

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



Your school budget vote is important!

VOTE YES ON MAY 18

PITTSFORD CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

POLLING LOCATION | Barker Road Middle School Gymnasium
75 Barker Road • Pittsford NY 14534

The Pittsford District Teachers Association ENDORSES
Jeff Casey, Sarah Pelusio and René Sanchez-Kazacos.




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Endorsements Align With Our Shared Values Dwayne Cerbone, President

As a union of educators representing teachers, mental health providers, paraprofessionals, nurses, tutors, and auxiliary staff we are deeply committed to the District's Values that were established in conjunction with our valued partners in education, including parents and community members.

These Values are the basis of our work and, of equal importance, our endorsements for the BOE. Our members are invested in assuring that those elected to the Board of Education not only share these Values but commit to adhering to each of these guiding principles in all that they do for our schools.

Those who demonstrate such have consistently engaged with civility in our school community, possess the knowledge and personal attributes necessary for service, are prepared to fulfill the full breadth of responsibility the Board has for all students, and

support the professional engagement and development of our members, are considered for endorsement.

Successful candidates have received the approval of a team of PDTA leaders following a significant interview process and have been overwhelmingly approved by the PDTA's Representative Assembly. We are confident that this process has identified the candidates best equipped and prepared to lead the District in a manner that aligns with our values, those shared with the District and our community!

As a valued member, we appreciate and respect that ultimately your vote is always yours to cast. We do ask that you seriously consider the endorsements of the PDTA knowing that your elected leaders have painstakingly assessed each to most closely align with our values and interests. This is not a responsibility we take lightly nor enter into with preconceived notions. Thus, we thoughtfully implement multiple

equitable and tiered assessment practices as we pursue these interests.

Additionally, we ask for your support sharing these endorsements with friends and family in Pittsford. We do want to assure all members that, in fulfillment of our defined fiscal responsibilities and oversight through NYSUT and AFT, no member dues monies are expended on the endorsement of the PCSD budget nor that of the Board candidates.

These funds are generated through the thoughtful and generous contributions of our members to NYSUT Vote-Cope. The PDTA receives up to forty percent of our member's donations back in the form of a rebate annually, which is then allocated to these specific purposes. I thank Karen Grace and the entire Political Action Committee for their commitment to these fund raising efforts.

If not already engaged with the PDTA's

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Cerbone, continued...

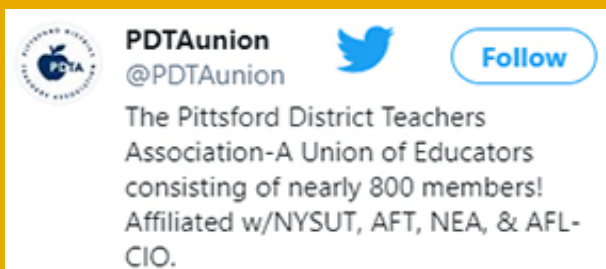
social media accounts, I encourage you to do so as we implement these means of communication quite frequently this time of year. Stephanie Warchol ardently assures that our social media presence remains professional, respectful and relevant.

Often the information shared through these channels cannot be distributed through PCSD email so this may be the only way to remain connected. Please take this opportunity to connect with us on these platforms.

twitter.com/PDTAunion

[facebook.com/](https://facebook.com/PittsfordDistrictTeachersAssociation)

[PittsfordDistrictTeachersAssociation](https://facebook.com/PittsfordDistrictTeachersAssociation)



PCSD 2021-22 Budget and BOE Member Vote Stephanie Warchol, Executive Vice President

The development of a school district's budget is a thoughtful, year-long process that includes careful long-term planning. 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 election. Through my representation on DPT and attending all of the virtual budget work sessions and BOE meetings, I hope to be able to provide you a basic overview of the 2021-22 proposed budget.

This year, the Budget Guidelines prioritize equity and inclusion for all, social emotional learning and mental health supports, creating safe school environments and facilities, not exceeding the tax cap, and opening schools fully without temporary learning models, if permitted by the NYS DOH.

On May 18, voters in Pittsford will be voting on a proposed budget of \$143,924,548 which is a 2.56% increase over last year. The Tax Levy increase is 1.95%. They will also be voting on four Propositions. The first,

to purchase twelve replacement buses using Capital Reserve funds. The second, to make mini capital improvement projects in various facilities, not to exceed \$6 million. The third will allow PCSD to establish a new Capital Reserve, as the current one is approaching maximum life. The fourth, to withdraw money from the Capital Reserve Fund not to exceed \$875,000, will be used towards Instructional Technology. This will allow PCSD to begin a 1:1 student technology device program in grades six through nine, and replace beyond-useful life devices. These propositions will NOT impact taxes and in some cases will generate State Aid if approved by voters.

In addition to the Budget Vote and Propositions, voters will also be choosing their Board of Education representatives. Long-time Board of Education members Valerie Baum & Irene Feldman Narotsky have decided to not seek re-election this year, and we thank them for their advocacy, dedication, and tireless work on behalf of all in the PCSD community.

This year we have six candidates running for three open seats. Incumbent and PDTA endorsed candidate René Sanchez-Kazacos. PDTA endorsed candidates Jeff

Casey and Sarah Pelusio, who are both seeking their first term on the Board of Education. Ruby L.S. Belton, Jennifer Canning, and Nicole Sidhu who are also all seeking their first term.

Voting will take place in person this year, at the Barker Road Middle School gymnasium from 7 AM to 9 PM on Tuesday, May 18. Voter identification is required and the following COVID-19 protocols will be in place: 6 feet of social distancing-which may result in a line forming outside (please plan accordingly for weather), masks must be worn, self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms. Residents seeking an absentee ballot must obtain an application and submit it to the PCSD District Clerk.

Absentee ballot applications must be returned to the District Clerk no later than May 11, 2021, if the ballot is to be mailed directly to the voter. Absentee ballot applications must be returned to the District Clerk no later than May 17, 2021, if the ballot is to be picked up in person by the voter. Ballots can be accepted up until 5 p.m. on the day of the vote, May 18, 2021, as long as the absentee ballot application is on file. Voters may also fill out an application and ballot in person on or before May 17 between 8:15 a.m.-4:15 p.m.



SRP Newslink

Lorinda Spring

**School Budget Vote/
BOE Elections-
Tuesday, May 18-**
Please vote in the

district where you live!

Posting Process- If you are a full-time employee who desires a change in

assignment or if you are displaced from your current position, you will have the opportunity to post for jobs once the SRP postings begin. Part-time employees may write a letter of interest for available positions. You may post for several positions and order them by preference. Please go to

www.pdta.org and click on Documents, Info Documents and then Postings and Transfer Process Document for more detailed information on the posting process. Please reach out to any Assistant SRP Representative or me if you have further questions.



Public Relations

Nina Talamo

PDTA is planning our annual BBQ fundraiser, with a twist this year! Based on the positive feedback about the yummy food from Pittsford Pub last year, we have asked them to partner with us again. The event will be held

at Barker Road Middle School from 4-7pm (or until sold out) and we will have fresh, hot meals delivered every half hour. The proceeds will go towards our Barb Shapiro Student Scholarship Fund.

\$15 will get you a 1/2 chicken - OR - pulled pork BBQ dinner, with salt potatoes, baked beans and corn bread. There will also be a very limited amount of veggies skewers offered for those looking for a meatless option.



Safety & Wellness

Emily Natoli-Burns

KEEPING IT COOL!

As we enter the season of warm weather and hot buildings, there are a few items to keep in mind during this pandemic year. Individuals may use personal fans that only blow on

them. Do not use fans that blow air across an entire room, including the overhead fans in classrooms and box/standing fans. You can use a fan in a window to pull air out of a classroom. You can keep windows and doors open if it helps in your classroom. It bears repeating that

the best thing we can all do is to dress appropriately for the weather and stay hydrated throughout the day. As always, please speak to your building health and safety representative with any concerns.

Stay well!

Building News:

JRE:

- Annie Sanford JRE had a baby boy 3/17/2021 - Matthew (Matty) Joseph Sanford 7lbs-9oz.
- Michelle Walsh JRE also had a baby boy 4/8/2021 - James Hugh Walsh 7lbs-8oz.

MCE:

- Congratulations to Cory Bottiglier on the birth of his Baby Girl on April 8th!

PRE:

- CSE Paraprofessional Sheila Lang lost both her mother and father in the past few months.
- PE Teacher Keith Pittinaro lost his grandmother recently.
- Grade 1 Teacher Rachel Sweet was married on April 11th.



Speak Out is edited and assembled by Brian Regan.

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

| | | |
|---|------------------------------------|--|
| Brighton Central School District Christina Lee Christopher Ross | Esther Winter | Endorsed by: Brighton Teachers' Association |
| Brockport Central School District David Legault | | Endorsed by: Brockport Teachers Association |
| Churchville-Chili Central School District Laurie Hildebrant Jonathan Payne | Cheryl Repass | Endorsed by: Churchville-Chili Education Association |
| Fairport Central School District Mary Caitlin Wight Peter Forsgren | | Endorsed by: Fairport Educators Association |
| Gates Chili Central School District Nicole Littlewood Andrea Hinchey Unson | | Endorsed by: Gates Teachers' Association |
| Greece Central School District Dr. Sherita Traywick Ms. Tracey Farmer | Ms. Tammy Flores | Endorsed by: Greece Teachers Association |
| Hilton Central School District Ed Mascadri Chotsani Whitt | | Endorsed by: Hilton Teacher's Association |
| Horseheads Central School District Kristine Dale Najeeb Rehman | | Endorsed by: Horseheads Teachers Association |
| Penfield Central School District William Yaeger Catherine Dean | Mark Elledge | Endorsed by: Penfield Education Association |
| Pittsford Central School District Jeff Casey Sarah Pelusio | Rene Sanchez-Kazacos | Endorsed by: Pittsford District Teachers Association |
| Rochester City School District Camille Simmons Joshua Bauroth | James Patterson | Endorsed by: Rochester Teachers' Association |
| Rush-Henrietta Central School District Jesse Redlo Rachel Sherman | Holli Fiscus-Connon Scott Adair | Endorsed by: Rush Henrietta Teachers |
| Spencer-Van Etten Central School District Rick Rodgers Donna Mistler | | Endorsed by: Spencer Van Etten Teachers' Association |
| Spencerport Central School District Kevin Hutton Leah Brown | | Endorsed by: Spencerport Teachers Association |
| West Irondequoit Central School District Rosa Vargas-Cronin Matt Metras | Justin Connor | Endorsed by: The Coalition of NYSUT Locals in West Irondequoit |
| Waterloo Central School District Andrea Bennett Caitlin Ryan | Ellen Hughes | Endorsed by: Waterloo Education Association |
| Webster Central School District Jennifer Birdsong-Ng Shanna LaDelfa | | Endorsed by: Webster Teachers Association |

Got Questions? Visit [PDTA.org](https://pdta.org).
To contact your PDTA President confidentially
off of school email, please use dcerbonepdta@gmail.com

Board of Education Candidate Statements

Each year, PDTA asks all candidates running for the PCSD Board of Education to meet with union representatives for individual interviews. Based on those conversations and subsequent discussion of the Representative Assembly, the organization endorses candidates whose values and platforms best align with ours, as well as with those of the District and community.

This year, PDTA is confidently endorsing new candidates Jeff Casey and Sarah Pelusio along with incumbent René Sanchez-Kazacos. In addition, all candidates are invited to provide answers in writing to the same set of questions for inclusion here in Speak Out. Their responses fill the following pages, in ballot order. Endorsed candidates are identified with the PDTA logo. We are unable to share a response from Dr. Ruby Belton as the candidate did not respond to multiple invitations to participate.

Please be sure to vote on the budget and for the Board of Education at Barker Road Middle School on Tuesday, May 18th. While you're there, pick up a BBQ chicken or pork dinner from the Pittsford Pub, with proceeds benefiting the PDTA Barb Shapiro Student Scholarship Fund!

Jeff Casey



Why do you desire to serve on the PCSD BOE?

I am seeking a seat on the BOE to serve my community, and to collaborate with all involved to continue the tradition of excellence for which PCSD is so well known. My interest in serving goes back several years but really piqued in 2017 as the District considered implementing full day kindergarten. At the time, our oldest daughter was in the cohort of students who would have been the first potential full day kindergarteners, so I knew this decision would impact our family. I started attending Board meetings and found that my interest extended far beyond kindergarten programming and into many responsibilities of the

Board including, but not limited to, the budget, district policies, curriculum, capital projects, and governance. I believe that my background as an attorney would bring a unique perspective that is not currently represented on the BOE.

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

The PCSD's strengths are many, and difficult to narrow down. While by no means exhaustive, some of its greatest advantages are undoubtedly the quality and commitment of the faculty and staff, the quality of instruction, and the wide range of extracurricular activities provided for students, all of which contribute to the education of the whole child. I also know that the Pittsford schools deeply value a spirit of collaboration that shows in their efforts to prioritize relationships, communicate with respect, and engage in shared decision making. One opportunity for continued improvement right now is in the area of diversity, equity, and inclusion. All students benefit from learning environments that make them feel welcome and valued. The District has taken important steps forward in this area and I am confident in the ongoing work.

What do you see as the major challenges facing public

education and our school district in the next few years?

There are several challenges coming in the years ahead as we bring our students back to full time, in-person, learning. Chief among them is the social-emotional toll the global pandemic has taken on the entire PCSD community. In collaboration with mental health professionals, both from the community and those on PCSD's own staff, our schools must thoughtfully plan for how to best address these needs. Re-building community among students who have spent significant periods of time away from each other or for whom social interactions have looked very different, is simply one example of a challenge that will require careful planning. Academically, some of our students may have new and varied gaps in learning and achievement, particularly those who have struggled to meet the complex demands of the remote or hybrid learning models. Assessing these needs and adapting instructional approaches to meet them will likely be no small feat.

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

There is good news in the short term for the District's budget, as the legislature recently made a commitment to

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increase foundation aid for PCSD and other districts that have been underfunded by the State for many years. In addition, there will be federal funds available to assist with some of the complex challenges caused by the global pandemic. How those funds are used to address those challenges will have to be carefully planned for as there is no guarantee that the foundation aid will not be frozen again in the future and the federal funds may be a one-time opportunity. I would support efforts related to identifying long-term sustainable revenue streams, and additional cost-saving opportunities between the District, the Town and the Village in procurement of goods and materials so that District financial resources

can be devoted to programming to the greatest extent possible.

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

As a parent of an eight-year-old at Park Road Elementary and a five-year-old who will start kindergarten in the fall, I am personally invested in the continued success of the PCSD, and would consider it an honor to serve. During my legal career, I have developed the following skills that I believe would be a benefit to the BOE and the District as a whole: strong and civil advocacy, experience interpreting complex laws and regulations, knowledge of the legislative process, creative problem-solving skills, successful

collaboration with individuals and groups that often have divergent interests and views, and an open-minded and creative approach to decision-making. If elected, I would diligently employ these skills in pursuit of policies that would benefit the entire PCSD community and continue the District's tradition of excellence.

Where can we learn more about you?

If you would like to learn more, please visit my Facebook page (Jeff Casey for Pittsford School Board) at the following address: <https://www.facebook.com/ElectJeffCasey>.

Jen Canning



Why do you desire to serve on the PCSD BOE?

I want to continue my service to Pittsford Schools and our community as a Board of Education member. I have a long history of local involvement, and am ready to take a more active role in policy and governance through the BOE role. I will utilize my experience in social work, higher education and community engagement to make sound and equitable decisions, utilizing best practices that support positive impactful outcomes for all stakeholders.

I have a deep commitment to supporting the District's mission of ensuring that all students are encouraged to be their best in a safe environment, preparing them to be global citizens; that all teachers and staff have the resources, tools and support to do their best in providing what our students need; and that the District is fiscally, socially and environmentally responsible in order to make a difference in the lives of our students and community.

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

Our District succeeds in part because of strong collaboration among our staff, teachers, families and community members. The dedication of our teachers illustrates the immense amount of caring and effort that enhances our high quality learning environment. We need to continue this dedication and collaboration through improved communication as a community in order to best serve our children and families.

District leadership continues to make steps in the areas of diversity and inclusion, but there is much work to be done. The Equity Policy provides the District with a starting point in making sure each child has what they need to be successful

and that teachers are trained to meet those needs in a culturally responsive way. I am eager to work with teachers, parents and District leaders as the Equity Policy and recommendations from the two DEI consultants are implemented in both short-term and long-term timeframes.

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

The past year has spotlighted upcoming challenges to address in our ever-changing world, including investing in technology for students and training and support for teachers. Responsive communication with individual families, culturally responsive classrooms and equitable services for all students will ensure an inclusive community and a sense of belonging. We must continue the discussion on mental health, destigmatizing it and addressing the factors that create stress and anxiety for our students.

District curriculum should continue to evolve, providing our students with diverse perspectives, voices, and ways of looking at the world, helping them to learn skills in civil discourse and how to think critically. The National Association

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of Colleges and Employers states eight career readiness competencies, including career and self-development, communication, critical thinking, equity and inclusion, leadership, professionalism, teamwork and technology, the seeds of which can be planted in our schools, preparing our students to enter college and the workforce.

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

Our District, along with many other districts, will be receiving an increase in Foundation Aid this year. This increased revenue will allow us to consider how we can enhance the programming and services offered though our District, and continued advocacy efforts with our legislators will be required to ensure the District receives the full funding amount in the future.

In addition, the District will be receiving \$5 million in federal grant

funding for addressing learning gaps. There must be community input on how those dollars should be spent, thinking about the impacts of the past year on not only the academic but also the social emotional facets of our students, as well as on our teachers and staff.

We must continue to prioritize what affects students directly, supporting our teachers and ensuring that all expenditures keep kids in mind and provide equitable opportunities so all children succeed.

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

I grew up in a family of educators, and I understand the many roles that teachers play and the impact they have on the lives of their students. I have been an educator in a variety of settings, providing workshops and trainings on early brain development and developmental assets for youth. Currently I am a program manager and instructor at Nazareth College,

leading experiential learning seminars and teaching a course in academic and college success.

I am an advocate for children in our schools and community. I have met with County and State legislators in New York, supporting the Children's Agenda, a local non-partisan advocacy group, in educating lawmakers on the need for more resources for child care and early intervention services. These experiences will inform my work as a Board Member in ensuring our District receives the resources it needs for our teachers and our kids.

Where can we learn more about you? (contact info/ website/social media/etc.)

Please visit: www.electjencanningpittsfordboe.com or Elect Jen Canning Pittsford Board of Education on Facebook. Feel free to email electjencanningpittsfordboe@gmail.com with any questions.

Sarah Pelusio



Why do you desire to serve on the PCSD BOE?

I am running for the Pittsford Board of Education to serve my hometown and to preserve the tradition of

success in Pittsford Schools for all our students. As a fifth generation Pittsford resident, and 2001 graduate of Pittsford Sutherland High School, I have a longstanding history in our community. I take great pride in the outstanding achievements of our District and wish to serve as a member of the school board to build upon that legacy. I currently serve as President of Pittsford Central PTSA; a role that affords me the opportunity to work in partnership with PCSD, PD TA and several other essential stakeholders associated with the District. It has been my passion to advocate for our students from our littlest learners through our graduating seniors, doing my part to ensure that their needs are being met to the best of my ability. I take great pride in our community and wish for everyone the same positive experience that I was privileged to have myself as a student in Pittsford Schools.

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

Through extensive PCSD committee involvement, I have learned that collaboration is the key component to success in Pittsford Schools. In the decision-making process, my experience has taught me that the result is better if more individual voices, from different perspectives, are included. The Pittsford community is actively engaged in our school district and working together we can best prepare our youth to be successful in school and in life. Our objective is to serve our students. To continue to do so exceptionally, we must adapt to the rapidly changing environment that surrounds us, anticipating the needs of each individual, and providing them with the tools necessary to be their very best self. I proudly support our

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District's current initiatives, including the commitment to equity. Pittsford Schools has made great progress over the past few years and remain focused on the goals ahead. I am thrilled to have participated in the District led, Generation Ready workshops and welcome the opportunity to assist in future plans to becoming a fully inclusive school environment.

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

As we continue to persevere through the global pandemic, it is essential that our District respond to the impacts the situation has brought on. As a member of the PCSD Scenario Planning Committee, I have worked to prepare for the return to full, in-person learning when it is determined safe to do so. I am pleased to know that this year's school budget allows for addressing unknown needs of our students as we reacclimate to normalcy. To varying extents, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone. It is imperative that our schools are prepared to address gaps in academics, mental health, and social-emotional well-being, not only for our students, but for our faculty, staff, and school community at large. The first step

to addressing the challenges we face, is through assessment. I fully support our District utilizing federal stimulus funds, towards COVID-19 related educational gaps. I welcome the input from our Pittsford community in determining how best to utilize this funding opportunity to best serve our schools.

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

Fiscal responsibility is a critical component to the role of the school board. Pittsford Schools currently holds a Aa1 bond rating which allows for sustainability and responsibility now and into the future. As a member of the District Planning Team, I worked collaboratively to determine the top priorities for this year's school budget. As always, Pittsford begins all work with a student-centered philosophy in mind. This year, Pittsford is receiving more foundation aid than in previous years. The increased aid allows for improved efforts to address student needs, professional development, and overall fiscal responsibility of the District. As a member of the District Advocacy Team for the past several years, I have worked with local legislators

to secure adequate school funding for Pittsford. If elected to the Pittsford School Board, I vow to continue in my advocacy efforts to sustain educational funding well into the future.

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

If elected to the Pittsford Board of Education, I pledge to continue the collaborative nature in which Pittsford Schools have operated for many years. Together we can accomplish our goals and provide the best quality education for all Pittsford students. Throughout my tenure in the Pittsford PTSA, including my current role as PTSA President, I have been involved in several PCSD committees used in making critical decisions for our District. My service includes areas related to future planning, equity and inclusion, curriculum, testing, mental health, advocacy, reopening/pandemic response, attendance boundary studies, social-emotional development, communications, and community engagement. It has been my privilege to represent our parent community in collaboration with District stakeholders over the past several years. My experience has prepared me profoundly to transition into the role of Pittsford School Board member. I look forward to the opportunity to expand my tradition of service to Pittsford Schools in this new role.

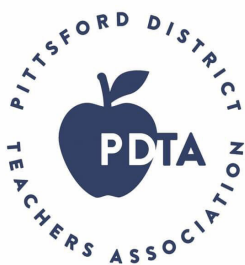
Where can we learn more about you?

I am grateful to have had the privilege to serve as a parent leader in Pittsford PTSA and look forward to continuing my service as a member of the Pittsford Board of Education. I hope to earn your vote on May 18th, so that together, we can continue to provide excellence in education for all our students. I invite you to follow my campaign on Facebook @ElectSarahPelusio. Sarah Pelusio
Sarah.pelusio@gmail.com

Vote YES

for the PCSD

Budget





Why do you desire to serve on the PCSD BOE?

Like all of you, at the end of the day, I am a teacher who is looking to make a positive difference in the lives of others. There are two reasons why I am looking to serve our community. First, it is important that all community members have a voice. In recent years we have seen the ability to have public discourse almost cease to exist in a civil manner. We need people who will actively listen to all sides and be able to make rational and reasonable decisions that benefit all stakeholders.

Secondly, I feel a need now more than ever to continue to use my educators' lens when discussing academic, procedural, and policy changes. It is imperative to have a voice that will ask questions or bring up points how potential changes will impact students, faculty, and staff.

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

Collaboration is biggest strength of our district. I have seen firsthand the many groups who work together to create lessons, curriculum, and find solutions that face our schools. I am

in awe of the dedication that faculty and staff have to their profession, our kids, and to our community. Thank you for all that you do for our kids!

SEL and DE&I – I think that we are doing a good job in both areas and I know that DE&I is a sensitive topic. In my opinion, there is always room for growth in each of these areas.

When we return to school full time in the fall, SEL needs to be at the top of our list for concerns. Clearly the kids are a priority, but so are all of you! I am a mom and a teacher in a neighboring district. This has been the most difficult year in my 23 years of teaching. I will not pretend that I know what is best or know what each of you needs. Everyone's journeys are different. We need to hear from you and listen to what you need and do our best to make that happen. I am hoping to see an increase in mental health professionals and creative ways to reintroduce our students and staff back into schools.

DE&I – Without a doubt, I believe that teachers should have direct input on what curriculum is being taught. As a district we need resources, vetted by teachers, that are age-appropriate and fit within the NYS standards and curriculum. I want to make sure that all staff are comfortable teaching these difficult topics and are both personally and professionally ready to do so.

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

Aside from SEL and DE&I, I am also concerned with some unique difficulties we will face when we return to school in the fall. Learning gaps caused by the pandemic, teacher shortages, and keeping foundation aid at current levels are all challenges that will need to be addressed in the years to come. This past decade has been rough on the teaching profession. I am not surprised to see decreasing enrollment in teacher certification programs at colleges throughout the

state and country. I am hoping that partnering up with programs like NYSUT's "Take a Look at Teaching" will help encourage dedicated individuals to join our profession.

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

I firmly believe as an educator, that our job is to create a well-rounded student. All aspects of education are important. I will strive to make sure that all our programs are funded. My biggest concern is foundation aid. I know state legislators have promised foundation aid funding for the next three years. My question is, "What happens after that?" One of my responsibilities as a teacher representative is to advocate through the Committee of 100 in Albany regarding this and other issues and make sure that there is continued advocacy through the Monroe County School Board Association.

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

I am married to a music teacher and I am mom of two PCSD kids one in BRMS and one who will be at the MHS in the fall. (Need to give a shout-out to our friends at TRE! We miss you guys!) I am a strong supporter of my local union (RHEA) and NYSUT. I am the co-coordinator of PAC and VOTE/Cope in my local, and I am about to complete my 23rd year in teaching. This past year has been a challenge for everyone. I want each one of you to know that as a parent and a board member, I've seen that you have all risen to meet challenges that, at times, changed on a day-to-day basis. All I can say is THANK YOU!

Where can we learn more about you? (contact info/ website/social media/etc.)

<https://www.facebook.com/KazacosforBOE>
Rene_Kazacos@pittsford.monroe.edu
Phone: 585-732-4382

Nicole Sidhu



My name is Nicole Sidhu and I am the mother of three children in the Pittsford Central School District, Ciaran (14), Naveen (12) and Sitara (10). I hold a Ph.D. in English literature from Rutgers University. I was a college professor for 15 years at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina, where I was an award-winning scholar and teacher and served on numerous university committees, including those devoted to hiring, policy creation, curricular development, teaching, and equity.

After embarking on a mid-life career pivot to full-time writing, I moved to Pittsford in 2018 to be closer to family and to give my children an excellent public-school education. I and my husband, a hospital physician at Newark-Wayne Community Hospital, love Pittsford for its wonderful schools and its many offerings in sports, the arts, and outdoor activities.

Why do you desire to serve on the PCSD BOE?

I believe I bring important assets to the board because of my background in higher education, as well as my status as a parent of three children currently attending school in the district. I am running as an advocate for a full reopening of the schools using a risk-balancing

approach that weighs Covid-19 related risks against the harms to our students, teachers, and staff from the ongoing restrictions limiting in-person instruction. We need a strong voice on the board to make sure that our district leaders do everything possible to return all our kids safely to school and keep them there. In this, and in all other policy matters, I advocate an approach that uses reason and information, not fear. My background in higher education also prepares me to help our community engage in difficult conversations on controversial subjects to produce a solid consensus. Finally, as someone who is a relative newcomer to the district, I bring a fresh perspective from my experience of other school districts and systems.

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

The district's greatest strengths are its families and its teachers. We are very fortunate to have supportive, engaged families who are willing to do whatever it takes to help our kids succeed. Furthermore, I have been very impressed with both the quality and dedication of my children's teachers. I have had experience in several different districts and school systems, and I can honestly say that the Pittsford teachers are the best I have seen. I think our district leadership needs to improve communication and increase opportunities for community members to speak to each other in person, outside of social media. Unfortunately, we live in a very polarized age, where the most extreme positions get clicks and audience attention. However, extremes and sensation do not work for communities. We need to create more ways to come together, speak to one another and build consensus. Honesty and mutual respect are key.

What do you see as the major challenges facing public education and our school district in the

next few years?

The greatest challenge over the next couple of years will be in helping our children recover from pandemic-related harms, particularly those in grades 6-12 who have not had full-time in-person school for over a year, possibly 18 months. We will have to deal with this damage on a variety of fronts, including: academic damage due to lost learning opportunities; damage to our children's mental health, which is likely to be just as marked when the kids return to school as it has been during the time they have been in hybrid, and damage to their physical health. Moving forward, we will also face challenges from the tendency of our media and social media to privilege extremes, polarities, and sensation. On issues related to race, diversity, and sex education, among others, we need to resist extremes and work together to create the best possible outcomes for our district.

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

We are fortunate in having two sources of additional funding. The first is the increase in Foundation Aid, which has added over \$2 million to this year's budget. The second is the Covid relief funding that we will also receive. While I agree that mental health supports will be important, I also want to emphasize joy in the life of the mind and the human connection, as an antidote to the sadness and trauma of the past year. The New Chaucer Society, a scholarly organization of which I am a member, has for many years offered a program for secondary school teachers to attend its biennial conference. I would like to see funding for this and other similar programs for teachers, to spark energy and discoveries that they can then pass on to our children. Mentorship, both for teachers and students, is another area we can profitably explore for the way that it

Continued next page

strengthens human connection.

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

I would like members to know the extent to which I value open and honest discussions that include many different viewpoints. One of the advantages of middle age is that one acquires a certain amount of humility, realizing that one does not have all the answers. For me,

the pandemic year has emphasized the importance of listening to others, even if their politics or views seem initially very different from our own. I am committed to helping us come together, and to giving people the opportunity to speak with a mutual respect that allows community members to ask questions or make objections to district policy without fear of condemnation and recrimination. I believe that this is the only way for

us to move forward.

Where can we learn more about you? (contact info/ website/social media/etc.)

You can visit my website at www.nicolesidhuforpittsfordboe.com

Or you can visit my Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/nicolesidhuforpittsfordboe>.



**Wear your
PD TA SWAG
this Tuesday!**



**Your school budget
vote is important!**
VOTE YES
ON MAY 18
PITTSFORD CENTRAL
SCHOOL DISTRICT

POLLING LOCATION

Barker Road Middle School Gymnasium
75 Barker Road • Pittsford NY 14534

**The Pittsford District Teachers' Association ENDORSES
Jeff Casey, Sarah Pelusio, and René Sanchez-Kazacos.**



Your Reps:

Building Representatives:

Stephanie Barg, AC
Brett Burrows, JR
Jennifer Villareale, MC
Spencer Jones, PR
Lisa Mauger, 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, MCE
Rachel Sweet, PR
Amy Adams, TR
Liesa Ehrlich, Rhonda
Matthews,
Tammy Cole, BRMS
Adrienne Ehrlich, Lisa Riley,
CRMS
Tom Kennell,
Paula Fink, Kelly Jordan MHS
Marc Hellems, Brian Shafer,
Amanda Marshall, SHS

SRP Representatives:

Cathy Anstrom, JR
Lisa Backscheider, SHS
Kristi Kelley, JR
Kristina Otto, MHS
Radhika Ramesh, TR
Janet Realbutto, SHS
Jenny Telek, MCE
Rebecca Tan, MCE

Tuesday, May 18 4-7pm
Barker Road Middle School

IT'S BBQ TIME!

\$15

1/2 Chicken - or - Pulled Pork

Salt Potatoes, Baked Beans & Corn Bread

Delivered hot from the Pittsford Pub!



*Thank you for supporting the PDTA
Barb Shapiro Student Scholarship Fund*

Important dates:

- **May 20: Retirement Party 4:30PM Eagle Vale (Invitation Only due to COVID restrictions)**
- **May 24: Pre-BOE meeting tenure recognition via Zoom 6:30pm.**
- **June 3: 20-Year Reception 7:00PM at CRMS (Invitation Only due to COVID restrictions)**
- **June 5: Senior Parade**
- **June 19: Graduation**

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.

Not sure where to start with your summer to-do list?

Whether it's assisting NYSUT members with everyday essentials, important choices about insurance needs, or making prudent decisions about financial and legal concerns, NYSUT Member Benefits can help.



Scan the QR code below to learn more about the following endorsed programs and services.

Saving you money: MB Discounts & Deals

With the **Member Benefits Discounts & Deals** program, NYSUT members can save up to 50% at more than 700,000 merchants nationwide (including thousands throughout New York State). Save on groceries and food delivery; restaurant dine-in or takeout; gasoline, oil changes and vehicle maintenance; clothing and shoes; and much more. You can even request that your favorite merchant join the network.

Saving you money: Every \$\$\$ counts

Whether your summer plans include home renovations, replacing or upgrading appliances, getting a new car, stocking up for the return to school, or even just hanging out and enjoying some time off, Member Benefits has a variety of endorsed programs -- **Purchasing Power, Buyer's Edge Inc., Office Depot/OfficeMax, Bose, Powell's Books** -- that might be able to minimize the impact on your wallet and maximize your enjoyment of the all-too-fleeting summer months.

Protecting your family: Insuring yourself and your family

Member Benefits endorses a number of competitive insurance programs that are available to NYSUT members. These include **auto/home/renters, life, disability, long term care, dental, vision**, and even **pet insurance**. Some of these programs are also available to or cover spouses/domestic partners of members, dependent children, dependent parents, and grandparents. Most offer payroll & pension deduction as payment options.

Planning for the future: Have a plan for wherever life takes you

It's never too early or too late to make a plan. Just starting a career or looking at retirement? Beginning to pay off loans or building a nest egg? Looking to buy a new home or refinance the one you're in? Welcoming a new child or adopting? Now would be a good time to look into the ways to put a plan in place or make adjustments to your existing one. Explore the Member Benefits **Financial Learning Center** for assistance; while you're there, check out our **Legal Service Plan** and **Financial Counseling Program**.



NYSUT Member Benefits offers dozens of programs and services that are available to NYSUT members and their families, including the following options:



DINING & SHOPPING DISCOUNTS



TRAVEL & TOURS



CAR & TRUCK RENTALS



LIFE INSURANCE



AUTO & HOME



LONG-TERM CARE & DISABILITY

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

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

May/June '21