

# SPEAK OUT!

PITTSFORD DISTRICT TEACHERS ASSOCIATION



## In this issue:

- 1 From the PRESIDENT
- 2-3 BOE CANDIDATES
- 4 VP FOR ADMIN/PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
- 5 POLITICAL ACTION
- 6 CONSTITUTION UPDATE
- 7 CUT & KEEP
- 8 REPRESENTATIVES
- 9 NYSUT AD



## Please Vote!!

Dwayne Cerbone, President

As I write this article I am awash with emotions and thoughts. The PDTA is deeply engaged with so many significant and important interests at this time. Our leaders and our members are taking each of these on with the enthusiasm, passion and thoughtfulness that PDTA is deeply respected for within our school community.

Here are just a few things PDTA is involved with on behalf of our members at the writing of this article:

- ...ongoing contract negotiations - revising our Constitution - drafting and adopting a sexual harassment policy to comply with state regulations - revising our budgetary processes to increase transparency*
- hosting the retirement party - sponsoring a chicken barbecue*
- phone banking for our endorsed candidates and the budget vote*
- planning for the tenure reception*
- engaging in ongoing conversations regarding acts of racism in our schools - addressing the job posting interests of our members*
- having conversations related to "incompletes" following revisions*

*to the secondary grading practices - filling numerous interview committees - supporting nurses and HOAs through the restructuring process - and the list goes on...*

I will specifically highlight the upcoming budget vote and the PDTA's endorsement of two candidates, Amy Thomas and Peter Sullivan, for the PCSD Board of Education. Please get out to vote this Tuesday, May 21, 2019 no matter where you live. School districts across our region will have votes this day for school budgets and for Board of Education seats.

As a member of PDTA I implore of you to take this opportunity to support your local school district. They, like us, are doing amazing things for students daily and deserve the support required to fund their schools. This includes supporting the salary and benefits of our union brothers and sisters in those districts. Please plan to vote and then go out and do so with your family and friends in tow.

If you are a resident within the Pittsford School District, we ask for your support of the two PDTA-endorsed Board of Education candidates, Amy Thomas and Peter Sullivan. Your

endorsement committee interviewed each candidate and were unanimous in their belief that Amy and Peter have the experience, knowledge, commitment and values to serve our students, schools and community.

We would not endorse a candidate if we did not believe that their service to the Board was in the best interest of our students and our members. We are proud to endorse Amy and Peter and are confident that they are equipped and prepared to guide our district through the challenges of the coming years. Please show them your support as they strive to support the work you do daily!



## We asked the Board of Education candidates to respond to the following questions. Their responses are below.

- *Why do you desire to serve on the PCSD BOE?*
- *What are our school district's greatest strengths, and opportunities for improvement?*
- *What do you see as the major challenges facing public education and our school district in the next few years?*
- *In this role, how will you address the current fiscal realities while continuing our commitment to excellence?*

### Amy Thomas



**Why do you desire to serve on the PCSD BOE?** Education is my passion. As a former elementary teacher, substitute teacher, and dedicated volunteer

in my children's domestic and international schools, I have been able to apply my background in the role of a BOE member since 2013. As our District faces challenging issues, the importance of having a steadfast, determined and knowledgeable leader with global experience is vital. Having lived in Brazil for 6.5 years, I am able to offer a unique perspective on issues such as diversity, inclusivity and equity. I am committed to serve as an advocate for PCSD and work with you to continually improve the exceptional educational foundation we offer to all students.

**What are our school district's greatest strengths, and opportunities for improvement?**

We live our PCSD established values of being collaborative, student-centered, progressive, creating a supportive environment for all and a commitment to continuously improve. Among these values, collaboration with multiple stakeholder groups makes us unique from other districts. PCSD solves complex issues unlike no other because of our collective minds and actions. Currently we have an opportunity to be leaders in inclusivity – listening more intently with a focused effort on communication with stakeholder groups, while taking some risks, to reach long-term solutions that

promote academic, social and emotional excellence for all.

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

Federal and state funding, unfunded mandates, computer based testing, safety in our buildings, increased mental health needs for students, inclusivity and equity for all of our students, addressing teacher shortages, and local control of teacher accountability.

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

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 (KEEP), actively advocating with legislators for full state aid reimbursement for our FDK students and participation in the county-wide health consortium. Adhering to our budget guidelines, we will seek cost efficiencies with the least impact on the classroom.

### Pete Sullivan



**Why do you desire to serve on the PCSD BOE?** I've served the Pittsford community for 20 years – as coach, youth sports organization President,

and BOE member since 2010. I bring extensive experience to the role, including as former BOE VP and President, Audit Committee

member, and MCSBA committee member. I live our District values, bringing a collaborative, student-centered approach while striving for continuous improvement. PCSD is an exceptional District, but considerable work remains. Through my experience and passion for our kids' success, I'm committed to serving in this role to deliver on our District's mission and vision.

**What are our school district's greatest strengths, and opportunities for improvement?**

The value placed on Education by our kids and their families remains our District's primary strength. Parental support of their children's growth and success, coupled with our Community's continued investment, makes for a strong combination. The District's collaborative spirit – highlighted by the relationship between District administration and our Educators – is both a strength and the source from which opportunities for future growth will come. It is in this spirit that our community will come together to confront all future challenges.

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

Public Education has grown increasingly complex in recent years; we don't have the luxury of identifying any one, single challenge that stands above the rest. Among Education's many challenges are school safety, social-emotional health, continued professional development for our educators, and sustaining a welcoming environment that includes all our kids.

**In this role, how will you address the current fiscal realities while continuing our commitment to**

**Continued next page...**

**excellence?**

Advocacy remains the critical component in our BOE's efforts to address the District's fiscal challenges. Activities include meeting with our local, state, and federal legislators to ensure that PCSD receives the Foundation Aid funding it deserves. Working with our District leadership, specifically the Business Office, we continue to pursue creative options – e.g., participation in the self-funded RASHP2 healthcare plan and leaving the Federal School Lunch program – to maintain our strong Aa1 bond rating and clean audit reports from NYS Comptroller's Office.

## Tharaha Thavakumar-Slavin



**Why do you desire to serve on the PCSD BOE?**

I love this school district and believe my skill set and unique perspective can add value to PCSD's quest for excellence in academics, and its mission to ensure a safe and welcoming environment for all students and families. I'm running to support the hard-working teachers, administrators, and parents across

the district. I want to give voice to our shared vision and ensure we have the tools necessary to meet the needs of every child regardless of race, gender, religion, ability, or orientation.

I hold two Master's degrees, one in Management and the second in Marriage & Family Therapy. I am a behavioral specialist at the Center for Autism Related Disorders and a Senior Youth Service Provider at Pathways, Inc. A first generation Sri Lankan-American, I entered Pittsford as an Urban-Suburban student in fifth grade, graduated from Mendon High School, earned a BS in Biology with a Spanish Minor from SUNY Geneseo, and then attended the AUIS, School of Medicine for two years before pursuing my current passions. I currently serve as the PTSA Treasurer at BRMS. My husband Kristopher Slavin and I have a happy blended family of four boys, aged 2 to 26 years old, and live in the Park Road neighborhood.

**What are our school district's greatest strengths, and opportunities for improvement?**

Pittsford School academics, athletics, and our amazing teaching staff are second to none. Pittsford teachers are dedicated, compassionate, and always willing to go the extra mile. The areas for improvement we face are similar to all districts. We are working to better meet the needs of diverse

learners, overcome standardized testing burdens on both students and teachers, manage constraints of the common core, keep an eye on decreasing student population, and tackle teacher shortages.

As a community, we must prioritize and celebrate our teachers, and make sure they have the tools, resources, and information they need for success. I will pay careful attention to financial management by conducting a rigorous analysis of existing data about enrollment, and will approach changes that meet student needs and allow teachers to flourish in their chosen profession with open-mindedness and flexibility.

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

As a member of the Pittsford Board of Education, I can offer deep insight on what it's like to be a student, a parent, a woman of color, and a member of the Urban/Suburban program in the district. I bring expertise in social-emotional learning, serving differently-abled children, and can help the board with our inclusivity efforts. It's time we give teachers and parents what they need to make PCSD safe and welcoming for all!



**Join Us!**

**PdTa**  **for a CHICKEN BBQ Fundraiser**

**Tuesday, May 21st**  
**3:00-7:00PM at**  
**Barker Road**  
**Middle School**  
**(Budget Vote day!)**

**Includes 1/2 chicken, salt potatoes, mac salad, dinner roll & utensils. Provided by King's Catering, Canandaigua.**

**Sales on day of the event - \$14.**  
**NEW this year we will have drinks available on site for \$1.**  
**All ticket sales will benefit the PDTA Student Scholarship fund.**



## PCSD 2019-2020 Budget and BOE Member Vote Stephanie Warchol, VP for Administration

All area school districts will vote on budgets and board candidates on Tuesday, May 21. 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 97% graduation rate and 95% of those students are college-bound. We are proud of these achievements and want to maintain our high standards of excellence.

On May 21, voters in Pittsford will be voting on a proposed budget of \$136,689,421 which is a 0.11% increase over last year, within the NYS Tax Cap and preserves current programming. They will also be voting on two propositions. The first, to purchase nine replacement buses from the Capital Reserve Fund. The second, to

make capital improvements such as a partial roof replacement at BRMS and PRE, the replacement of the fuel farm storage at the Transportation facility, and other incidental work. These propositions will NOT impact taxes and will generate State Aid if approved by voters. Finally, voters will also be choosing their Board of Education representatives. This year we have three candidates running for two seats. Incumbent and PDTA endorsed candidates Amy Thomas & Pete Sullivan, and Tharaha Thavakumar-Slavin who is seeking her first term on the Board of Education.

Per NYS law, school boards can submit a budget to the voters a maximum of two times, then a "Contingent Budget" must be implemented. If the budget is defeated once, the Board may conduct a revote or go straight to a Contingent Budget. NYS law requires that a Contingent Budget not include certain non-ordinary contingent expenses

and that the new budget must have a Tax Levy that is not greater than the previous year's Tax Levy. The Board of Education is charged with determining a Contingent Budget, however, for PCSD a Contingent Budget would result in an almost \$1.2 million budget variance from the proposed 2019-20 budget of \$136,689,421.

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, but be sure to bring identification that shows proof of residency. The PCSD 19-20 budget vote and board member election is on May 21, 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 our members are voting! For more information on the budget vote please click [here](#).



## Professional Learning Updates Julie Barker, Teacher Center Director

The summer professional learning calendar is in the final stages and we look forward to providing a full catalog of opportunities for you to continue your learning this summer. The summer sessions will run from June 27th through August 29th and all hours will count toward the 2019-2020 school year. The catalog for summer workshops is set to open on or around May 31st and you will be receiving emails from me prior to that date to confirm details.

Summer programs include a wide variety of topics such as: PLCs, inclusivity, content-specific workshops, mental health, grading, and instructional strategies. In addition, there are multiple workshops focusing on the use of technology to support instruction including Office 365 tools, using Breakout EDU in the classroom,

and building teacher webpages.

An area of focus this summer is on Professional Learning Communities. We are offering a series of programs that will address the work of PLCs at various stages. Look for the following workshops in the PLC series:

- PLC 101
- Making the Most of a 30 Minute Meeting
- Essential Learning Targets – Answering PLC Question 1
- Common Formative Assessments – Answering PLC Question 2
- Looking at Student Work
- Effective Strategies for the Elementary RtI Block
- Tools and Strategies for Singletons

Another exciting event this summer is Rick Wormeli returning to Pittsford. He is scheduled to present a full day workshop on August 14th related to assessment and grading. The focus

will be primarily on the secondary grades and will be related to the work we continue to do in this area.

As always, if you have any questions, please contact me directly. Wishing you all a happy and successful end to the school year!

### Individual Initiatives

Are you attending professional learning outside the district this summer? If so, you may be eligible for individual initiative credit.

The form is available on the Teacher Center webpage and can be submitted to your principal electronically to request approval. Additional information related to individual initiatives can also be found on the [TC webpage](#).



## NYSUT RA 2019 Highlights

(summary from:

<https://www.nysut.org/resources/special-resources-sites/representative-assembly>)



“Unionists always face challenges. This past year wasn’t any different. The teacher shortage, a further erosion of trust in the State Education Department, the fight for equality. These challenges demand hard work and commitment from us and they force us to reflect on exactly who we are, what matters to us and what we stand for.

And although this work may fuel us, we may never be satisfied with the solutions that emerge. For many of us, good simply isn’t good enough. In the back of our minds we’re thinking, “Could we be doing more?” For me, the answer is always yes. There’s always more work to be done”.

- NYSUT Executive Vice President  
**Jolene T. DiBrango**



## Vote-Cope Campaign Will Run May 21st – May 28th 2019

PDТА was awarded the 2018 NYSUT Dan Sanders VOTE-COPE level award for Teacher contributions at this year’s NYSUT RA. This is awarded to locals who have teacher contributions equivalent of at least \$25 per member.

PDТА was awarded the 2018 NYSUT Abel Blattamn VOTE-COPE level award for SRP contributions at this year’s NYSUT RA. This is awarded to locals who have SRP contributions equivalent of at least \$10 per member.

Let’s keep up the great work!!

***If you haven’t contributed in the past, we are asking teachers to contribute a \$5.00 per pay/\$100 per year and SRP’s to contribute a \$2.00 per pay/\$40 per year.***

VOTE-COPE Funds rely on contributions and DO NOT come from dues. They are put to work in nonpartisan ways. Our collective contributions go towards lobbying for PRO-NYSUT member legislation, helping to elect candidates who understand the importance of education, health care, and who support the values of the organized labor movement. V-C funds are also used locally to help pass school budgets.

In recent years VOTE-COPE has also helped to secure:

- a permanent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for retiree pensions;
- Teacher Center funding;
- the elimination of Tier inequities such as the mandatory 3% contribution for Tier 3 and 4 members of the NYS Retirement System (these members now only pay into the system for 10 years instead of their entire career);
- the continued enforcement of tenure laws and legislation like the Triborough Amendment (which continues the terms of expired contracts until successor agreements are negotiated);
- momentum for greater investment in our schools; and historic overrides of vetoes that restored \$1 billion in education and health care funding.

OUR VOICE, OUR VALUES



OUR VOTE-COPE



## Solidarity Wear Day!

Tuesday, May 21st: wear your PDТА gear to show YOUR SUPPORT!



## PDTA Constitution Update Stephanie Warchol, VP for Administration

As you read in the last issue I have been extensively reviewing our PDTA constitution, and proposed updates to the Representative Assembly. With RA approving the changes at a recent meeting, all active PDTA members will be able to review the document and vote on the proposal. This vote will take place at the same time as the PDTA contract ratification. Through this article I hope to remind you of some of the significant changes we are recommending.

Even though we currently have 100% member participation, we know that this may not always be the case in a post-Janus world. After the Janus decision many locals were looking to update their constitution to make sure they were protecting their members, and were looking to add language highlighting active member vs. nonmember rights, and status change periods. After going through NYSUT training, I have added these changes to the document.

After conversations with our Labor Relations Specialist (LRS) at NYSUT,

and our SRP Representative, we decided to combine the PDTA and SRP Constitutions. The SRP Constitution was a one-page document and the majority of the same language was also stated in the PDTA Constitution. As a sign of solidarity, and also for clearer readability for our members, we worked together to merge the two documents.

We feel that the title of Vice President for Administration doesn't align with the duties and responsibilities of the position. After discussing the idea of a title change with the PDTA Executive Committee, we decided to align the title with NYSUT, and other locals in our area. We are proposing the position be renamed Executive Vice President. This also helps to differentiate the two VP positions, understanding that this person would assume the duties of the President in their absence.

Several other items throughout the constitution are being updated to reflect changes made in the last eighteen months at the District level, or through various votes at Exec or Rep Assembly. For example, it has been proposed that an additional TOSA sit on Representative Assembly as a

non-voting member. Constitutional revisions, dating back to June 1996, will now be reflected at the end of the PDTA Constitution. The responsibility of sitting on the large and small APPR committees are now reflected in the position duties of President, and the two Vice Presidents. The position of Webmaster has been added. This person is responsible for the development and maintenance of the PDTA website. The term cycles for President and Treasurer will now alternate, as to not have a new President and Treasurer in the same year. PDTA has added a 7th Delegate to attend the NYSUT Representative Assembly, when at no cost to the Union. Finally, we have added language around PDTA election challenges, and Officer impeachment protocols.

Currently, all Building and SRP Representatives have a printed copy of the proposed constitution. As we approach ratification, all active PDTA members will receive an email outlining the process for voting and a digital copy of the proposed changes. Please see your building representative or contact me if you have any questions before or after you receive the above-mentioned digital communication.

# Cottage Rental in Maine



**3 BR, 1 bath**

**There are two cottages adjacent to each other.**

**Big cottage: \$1000/week**

**Smaller cottage:**

**\$750/week**

**Both together:**

**\$1500/week**

**Big cottage available:**

**7/13-7/27 and 8/10-8/31**

**Smaller cottage available:**

**8/3-8/31 (Sat to Sat)**

**Contact Nancy Ramsay at [nramsay364@gmail.com](mailto:nramsay364@gmail.com)**

# Cut and Keep Reminders

You have rights won for you by your union! Under the law, you have a right to union representation at an investigatory interview with a supervisor if you reasonably believe that the interview will lead to discipline. This right is triggered when you request union representation. The representative must be a union leader. If you believe you may be disciplined, you should ask, "Could this meeting result in discipline? If so, I request my union representative be present." A reasonable period of time shall be afforded to you to obtain such representation. That means you never have to meet with the supervisor right away, and you are also entitled to know the subject of the meeting. These are known as your Weingarten Rights.

Monday afternoons are reserved for PDTA meetings. If you are a teacher leader, please avoid scheduling meetings on Monday afternoons to enable our PDTA leaders to attend their meetings representing you and our member's interests. Please share this information with any non-member who desires to schedule a meeting that conflicts with this agreement. Thank you!

All permanently or professionally certified teachers or educational leaders and Level III teaching assistant certificate holders are required to register with SED in the month of his/her birth. This registration process will be done using the State Education Department's TEACH system. These certificate holders will be required to register every five (5) years thereafter.

Don't forget Health Fund money was not deposited until mid October. Your funds could now be available to you. Full-time staff members who are not on the payroll as of October 1, but who are on the payroll before February 1 of the school year, shall be eligible for a pro-rated portion of the health fund, according to the following schedule:

- On the payroll before November 1: 80% of the benefit
  - On the payroll before December 1: 70% of the benefit
  - On the payroll before January 1: 60% of the benefit
  - On the payroll before February 1: 50% of the benefit
- Part-time staff members of .5 or more shall receive a prorated contribution of the above schedule.

Like us on Facebook ([Pittsford District Teachers Association \(PDTA\) – A Union of Educators](#))  
Follow us on Twitter [@PDTAUnion](#)

PD Requirement: If you are a certified professional staff member, please remember your contractual 12hour obligation for professional development is actually 6 hours this year! All PD must be completed by May 31.

Employee Assistance: Life can be difficult but you are not expected to do it alone. Your union is here to support you. Please know you also have a confidential and free service available to you through the Associates in Employee Assistance for any personal need. PLEASE CALL AHEAD TO SET UP AN APPOINTMENT at 585-383-4478 or call toll free 877-327-2278.

IMPORTANT DATES: Retirement Party (Eagle Vale) - May 16, 2019  
Budget Vote, BOE Elections, PDTA Chicken Barbecue (BRMS) – May 21, 2019  
Tenure Reception (BRE Room #1) May 28, 2019 6:30PM  
Membership Meeting/Rep Assembly June 10, 2018 3:30  
Graduation (RIT) June 29, 2018 (SHS 10:00am & MHS 2:00pm)

## Got Questions? Visit PDTA.org



# Your Reps:

## Building Representatives:

Allen Creek: Stephanie Barg  
Jefferson Road: Julie Shaw  
Mendon Center: Jill Drake  
Park Road: Karen Socker  
Thornell Road: Lisa Mauger  
Barker Road: Kristen Dolan  
Calkins Road: Melissa Althouse  
Mendon High School:  
Dave Larson  
Sutherland High School:  
Lynne Drake  
SRP Representative:  
Lorinda Spring

## Assistant Building Representatives:

Kathy Rudd, AC  
Elizabeth Kramer, JR  
Patty Mayer and  
Hendrina Schindeler, MCE  
Jill Pink, PR  
Greg Bischooping, TR  
Liesa Ehrlich, Rhonda  
Matthews,  
Tammy Cole, BRMS  
Chrissy Doggett, Heather  
Trapiss, CRMS  
Paige LaBarr, Tom Kennell,  
Paula Fink, MHS  
Marc Hellems, Brian Shafer,  
Amanda Marshall, SHS

## SRP Representatives:

Lisa Backscheider, SHS  
Radhika Ramesh, TR  
Constance Bader, BRMS  
Suzanne Kaier-Tuttle, MC  
Kristi Kelley, JR  
Vicki McCutcheon, SHS  
Tracy Anderson, PR  
Kristina Otto, MHS

# Thank You MEMBERS!

**PDTA is committed  
to retaining 100%  
membership!!**

**We thank our members  
for the great work  
you do, for valuing  
the work of our  
Association, and for  
committing with us to  
move forward in unity.**

## 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 [brian\\_regan@pittsford.monroe.edu](mailto:brian_regan@pittsford.monroe.edu).



## Protect Your Loved Ones with Union-Endorsed Benefits

**Insurance...** it's often the type of product you hope to never have to utilize. In the event you do need it, though, it's important to have the insurance product that best meets your needs and those of your loved ones.

NYSUT Member Benefits endorses a variety of **crucial insurance programs** that provide important protection for NYSUT members and their families, including life, auto and home, disability, long-term care, dental and vision plans, and more.

### *The Power of the Union*

Regardless of whether you're participating in one of our endorsed insurance programs; legal or financial services; or many shopping, entertainment or travel offerings, NYSUT members receive a quality product and enjoy the **"Power of the Union"** behind them.

The **"Power of the Union"** should serve as a steadfast reminder to all NYSUT members that we are your advocate. Unlike when purchasing products available to the general public, NYSUT Member Benefits is here if you ever have any issues or concerns with our endorsed programs. You aren't just a member to us... you are part of our union family.

**Member Benefits is here to offer assistance with the student loan crisis. Visit our website for more information.**



To learn more about Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services, visit [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org) or call **800-626-8101**.

For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits.

May/June '19



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)