

## Board of Education Modifies Leadership Structure

At the Board of Education Reorganization Meeting on July 9, 2024, the Board of Education elected its leadership members and modified its leadership structure for the 2024-2025 school year, with the added the position of President-Elect. With this addition, the Board elected Robin Scott as President, Jeff Casey as President-Elect, and Sarah Pelusio as Vice President.



## Administrative Appointments

**Terrence Hasseler** joined Pittsford Schools as Budget Director on August 12, 2024. Hasseler was most recently serving as Executive Director of Budget, Efficiencies, and Compliance at the Rochester City School District. Previously he served as the Business Administrator for the Caledonia-Mumford Central School District and worked as an audit manager at Raymond F. Wager, CPA.



Terrence Hasseler

He has Bachelor of Science Degrees in both Accounting and Finance from the University of Buffalo, a Master of Science in Education and a Certificate of Advanced Study in School Business Administration from State University of New York at Brockport.

**Jessica LeVan** was appointed Assistant Principal of Mendon Center Elementary School, beginning July 29, 2024. She has worked at Pittsford Schools in several roles including student services teacher, school psychologist, standards leader and as a member of the Committee on Special Education. Additionally, she was an adjunct professor at Rochester Institute of Technology.



Jessica LeVan

LeVan has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from the State University of New York at Geneseo, a Master of Science degree in School Psychology and a Certificate of Advanced Study from Rochester Institute of Technology. She holds a second Master of Science degree in Educational Leadership from St. John Fisher University.

**Orlando Benzan** has been promoted to serve as the Director of Equity, Inclusion and Personnel for the Pittsford Central School District. His position was elevated to the director level to include oversight and expanded responsibilities in Human Resources.



Orlando Benzan

His previous position of Coordinator of Equity & Inclusivity was funded through a federal grant that will expire in October. This new position was combined with a vacant position in Human Resources to create the new directorship.

**Rachel Smith** has been promoted to District Treasurer. She previously served as Assistant Director of Finance. Prior to her work with Pittsford Schools, Smith was Fiscal Manager for Wayne-Finger Lakes CBO supporting Phelps-Clifton Springs Central School District and Romulus Central School District, as well as other districts as Deputy Treasurer. She also worked as a senior auditor at Raymond F. Wager, CPA.



Rachel Smith

Smith has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Accounting from St. John Fisher College, a Master of Science in Educational Administration, and a Certificate of Advanced Study in School Business Administration from State University of New York at Brockport.

## Mendon High School's Mark Akladious and Sophie Khan Awarded National Merit Scholarships

Congratulations to Mendon High School 2024 graduates Mark Akladious and Sophie Khan who were selected as National Merit Scholarship winners. They are among just 2,500 Merit Scholarship awardees from an initial pool of approximately 1.5 million students who entered the National Merit Scholarship Program.

Akladious and Khan were each awarded a \$2,500 National Merit Scholarship. The Scholarship winners were determined by a committee of college admissions officers and high school counselors who appraised information submitted by finalists and their high schools: the academic record, including difficulty level of subjects studied and grades earned; scores from the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®); contributions and leadership in school and community activities; an essay; and a recommendation written by a high school official.

Twelve Pittsford high school students were among more than 15,000 of the highest-scoring entrants to advance to the Finalist level and represent less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors to achieve this distinction.

MHS Class of 2024 Finalists: Mark I. Akladious, Alexander S. Gill, Sophie E. Khan, Rena X. Li, Matthew A. Metlitsky, Jack C. Peyre, and Aaron Y. Shan.

SHS Class of 2024 Finalists: Justine Li-Wu, Aariv A. Mody, Thomas W. Raith, Lina Y. Yang, and Maureen X. Zhang.



Mark Akladious



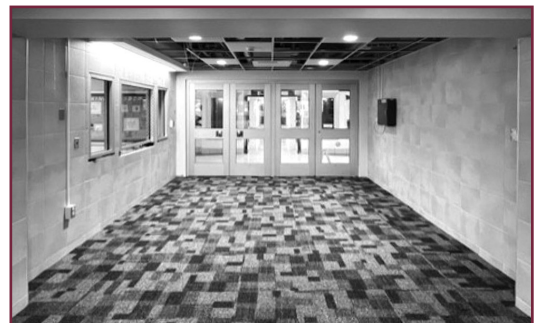
Sophie Khan

## Summer Construction on Main Entrances

The hardening of all school entrances was the focus of the summer construction work which will continue into the fall. Some schools will have functional vestibules at the opening of school, while others are still in progress. When complete, each school will have a single point-of-entry, double-door main entrance vestibule.

These new entrances will consist of a doorbell with an audio/visual system to allow visitors into a self-contained entrance. While in this first vestibule, visitors will use an iPad and their valid photo identification to register in the Visitor Aware software system. Visitors can also pre-register in the Visitor Aware system by using individual links that were sent out by each school. Once verified, the visitor is admitted into the school.

Schools with vestibules that will not be completed in time for the opening of schools will have an alternate entrance with security posted at the door and signage to direct visitors, as appropriate.



Mendon High School Entryway

## Pittsford Schools

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- Clerical
- Substitutes

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Competitive Pay & Benefits | NY State Retirement | Paid Professional Development

## Register Now for New 'Visitor Aware' Security System

School visitors will now use an iPad and their valid photo identification to register in the new Visitor Aware software system for admittance to a building. The system will screen visitors against national databases to prevent unwanted visitors from gaining access to our schools.

Here's a look at how the process will work:

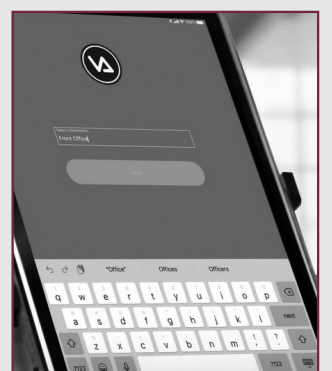
- To enter a building, visitors will press an intercom buzzer connected to the front desk and will be asked to state their name and purpose before being allowed into the vestibule.
- Visitors will then use the iPad tablet provided to access the Visitor Aware kiosk system to get a badge before entering. The process will involve a brief series of steps which include selecting the destination (building) you are entering, taking a photo of yourself and your license with the iPad, and waiting for the ID tag to print.

- Once verified, the visitor may enter the school.

For security purposes, no one should hold the door open for other visitors. Each person needs to be screened before entering the vestibule.

There will be a designated location for items to be dropped off in the vestibule.

**How to Register:** Parents/guardians will need to create an account for each student, by building. This can be done at the time of a school visit or by pre-registering in the Visitor Aware system to speed up the entry process. To find the link for your child(ren)'s school, access the Superintendent's September eNewsletter using the link on the homepage of the District website or visit: [www.pittsfordschools.org/visitoraware](https://www.pittsfordschools.org/visitoraware).





## Lunar New Year Declared NYS Holiday:



**Schools Closed on January 29**

There will be no school on Wednesday, January 29, 2025, as Lunar New Year has been declared a New York State public holiday by Governor Hochul. School will not be in session that day for students and teachers of Pittsford Schools.

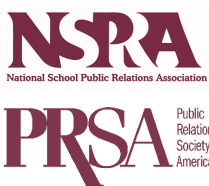


## MHS and SHS Named Schools of Distinction

For the 2023-2024 school year, ALL of Pittsford Schools' varsity sports teams were named NYSPHSAA Scholar-Athlete Teams and both Mendon and Sutherland High Schools qualified for the Scholar-Athlete Schools of Distinction for the seventh consecutive year.

This distinction is awarded to schools when all varsity teams receive the Scholar-Athlete team award during their respective sports seasons. To qualify, the team's average GPA must be greater than or equal to 90.0 for 75% of the roster. Spring teams included: Mendon and Sutherland Baseball, Softball, Outdoor Track/Field, Boys Golf, Boys Tennis, and Pittsford Boys and Girls Lacrosse.

View the full list of Scholar-Athlete Teams and Individuals at <https://nysphsaa.org/>.



## District Communication Earns National Recognition

Recently, the District's Communication Department was recognized by the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) and the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) for its work. In addition to Honorable Mentions from NSPRA for the District's printed newsletter and calendar of schedules and events, PCSD received highest honors with a PRISM Award (PRSA) for the capital campaign vote community relations campaign.

Each year, the Communication Office supports Pittsford's nine schools by providing important print and electronic communication about district-wide initiatives and events. Whether sharing news of student accolades, achievements and events, constructing the annual calendar, or posting timely news to the website, Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn, the Communication team works tirelessly to ensure families and community members are informed.

## Religious Observances

Differences in culture, gender, generations, backgrounds, and religion shape who we are as a school community. Our community becomes more diverse every year, increasing the importance of sensitivity to families and students from a variety of backgrounds and beliefs. Respect and acceptance to such a diversity of students is vitally necessary to those of us who are responsible for modeling the behavior we want in our children.

The District strives to promote inclusivity through its policies and actions. Our community and school district are sensitive to the issues of religious freedom. It is our belief and practice that every student should be supported and protected with respect to religious philosophies and observances.

Our curriculum appropriately recognizes the impact of religion on cultures, institutions, and individuals. Instruction may be provided about the influence and customs of world religions. Displays of associated symbols are appropriate if they are clearly used as part of a curriculum dealing with cultures or customs.

Parents have a right to determine when their children will be absent from school because of a religious observance. **Students will not be penalized or suffer prejudicial consequences for an excused absence for religious observance and will be allowed reasonable opportunities to make up work missed during such absences.** Parents are encouraged to inform the school as soon as possible of the absence so that arrangements can be made for any missed work. The school principal should be contacted if any questions or problems occur.

Your cooperation is appreciated as we strive to foster an environment that respects and values the rich diversity of our community and schools.



## Students Go to Camp with the Buffalo Bills



Students from Pittsford Schools' Extended School Year program were all smiles as they visited the Buffalo Bills' Training Camp at St. John Fisher University this summer. They met the players, received autographs and watched some live action practice as the Bills kicked off their unofficial start of the new season. #GoBills!



## Ray Manginell Named Transportation Employee of the Year

The Rochester Area Transportation Supervisors Association (RATSA) named Ray Manginell as Pittsford Schools' outstanding transportation employee for the 2023-24 school year. He was chosen by his peers and was celebrated at this year's RATSA brunch in May.



Manginell has been with PCSD since 2015 and was selected because he possesses the following characteristics:

- Good attendance
- Accident free
- Friendly disposition
- Readily accepts and exceeds responsibilities
- Relates well with colleagues, parents and children

## if you SEE something SAY something

Informed, alert individuals play a critical role in keeping Pittsford Schools safe. Students, parents and staff are encouraged to follow the "See Something, Say Something" protocol the District has adopted from the Department of Homeland Security.

The program raises awareness about the importance of reporting suspicious activity, or any behavior that could indicate crime, to law enforcement.

**If you see something and don't immediately know who to tell, here are three methods available to report an incident:**

**File an Incident Reporting Form** – There is an anonymous form on the District website's School Safety and Security page you can fill out and submit to your building principal or another trusted staff member: <https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1714671666/pittsfordschoolsorg/x6krz0sulbash7hzdr9/hsconcernform.pdf>

**Call your child's school principal or another trusted staff member.**

**Call police authorities at 911 if there is an imminent threat or risk of harm. Then call the school.**

When reporting an incident, make sure to describe specifically what was observed including when it occurred and where it occurred. The severity of the incident will determine which reporting method to use. If your report involves an urgent or emergency event, please call police authorities at 911.

Parent-student-school communication is key to identifying and reporting possible threats and concerns. The District thanks students, parents and staff for their partnership and commitment to the safety of Pittsford Schools.

For more information on the District's safety and security policies and procedures, please visit the School Safety and Security webpage of the District website at [pittsfordschools.org](https://pittsfordschools.org).

## PROTECT YOUR EVERY DAY

If you **see** something, **say** something

**REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY**  
**866-SAFE-NYS**  
(866-723-3697)  
or 9-1-1 in case of emergency





Parent/Guardian Notifications

Free and Reduced-Priced Meals Forms Due

New applications for free and reduced-priced meals are required for each school year. Applications for the 2024-2025 school year are available on the Food Service page of the District’s website, as well as in the District calendar. Please send completed applications, along with an original copy of a direct certification letter or income verification, to PCSD Food Service Department, 100 Mendon Center Road, Pittsford, NY 14534.

Consent for Use of Photographs/Videos

Throughout the school year, photographs and/or video may be taken of students for use for broadcast news purposes and in district-produced publications, digital communication including social media, videos, podcasts, webpages or by the news media. Please consult the Board of Education policies on the website for more information.

Pittsford Schools to Receive Title I Funds

Pittsford Central School District is receiving Title I Targeted Assistance funds again this year (Allen Creek, Calkins Road and Sutherland). For this reason, the District is required to publish its “Program and Projects Funded by Title I” policy (#8260) adopted by the Board of Education on May 23, 2005. The policy is as follows:

Programs and Projects Funded by Title I

Parental Involvement

The Board of Education recognizes the rights of parent/guardians to be fully informed of all information relevant to their children who participate in programs and projects funded by Title I. The District shall ensure parental involvement in these programs and projects by:

- a) Providing such support for parental involvement activities as required by law;
- b) Convening an annual meeting to which all parents/guardians of participating children shall be invited;
- c) Providing parents/guardians with reports on their children's progress;
- d) Providing opportunities for regular meetings of parents/guardians.

In addition to the above, the District shall, jointly and in agreement with parents of students receiving Title I services, establish expectations for parent involvement in Title I programs in accordance with Section 1118(a) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Similarly, each school receiving Title I Targeted Assistance funds shall establish building level school/parent involvement policies in accordance with Section 1118(b).

Such school/parent policies shall include, where applicable, school-parent compacts outlining how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help students achieve the state's high standards.

Comparability of Services

The District shall ensure equivalence among the schools in the District of the same grade span and levels of instruction with regard to teachers, administrators and auxiliary personnel as well as equivalence in the provision of curriculum materials and instructional supplies in to schools receiving Title I Targeted Assistance.

Complaint Resolution Process for Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Funded Programs

The New York State Department of Education (NYSED) has a complaint resolution process for Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Funded Programs. To access the process outlined by NYSED to file complaints and allow for the timely resolution of such complaints, visit <http://www.nysed.gov/essa/new-york-state-essa-funded-programs-complaint-procedures>. The procedures meet the requirements of ESSA Section 8304(a)(3)(C) and 34 CFR Part 299, Subpart F - Complaint Procedures.

Annual Notification of Rights under FERPA

Pittsford Schools complies with The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99), a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records.

FERPA provides parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when the student reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading.

Complete information and definitions can be found in the Board of Education Policy 7240, which was updated in 2022.

Understanding New York State Tax Rates: Tax Levy, Equalization Rates, and Assessed Value

In New York State, property taxes are an important source of revenue for local governments, schools, and public services. The process of determining how much property owners owe is complex, involving several key components: tax levy, equalization rates, and assessed value. Understanding these terms helps taxpayers navigate the system and comprehend their property tax obligations.

Tax Levy

The **tax levy** refers to the total amount of money that a local government or school district needs to raise through property taxes. This amount is determined by the budgetary needs of local governments, such as funding schools, police, fire services, infrastructure projects, and other public services. After the total levy is set, the responsibility to meet this amount is divided among property owners in the jurisdiction.

Assessed Value

The **assessed value** is the value assigned to a property by a local tax assessor for tax purposes. It is not controlled by the school district. The assessed value reflects a percentage of the property’s market value and is used to determine how much of the total tax levy a particular property owner will be responsible for. The assessed value is typically reviewed and updated periodically to ensure it remains accurate in relation to changes in property values.

Equalization Rates

New York’s real estate market varies widely, from dense urban centers like New York City to rural towns. To ensure fairness in taxation across different municipalities, equalization rates are applied. These rates are not controlled by the school district. An **equalization rate** is the ratio of a municipality’s total assessed value to its total market value. In other words, it ensures that a property in one area is taxed similarly to a property in another area, even if assessed values are calculated differently.

For example, if a municipality assesses properties at 50% of market value, an equalization rate of 50% is applied to level the playing field compared to another jurisdiction that assesses properties at 100%.

How It All Comes Together

Once the tax levy is determined and each property's assessed value is known, the equalization rate is applied to ensure tax fairness. The property tax bill is then calculated based on the adjusted assessed value, relative to the total tax levy.

Understanding these elements—tax levy, assessed value, and equalization rates—is crucial for New Yorkers to grasp how their property taxes are calculated and distributed.

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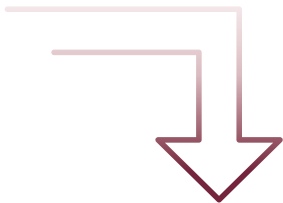
*Let us know ANONYMOUSLY when you know of anything that threatens the safety of our school.*

***web: safeschoolhelpline.com***  
***text: 614-426-0240, then type TIPS***

***800-4-1-VOICE EXT. 359***      ***Free mobile app for Apple and Android Phones***

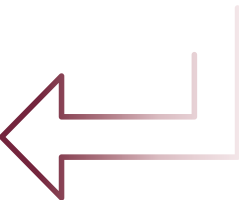
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Safe School Hotline

The Safe School Helpline is a convenient and confidential way to report concerns about harmful or threatening behavior. You can call, text or report online anytime of the day or week. [safeschoolhelpline.com](http://safeschoolhelpline.com); 1-800-418-6423, ext. 359.



PCSD Inclusivity Advisory Committee Seeks Volunteer Committee Members

The Pittsford Central School District is seeking two qualified volunteers to serve on its Inclusivity Advisory Committee to provide guidance to the Superintendent of Schools regarding systems, structures, policies, regulations and experiences related to inclusivity.

The purpose of the Inclusivity Advisory Committee is to ensure that PCSD is a place where students, families and staff feel a sense of acceptance, connectedness, and validation; a place where diversity and differences are viewed as strengths. The committee meets once a month.

Volunteer members will need to commit to the following tasks:

- Regular meeting attendance
- Adherence to collaboratively established committee norms
- Active listening and participation in meetings
- Representation and communication with constituency group
- Participation on relevant sub-committee or ad hoc committees, if needed
- Review of data/information aligned to the purpose and goals of the committee

- Respect recommendations made by consensus and adhere to collaborative decisions

In addition, applicants should have experience or expertise in diversity and inclusion related to the following areas:

- Culture
- Disabilities
- Ethnicity
- Gender identity and sexual orientation
- Mental health
- Race
- Religion and interfaith

Interested applicants should send an email to [orlando\\_benzan@pittsford.monroe.edu](mailto:orlando_benzan@pittsford.monroe.edu) expressing their interest. Please include a recent resume and a letter addressed to the Superintendent of Schools sharing the attributes that you would bring to the committee, your professional expertise that may be relevant to the work of the committee and your involvement in the Pittsford Central School District and/or community at large. Interested candidates should apply by September 20, 2024.



# Join us for Homecoming 2024

Homecoming week kicks off Monday, September 23, as students and staff celebrate their school spirit with fun theme days and pep rallies during the week. We invite you to join us on Saturday, September 28, for a parade on Main Street Pittsford at 9 a.m. and the Homecoming Football Game at 5 p.m. at Sutherland High School.



# Join the Pittsford PTSA and Mark Your Calendar for the Annual Super Sale on October 18-20

The Pittsford Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) invites parents and staff to register for membership at [pittsfordptsa.net](http://pittsfordptsa.net) and support the important work carried out during the school year! Members have the opportunity to work on special events, after school clubs and activities, instructional materials and community service programs. The Pittsford PTSA membership drive and annual Super Sale are two of PTSA's major fundraisers.

**There's a new location for the Super Sale this year.** Join us at the **Golisano Training Center at Nazareth College!** Profits go to all nine schools and make up nearly 60% of the PTSA budget. The sale opens to the public on Saturday, October 19 from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Shoppers can enjoy 50% off items on Sunday, October 20 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., and "make a deal" from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. that day.

All unsold items will be donated to local charitable organizations after the sale. Feel good about donating, volunteering, and shopping for a great cause!

**Oct. 18 Volunteers' Presale 4-7pm • Oct. 19 Public Sale 9am-7pm • Oct. 20 50% Off 9am-2pm, Make a Deal 2-7pm**

**New Location!**  
Nazareth University's Golisano Training Center

[www.pittfordptsa.net/super-sale](http://www.pittfordptsa.net/super-sale)

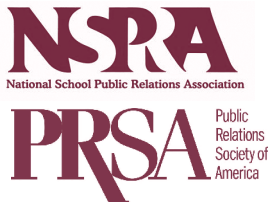
The Pittsford Central School District does not discriminate in access, admission, employment, or treatment of participants in any of its programs and activities on the basis of race, religion, age, sex, color, handicapping condition, or ethnic or national origin. This is in compliance with Title IX, OCR Guidelines, and other applicable federal and state laws and regulations. Inquiries regarding compliance issues may be addressed to: Shawn Clark, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, Administration Building, Pittsford Central Schools, 75 Barker Road, Pittsford, New York 14534.

**Pittsford Central Schools**  
75 Barker Road, East Wing  
Pittsford, NY 14534  
(585) 267-1000  
[www.pittsfordschools.org](http://www.pittsfordschools.org)  
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# Pittsford

School District News

# Fall 2024

- Board of Education Modifies Leadership Structure
- Front Entryways Focus of Summer Construction
- Administrator Appointments and Promotions
- Two Students Named National Merit Scholars
- Homecoming Week 2024
- PTSA Membership Drive and Super Sale

