

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



Local Political Action Dwayne Cerbone, President

As a union of educators representing teachers, mental health providers, school related professionals, nurses, tutors, and auxiliary staff, we are deeply committed to engaging in any interests that directly impact our members. This time of year we strive to identify PCSD Board of Education candidates that are prepared to lead the District in a manner that best represents and serves the needs of our students, schools, staff and community. The PDTA implements an extensive interview process that has proven to be a reliable means for eliciting the attributes known to best equip a candidate for successful Board service. In addition, we initiate a comprehensive background study.

I am pleased to share that with a unanimous vote of your PDTA Representative Assembly, we have once again endorsed Emily Kay and Dave Berk for the two open seats on the PCSD Board of Education. Emily and Dave each demonstrated an impressive understanding of the most pertinent topics impacting our schools and expressed a continued commitment to working collaboratively with our unit to manage these. The Board of Education is responsible for managing the complex systems, finances and functions of our entire school district. These candidates each bring unique

attributes that are necessary to assure the balanced, effective, efficient and responsive leadership that our schools require.

As a valued PDTA member, we acknowledge that your vote is a personal decision; however, we do respectfully request that you consider the endorsements of the PDTA (or your local district's union) when voting. Please see pages 3-5. We also ask that you share these endorsements with friends and family in the Pittsford community. One way you can spread the word is by sharing our social media posts. If you are not already engaged with the PDTA's Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) accounts, I encourage you to follow us, as we communicate information not typically shared through district email frequently using these platforms. We consistently strive to maintain a social media presence that is professional, respectful, relevant and unifying around shared educational interests.

In accordance with all legal and fiscal responsibilities, no member dues funds are expended on the endorsement of the Board candidates nor school budget. The money for these activities is generated through the voluntary and generous contributions of our members to NYSUT Vote-Cope.

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In other political news, it appears that NYSUT has successfully advocated for bell-to-bell distraction-free learning to support the educational environment and improve mental health among students during the school day. At NYSUT RA this past weekend we heard positive reports from schools that have already taken steps to restrict students' cellphone and personal electronic device usage. They detailed observable benefits to academic focus, student mental health and overall school culture. However, as with any significant change addressing addiction, we are aware implementation will likely reveal some challenges in the PCSD. President-elect Warchol recently attended a Disconnected Conference sponsored by NYSUT and is equipped to spearhead the impact of the bell-to-bell restriction, which is expected to be included in the 2025 NYS Budget.

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Pittsford District Teachers Association (PDTA) – A Union of Educators



PCSD 2025-2026 Budget and BOE Member Vote

Stephanie Warchol, Executive Vice President

The development of a school district's budget is a thoughtful, year-long undertaking. It is a multi-faceted process including establishment of shared priorities (Budget Guidelines) by the District Planning Team, budget preparation, presentation, review by the Board of Education and community members, formal budget adoption, further sharing with the community, and Board approval. Through my representation on DPT and attending all of the budget work sessions and BOE meetings, I hope to be able to provide you a basic overview of the 2025- 2026 proposed budget. The information below is compiled from the District website and budget newsletter.

Ninety-two percent of Pittsford Schools' revenue derives from the tax cap levy and state aid with the levy supporting 70% of the budget. PCSD's revenue sources are often referred to as being "capped" and "frozen." The tax cap levy is capped given that the tax cap formula does not account for inflation beyond 2%, nor does it take into consideration increasing costs of energy, health care, minimum wage, or other costly factors. Foundation aid (money from the state) has been frozen for many years, with the exception of a couple, yielding an additional \$10,000 last year. The result of both the current state of the tax cap and foundation aid, coupled with increased costs, have led to advocacy efforts for increased foundation aid while also requiring PCSD to make \$1.5 million in reductions and utilize reserves to balance the budget.

For the 2025-2026 budget year, PCSD should receive a minimum increase of about \$558,000 in Foundation Aid, which is a 2.64% increase over the current year levels. This is in part thanks to the many letters residents and staff

sent to legislators, and meetings that administrators and Board of Education members held in Albany in February. At the District Office, over \$300K in reductions were made by consolidating and eliminating positions. Significant savings were made through attrition across the District, and PCSD is currently finalizing other reductions, all of which are far removed from students.

The proposed budget of \$168,218,102, an increase of 3.97%, reflects a tax levy increase of 2.34% which is within the Tax Cap. Residents will also be voting on two propositions. The first, authorizing to withdraw \$2,419,162 from the "Capital Reserve Fund - Purchase of Buses." The second, authorizing to withdraw no more than \$500,000 from the "Capital Reserve Fund – Instructional Technology." These propositions will NOT impact taxes and in some cases will generate State Aid if approved by voters.

In addition to the budget and propositions, voters will also be choosing their Board of Education representatives. This year we have three candidates running for two open seats. PDTA conducted its formal endorsement process and the Representative Assembly unanimously voted to endorse incumbent Board Members Emily Kay & Dave Berk. You can find more information about all the candidates later in this edition of *Speak Out*.

Voting will take place at the Calkins Road Middle School from 7 AM to 9 PM on Tuesday, May 20. Residents seeking an absentee ballot must obtain an application and submit it to the PCSD District Clerk; for more information visit the District's website.



SRP Newslink

Connie Maust

Here are important reminders for the end of the school year.

- Para Evaluations: You should receive a written evaluation by June 1 completed by your designated building administrator. An evaluation conference may be scheduled based on the date of your last in-person conference, which is required at least once every three years.
- Summer day of work: SRPs need to complete one summer workday. The prior approval section of the form must be given to your building administrator by Friday, June 13th. The form can be found on the PDTA website or [HERE](#).
- Open SRP position postings for school year 2025-2026 will start May 15. Human Resources will send emails detailing open paraprofessional positions. This process is especially important for our "undesigned paras."

Express interest in all paraprofessional positions, including the role you currently hold, in order of preference. Placements are made based on the assigned unit and each member's seniority. There will be multiple rounds of postings so it could be a few weeks before you are settled in a position. You can, and should, continue posting until you obtain your most desired assignment.

· The PCSD Budget Vote & School Board Election on May 20 (7:00 am – 9:00 pm): PDTA will be hosting the BBQ Chicken Fundraiser for the Barbara Shapiro Student Scholarship Fund from 3:00 – 6:30 pm. Presale meal tickets are available until May 9th for \$14 from your building PR rep. There will also be onsite meals available for purchase for \$16.

· The new retirees and 20-year recognition party is May 22, 2025. It will be at Ravenwood Golf Club at 4:30 pm.

Board of Education Candidate

Emily Kay



1. Why do you wish to serve on the PCSD BOE?

As both a Pittsford parent and a Pittsford alumna, I am fiercely protective of what we have here in PCSD. The educational opportunities and individualized supports we are able to give our students are both wonderful and rare. After my own graduation, I saw firsthand what an incredible advantage my Pittsford education was for me. I feel passionately about ensuring that every kid who goes through our buildings receives that same advantage.

I also know from my experience on our Board of Education that a school district of Pittsford's caliber doesn't happen by running on auto-pilot. It needs a constant stream of parents, teachers, administrators, and community members who are committed to growing our standard of excellence in all areas, for all students. I have both the time and the desire to help create the most collaborative, supportive, and academically rigorous experience possible for all our kids.

2. What are our school district's greatest strengths and opportunities for improvement?

I believe our district's greatest strength is its spirit of collaboration. On the whole, our stakeholder groups – parents, teachers and staff, administrators, the Board, the Town and Village governments – value our schools, respect each other's work, and want the best for our kids and our community. This collaboration allows us to find innovative ways to support our kids, both academically and as individuals.

However, we cannot rest on our laurels. We need to make sure we are consistently inviting feedback from our community and using it to improve. We need to utilize our Communications Office effectively to showcase the wonderful work our educators, staff, and students are doing each day and to build trust in our teachers and their expertise. The collaboration that defines PCSD only works as long as our many stakeholders trust and remain invested in our schools.

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

The mental health crisis among our kids is a national issue but we see its effects in our schools daily. While there are no easy answers, I am heartened by some of the steps I've seen to help our PCSD students. I am optimistic that our new cellphone policy will help our students' mental health by giving them a break from the overstimulation, distraction, and social drama that can come with our smartphones. For students with more severe mental health struggles, I believe our Tutoring Center will be vital in meeting them where they are and continuing to provide instruction.

We must also find creative ways to attract and retain the high-quality teaching professionals that define PCSD. A robust pipeline of new graduates from teaching programs simply isn't there, which makes our efforts to attract new talent and hold on to our experienced educators even more crucial.

4. In this role, how will you address the current fiscal realities while continuing our commitment to excellence?

This year, I have seen first-hand why collaboration is so vital to addressing our fiscal situation. We faced this budget season with a \$1.5 million budget gap and only \$10,737 in additional Foundation Aid funds. In response, the district created an Advocacy Team with representation from our Board, PDТА, Central Office, PDAA, PEOP, and PTSA, and launched a community-wide campaign to advocate for more state funding. This campaign was so successful that one of our local legislators jokingly begged us to stop flooding her office with letters. The state listened, and we now expect a minimum increase of \$558,000 in Foundation Aid.

Still facing a budget gap, PCSD's employees embraced the spirit of collaboration and looked for ways their own units could help. Their ideas, combined with our reserves, have allowed us to successfully close our budget gap without layoffs or sacrificing programming for students.

5. What else would you like our members to know about you?

I am extremely dedicated to my role as a member of the Pittsford BOE. The first term always carries a steep learning curve, but I have gone out of my way to get up to speed as quickly and thoroughly as possible. I've spent three years on county-level District Operations, Information Exchange, and Legislative Committees and on our PCSD Teacher Center Policy Board. I've also served on our Community Outreach Committee and I head our newly re-formed Policy Review Committee. Each year, I travel to Albany, meet locally and on Zoom with legislators, and spend as much time in our buildings and at PCSD events as I can.

A board member isn't a subject matter expert. We already have incredibly knowledgeable experts in our district: our educators and administrators. It is my job, however, to be as well-informed about my governance role as possible and I take that responsibility very seriously.

6. Where can we learn more about you?

The best way to learn more about me is simply to speak with me. I'm happy to chat on the phone, in person, or by email. Pittsford schools are one of my favorite topics of conversation, so please don't hesitate to reach out.

kay.emily.a@gmail.com
emily_kay@pittsford.monroe.edu
(585) 313-6323

Board of Education Candidate

Dave Berk



1. Why do you wish to serve on the PCSD BOE?

Having now spent three years on the Pittsford Board of Education, I've developed a deeper appreciation for both the complexity and importance of

this role. When I first ran, I believed that my background in business operations and finance, along with my experience working with corporate boards, would serve me well. And while that experience has been valuable, I've come to understand there's no real preparation for the breadth of issues the board must address—ranging from facilities and budgeting to pedagogy and policy.

Today, I feel like I'm just hitting my stride. I'm running for reelection because I want to continue contributing meaningfully to the district, bring institutional knowledge to support our new leadership, and ensure our schools continue to offer the exceptional education my own children—and every child in Pittsford—deserve.

2. What are our school district's greatest strengths and opportunities for improvement?

Pittsford's greatest strength is its people: the educators, administrators, students, and families who are aligned in their commitment to excellence. Our community shares core values around academic rigor, student safety, and fiscal responsibility. I've witnessed firsthand how well our leadership collaborates—parents, teachers, and administrators work together to solve problems, not create them.

That said, we also have opportunities for improvement. At the building levels and in the central office, we have many new faces and young leaders. It's critical that we invest in supporting our new leaders while maintaining continuity and consistency. We also need to continue strengthening our communication with the community—making sure people feel informed, engaged, and heard in decision-making processes.

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

The challenges ahead are real and complex. We're operating in a climate of significant financial uncertainty—state funding is tightening, inflation continues to impact costs, and we're seeing real-time policy changes that affect how we operate. In Pittsford specifically, we have to help the leadership in our district navigate these challenges with the support of a unified, experienced and collaborative board. More broadly, we must not become distracted with our core focus of prioritizing what's best for students.

4. In this role, how will you address the current fiscal realities while continuing our commitment to excellence?

My professional roles have provided me with a good deal of experience in operations and building and managing budgets. I bring a strong appreciation for responsible budgeting and long-term planning. The district has historically done an excellent job managing resources, and we must continue that tradition by maintaining transparency, prioritizing spending based on impact, and advocating for our needs at the state level.

We can't let financial constraints compromise our core commitments to academic excellence, equity, and student well-being. It will take thoughtful tradeoffs, clear communication, and strong collaboration between the board and administration—and I'm committed to bringing that to the table.

5. What else would you like our members to know about you?

I'm a proud Pittsford alum, a parent of two young children in the district, and someone who is deeply invested in the success of our schools—not just today, but for the long term. My wife and I both graduated from Pittsford Sutherland, and returning here to raise our family was a deliberate decision rooted in our belief in this community and its schools.

Professionally, I've spent 15 years in leadership roles at recruiting and technology companies in New York and San Francisco. I hold degrees in political science and economics, with additional study at Georgetown and the London School of Economics. I bring this experience to the boardroom, but I also bring humility, a willingness to listen, and a deep respect for the educators and leaders who do this work every day.

6. Where can we learn more about you?

You're welcome to reach out to me directly at dave_berk@pittsford.monroe.edu

I appreciate your interest and welcome your questions!

Board of Education Candidate

Laura Schulitz



1. Why do you wish to serve on the PCSD BOE?

I have spent over 16 years leading volunteer activities that develop youth. The PCSD BOE is where I can best support their ongoing development. I bring deep

experience with the district, having been involved with the PCSD and PTSA for about 14 years. I have worked on district committees, including the Scenario Planning Committee. As the parent representative, I assisted the superintendent with the logistics around reopening school during COVID! Getting our youth back in the buildings, even if part-time, was a great experience and demonstrated what committed and collaborative leadership can accomplish. That experience of helping the district's youth get back to normal after a crisis propelled me to take this step of running for the BOE. Developing youth, through Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, The Junior League, and the PTSA, is the focus of my volunteer time. I enjoyed time in the district and am confident I can help.

2. What are our school district's greatest strengths and opportunities for improvement?

I think the district speaks for itself for strengths with the amazing faculty and staff who comprise our district, but the opportunity for improvement has to be the pay scale for our clerical staff. These women and men work tirelessly to ensure our students' transcripts show up at the right school, diplomas are completed, AP exams are submitted – all with love in their hearts!

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

Bussing is at the top of my mind! My mother was a school bus driver when I was growing up, and although it was hard, it put food on our table and allowed her the flexibility

to be with my brother and me. I would love to spend time in the transportation department to see why there is so much turnover and what we as a district can do better. One other challenge is striking the right balance between using technology to augment learning and safety (i.e., cellphones) while ensuring appropriate educational outcomes are achieved (i.e., dealing with AI)

4. In this role, how will you address the current fiscal realities while continuing our commitment to excellence?

Unfortunately, I don't have as intimate knowledge of the budget as an outsider. But in thinking about it and my past roles, it is a line-by-line review of all costs, and there is no way around it. I know the budget is carefully reviewed and the team works very deliberately to keep it below the tax cap. To touch on a previous point, however, any place where we can prudently deploy technology to reduce cost, meetings, etc., should be carefully considered.

5. What else would you like our members to know about you?

I have been and will always be focused on our children as students. I realized recently that as I was able to watch my children grow up, I was also able to watch their friends grow up. This journey has been amazing, and I have loved seeing them all become fabulous adults. I like being involved and helping develop youth. I enjoy the continuing fellowship with other adults similarly committed. It really does take a village.

6. Where can we learn more about you?

I'm on Facebook at [Elect Laura Schulitz. Pittsford BOE.](#) Please feel free to email me at Laura.schulitz@yahoo.com with any questions and I will do my best to answer or message me on Facebook as well at [Laura Ambrosio Schulitz.](#) Thank you for the opportunity and I hope to earn your vote on May 20.

2025-2026 PCSD Budget : Endorsed by PDTA

**Capital Reserve Fund – Purchase of Buses
(savings account) : Endorsed by PDTA**

**Capital Reserve Fund – Instructional Technology
(savings account) : Endorsed by PDTA**

BOE Candidates Berk and Kay : Endorsed by PDTA



PDTA CHICKEN BBQ FUNDRAISER



PRESALE UNTIL MAY 9!

TICKETS \$14

DINNER INCLUDES:
1/2 BBQ CHICKEN
MACARONI SALAD
SALT POTATOES
DINNER ROLL & BUTTER

EVENT INFO:
TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2025
PICKUP FROM 3-6:30 PM
CALKINS ROAD MIDDLE SCHOOL

**SEE YOUR PR REP TO
PURCHASE TICKETS!**

AC - ALYSON HALLETT
JR - JEN TERENZI
MC - KRIS FERNANDEZ
PR - ALLISON LUTA
TR - RADHIKA RAMESH
BRMS - PEGGY CARR
CRMS - CHRISTINE JOHNSON
MHS - RACHAEL BONANNO
SHS - CORINE WARNER



THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE BARB SHAPIRO STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP FUND!

EMBROIDERED PDTA SWAG



15% of all sales go directly to our PDTA Student Scholarship Fund. We've raised over \$345 since the program began!

All products are embroidered.

Purchases are done online through the company and shipped directly to your house. Keep an eye out for sale codes and free shipping deals which are frequently offered.

Link will always be open - make purchases whenever and as often as you like.

Makes a perfect gift for yourself or your favorite PDTA member- feel free to share the link with friends or family.



pdta.logosoftwear.com

Important Information and Dates:

- 5/20: Budget Vote and Chicken BBQ Fundraiser at CRMS
- 5/22: Retirement Party at Ravenwood Golf Club (note location change)
- 5/31: Deadline to complete Professional Development hours for Certificated Staff



Speak Out! is edited and compiled by Murie Gillett.
Feel free to contact me with any questions at
murie_gillett@pittsford.monroe.edu.

SPEAK OUT! Ads

You and your family members are invited to place ads in future issues of SPEAK OUT!
Rates for members and family (price is for one issue):

1/8 Page: \$12.50 ¼ Page: \$25.00 ½ Page: \$50.00 Full Page: \$100.00

Above rates are for copy ready advertising. If additional design or set-up is required, an additional fee of \$25 will be assessed. Space for ads is limited per issue. Checks should be made out to PDTA and mailed to the PDTA Office. **Ad proceeds will support PDTA charitable efforts.**

Send copy and questions directly to murie_gillett@pittsford.monroe.edu.

Your PDTA Representative Assembly 2024-2025:

President: Dwayne Cerbone * (SHS)
Executive Vice President: Stephanie Warchol * (CRMS)
Vice President for Negotiations: Dennise Zobel * (BRE)
Secretary: Alyson Hallett * (ACE)
Treasurer: Ryan Domina * (SHS)
Resolution Specialist (non-voting): Kim Chesko * (JRE)

Allen Creek Elementary

Michele Riedl, Building Representative *
Alyson Hallett, Assistant Building Representative
Susan Benson, Assistant SRP Representative

Jefferson Road Elementary

Bret Burrows, Building Representative *
Patty Steele, Assistant Building Rep.
Julie Pellegrino, Assistant SRP Representative

Mendon Center Elementary

Jen Villareale, Building Representative *
Nina Dezio, Assistant Building Representative
Trisha Sullivan, Assistant Building Representative
Deborah Ricketts, Assistant SRP Representative
Rebecca Tan, Assistant SRP Representative

Park Road Elementary

Spencer Jones, Building Representative *
Allison Luta, Assistant Building Representative

Thornell Road Elementary

Greg Bischooping, Building Representative *
Kelly Sanderson, Assistant Building Representative
Radhika Ramesh, Assistant SRP Representative

Barker Road Middle School

Kristen Dolan, Building Representative *
Ann Conciardo, Assistant Building Representative
Ellen Fox, Assistant Building Representative
Karen Grace, Assistant Building Representative
Connie Maust, SRP Representative *

Calkins Road Middle School

Melissa Althouse, Building Representative *
Sophie Spyra, Assistant Building Representative
Jessica Wojcik, Assistant Building Representative
Farida Patrawala, Assistant SRP Representative

Mendon High School

Samantha Hyde, Building Representative *
Mindy Emmerson, Assistant Building Representative
Mike Madden, Assistant Building Representative
Brandon Mauks, Assistant Building Representative
LaShanda Clark McCadney, Assistant SRP Representative

Sutherland High School

Amanda Marshall, Building Representative *
Marc Hellems, Assistant Building Representative
Brian Shafer, Assistant Building Representative
Jeff Wing, Assistant Building Representative
Kelly Nanavati, Assistant SRP Representative

Non-voting:

Irene Hopp, Retiree Representative & Amy Lamb, Ancillary Representative

Standing Committee Chairs:

Communications: Murie Gillett, SHS
Extracurricular: Katie Shea, SHS
Membership: Paul LeVan, SHS
Political Action: Karen Grace, BRMS
Professional Advancement: Dennise Zobel, BRE
Professional Growth: Nicole Barry, BRE
Public Relations: Kelly Jordan, PRE, and Allison Luta, PRE
Safety and Wellness: Emily Natoli-Burns, SHS
Special Events: Erica Bonin, MHS

Delegates:

1. Dwayne Cerbone
2. Kimberly Chesko
3. Katie Shea
4. Karen Grace
5. Stephanie Warchol
6. Jennifer Simons
7. Vacant



***Indicates Executive Committee Member**



LET MEMBER BENEFITS HELP YOU PLAN FOR RETIREMENT

If you recently retired or plan to do so in the near future, it's important to prepare for the transition from in-service work to retirement.

Maintaining NYSUT membership in retirement is crucial, especially if you're currently participating in a NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed program(s) and would like to continue doing so. This can be accomplished in one of two ways:

- 1** Continue membership within your local if retiree membership is offered. Contact your local to find out if any retiree membership requirements are in place. You must comply with these requirements to continue your membership in NYSUT along with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and National Education Association (NEA).
- 2** Continue as an at-large member of NYSUT through the Retiree Council in your region. Contact your local to ensure you will be reported as retired to NYSUT. This will provide you with membership in the Retiree Council in your region along with NYSUT, AFT, and NEA. If you have questions about maintaining NYSUT membership or would like more information about NYSUT retiree programs, you will want to contact the NYSUT Retiree Services Consultant serving your region. You can find this information at nysut.cc/retireeconsultants.

More than a dozen of the endorsed programs offered by Member Benefits can be purchased through either payroll or pension deduction. These convenient payment methods offer reduced premiums or the elimination of service fees in many instances. An active NYSUT membership is required to participate in payroll or pension deduction. If you're currently participating in one (or more) of our endorsed programs, we encourage you to look into switching to pension deduction after you enter retirement.


Learn more about continuing Member Benefits-endorsed programs or the pension deduction process by scanning the QR code, visiting memberbenefits.nysut.org, or calling 800-626-8101.



May/June 2025

Life is complicated. NYSUT Member Benefits can help.

PEER SUPPORT LINE



Don't go it alone.

When stressful situations arise, let the Peer Support Line help you find solutions. Our trained specialists will lend a caring ear and connect you with community resources that can help make a difference for you and your family.

The Peer Support Line is a service available through NYSUT Member Benefits that's offered at no cost to all NYSUT members and their families.

Staffed by trained in-service and retired individuals who understand the unique professional and personal challenges of NYSUT members, this confidential helpline provides answers, resources and empathetic support when you need it.

The Peer Support Line can help with:

- Finding mental health services and supports
- Managing work-related stress & personal challenges
- Providing support to new members
- Assisting with marital, relationship or child-rearing concerns & accessing caregiving resources
- Reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness



For more information or
assistance, call toll-free:
844-444-0152.



The Peer Support Line is a partnership between NYSUT Member Benefits and Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care.