

INFORMATION, NEWS AND SUPPORT  
**SPEAK OUT!**  
PITTSFORD DISTRICT TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

**SPECIAL ISSUE:**



**& BOARD OF EDUCATION**



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**from the Acting President:  
Kim Chesko**

First- let's address the elephant in the room- this budget year has been one of

our most difficult in years.

The dual challenges of the tax cap and the state's shamefully low contribution to our budget have put the Board of Education in a difficult position: to balance the needs of our children with the very real concerns of voters. As tax payers we share these concerns, but also understand that the tax levy represents an investment in all of our students, current and future.

**Our students.** They are why I am asking you to carefully consider the school budget proposal that will be put to voters on May 16th. It is a budget that will add a full day Kindergarten program to our district, which we know will help our smallest learners to have more time for academics, play, friendships, creativity, music, art and more.

It is also a thoughtful plan that puts students' needs first and recognizes that our schools and staff are integral to a vital community. Although not perfect, this budget was crafted from a goal that teachers, parents, and our whole community should share – providing the best possible education

for the children of our district, while responsibly using the resources we have.

I want to extend a huge THANK YOU to all those who have volunteered to make calls to remind people to vote on May 16th. We need to make call for one more big push to turn out voters on MAY 15th at NYSUT Headquarters. Check PDTA's Facebook page for more information. (Hint: there's a prize at this one!!)

To show our solidarity and support for public education no matter where we live, please wear one of our many PDTA Solidarity Wear t-shirts on May 16th. We have several individuals running for Board of Education here in Pittsford as well. In this edition of Speak Out, you will find articles from each candidate. If you live in Pittsford, you will be receiving a budget vote reminder card, which will include our three endorsed candidates. You can also check PDTA's Facebook page and twitter account for more information.

Wherever you reside, please make a plan to vote on May 16th, and vote to support the schools that our children need.

Thank you.

**Clip and Keep Reminders:**

- The annual PDTA/PCSD Retirement and Recognition Party will be held on May 25th. Keep sending checks Karen Kalinowski at the PDTA office.
- Remember to continue to review your PCSD/PDTA posting and transfer process sheet as we move through posting season. Contact your building representative with questions.
- All PD requirements for professional staff must be completed by May 30th.
- Don't forget to enjoy Memorial Day weekend and rest up for the final push!



# BOE Candidate Statements

Candidates are presented in alphabetical order. Check social media for PDTA endorsements.



## Ted Aroesty, BOE Candidate

I want to continue to serve on the Board of Education because I want to give back to the school district and community that has given so much to my family. Also, I believe that I have learned a lot over the past three years, and my board experience and professional experience will continue to benefit the district.

I believe that the greatest strengths of the PCSD are its people and its ability to collaborate with its many stakeholders. I often speak of the “secret sauce” that makes our district so great and that is collaboration. I think the greatest opportunity for improvement, as a district, is two-way communication with stakeholders.

In my opinion there are many issues facing public education as we move forward. Of particular concern is attempting to regain as much local control as possible. We must follow the laws, however, we should continue to advocate for change. Additionally, we must advocate for more equitable

funding from New York State for the PCSD to ensure future sustainability.

I feel that balancing fiscal responsibility without compromising programs is a very delicate line, and I believe that staying student centered is key. I believe that the Board of Education has done a good job of holding the line on staying student centered. We must continue to look to innovate and look for creative ways to do more with existing resources. We must not compromise the excellence we have all grown accustomed to. Community outreach will become more and more important.



## Jori Cincotta, BOE Candidate

Pittsford has been dealing with challenges on multiple fronts for a number of years; new standards and curriculum, financial limitations with growing costs and mandates, and a sense of attack on our teachers and public education as a whole. The need for our community to come together is more critical than ever. My involvement in the school district as a parent and PTSA leader has

allowed me to form relationships and learn what is important to parents, students, teachers, administrators, and taxpayers, all while gaining in-depth knowledge about educational issues. My regional and state advocacy efforts have also prepared me to be an effective representative for our school community.

Pittsford prides itself on its collaborative decision making and dedication to putting students first. As a board member, I would focus on improved, two way communication, promoting dialogue and effective practices towards diversity and inclusion, while bringing people together to advocate with our

legislators for more sustainable funding and to better educate our community on the financial challenges facing our schools through an ongoing, transparent, budget planning process. I’ve learned through listening, making mistakes, and remaining engaged, that fostering communication and maintaining trust are necessary to effect meaningful change. Pittsford stakeholders share a commitment to creating an environment that fosters creativity, curiosity, empathy and empowers our children to challenge themselves on many fronts. I would be proud to represent our community on the Pittsford Board of Education. I hope you’ll consider voting for me on May16th.



## Gary Graziano, BOE Candidate

My mission in serving on the Board is to ensure that PCSD remains the best in the area (and among the best in the state and nation), that funding is sustainable and taxes are affordable for all residents – including the two non-student households that support each student household. Why? Because when planning, process improvement and creative problem-solving can make a difference in something important to

me, I get involved.

Our District’s greatest strengths include strong community support for best-in-class schools, excellent teachers, engaged parents, a relatively stable student census and taxpayers’ historical willingness to fund budget increases above the rate of inflation.

Going forward, an opportunity and issue is Common Core. Giving the District more control over what is taught, how, what it costs and how success is measured is important for continued best-in-class performance. What NYS will require if Common Core is phased out is a change we need to influence and prepare to address. *Of equal importance is how*

*we fund the rapidly rising costs of contracted retirement benefits without compromising our superior education outcomes, teaching environment, ranking vs. other districts and home values.*

As a Board member, I will uphold my fiscal responsibility to all residents without compromising education outcomes: 1) by vigorously pursuing the \$70MM in State Aid we are owed; 2) through improved planning, benchmarking, new and creative approaches to how the District accomplishes its objectives, new funding sources and census-driven right-sizing; and 3) with reasonable and sustainable tax increases – *that respect the tax cap.*

More on the next page.

# BOE Candidate Statements

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**Jerome  
Jean-  
Gilles, BOE  
Candidate**

1) Why do you want to serve on the BOE?

As a physician and assistant professor at URMC, I will diversify the skill set of the board by bringing a doctor's perspective to every decision. In addition to academic excellence, I recognize that we also have a stake in the physical, emotional, and mental health of our students. I am running to safeguard the wellbeing of Pittsford students and ensure they receive a world-class education that prepares them to succeed in a diverse and globally connected world.

2) What do you believe are the greatest strengths and opportunities for improvement of our school district?

Our school district does an amazing job providing students a high level academic experience and incredible athletic opportunities. Moving forward, we must balance academic rigor with physical and emotional well-being and equip students with the knowledge, skills, and support network to balance the many demands placed upon them. We must emphasize the interconnectedness of our society, build cultural competencies and prepare graduates for the global marketplace.

3) What do you see as the major issues facing public education and our school district in the next few years?

The *Common Core* and mandated standardized assessments put

unnecessary and irrelevant demands on students, families, district personnel. Combine those top-down policies with the near impossible task of balancing the school budget amid myriad financial obstacles such as unfunded mandates, underwhelming state aid, and increasing healthcare costs.

4) How will you balance fiscal responsibilities without compromising our educational program?

Maintaining the high quality educational experience provided by PCSD is the top priority of the school board. Possible strategies to help balance our school budget could include increasing community fundraising, aggressive advocacy campaigns for state funding and engaging local businesses to offset cost through possible advertising spaces or naming rights.



**Kim  
McCluski,  
BOE  
Candidate**

My passion for serving the students and families of our

community remains as strong now as it was when I was first elected to the Board of Education 21 years ago. As our district continues to face difficult issues it is critical to have an experienced leader. I pledge to serve as an advocate for public education and build upon the excellent, well-rounded experiences we provide to all of our students.

This is a challenging time in public education. There are several major issues facing public schools over the next few years. These challenges include: lack of federal and state funding, the tax cap, gaining local control of teacher accountability, ensuring the creation of developmentally appropriate assessments for students and an increased need to support the social and emotional well-being of our students.

Strong relationships between all of our stakeholder groups sets us apart from other districts. Through our collaborative relationships we are able to solve complex issues. We

show our strength best when all of our stakeholder groups advocate together. To that end, we need to continue to evolve relative to how we communicate. The addition of social media and processing of truth versus fiction within social media is an area we need to address.

Our budgets will continue to be sustainable through a commitment to: prudent reserve accounts, Aa1 bond rating, alternative sources of revenue such as our school foundation, obtaining "bullet aid" through our active advocacy with legislators and participation in the county-wide health consortium.



**Rene  
Sanchez-  
Kazakos,  
BOE  
Candidate**

I believe that "education is the great equalizer" and will be an advocate for all learners. Pittsford students deserve

a well-rounded education that fits their academic needs and prepares them to be responsible citizens. Our district prides itself on its passion for academic excellence, but our students also benefit from experiences beyond the typical classroom. In order to stay competitive, we need to offer multiple opportunities that will give all learners the means to foster their individual strengths.

I know there has been a concerted effort by the district to promote the

social/emotional well-being of its students. We need to continue along this path and ensure that we are teaching compassion and encouraging our students to embrace diversity. As an educator, parent and community member there are several issues that I see our district wrestling with over the next few years:

- Increasing anxieties students, parents, and teachers face due to

**Continued next page.**

## Sanchez-Kazako continued...

changes in Common Core and APPR.

- Lack of local control over state testing. We need to ensure age-appropriate testing and relevant feedback for students, parents and teachers.
- Our state is on the verge of

a teacher shortage. We must continue to recruit and keep our highly qualified educators, as teachers are our greatest resource!

- We need to educate the public and vote NO on the Constitutional Convention ballot in November in order to protect public education and deter the growth of charter

schools and use of vouchers.

I'm in full support of the budget, but going forward, the BOE should explore other ways of raising revenue. We also need to hold New York State accountable for the monies owed to our district and focus on ways to increase the reserve to a fiscally responsible level.

## Get Out the Vote!!

### Stephanie Warchol, Acting VP for Administration



All area school districts will vote on budgets and board candidates on Tuesday, May 16. So why vote in Pittsford? The Pittsford Central School District and its individual schools consistently provide a nationally ranked academic program, and are recognized to be among the highest achieving in New York State and Monroe County. PCSD has a 99% graduation rate and 97% of those students are college-bound. We are proud of these achievements and want to maintain our high standards of excellence!

On May 16, community members will be voting on a budget that includes:

1. Full-Day Kindergarten implementation and related costs. Debt payments on voter-approved 2012 Capital Project.
2. Proposition for the purchase of buses from the Capital Reserve Fund. The bus proposition WILL NOT impact taxes and will generate State Aid if approved by voters.
3. 3 Board of Education Seats- To learn more about these candidates continue reading this edition of Speak Out, and for PDTA's endorsed candidates, please see our social media outlets.

The 2017-18 budget development was faced with some unique challenges. These factors include the 16-17 year with its 0.58% Tax Cap which established a base far below historical averages and projections. The 2017-18 year will commence the payments on debt as approved by the voters with the 2012 Capital Project. The final significant factors are the implementation and recurrent costs associated with a Full-Day Kindergarten program. The combined effect of these factors created a perfect storm and forced a Property Tax Cap Override. PCSD is seeking a 6.95% budget increase with a 4.73% Tax Levy increase.

In addition to the above, over a 12-year period PCSD was denied 49% of State Aid due to NYS not following the legally prescribed aid formula. For the past eight years, State Aid has been frozen. PCSD has received only nominally more in aid than it received 12 years ago. In 2017-18, PCSD will only receive approximately \$237,000, the minimum NYS Foundation Aid increase. In 16-17, PCSD received approximately \$1.5 million.

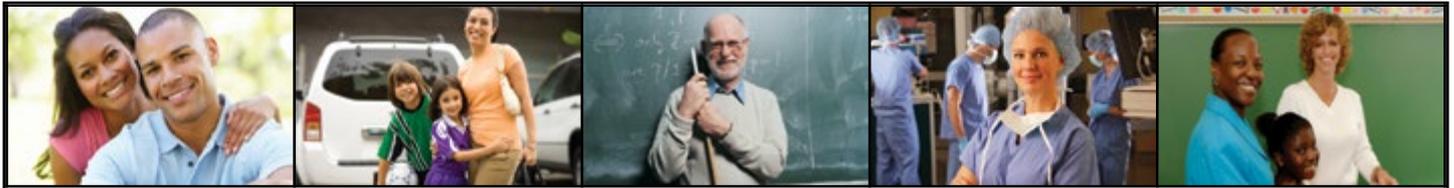
If a Super Majority vote fails, the board of education has the option of going out to vote one more time on the same budget, or amended budget, or, exercising the terms under

a contingent budget. If the budget is defeated twice, the board must adopt a contingent budget. Under a contingent budget the District must adopt a budget with the same tax levy as the prior year- essentially a zero percent cap - which, for PCSD would result in over \$6,800,000 in reductions. With this type of significant financial loss, the ability to continue to maintain the high quality of education families have come to expect from PCSD would be threatened. We do not even want to consider the catastrophic impact this could have on programming and staffing.

It is so important to get out and vote wherever you reside! If you have students or your own children who are 18 years or older, please encourage them to vote. It's easy; no voter registration is required, only proof of identification. The PCSD 17-18 budget vote and board election is on May 16, 7 am to 9 pm in the Barker Road Middle School gymnasium. Pittsford residents, please complete the quick exit poll so the district knows that PDTA members are voters too! For more information on the budget vote or Full-Day Kindergarten, please see the district website.

Speak Out is edited and assembled by Brian Regan.

Your feedback is welcome at [brian\\_regan@pittsford.monroe.edu](mailto:brian_regan@pittsford.monroe.edu)



## ***NYSUT Member Benefits offers savings, advocacy***

Your union is steadfast in its fight for better contracts, safer working conditions, fair pay, advocacy and upholding the labor rights of the dedicated women and men proudly working in the education and health care industries on a daily basis.

But your NYSUT membership does so much more! It also provides you the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of the more than 40 endorsed programs & services offered by NYSUT Member Benefits. Look to Member Benefits for crucial insurance programs such as auto, homeowners, life, disability, or long-term care insurance along with a variety of travel, entertainment & shopping options.

And participation in Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services gives you the added protection of knowing you have a trusted advocate on your side. Each of our endorsed offerings are regularly reviewed and monitored to ensure member satisfaction. Member Benefits is here to help if you should ever have any issues or concerns with any of these programs.

**The following is just a sampling of the endorsed programs & services available to NYSUT members & their families:**

- Homeowners Insurance
- Auto Insurance
- Legal Service Plan
- Financial Counseling Program
- Life Insurance
- Vision Plan
- Abenity Discounts
- Office Depot/OfficeMax
- Car & Truck Rentals
- Wyndham Hotels
- TripBeat by Endless Vacation
- Premier World Discovery

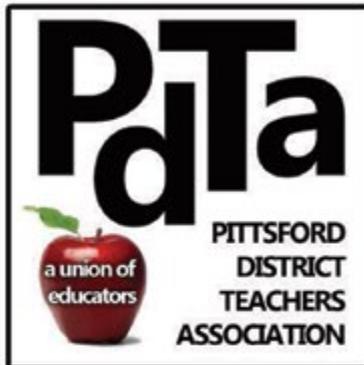


To learn more about Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services, visit ***memberbenefits.nysut.org*** or call **800-626-8101**.



For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.

# Join Us!



for a  
**CHICKEN BBQ  
Fundraiser**

**May 16th  
3-7pm at BRMS.  
VOTE, then EAT!**

**All Proceeds  
Benefit PDTA  
Student Scholarships.**

**\$10** Advance Sales    **\$12** Day of Event

**Includes: 1/2 chicken, salt potatoes, mac salad, dinner roll, utensils.**

**(from King's Catering, Canandaigua)**

**Order ahead through building PDTA rep and pick up meal in the BRMS parking lot. Make checks payable to PDTA. Questions? Contact Kelly\_Jordan@pittsford.monroe.edu**



Tickets just \$20.99 plus tax  
A savings of \$29.00!



**DAYS**

**July 8-23, 2017**



Did you know that 2017 marks the landmark 35<sup>th</sup> year for our signature corkscrew coaster - THE VIPER? Built in 1982, it was the first coaster in the world to feature five inversions.

Now you can print and order your tickets online with print and go.

**YES!** Send me \_\_\_\_\_ Darien Lake NYSUT tickets at \$20.99 plus tax ( \$21.39 each ) valid any one day July 8-23, 2017. All mail orders must be received by July 1, 2017. A stamped, self-addressed business-sized envelope must be included to receive your tickets, along with a check made payable to Darien Lake or credit card information

**OR**

**Easiest Deal:** Use Print-N-Go! For \$20.99 plus tax you can print your own Darien Lake NYSUT Day tickets from home: Here's how: Log on to [www.DarienLake.com](http://www.DarienLake.com) • Enter promo code: NYSUT • Pay by credit card...then • Print-N-Go!

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**PAYMENT INFORMATION:**

Credit Card Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ security code \_\_\_\_\_

Exp date: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail your order with a self addressed envelope to:  
Darien Lake, ATTN: NYSUT Days, PO Box 91, Darien Center, NY 14040  
Or email [groups@darienlake.com](mailto:groups@darienlake.com) (Credit Card Orders Only)  
Tickets are available the day of for \$24.99 plus tax at any ticket window.