INFORMATION, NEWS AND SUPPORT

SPEAK OUT!

PITTSFORD DISTRICT TEACHERS ASSOCIATION



Got a Quick Question?

Stephanie Warchol, President

A core aspect of the work we do at PDTA is provide resources and guidance to our members. As our membership continues to experience growth and turn over, I thought I would take the opportunity to explain our structures and share who to lean on for support when you have that "quick question". Please refer to the PDTA Website page titled "People" for our various rosters and the leadership directory. The Representative Assembly roster is listed towards the end of every edition of Speak Out.

Building Representatives

Your Building Reps are your go-to contact for anything PDTA related, especially regarding questions/ concerns tied to your own building and building administration. They meet regularly with admin and can ask questions, voice concerns, and advocate on your behalf. They also attend monthly meetings with other PDTA leaders and can carry your voice to a higher level and see if concerns at one building are bubbling up at others. Every building has one Building Rep, and a number of Assistant Building Reps, based on the amount of PDTA members in your building.

SRP Representatives

PDTA has one SRP Representative and nine Assistant SRP Representatives, sprinkled across the nine buildings. While it is an ultimate goal to have at least one designated SRP Rep in every building, we aren't quite there yet. If you are an SRP or have needs or questions connected to SRP roles, please do not hesitate to reach out to this talented group of leaders. They too meet with building admin and with the rest of the PDTA Rep Assembly regularly.

Committee Chairs

The nine PDTA Committee Chairs are responsible for the various focus areas of the organization. Most of them have a committee of building volunteers who participate in the work and bring feedback to and from their building. For example, if you have a question connected to the current APPR process (soon to be known as STEPS), you would reach out to anyone on the Professional Standards Committee. If you have a safety concern or SEL suggestion, you could connect with the Chair or building volunteers on the Safety Council or SEL Committee. If you have a specific question about a club you advise, you could reach out to anyone on the Extracurricular Committee. We still have spots to fill for building volunteer positions, if any of our focus areas interest you, click HERE to see the current committee roster.

We Educate.
We Advocate.
We Collaborate.

PDTA Officers

Your Officers act as liaisons and collaborate with various stakeholders, while overseeing and directing the work of the Association. The President meets regularly with members of the Central Office Team (COT) and brings updates back to Exec and RA. They also meet monthly with Presidents from locals around the county as part of an organization call The Monroe County Federation of Teachers (MCFT). The Executive Vice President is our link to the Board of Education (BOE) and PTSA. They attend all BOE meetings and work with PTSA leaders on ways our two organizations can partner. The Vice President for Negotiations handles all aspects of negotiations and co-facilitates the Professional Standards Committee with the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources. Our Resolution Specialist handles contract concerns/violations and acts as a primary medical leave advocate for members. Our Treasurer is responsible for managing the finances of the Association, setting the annual budget, and overseeing an annual audit of the books. Our Secretary handles all meeting notes and minutes and is responsible for various aspects of distribution.

NYSUT Delegates

A NYSUT Delegate's work is to speak for the members of their local union, ensuring that local member's priorities, concerns and policy positions are heard at local ED 5/6 meetings and

continued on the following page...

In this issue:

1 from the PRESIDENT
2 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
3-4 STUDY GRANT RECIPIENT
5 SRP NEWSLINK, RESOLUTION SPECIALIST
6-8 REMINDERS AND ADS
9-10 HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

the state-wide NYSUT Rep Assembly meeting. These elected representatives debate, discuss, and vote on resolutions, policy issues, and strategic priorities that shape NYSUT's programs, services and bargaining positions. For example, at our ED 5/6 meeting in October, the idea of creating a resolution pertaining to the collective concern of staggering increases to healthcare premiums, and their impact on districts and members, was proposed and began to be developed. This year's NYSUT Rep Assembly will take place in NYC in early May.

We are exceptionally proud of our network of more than 125 peer leaders and volunteers who are committed to supporting your growth and helping you navigate a variety of professional needs. This support extends beyond your building's Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), Grade Level Chairs, Department Leaders, Standards Leaders, Mentors, and Administrators, all of whom serve as valuable partners in your success. We encourage you to explore the many additional resources available at https://www.pdta.org, where you'll find tools, information, and opportunities designed to support and inspire you throughout the year.



Executive Vice President
Kim Chesko

Board of Education Recognition

The week of October 12-16 was School Board Recognition Week in New York. PCSD celebrated our seven Board of Education members at the meeting on October 13th. I stood proudly with PDAA, PEOP, and PTSA leaders to convey the appreciation and gratitude of those in our organizations. In addition to cards for each member, PDTA also made a donation in their honor to the Pittsford Education Foundation and Pittsford Youth Services, in the amount of $125 each.

Below are the remarks I made at the meeting:
I am here representing the nearly 800 members of the PDTA. We want to express our heartfelt gratitude to you for supporting what we do as educators. We are in awe of the countless hours you dedicate to this volunteer position, to the benefit of all of us within the PCSD and Pittsford community. We in PDTA are not unaware of how unique our relationship with our board is. We approach every day with students, every decision made, every connection created, with the knowledge that we have a board that supports us and strives to always work collaboratively toward the betterment of our schools and school community. I was struck during our work at this year's summer workshop that our board members are experts at collaboration. As we crafted strategic goals and envisioned a vibrant future for our district, our Board Members listened actively, forged creative solutions, and embraced the expertise of all stake-holders. The trust and shared vision that PDTA and the Board hold in common are truly what makes Pittsford Schools a great place to work, and we thank you deeply for each of your individual roles in that. Happy Board Appreciation Week!

PTSA Membership

It's not too late to join the PTSA! For as little as $10 you can become a member of the Pittsford Central PTSA. This is an annual membership that does not roll over, so it must be renewed each year. If you want to check your membership status, email the PTSA Membership Chair at membership@pittsfordptsa.net.

NEW THIS YEAR
Any staff who join PTSA by November 30th will be entered into a raffle for a set of Flair pens (ya'll know you love a good Flair pen) There will be one winner from each building!

See flyer below for a QR code or join online here.



Wanda Ward Study Grant Recipient

Angela Carpin, 3rd grade teacher, Mendon Center Elementary

What do you notice? What do you wonder? What would happen if…? Why? Questioning like this was at the heart of the ***Creativity Connected 2026 National Arts Integration and STEAM Conference.*** Educators from around the country gathered to explore ways to elevate instruction through STEAM centered integration and creativity content integration to STEAM driven integration. Thanks to the Wanda Ward Study Grant and support from my building, I had the pleasure of attending the conference in St. Louis this past July.



The conference is hosted each year by the Institute for Arts Integration & STEAM, whose mission is to *"empower educators to use creativity as a teaching tool, blending arts integration with STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) to foster innovation, critical thinking, and engagement."* Susan Riley, the institute's founder, was present and active throughout the conference. She continually reinforced the idea that integration on its own is wonderful, but doing so with purpose and a focus on observation and questioning elevates the learning experience for students. According to Riley, "STEAM" is not just lessons related to science and technology – learning to code, building structures from marshmallows and toothpicks – but rather an approach to teaching that emphasizes questioning, problem solving, and collaboration, regardless of the content area.

The three full days of the conference included speakers and presentations that supported the institute's message and inspired attendees. Billy Almon, an "astro-bio-futurist" who has worked at Disney and Animal Planet, opened the conference with a metaphor comparing changing times to the ocean. He encouraged attendees to analyze changes and information coming their way and to "not make tsunami decisions based on ripples." Barney Saltzberg, author of "Beautiful Oops!" shared his journey of perseverance and coached us on ways to help students see the opportunities in mistakes or unexpected outcomes. Trevor Muir, who turned his passion for project-based learning into a career as a motivation/inspirational speaker, closed the conference by reminding attendees to value the connections they can help create between their students and the content they teach.



I was impressed with the number and variety of sessions offered at the conference. Presenters included teachers and STEAM program leaders sharing best practices and innovative lessons, administrators and/or district leaders discussing programs and protocols that were successful in their districts, professors and researchers sharing the latest information about creativity and student engagement, and vendors demonstrating ways their services or products could support arts and STEAM integration in classrooms. It was tough to choose which to attend, and I often wished I could clone myself to attend all of them! Each session I attended offered something valuable, but my three favorite sessions were:

- **Data Storytelling** – While this sounded as if we would learn about using metrics to measure STEAM learning, it was instead an AMAZING session with ideas for using picture books to engage students in STEAM thinking: teaching them to use evidence to think critically and use evidence to support further questioning. It was fabulous!

- **Fostering Creativity Inside and Outside of the Classroom** – This research-based session focused on defining creativity, differentiating between types of creativity, and proposing options for fostering creativity in the classroom, especially for our neurodivergent, exceptional, and/or highly talented students. The session reinforced the value of thinking routines, such as those available through Harvard's Project Zero.



- **Creative Limits, Limitless Thinking: Using Constraints and Spontaneous Challenges to Supercharge Student Innovation** –This presenter leveraged their experience with teaching creativity, STEAM and coaching Odyssey of the Mind. They demonstrated how adding constraints to one or more parts of a task can help avoid the "my mind is blank" panic students often experience and actually improve students' ability to think creatively when problem solving.



One of the greatest benefits of attending the conference was the opportunity I had to interact with other attendees. Meeting people and connecting was made easier by the interactive nature of most conference sessions and the networking support built into the conference. People I engaged with came from all over the continental

US. (Some attendees came from as far away as Hawaii, but I did not have the pleasure of meeting them!) Some were public school teachers, some private school teachers, and some ran separate STEAM programs. Some taught art, some taught technology, and most were classroom teachers. It was refreshing to share our common experiences and concerns and energizing to be inspired by best practices we shared. St. Louis provided an excellent setting for these conversations. I joined other attendees in the evenings to enjoy St. Louis BBQ, live music, a food truck rodeo, a tour of the botanical gardens and to cheer the Cardinals as they beat the Milwaukee Brewers 5-1!



Was it worth spending four days of summer vacation learning and networking? Absolutely! Next year's 2027 Creativity Connected Arts Integration & STEAM Conference will be July 9-12 in Atlanta, Georgia. I strongly recommend this conference for any teachers who are eager to expand their understanding of STEAM and creativity and who would appreciate a renewed sense of inspiration and possibility.

The PDTA's Wanda Ward Study Grant offers fund to assist teachers with expenses related to professional learning during school breaks. You will find the application for the study grant under "Documents" on the PDTA website. The deadline for applying for summer conferences or programs is April 15. Earlier deadlines apply for opportunities during other breaks.



In the Golisano Training Center at Nazareth University it's almost time for the

PTSA SUPER SALE!

PCSD employees shop the PRE-SALE on Friday, Nov. 6th

2pm-4pm & 6pm-8pm*

***please note we must close the pre-sale from 4pm-6pm**

The SUPER SALE will open to the public Nov. 7 & 8 at 9AM

Sales profits fund k-12 programs and enrichment at PCSD Schools

www.pittsfordptsa.net/super-sale



SRP Newslink

Connie Maust

Union dues deductions for the 2026-2027 school year will begin with the November 15 paycheck. When reviewing your pay statement, you may notice a slight change in your net pay.

In addition to the support and benefits negotiated by your PDTA leadership team and representatives, your NYSUT membership provides access to valuable resources and discounts. Visit NYSUT's webstite to explore savings on concerts, sporting events, shows, restaurants, appliances, vacations, cars, and retail purchases, as well as insurance, legal, and financial services. The NYSUT website also offers informative articles and professional learning opportunities for SRPs through NYSUT ELT. I encourage everyone to log in and take advantage of these resources and benefits.

Remember that paid learning opportunities are available through WinCap Web. Be sure to check the Elective Catalog regularly for new courses added to the Para Academy. One current option is Introduction to the Habits of Mind Framework. Habits of Mind is a districtwide initiative across all grade levels and buildings. This course introduces the 16 thinking qualities that effective problem-solvers use when facing challenges and unfamiliar situations. By developing these habits, students can become stronger learners, critical thinkers, and lifelong problem-solvers.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your building representative or your building SRP assistant representative.

Reminders:

- The PDTA Apparel Sale ends Friday, November 6
- SRP Recognition Day is Tuesday, November 17
- The annual mandatory training modules (Cypherworx) - need to be completed by 12/31/26.
- Active Membership Meeting will take place on January 11, 2027 @ 3:30-5:00pm (SHS)

Follow us on social media!

@pdtaunion

@ Pittsford District Teachers Association - PDTA

@PDTAunion



Resolution Specialist

Jennifer Villareale

Time for a WinCap Check-Up!

Is it just me, or does it seem like there's always something to double-check? As we move through the school year, take a few minutes to review your **WinCap information**. Whether you're checking your sick day balance, making sure your paycheck looks right, or keeping track of your professional development hours, it's always better to catch a discrepancy early than to discover it when you need that information most!

Where can you find WinCap? Access it through your Class Link or under "For Staff" on the district website.

Here's a quick guide:
Sick/Personal Day Balances: Under the purple bar, select Employee Self Service → My Attendance Balances. For a more detailed look, check My Attendance Activity.
Paychecks: Select Employee Self Service → My Paychecks. You may need to adjust the date range to find the paycheck you're looking for.
Professional Development Hours: Select Professional Development → My Profile → My Activities/My Activity Requests.

Our friendly reminder: Don't just assume everything is correct, take a look! Check your balances, review your attendance activity, and make sure your professional development hours and paychecks are accurate. A few minutes now could save you a headache later!

Did You Know?
Not every absence needs to come out of your sick or personal day bank. If you are **subpoenaed to appear in court or called for jury duty**, your contract provides for these as personal leaves **without deduction** from your sick/personal day balances.That means you don't need to use your hard-earned personal days for these circumstances! Be sure to review the applicable contract language in Sections 3-8, 29-7, and 49-7 so you know your rights and can make sure your attendance is recorded correctly.

Know your contract, check your balances, and keep those days when you're entitled to them!

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:

- November 6: PDTA Apparel Sale ends
- November 17: SRP Recognition Day
- December 31: All mandatory training modules due
- January 11: Active Membership Meeting, 3:30-5:00 PM, SHS LGI



Speak Out! is been 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 2026-2027:

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

Allen Creek Elementary
Michele Riedl, Building Representative *
Emily Odhiambo, Assistant Building Representative
Susan Benson, Assistant SRP Representative

Jefferson Road Elementary
Katie Phillips, Building Representative *
Patty Steeley, Assistant Building Rep.
Heather White, Assistant SRP Representative

Mendon Center Elementary
Nina Dezio, Building Representative *
Erin Ciccone, Assistant Building Representative
Erin Cregan, Assistant Building Representative
Deborah Ricketts, Assistant SRP Representative
Rebecca Tan, Assistant SRP Representative

Park Road Elementary
Jackie Bowser, Building Representative *
Jacqueline Madden, Assistant Building Representative

Thornell Road Elementary
Building Representative: Vacant *
Assistant Building Representative: Vacant
Anne Holahan, Assistant SRP Representative

Barker Road Middle School
Kristen Dolan, Building Representative *
Jennifer Robinson, Assistant Building Representative
Ellen Fox, Assistant Building Representative
Karen Grace, Assistant Building Representative
Connie Maust, SRP Representative *

Calkins Road Middle School
Jessica Wojcik, Building Representative *
Jaclyn Anderson, Assistant Building Representative
Jessica Bonadio, Assistant Building Representative
Farida Patrawala, Assistant SRP Representative

Mendon High School
Samantha Hyde, Building Representative *
Brandon Mauks, Assistant Building Representative
Erin Moses, Assistant Building Representative
Jake Thompson, 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 & Whitney Sienkiewicz, 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
Safety and Wellness: Zachary Herbert, BRMS
Special Events: Erica Bonin, MHS

Delegates:
1. Stephanie Warchol
2. Kimberly Chesko
3. Katie Shea
4. Karen Grace
5. Alyson Jacobs
6. Jennifer Simons
7. Jennifer Birdsong-ng

*Indicates Executive Committee Member

Protect your independence with exclusive member savings

Your NYSUT membership allows you to preserve your independence with reduced pricing on important personal health and safety programs.

Home Care Plans: Affinity by True Freedom offers non-medical home care through a vast network of licensed and insured home care agencies. This benefit includes exclusive discounts not available to the general public with plans administered by Advisors Insurance Brokers/ New York Long-Term Care Brokers, provider of our endorsed long-term care insurance plan.

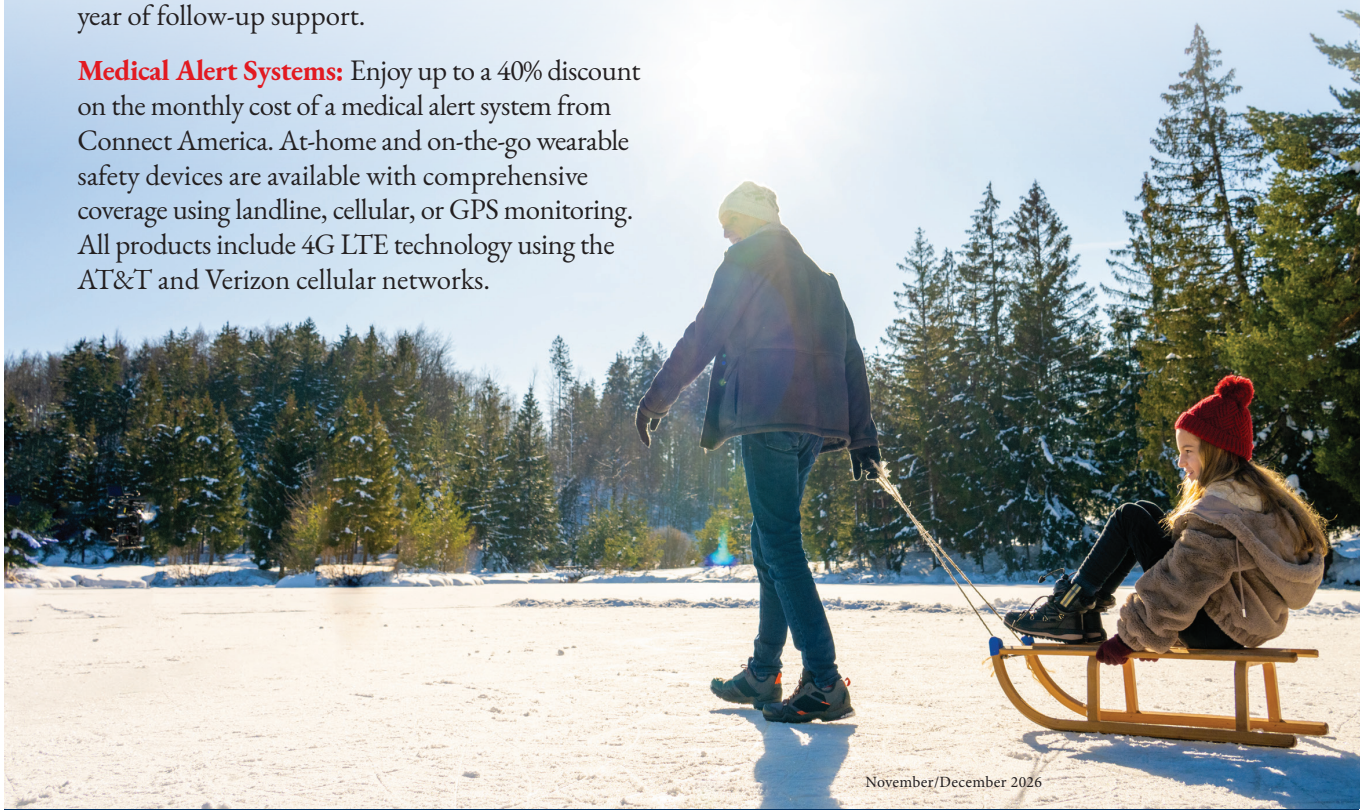
Hearing Care Plan: Save thousands on out-of-pocket costs for quality prescription hearing aids from TruHearing, ranging from $499 to $1,799 per device. Access a nationwide network of over 8,850 providers that can perform hearing tests and offer personalized hearing aid solutions. All purchases come with a 60-day no-risk trial period and one-year of follow-up support.

Medical Alert Systems: Enjoy up to a 40% discount on the monthly cost of a medical alert system from Connect America. At-home and on-the-go wearable safety devices are available with comprehensive coverage using landline, cellular, or GPS monitoring. All products include 4G LTE technology using the AT&T and Verizon cellular networks.

Preserve your independence with help from Member Benefits.

Scan the QR code, visit **mb-nysut.org/lifecare**, or call **800-626-8101**.

MEMBER BENEFITS
nysut
Working to Benefit You



November/December 2026

Happy









































Halloween!























