

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



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BALANCE Dwayne Cerbone, President

As a union, we consistently struggle to balance the needs of students and members. In this current era of public education, it is apparent that our students require more services, support and individualized engagement than ever before. Simultaneously, the most prominent voices we hear are typically casting judgement and issuing complaints rather than offering any practical support. Many of us recall when the responsibilities accredited to educators were primarily instructional in nature. Though we were professionally and individually engaged regarding other associated facets, we were welcomed to that work as partners in a broader network of responsible parties.

However, as others neglected or discharged their responsibility in these areas, and themes arose that were deemed to be of preemptive importance, many additional responsibilities have been cast our way in the absence of comparable

reductions. The landscape has shifted significantly, including but not limited to: filling gaps from remote/hybrid learning, implementation of varied technologies, provision of individualized and specialized services, direct and indirect supports for students' social and emotional well-being, dealing with the impact of social media, providing safe school environments and addressing emerging and longstanding societal issues.

To address this expanding list, there has been an ongoing battle for limited resources. Unfortunately, you and I are the greatest resource in the realm of public education. It is evident from my observations that we struggle individually and corporately to attain that elusive balance.

I am in no way devaluing the importance of these interests, the need for them to be addressed, nor the role we as educators can contribute. I am deeply concerned about the ability of those this system

relies on to sustain such a load and pace. We must continue to fight for our students while professionally advocating for ourselves. I believe these to be symbiotic interests.

Like never before, I am seeing far too many members struggle, to a disturbing level, with the expectations of the job. College enrollment in education is plummeting at a time that teachers, paras, nurses, and others are leaving the profession at an alarming rate. For those of us that remain, our union's work will be critical; negotiating for salaries, benefits and workloads that are reasonable and appropriate to the vital service we provide our community. It is more important now than ever that we remain in solidarity and continue to partner with those who share our values. Our balance comes as we advocate for reasonableness of current conditions as well as explore options for expanding the pipeline for future employees.

Continued next page



Executive Vice-President Stephanie Warchol

PDTA Student Benefit Fund

As Executive Vice President, one of my responsibilities is to Chair the committee approving requests for the PDTA Student Benefit Fund. The Fund was established to provide financial assistance to PCSD families experiencing difficulties, which could limit their child's opportunity to learn or participate in school-sponsored educational activities. We are encouraging all PDTA members to utilize the Student Benefit Fund when you know a student is in need. Only the

signature of the Building Principal is required and PDTA provides the resources.

The selection committee, which consists of the PDTA Executive Vice President, Treasurer, and one additional member of the Representative Assembly, will determine the merit of each request and identify the amount to be allotted (\$50.00 maximum), all while keeping the information confidential. The applicant must be a current student attending Pittsford Central Schools, and no specific income criteria is necessary.

Funding requests can be used for items including, but not limited to- field trips, extra-curriculars, college exam fees, Pittsford Youth Services programming, health or safety needs, etc.

If you are interested in learning more, [click here](#) for the fund guidelines and application. Once the form is complete, please return it to the PDTA Office in the Lomb Building. If you have any questions about the fund, please don't hesitate to contact me.

NYSUT knows your life is complicated, busy and full. Unexpected complications arise which can be managed by having a positive course of action, the right information, and/or confidential help from a caring professional. Let NYSUT Social Services assist you. www.nysut.org/resources/special-resources-sites/social-services Call 518-732-6239, or email us at socialservices@nysut.org.



The Employee Assistance Program is available to all employees in need of assistance with personal/family problems including managing stress, substance abuse, financial difficulties, and many other issues. Any Pittsford Central School District Employee may request confidential assistance. Reach out for assistance at helpforemployees.com. 585.383.4478.

Got Questions? Visit PDTA.org.
To contact your PDTA President confidentially
off of school email, please use dcerbonepdt@gmail.com

Cerbone, continued...

We all know that we are experiencing a national shortage of educators. The simple fact is that many no longer see the value in the career that you and I treasure. The work has been de-valued by politicians, the attacks have become far too rampant and the transfer of responsibility does not seem to be letting up.

As we strive to fill the educator pipeline, PDTA has applied for and received a three year grant through NYSUT/NEA. As a result, we are proud to roll out our Take a Look at Teaching initiative in each of our high schools.

This work will focus on developing our "Grow Your Own Program", increasing the diversity of the teacher pipeline, running TALAT clubs in each High School to foster interest in teaching careers develop partnerships and relationships in more intentional and purposeful ways with K-12, higher education, families, and community partners and addressing sustainability of the teacher pipeline after the grant period.

We look forward to this opportunity for our students and the profession we love.



Congratulations to our new TALAT Leaders!

TALAT Coordinator

- Bethany Patterson: MHS Social Studies Teacher

TALAT Building Advisors

- Kim Waterbury: MHS Mathematics Teacher
- Dan Roberti: SHS Science Teacher



SRP Newslink

Lorinda Spring

Contract Negotiations- As we begin the New Year, PDTA is starting to prepare for negotiations with the District. Our current contract runs through June 2023 so we will be negotiating during the 2022-23 school year. More information will be forthcoming regarding how we will collect interests from our members.

Personal/Sick Days - At times, there are misconceptions circulating among members regarding personal and sick days available to paras. The following information will help clarify personal/sick day use.

- **Personal Days and Sick Days** are lumped together in one bucket.
- **Personal Leave/Personal or Family Illness with Deduction from Sick Leave** - Each year, full-time paras are granted 15 days of absence with pay for either personal business which cannot

be scheduled outside the normal workday or personal/family illness. Part-time employees are granted 9 days. Personal days require prior approval and may not be used for personal recreation or vacation. Personal days may not be granted for days immediately preceding or following school vacations except in extreme emergencies. Please refer to page 49 (Section 29-1) and page 51 (Section 29-8) in the contract for additional details.

- **Personal Leave without deduction from Sick Leave** - Employees shall be granted paid leave for certain absences with prior approval. Please refer to page 51 (Section 29-7) in the contract for more details. PDTA negotiated "Quarantine" days off without deduction from Sick Leave for members who have symptoms of Covid-19 or have a reaction to the shot. Please

check your attendance balance in WinCap Web to be sure you are not being charged for these days if you need to use them.

- **Prolonged Illness Days** - Full-time employees with more than 3 years of experience in the District shall be granted 25 days of absence with pay for personal illness at the end of the 3rd, 8th, 13th and 18th year. Refer to page 50 (Section 29-2) for details.
- Unused sick leave may accumulate to a maximum of **200 days**.
- **The PDTA Contract** may be found on our union website at www.pdta.org.

Take Care of You! - During these challenging times, we are continuing to be stretched thin. If you are feeling stressed, please don't hesitate to reach out to your union leaders. We are here to listen and help!

Building News:

MCE: Congratulations to Ashley Frame who welcomed her new baby girl! Amelia Ann was born Dec. 7.

SHS: Vicki McCutcheon is a new, proud Grandma to Bennett Cawley McCutcheon, born 1/1/2022 to Andrew and Jackie McCutcheon. Every break will now be spent in DE!



HOLIDAY GIVING

Once again, PCSD staff stepped up to help out those in need this holiday season. Here are just a few examples of the giving that happened throughout the district.



VP for Negotiations

Cindy Merrifield

Many thanks to all who attended our General Assembly meeting (via zoom). During our meeting I reviewed (briefly) the process we have put in place to collect interests for negotiations.

Each building will hold **three** meetings they are scheduled for **Monday, February 7, Monday February 14** and a third meeting (to be determined

by your building representatives) in the a.m. before school. These opportunities ensure that your voice is heard as we collect interests. Check with your building representative for additional information such as times and locations.

When meeting please remember that in the data collection process we want to be thoughtful when others are sharing out interests. The collaborative piece

will be the discussion of any solutions you may come up with in your group.

Also, we will follow all prevailing PCSD COVID safety protocols. At the time of publication these protocols dictate up to 5 active members and a table facilitator in each room. Feel free to reach out to your building representative or me (cynthia_merrifield@pittsford.monroe.edu) if you have any questions.



Professional Learning Updates

Julie Barker

The Spring catalog for professional learning is now available in WinCap Web and activities will begin in February. All certificated staff members are encouraged to check their completed hours for the year to be sure they have met the contractual requirement. For any staff member who has not yet completed the required hours, there will be activities in the spring catalog to assist in fulfilling this requirement.

Please note that activities from the Electives catalog, such as Crisis Prevention Institute training and refreshers, do not count toward the contractual requirement for professional learning hours for certificated staff. In addition, activities that take place during your workday and are tracked for CTLE purposes do not count toward this requirement.

If you have any questions about your completed professional learning hours, please contact me directly.

New this Spring: Secondary Grading Forum

Are you interested in talking about issues related to grading with your colleagues? If so, join us on March 21st from 3:00-4:30 PM via Zoom for a Secondary Grading Forum. All participants will be asked to read the article, [Grading is Due for an Overhaul](#), prior to the session. The ideas in this article

will form the basis of the conversation. You can register for this activity in the Professional Learning Initiatives catalog in [WinCap Web](#).

Upcoming dates of interest:

- March 1st: the last day to submit a collegial circle proposal for this school year.
- March 1st – 31st: Mentor Applications will be accepted for certificated staff members who are interested in joining the mentor pool. Information about the Mentor Program and the Mentor Application can be found on the Teacher Center webpage, [Induction and Mentor Program](#).
- April 15th: the deadline for submitting PDTA Study Grant applications for summer work. The Study Grant application and additional information about study grants is on the [PDTA website](#).
- May 15th: Collegial Circle Final Reports for this school year are due.
- May 31st: the deadline for Certificated Staff to complete contractual hours for professional learning for this school year.

Wishing you all a great spring semester!
Julie



**PITTSFORD
PANTHERS**



VS.



**FAIRPORT
RED RAIDERS**

Saturday, February 5, 2022
BILL GRAY'S REGIONAL ICEPLEX

JV
5:15 P.M.

ALL PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT



VARSITY
6:45 P.M.

TEACHER/STAFF SALES: Tickets and T-shirt sales will be taken at each school by the PDTA Public Relations Rep. Orders should be in by 1/24.

COST: Pre-order Ticket/T-shirt COMBO price FOR TEACHERS & STAFF is \$10. (\$3 of this goes to BCCR) TICKET ONLY \$5 T-SHIRT ONLY \$10

Pink the Rink Masks also being sold for \$10.

Tickets will also be sold at the door for \$5 and T-shirts at the event for \$10. Checks payable to: Friends of Pittsford Hockey

NYSTRS (New York State Teachers' Retirement System) Annual Convention (Virtual)

October 29, 2021: Pittsford Delegates Kathleen Curtis, Karen Grace, and Lynn Smith attended the second virtual NYSTRS Annual Meeting to accomplish two goals: Elect teacher delegates to the NYSTRS Board and attend seminar presentations to share with colleagues. Below you will find highlights and links to the presentations. Fun Fact: 2021 is the one hundredth anniversary for NYSTRS.

Three Teacher Members on the Retirement Board for NYSTRS:

- Elizabeth Chetney of Baldwinsville Central School District currently serves on the NYSTRS Retirement Board.
- Juliet C. Benaquisto from Schenectady City School District was elected to the NYSTRS Board on October 29, 2021 to serve out the term, vacated by Sheila Sullivan Buck.
- Eric J. Berger from Bayport Blue Point Union Free School District was elected to the NYSTRS Board on October 29 2021 for a three-year term.

The mission of NYSTRS is to provide members with a secure pension. The vision: To be the model for pension fund excellence and exceptional customer service. NYSTRS is among the best-funded plans in the nation, largely due to uninterrupted employer and employee contributions with a long term return rate goal of 6.95%. Investment earnings have accounted for about 85% of NYSTRS income over the last year. Employer contributions accounts for 13% of the income, and member contributions accounts for about 2% of the income.

There are six tiers, each with different benefit structures and eligibility rules.

Tier 1: Membership prior to 7/1/73	Tier 4: Membership 9/1/83 — 12/31/09
Tier 2: Membership 7/1/73 — 7/26/76	Tier 5: Membership 1/1/10 — 3/31/12
Tier 3: Membership 7/27/76 — 8/31/83	Tier 6: Membership on or after 4/1/12

Workshop Highlights

NYSTRS Year in Review and the Long Term Stability of the System

- PREP modules are now on line for members to review all six or some of them.
- Approximately 4000 individual video conferences regarding retirement took place last year.
- The \$35000 limit for earnings for retired members <65 is waived currently, Section 212.
- Currently, there is a Senate Bill #4920 to raise the limit on earnings to \$50,000 annually.
- E-notarization is acceptable on NYSTRS documents during the pandemic.

[NYSTRS Year in Review and the Long-Term Stability of the System - YouTube](#)

Delegate-Board/Staff Discussion: Delegates submit questions to the board ahead of time so the board has time to prepare an answer for the virtual environment. Questions regarding final average salary (FAS) and the impact of fewer extra-curricular activities available to members. [Delegate-Board/Staff Discussion - YouTube](#)

MyNYSTRS: Access to Your NYSTRS Information: If you have not set up a MyNYSTRS account, please do so. If you have not visited this account in a year or more, you may need to create a new password or new account altogether. There are several security features in place including the two-tier authorization. There were several members across the state that received a fraudulent unemployment form, including some Pittsford staff members. Be vigilant with your personal and retirement information.

Social Security: Last year over One Trillion dollars was paid to 65 million people under current social security laws. Actuarially, there may need to be some reforms in the future as people are living longer.

[Social Security Overview: What You Need to Know - YouTube](#)

Additional information from previous conventions

- The Calculation for a pension is determined by the rules in your pension tier. All pensions are calculated using the formula (pension factor) X (age factor) X final average salary (FAS). The Final Average Salary (FAS) is determined by your three highest consecutive school years of regular service. This excludes increases above 10% from year to year.
- You should have received your Benefits Profile in November summarizing many individual details including service credit, pension projections, and designated beneficiary as of June 30, 2021. Be sure to read this document and alert NYSTRS if the information is incomplete or incorrect.
- Planning for retirement at least 5 years in advance is wise. We suggest attending a PREP Seminar (virtually) and scheduling a consultation through your MyNYSTRS account or call (800) 348-7298 Ext.6100.
- In your MyNYSTRS account, you can review your benefit profile, find contact information and publications, utilize secure messaging and download forms that you may need. The on-line retirement application is preferred as there is less room for error on the electronic document and the submission time for digital applications is faster. There are two steps in collecting your pension. You must resign from your position with Pittsford, and retire from the state. The date of resignation from Pittsford is usually June 30, the last contracted day of work. The earliest date of retirement is the day **after** your last contracted day of work, so July 1. The earliest you can file for retirement is 90 days prior to your retirement date, so April 2 is the earliest you can file if you plan to retire on July 1.

Your Reps:

Building Representatives:

Michele Riedl, AC
Brett Burrows, JR
Jennifer Villareale, MC
Spencer Jones, PR
Greg Bischooping, TR
Kristen Dolan, BR
Melissa Althouse, CR
Paige LaBarr, MHS
Lynne Drake, SHS
Lorinda Spring, SRP

Assistant Building Representatives:

Kathy Rudd, AC
Elizabeth Kramer, JR
Patty Mayer and
Trisha Sullivan, MC
Rebecca Kemp, PR
Amy Adams, TR
Liesa Ehrlich, Rhonda
Matthews,
Tammy Cole, BRMS
Adrienne Ehrlich, Lisa Riley,
CRMS
Tom Kennell,
Mindy Johnston, Jennifer
Shaffer MHS
Marc Hellems, Brian Shafer,
Amanda Marshall, SHS

Assistant SRP Representatives:

Rebecca Tan, MC
Debbie Ricketts, MC
Michele Seidel, AC
Radhika Ramesh, TR
Julie Pellegrino, CRMS
Farida Patrawala, CRMS
Connie Maust, BRMS
Brian Oliver, SHS

Rochester Regional Office

NYSUT will offer two free webinars about the NYS Teachers Retirement System (NYSTRS) in February.

Topics covered include: Security, Planning, Filing for Retirement, Calculating your Benefit, Reading your Statement, and Understanding the Options.

The webinars will be held on Tuesday, February 8th and Wednesday, February 16th from 4:00-6:00 pm.

These sessions will fill up quickly. Advance registration is required. Please use your personal email and not your district email to register for this session as your district's server may block your confirmation email. If you do not see a confirmation email, please check your spam or junk inboxes or if your promotions folder if you use Gmail.

In order to inform the presentation to meet your needs, please also complete this quick [SURVEY](#) in advance of attending the webinar.

Register [HERE](#) for the February 8th session.

Register [HERE](#) for the February 16th session.

Important Dates:

Pink the Rink (Bill Gray's Iceplex) – February 5, 2022 (Wear Pink)

PDТА BBQ Fundraiser on May 17th.

Retirement Party (Eagle Vale) - May 19, 2022 at 4:30PM

FYI:

For tax purposes, each member's annual union dues for 2021 is shown on the last paycheck stub of the year. This information can be obtained on WinCap under "Misc Teacher Dues." The amount for full membership was \$735.52

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 PDТА and mailed to the PDТА Office. **Ad PROCEEDS WILL SUPPORT PDТА CHARITABLE EFFORTS.**

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



Political Action Karen Grace

ALBANY, N.Y. Jan. 21, 2022 — New York State United Teachers today endorsed U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer, Gov. Kathy Hochul, Lt. Gov. Brian Benjamin, Attorney General Letitia James and Comptroller Tom DiNapoli for re-election.

NYSUT’s Board of Directors voted to endorse the five incumbents late Friday afternoon.

Schumer has long been an ardent supporter of the work of NYSUT members across New York.



ENDORSEMENT ALERT

NYSUT endorses

U.S. Senator Charles Schumer
Governor Kathy Hochul
Lieutenant Governor Brian Benjamin
Attorney General Letitia James
Comptroller Tom DiNapoli



“We’re proud to call Sen. Schumer a friend of NYSUT members and organized labor across the state and country,” NYSUT President Andy Pallotta said. “From his hard work to secure federal relief funding during the pandemic to his hyper-focused attention on the needs of New Yorkers from Montauk to Buffalo, Sen. Schumer continues to deliver for our state, and we unequivocally endorse him for re-election.”

NYSUT’s endorsement of Hochul is the union’s first endorsement for a gubernatorial candidate since 2006.

“Gov. Hochul has met the challenges we face head-on from Day 1 of her administration, proving she has what it takes to lead New York through the pandemic and to new heights,” Pallotta said. “Her commitment to listening to the needs of our members signals a new day in Albany, and we look forward to working alongside her to ensure we build on our high-quality public education, higher education and health care systems in the next four years.”

Pallotta added that with Benjamin on the ballot, the gubernatorial ticket is all the more formidable.

Pallotta said NYSUT is proud to endorse James for re-election, after endorsing her in her first run for attorney general in 2018.

“Attorney General James isn’t afraid to stand up for New Yorkers, whether it’s in our communities or before the U.S. Supreme Court,” Pallotta said. “A former educator and union member herself, she shares the values of organized labor and working people across our state, and we know she’ll continue to serve as a fierce protector of our values.”

DiNapoli is a longtime supporter of organized labor and NYSUT members and has a deep knowledge of the needs of students, educators and families going back to his days as a trustee on the Mineola Board of Education.

“Tom’s dedication to financial stewardship is unmatched,” Pallotta said. “In particular, Tom has been a stalwart protector of retirement security for public employees his entire career. There is no better champion of the idea that public employees deserve a secure and fair retirement.”

New York State United Teachers is a statewide union with more than 600,000 members in education, human services and health care. NYSUT is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association and the AFL-CIO. from <https://www.nysut.org/news/2022/january/media-release-endorsements>

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

One of our members lost her beloved dog on Thanksgiving morning, after the pet got into a tube of commonly prescribed skin cancer medicine. She asked that we share this information to save others from the same heartbreak.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is alerting pet owners, veterinarians, health care providers and pharmacists that pets are at risk of illness and death when exposed to the topical cancer medication Fluorouracil Cream USP 5% (5-FU.) intended for use in people. Although the FDA has not to date received any reports involving cats, they are also expected to be extremely sensitive to Fluorouracil cream.



FDA Advice on Pet Exposure to Fluorouracil

Check out all your union membership has to offer!



NYSUT Member Benefits

Every Dollar Counts!

When it comes to protecting yourself, your loved ones, your income or your most valuable possessions, NYSUT Member Benefits has insurance programs that fit the bill. Whether you are looking for **auto & home, life, disability, long-term care, dental, vision, or pet insurance**, there is a Member Benefits-endorsed plan that may be of assistance featuring value-added extras unavailable to the public.

Get started by first bookmarking the Member Benefits website at memberbenefits.nysut.org. There, you will find numerous tools and resources available to you as a NYSUT member – including a **Financial Learning Center** with articles designed to help educate you on financial decisions and topics.

Member Benefits also endorses several discounted shopping programs that can help you save on both everyday and more expensive purchases. Finally, if you ever have an issue or problem when using a Member Benefits program, our staff take great pride in their ability to quickly assist members with any concerns that may arise.

Visit memberbenefits.nysut.org or call **800-626-8101** to learn more about the endorsed programs and services available to you through your union membership.



Learn more by scanning the QR code to the left, visiting memberbenefits.nysut.org or calling **800-626-8101**.



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

Jan/Feb 2022



Speak Out is edited and assembled by Brian Regan.

Your feedback is welcome at brian_regan@pittsford.monroe.edu