the Pittsford community. I met with, and continue to meet with, various community partners/organizations, parents, and stakeholder advisory groups to listen and learn about the needs of our community.

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Moody’s Investors Service Gives PCSD Its Highest Rating

Maintaining Pittsford Central School District’s fiscal stability and responsibility is an ongoing commitment to Pittsford taxpayers. That commitment was evidenced recently as Moody’s Investors Service assigned PCSD the highest credit rating – Aa1. Per Moody’s, “the Aa1 rating reflects strong financial operations supported by conservative budget practices and is the highest rating a school district can attain.”

Similar to a personal credit rating score, the District’s Aa1 rating reflects financial stability and health, and as a result affords the District favorable borrowing terms (low interest rates) when PCSD residents vote to approve debt issuance in potential capital projects.

Below are highlights from an October 2021 credit analysis published by Moody’s Investors Service:

- The credit position of PCSD is very strong. The Aa1 rating is above the U.S. school district median.
- Key credit factors PCSD demonstrated in order to earn an Aa1 rating included a very healthy economy, stable enrollment trend, sizable financial position, somewhat high leverage and very modest fixed costs.

Annual Philanthropic Student Events Raise Over \$30,000



Each year Pittsford students rally the community together in support of the Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester and the Golisano Children’s Hospital. The extraordinary spirit of philanthropy and leadership is on full display as students work together to raise money through the sale of tickets, program ads and merchandise for the annual “Pink the Rink” hockey games and “Rainbow Classic” basketball games.

In recognition of Pittsford students’ commitment to and success with the Rainbow Classic each year, the “Outstanding Young People in Philanthropy – Group” award was presented by the Association of Fundraising Professionals Genesee Valley Chapter (AFPGV) on November 5, 2021.

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2022-23 Budget Development Schedule

The Pittsford Central School District community is invited and encouraged to attend and observe the remaining budget development workshop, meetings and events as they are open to the public. Community members will have the opportunity to comment at the regular Board of Education meetings immediately following the budget workshops, during the time allotted for public comment.

All meetings take place at Barker Road Middle School in the McCluski Room.

Budget Work Session

Tuesday, March 15, 2022, 6 - 7 p.m.

Budget Adoption and Regular Board of Education Meeting

Tuesday, April 5, 2022, 7 - 9 p.m.* (NEW DATE)

*Pending NYS Budget

Budget Adoption is placed on the agenda of the regular Board of Education meeting. During this meeting, the Board of Education formally votes to adopt the budget created during the Budget Work Sessions. (The March 29 and April 12 Board of Education Meeting dates are canceled.)

PTSA Meet the Board of Education Candidates Night

Thursday, May 5, 2022, 7:30 - 9 p.m.

Barker Road Middle School, McCluski Room

Budget Hearing and Regular Board of Education Meeting

Tuesday, May 10, 2022, 7 - 9 p.m.

The Public Budget Hearing is the formal presentation of the Board of Education’s adopted budget which will later be voted on by residents at the annual Budget Vote and Board of Education Election.

Budget Vote and Board Election

Tuesday, May 17, 2022, 7 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Voter identification is required.

Barker Road Middle School Gymnasium

First Quarter Honor Roll

Pittsford Central School District congratulates all the students who have earned a spot on the Honor Rolls for academic achievement. In the past, Honor Rolls appeared in the Brighton Pittsford Post, which is no longer published. We invite you to view the list of students on the First Quarter Honor Roll, located on the District website at www.pittsfordschools.org/HonorRoll.

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.

Families Invited to Join Pittsford Special Education Parent Teacher Association

PCSD families are invited to join the Pittsford Special Education Parent Teacher Association (SEPTA), a group that brings together families of students who receive special education services at schools across the District. Pittsford SEPTA allows families, PCSD and community members to connect and share valuable resources and information that support students' successes throughout their education.

Members of the Pittsford PTSA can become a member of SEPTA by completing the membership form located on the Pittsford PTSA website's SEPTA link under the "Programs" tab.

Celebrating Black History Month in Pittsford Schools

Pittsford Schools honored Black History Month throughout the month of February with a variety of activities and events that both acknowledged and increased awareness of the impact of Black heritage and culture.

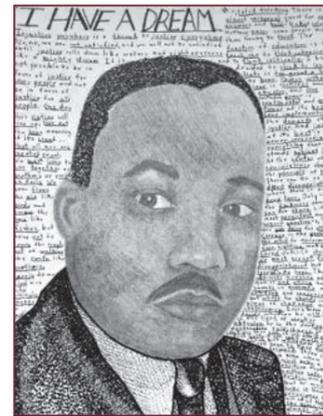
One highlight of Black History Month, were the "Womba Africa Drumming and Dance Company" performances that PTSA organized and funded as a way to engage students and share the culture of Ghana through dance and music. Thanks to funding from the District's PTSA, students had the opportunity to both watch and participate in these high-energy performances.

During each of the 28 days of February, PCSD also posted videos to its social media sites of students and staff reading from the inspirational book "28 Days: Moments in Black history that changed the world" by author Charles R. Smith, Jr.

Additionally, schools supplemented the existing inclusivity/diversity aspects of curriculum in a variety of ways, such as reading and discussing books written by or celebrating the accomplishments of Black people throughout history, morning announcements including moments in Black history that changed the world, commemorative bulletin boards, galleries and more.

"As we celebrated Black History Month, the District's mission of 'working collaboratively to inspire and prepare our students to be their best, do their best and make a difference in the lives of others' remained at the forefront of everything we did," said Superintendent Pero. "On a regular basis, I witness students carrying out this mission in so many ways," he added.

One such person is Barker Road Middle School student Flor Jelani Ayala-Pound who had artwork on display at the "2022 NYS Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Student Art & Essay Exhibit" which highlighted Dr. King's Six Principles and Steps of Nonviolence. Ayala-Pound's pencil drawing (above) depicts Martin Luther King, Jr. surrounded by quotes from his speeches. It is one of hundreds of submissions from schools across New York State.



Ensuring a Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Learning Environment



The Pittsford Central School District is committed to creating an inclusive and equitable learning environment where the identity of all is affirmed, and where students experience high expectations, rigorous instruction, and a curriculum that elevates historically marginalized voices. Work is well underway to make appropriate and necessary revisions to curriculum and common resources that reflect the District's commitment to a culturally responsive-sustaining learning environment.

Prior to the start of this school year, a team of 30 elementary educators came together for professional learning and curriculum development leading to the infusion of the Social Justice Standards (developed by the organization, Learning for Justice) into inquiry based social studies units at every grade level, K-5. Resources identified to support the teaching of each inquiry were carefully selected to ensure the presentation of multiple

perspectives and affirmation of diverse social identities, with the ultimate goal of developing multiple inquiries at each grade level that weave together a focus on diversity, equity, civic-mindedness and social justice throughout the elementary school experience.

At the secondary level, teachers who are responsible for teaching United States History in 7th, 8th, and 11th grade have created a bank of high quality resources representing diverse perspectives to assist students in learning a more complete history of our country than can be represented in any single textbook. Teachers are working collaboratively on lessons that incorporate these resources so that students may benefit from the voices and perspectives of people from all ethnicities, races, genders, and abilities to better understand the complex and beautiful tapestry that is our country's history.

New books have also been integrated into English/Language Arts instruction at all grade levels to enhance students' learning experiences by engaging them in texts written by a diverse complement of authors about experiences that can serve as windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors for students. Pittsford Central School District strongly believes that all students need to see themselves, their families, and their lived experiences in the literature and materials they encounter throughout their educational experience.

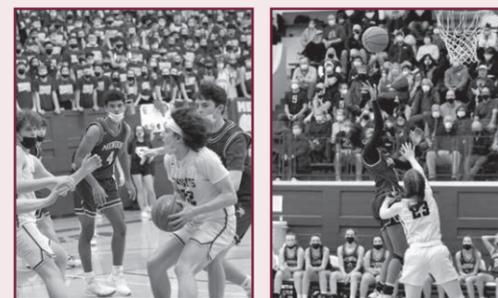
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Annual Philanthropic Student Events Raise Over \$30,000 (Cont.)

At the 12 Annual "Pink the Rink" Hockey Games on February 5, the Pittsford Panthers JV and Varsity Hockey Teams went head-to-head with the Fairport Red Raiders, raising \$7,000 for the Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester. As per tradition, Pittsford athletes wore special pink jerseys during the games that resulted in a final score in the varsity game of Pittsford 4 to Fairport 2; and a final score in the JV game of Pittsford 2 to Fairport 5.

At the 21st Annual Rainbow Classic Basketball Games, Mendon and Sutherland Boys and Girls Basketball teams hit the court in two friendly cross-town rival events that raised \$25,000 to support pediatric mental health at Golisano Children's Hospital. At the first event, on December 17, the Mendon and Sutherland Boys Basketball Teams competed against each other at Mendon High School, with a final score of Mendon 69 to Sutherland 57.

On February 12, the Mendon and Sutherland Girls Varsity Basketball teams kicked the Rainbow Classic off at the UR Palestra with an exciting game resulting in a final score of Mendon 70 to Sutherland 35. The Boys Varsity Mendon and Sutherland basketball teams followed suit in a competitive game that resulted in a final score of Mendon 53 to Sutherland 37.



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60 Days In: Leading by Listening (Cont.)

I have also connected with Mendon and Sutherland High School students and advisors who have participated in the ROC2Change Student Summit on Race. Since the 11th annual ROC2Change Summit held in November 2021, we have had several meetings to formulate meaning and understanding around the topics covered at the summit, and to generate ideas for ways students can implement what has been learned within the school community.

During my first 60 days, working with PCSD Director of Student Services Shana Cutaia, we hosted a comprehensive interview process to recruit new members within the Pittsford community to be part of PCSD's Inclusivity Advisory Council (IAC). The IAC provides guidance to the Superintendent of Schools regarding systems, structures, policies, regulations and experiences related to inclusivity. It was wonderful to see the depth and breadth of experience and backgrounds of the caring residents who applied.

In recent weeks, I worked with secondary school leaders and students on

Black History Month activities and met with community members at the February 17 Equity Plan Update event. As I move forward, I will continue to collaborate on an ongoing basis with District leaders on a variety of initiatives including, the annual review of the PCSD Code of Conduct and the formulation of recommendations, including restorative justice practices and a tool kit for teachers; monitoring PCSD Equity and Inclusion Goals to make recommendations for additional goals, provide more specificity when necessary, and align resources to achieve these goals; engaging with students, staff, community groups and the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council; meeting with Monroe County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) with the goal of listening to their perspective on racial incidents and continuing to improve positive relationships with the MCSO; connecting with Urban-Suburban students via monthly community circles to increase inclusivity within the school community; and meeting with Curriculum Department leaders to stay abreast of the ways in which equity/inclusion has been and continues to be woven into curriculum.

Celebrating National Rankings while Understanding their Limitations

Nearly two years into this global pandemic, Pittsford students, staff, and families continue to demonstrate incredible fortitude, adaptability, and resilience.

One data point (among many) is how PCSD high schools rank locally, regionally, and nationally. With respect to national rankings, attention is often directed to the annual list of the nation's best public high schools as published by the "U.S. News & World Report."

Pittsford Sutherland and Pittsford Mendon high schools historically compare very favorably on this list. While the District celebrates these impressive rankings, the rankings are not used to influence curriculum, instruction, or assessment in any meaningful way.

When considering the value of these rankings, it is also important to understand that the methodology used by "U.S. News & World Report" is not static; it ebbs and flows. The factors used to assess and compare shift regularly – as does the very number of schools evaluated.

For example, if a school's overall score increased by just one point (for example, from 97 to 98 in a year), that school's ranking would move up by approximately 179 places. In the same way, if a school's scores slipped by even half a point (for example, from 97 to 96.5 in a year), it would fall by approximately 90 places in the rankings.

Also important to note is that there has been a shift in ranking methodology. In 2019 "U.S. News & World Report" altered their ranking system to include *every eligible public high school in the nation* (~17,800 schools). Before 2019, they ranked only ~2,700 high schools

nationally – a change that impacted PCSD's standing. In addition, they now consider six factors in their calculation of yearly rankings:

- 30% – College Readiness.
- 20% – Math/Reading Proficiency; state standardized tests (opt-outs not included); compares one state versus others.
- 20% – Math/Reading Performance; derived from math/reading state assessments, comparing scores with what US News predicted for a school w/its demographic characteristics.
- 10% – College curriculum breadth.
- 10% – Underserved Student Performance; score on state assessments vs. other states.
- 10% – Graduation Rate (prior to 2019).

In "U.S. News and World Report's" 2021 rankings (based on the 2018-2019 academic year), Pittsford's high schools continued to rank highly.

- **Mendon High School:** #1 Rochester region, #22 New York state, #193 nationally, overall score 98.92.
- **Sutherland High School:** #2 Rochester region, #36 New York state, #319 nationally, overall score 98.21.

"These figures represent the hard work and dedication of both Pittsford's students and teachers," said Superintendent Pero. "They also point to a community that values education and understands that the goal is not necessarily high rankings, but the kind of continuous improvement that benefits students and their long-term success," he said.

Reminder about Busing Delays

Parents/Guardians: Please check your email every morning around 6:30 a.m. for a notification in case there is a change in your child's bus schedule due to bus driver shortages or absences. If you do not receive an email/text message, please assume your child's bus is running its normal schedule. We ask that you, please, not call the Transportation Department unless you have an emergency. The District extends sincere thanks to our bus drivers and parents/guardians for their ongoing cooperation, patience and understanding during this challenging time.

Snow Day Closing Information

When it is necessary to close or dismiss schools for any emergency, including inclement weather, announcements are made on local radio and television broadcasts as early as possible. The information is also communicated to parents through the Blackboard® notification system and posted on the District's website at www.pittsfordschools.org. When school is closed for the day or dismissed early, all evening school activities will be cancelled, including athletic practices and contests, club meetings and any other student after-school activities. The only exception would be a major District-wide event, such as a concert involving hundreds of students, which could be held if the weather clears sufficiently.

Transportation Requests Due April 1, 2022

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, 2022, in order to receive transportation services. Dual Location/Daycare forms are also due by April 1.

Transportation Request Forms are available online at www.pittsfordschools.org in the Parent Center under Transportation.

Student Artwork Recognized in RIT "Start Here 2022" Art Show

Congratulations to students who received awards for their artwork on display at the RIT "Start Here 2022" art show and competition in January!

Marcus Austin (MHS) – School of Design Vignelli Award for "City Boy"

Maddie Harmon (MHS) – School of Art Education 3D Award for "Wishing Well"

Ashlyn Kreiss (SHS) – School of Design 3D Digital Design Award for "Heartstrings"

To view an album of all PCSD student entries, visit the District's Facebook page.



MHS Students Advance to National Virtual Enterprise Competition

Mendon High School students, Maris Lindley, Noah Lucia, and Mark LoMaglio earned first place in the Virtual Enterprise (VE) Northeast regional competition for the business plan they created for their VE business "Horizon," a subscription-based vintage clothing company. The mission of "Horizon" is to "provide sustainable, fashionable options to add to your wardrobe delivered straight to your door that maintain a concern for clothing waste and environmental stressors." The students will advance to the national competition in April 2022.

Sutherland High School students Marilyn Arikkat, Abby Chamot, Jackson Ciocca, Kailani Liu placed fourth for their VE business, "Coldest Brew," an online marketplace for the purchase of cold drinks, food items, coffee products and accessories.



First place Northeast Virtual Enterprise competition team members Maris Lindley, Noah Lucia, and Mark LoMaglio will advance to the national competition in April

Students Participate in ROC2Change Student Summit on Race

Mendon and Sutherland High School students along with high school students throughout Monroe County came together in November for the 2021 ROC2Change Student Summit on Race at St. John Fisher College. The event was organized and led by student planning committees with students from Fairport Central School District and School Without Walls.

ROC2Change was established in 2016 as students from across Monroe County began to come together to address race relations in the community. Hundreds of students from more than 30 schools have participated in the full-day summit in years past. These summits encourage dialogue about race through speakers, student-led activities and sessions. Each summit also includes time for students to collaborate on how to bring the ROC2Change progress and plans back to their respective schools.



On Stage this Spring...

Disaster!

Mendon High School Musical

March 10-11 at 7 p.m.

March 12 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Tickets Sales: www.showtix4u.com
or at the door

\$12 adults; \$10 students & senior citizens

Big Fish

Sutherland High School Musical

April 7-8 at 7 p.m.

April 9 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Tickets Sales: www.showtix4u.com
or at the door

\$12 adults; \$10 students & senior citizens

Board of Education Honors Pittsford Pride Recipients

Nine students received the Pittsford Pride Citizenship Recognition Award during the February 8, 2022 Board of Education Meeting for demonstrating excellent citizenship and positive leadership. Students are chosen for this award three times a year.

Congratulations to: **Mia Adler**, Gr. 12, SHS; **Omer Ahmed**, Gr. 6, BRMS; **John Dean**, Gr. 8, CRMS; **Will Fickling**, Gr. 3, MCE; **Roman Irizarry**, Gr. 3, JRE; **Vinay Pendri**, Gr. 11, MHS; **James Pritchard**, Gr. 5, TRE; **Piper Rae Webb**, Gr. 5, ACE; and **Alborz Yousefi Nooraie**, Gr. 5, PRE.

To view the video of the ceremony, visit the Pittsford Central School District YouTube channel.



New Graduation Date, Times & Locations!

Due to COVID-19 protocols, MHS and SHS graduation ceremonies have been moved on campus. New dates, times and locations are listed below.

Rehearsal

Thursday, June 23

High School Athletic Stadiums

- MHS at 2:00 p.m.
- SHS at 2:00 p.m.

Graduation

Friday, June 24

High School Athletic Stadiums

- MHS at 4:00 p.m.
- SHS at 7:30 p.m.

Rain Date

Saturday, June 25

High School Athletic Stadiums

- MHS at 10:00 a.m.
- SHS at 1:00 p.m.

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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.

Pittsford Central Schools

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State and National Award
Winning Publication

NSRA
National School Public Relations Association

PRSA Public Relations Society of America

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75
YEARS OF

CELEBRATING *Excellence*
1946-2021 Pittsford Schools

Spring 2022

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