Pittsford
School District News

Fall 2025

A publication for the residents of Pittsford Central School District

Board of Education Updates

President and Vice President Announced

The Pittsford Central School District Board of Education elected its president and vice president at its reorganization meeting on July 8, 2025. **Jeff Casey** was elected as president, and **Sarah Pelusio** was re-elected as vice president.

Mr. Casey has been a member of the Pittsford Central School District Board of Education since 2021 and served as President Elect during the 2024-25 school year. Ms. Pelusio was elected to the Board of Education in 2021 and served as Vice President during the 2024-25 school year.

For additional Board of Education information, please visit the District website at *pittsfordschools.org/BOE*.



Jeff Casey



Sarah Pelusio

From Classroom to Boardroom: PCSD Welcomes Two Student Representatives

Mendon High School junior **Mesude Yusra Ersoz** and Sutherland High School senior **Manaar Abdelgadir** have been selected to serve as ex officio members of the Pittsford Schools Board of Education, working alongside the District's seven elected Board members, to represent student perspectives. Both were chosen by their school principals following a collaborative process involving teachers and student leaders.

Effective July 1, 2025, New York State requires all school districts (outside of New York City) to appoint at least one high school student as a non-voting member of their boards of education. The initiative aims to strengthen student civic engagement and elevate youth voices in education policy.

"The new legislation underscores the importance of student participation in shaping school district policies, providing students with an authentic experience in governance and public service," said Superintendent Michael Pero. "We look forward to working with these outstanding students."

Under the statute, ex officio student board members sit with the board at all public meetings and hearings and may take part in other board activities at the board's discretion. While they do not have voting rights, they are free to participate in all public board discussions.



Mesude Yusra Ersoz



Manaar Abdelgadir

Pittsford Schools Ranked Among the Top in America

Pittsford Central School District was ranked in the top 1% of public school districts nationwide in a 2025 report from Niche. The report ranked 10,561 public school districts across America using data from a variety of sources including state test scores, common core data, and graduation rates from the National Center for Education. Pittsford Schools was ranked #87 in the U.S.



According to the report, PCSD ranked number one among public schools in the Greater Rochester Area, and Mendon and Sutherland High Schools ranked first and second, respectively, among Rochester and Monroe County schools. They landed in the top 3% nationwide. Barker Road and Calkins Road Middle Schools ranked first and third in Rochester, respectively, and Pittsford's elementary schools were named the top five in the Rochester area.

Mendon High School was ranked 25 in New York State and 264 in the nation. Sutherland High School was ranked 33 in New York State and 457 in the nation. Rankings included 20,733 high schools across the U.S. and 1,283 high schools in New York State.

Snacks, Smiles and a Warm Welcome for Incoming Superintendent Cutaia



Community members gathered at Thornell Farm Park on August 27 for a casual, family-friendly meet-and-greet with Shana Cutaia who steps into the role of Pittsford Schools' Superintendent on December 1, 2025, following Michael Pero's retirement.

Sponsored by the PTSA, the event gave families the chance to enjoy some snacks, connect with fellow community members, and give Ms. Cutaia a warm Pittsford welcome.

Ms. Cutaia brings extensive experience with Pittsford Schools, beginning her career in 2003 as a social studies teacher at Barker Road Middle School. She later served as assistant principal at Brighton's Twelve Corners Middle School before returning to Pittsford as principal of Barker Road Middle School from 2014–2021. She currently serves as the District's Director of Student Services.

Her credentials include a BA in History and Secondary Education from Nazareth University, a Master's in Educational Leadership from St. John Fisher University, and certifications in School District Administration (SUNY Brockport) and Human Resources Management (Cornell University). She also completed the Future Superintendent's Academy (2023–2024) and Harvard University's "Civic Leadership in the Superintendency" program (2024).

Back to School 2025 – Construction Update

Phase 2 of the 2023 Capital Improvement Project made steady progress over the summer, with work continuing into the school year.



Barker Road Middle School temporary cafeteria

- **Barker Road Middle School:** The locker rooms and small gym were demolished, and the pool has been infilled and topped with a new concrete floor. That space will serve as a temporary cafeteria while the former cafeteria is renovated. Structural, mechanical, and interior work continues throughout the year.
- **District Office:** A new secure vestibule and renovated office spaces are underway. The expanded parking lot is complete, improving traffic flow and visitor parking.
- **Mendon High School:** A new stadium restroom building is under construction, with utility and site work ongoing. The varsity baseball field is closed until Spring 2026. Interior renovation is also in progress, and work on the new classrooms continues.
- **Thornell Road Elementary**: Locker rooms and storage spaces were removed; new walls, floors, and finishes are underway. Painting has begun.
- **Lomb Building:** Exterior abatement completed; structural and window restoration continues while preserving the historic character.
- **Sutherland High School:** Site prep is complete for new tennis courts. Both tennis and softball fields will be closed until Spring 2026.
- **Generator Installations:** Emergency power upgrades continue at Park Road, Jefferson Road, Mendon Center, and Sutherland.

Administrator Updates

Lindsay Ali, Ed.D. will become Director of Student Services on November 10, 2025. Ali replaces Shana Cutaia who will begin her role as Superintendent of Pittsford Schools on December 1.



Lindsay Ali

Ali has served as Principal of Park Road Elementary School since 2023 and was Director of Pupil Personnel Services at Honeoye Falls-Lima Central School District (HFL) from 2018-2023. During her tenure with HFL, she also served as a Teacher on Special Assignment/Administrative Intern from 2016-2018, Special Education Teacher-Team Leader from 2012-2016, and Coach of Modified Girls Soccer and Lacrosse.

Ali earned an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from the University of Rochester, a B.S. in Marketing from John Carroll University, an M.S. in Education from Nazareth College of Rochester, a Graduate Certificate in Applied Behavior Analysis from Pennsylvania State University, and a Certificate in Educational Leadership from the University of Rochester.

Stephanie Barg was appointed Assistant Principal for Mendon High School.



Stephanie Barg

Barg most recently served as the principal of Jefferson Road Elementary School. Prior to that, she served as Pittsford's Social Emotional Learning Coordinator and the District's Student Services Specialist/Teacher on Special Assignment. During her time with Pittsford Schools, she has supported school mental health teams and co-led the Trauma, Illness, and Grief response team. She also served as Chair of the PCSD Health and Wellness Committee and managed the URMC's Expanded School Mental Health clinic at PCSD. She began with Pittsford Schools in 2012 as a general education teacher for grades 1, 2 and 5.

Barg earned a B.A. in History from University at Buffalo, a M.S. in Inclusive Childhood Education from Nazareth University, and a M.S. Ed. in Educational Leadership from St. John Fisher University. She was awarded the Distinguished Leader Award from her cohort at St. John Fisher University and is certified as a School Building and District Leader in NYS.

Marisa Capuano was appointed Principal of Jefferson Road Elementary School at the September 9, 2025, Board of Education meeting.



Marisa Capuano

Capuano comes to Pittsford Schools after serving as principal of East Rochester's Elementary School. Prior to this, she served as the elementary school principal of Red Jacket School District and assistant principal of Webster's State Road Elementary School. She also served as a K-2 enrichment specialist, 2nd grade teacher, preschool teacher, instructional specialist and high school assistant principal.

Capuano earned a bachelor's degree in Elementary and Special Education from SUNY Geneseo, a master's degree in Administration, Planning and Social Policy from Harvard University, and a master's degree in Education of the Gifted from Columbia University.

2025 Mendon High School Graduate Timothy Seo Awarded National Merit® Scholarship

NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Congratulations to Mendon High School 2025 graduate Timothy Seo for being selected for a $2,500 National Merit Scholarship! He was one of 6,870 Merit Scholarship® winners from a group of more than 15,000 Finalists and an initial pool of 1.3 million students who took the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®), which served as an initial screen of program entrants.



Timothy Seo

Congratulations also to the 2025 graduates who advanced to become finalists, representing less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors to achieve this distinction. **MHS:** Andrew He, Surya Man, James Mou, Sami Ali Ozdemir, Timothy Seo, Andrew Shen, Howard Tang, John Wadsworth, Rowan Wilkens. **SHS:** Christopher Gargan, Franklin Scharf, Deven Spencer, Kimberly Wang, Alexander Wu, Matthew Xie, Elijah Yaar.



From Social Media to Print: Pittsford's Communication Office Shines Nationwide

Pittsford Central School District's Communication Office continues to set the standard for excellence, earning recognition from respected organizations at the local, state, and national levels for its creative, impactful, and audience-focused work. During the 2024-25 school year, the Communication Office earned top honors for projects that spanned multiple platforms—from engaging social media campaigns to comprehensive print publications—demonstrating both versatility and a commitment to keeping the community informed and connected. 2024-25 awards included: **National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) Awards of Merit** for the printed newsletter, social media, and calendar; **Public Relations Society of America's (PRSA) PRism Award** for the printed newsletter; **New York School Public Relations Association (NYSPRA) Award of Excellence** for a social media campaign publicizing the CRMS musical *Midnight at Midday: The Musical Tales of an Eclipse*, and **Award of Merit** for the Budget Newsletter.

Building a Greener Future: Sustainability Framework and Goals

Over the past year, the Environmental Sustainability Committee worked on a sustainability framework to guide future practices and outline current efforts related to environmental sustainability across the District. The framework outlines goals and metrics designed to guide improvements. This committee was approved by the District Planning Team in September 2024. The purpose of the Environmental Sustainability Committee is to provide guidance on matters related to district initiatives in areas such as:

- Healthy and sustainable school & district buildings; school & district grounds; capital projects; transportation systems; food systems; waste management systems; water systems
- Sustainability related teaching and learning
- Community engagement in sustainability

The Environmental Sustainability Committee is advisory to the Superintendent. Committee members include representation from stakeholder groups as follows: Assistant Superintendent for Business, Director of Facilities and Maintenance, Director of Transportation, Director of Food Service, Director of Communication, Pittsford District Administrators Association, Pittsford District Teachers Association, Pittsford Educational Office Professionals, high school students, and parents.

This framework was based on a review of over a dozen other school districts' sustainability frameworks and plans, a review of current practices across the District, and committee members input based on their expertise and experiences. The Framework is intended to serve as a living blueprint to establish PCSD as a leader in environmental sustainability that supports the current and future health and well-being of PCSD students, employees, and the broader PCSD community.

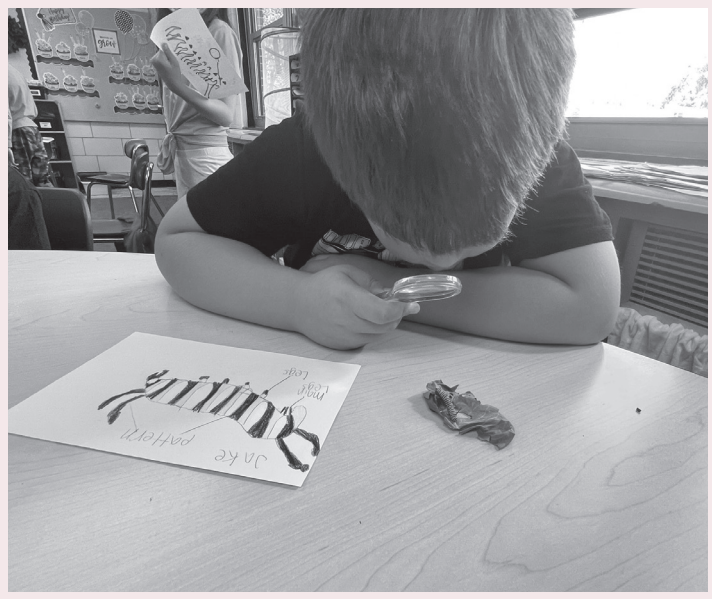
The committee identified three projects to focus on in the 2025-26 school year to begin to build momentum to meet the overall goals across nine areas of sustainability. The three recommended projects are:

1. Implement a one-year pilot **composting** program in the cafeteria of one elementary school with the goal of scaling up the program to all nine campuses by 2028.
2. Identify and ensure that all PCSD school campuses have at least one **outdoor learning** area to which teachers feel comfortable bringing their classes by the end of the 2025-26 school year. An ongoing goal will be to have at least two outdoor learning areas per campus as this project moves forward. The District is also seeking to convert various mowed grass areas that are unused for school activities back to a natural wildlife habitat with native wildflowers in an effort to reduce maintenance costs and lower the District's carbon footprint.
3. Ensure all school and District buildings have consistent bins and signage to support the regular **recycling** of paper, cardboard, and bottles and cans by a reliable recycling company by 2026. Returnable bottles and cans will be collected separately as determined by individual schools.

As the committee coordinates with District personnel and other partners to implement these three projects, PCSD leadership is concurrently working to implement an **energy performance contract** that will significantly improve building energy efficiency. It is also laying the groundwork to support the state-mandated transition to an all-electric bus fleet which will improve neighborhood air quality and reduce noise pollution as well as reduce ongoing fuel costs. The Grounds Department is also actively studying the transition to electric landscape equipment to reduce ambient noise and improve schoolyard air quality.

The next steps for the framework are for the District Planning Team to review and, upon approval, adopt its recommendations. It will then be shared with the Board of Education and the wider PCSD community. It will take strong coordinated leadership and the whole PCSD community working together in a focused fashion over a sustained period of time to meet some of the necessary targets contained in the framework.

PCSD maintains 1.3 million square feet across 11 buildings, has over 1,000 employees and 5,700 students, and manages 205 acres of land. As such, the District's impact on the environment and the opportunity to make a significant difference is considerable.



We are Hiring

- Bus Drivers (Paid Training)
- Bus Driver Trainer/ Safety Coordinator
- Bus Attendants
- Food Service Workers
- Paraprofessionals (K-12)
- Substitute Teachers & Paraprofessionals
- Cleaners/Custodians
- Maintenance Worker
- Lunch Monitors (K-8)



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Pittsford Schools Honored with Prestigious National Award for Excellence in Athletics



The National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) has officially recognized the Pittsford Schools athletic program with the 2025 NIAAA Quality Program Recognition at the Exemplary Level, a distinction awarded to only a select number of high schools nationwide that demonstrate excellence in athletic program administration.

This prestigious honor is the result of a rigorous evaluation process, which involved a comprehensive review of Pittsford's athletic policies, practices, procedures, and achievements across ten key categories of program quality. The assessment focused on evidence-based documentation that reflects the school's commitment to best practices in interscholastic athletics.

On Stage…

CRMS 6th Grade Musical
Lion King Jr.
10/24 at 7pm & 10/25 at 2pm

BRMS Grade 7-8 Musical*
Freaky Friday One Act Edition
11/14 at 7pm & 11/15 at 2pm & 7pm
*at Sutherland HS

MHS Mini-Musical
Ride the Cyclone High School Edition
12/12 at 7pm & 12/13 at 2pm & 7pm

SHS Musical
Footloose
1/15 & 1/16 at 7pm; 1/17 at 2pm & 7pm

Parent/Guardian Notifications

Each year, Pittsford Central School District is required to share important notifications with parents and guardians regarding student services, programs, and rights. The following information includes updates about free and reduced-priced meal applications, use of student photographs and videos, Title I funding, the complaint resolution process for ESSA-funded programs, and annual rights under FERPA. Families are encouraged to review these notices carefully to stay informed and ensure all necessary forms are completed and returned as needed.

Free and Reduced-Priced Meals Forms Due

Applications for the 2025-2026 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 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, Mendon High School 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:

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.

A New Chapter in Elementary Math Instruction

Pittsford Central School District is enhancing elementary math instruction by adopting Amplify, a comprehensive K-5 math program aligned with Next Generation Learning Standards. "This adoption marks a significant step toward a unified, high-quality math experience for all PCSD students," said Superintendent Michael Pero.

Amplify offers print and digital resources, manipulatives, and centers to support mathematical reasoning and communication. It provides structured, accessible lessons that promote consistency across grade levels, helping students build on prior knowledge and prepare for future learning.

Last year, Pittsford piloted Amplify in 28 elementary classrooms with over 600 students. Teachers in the pilot program met monthly with Amplify coaches and participated in walkthroughs in October and April. Pilot teachers in grades 4 and 5 also had the opportunity to observe an Amplify implementation in the classrooms of a neighboring district. They reported increased student discourse, improved math fluency, and stronger collaboration and problem-solving. The pilot's success led Pittsford Schools' Math Steering Committee, with support from the Elementary Academic Council, to recommend full adoption beginning this September 2025.

Teachers received training last spring, with more professional development and coaching planned this year. "We are excited about the implementation of Amplify and look forward to sharing success stories in the coming months. This important adoption reflects our dedication to instructional coherence, rigorous content, and equitable access to math learning for every child, in every classroom," said Assistant Superintendent for Instruction Heather Clayton.



NYS Electronic Device Policy in Place for Schools

Governor Hochul has enacted a statewide "bell-to-bell" ban on personal internet-enabled devices during school hours. This includes cellphones, tablets, smartwatches, wireless earbuds, and similar devices. The goal: reduce distractions, improve focus, and support student well-being. All NYS districts must adopt policies aligned with this law. Pittsford's policy (#7316) is available on the District website at *www.pittsfordschools.org*.

Within the first few weeks of school, some of the social emotional benefits have become apparent. "When I walk past students in the halls and cafeterias, I see them laughing and engaging with one another rather than scrolling through their phones," said Superintendent Pero. Without the distraction of cell phones and other personal cellular devices, teachers have also noted increased engagement and attention in their classrooms. "Change is sometimes hard, but this is a positive change where we're growing independence and interpersonal skills that will help students succeed in school and in life," said Pero.

District Policy Highlights

- **Allowed:** District-issued devices for educational purposes.
- **Prohibited:** Smartphones, tablets, smartwatches, wireless earbuds, or any personal device with internet/messaging.
- **Storage:** K–5: In backpacks, 6–12: In locked lockers or vehicles
- **During School Day:** Devices must remain stored.
- **Field Trips:** Not permitted during school-day trips; permitted on overnight/after-school trips per Code of Conduct.
- **Parent Contact:** Call the main office for urgent messages.



Violations

Progressive consequences may include warnings, parent meetings, detention, confiscation, or in-school suspension

Exemptions

Permitted only with medical documentation, IEP/504 plans, translation needs, or rare principal-approved cases.

Universal Free Meals Program Begins for Elementary Students

Following a program review by an ad hoc committee, Pittsford Central School District has reentered the National School Lunch Program and will offer free breakfast and lunch to elementary students during the 2025-26 school year. Elementary students will have the option to receive (1) breakfast and (1) lunch of choice at no charge regardless of household income or completion of the Free and Reduced Lunch Application. Universal Free Meals are made possible due to changes in state and federal laws.

The District's goal is to have secondary students enter the program in the 2026-27 school year. This timeline allows for the necessary infrastructure improvements and equipment purchases needed to store, prepare and distribute larger volumes of food for the anticipated growth in the number of students who will eat school-provided meals.

Families who may be or have been eligible for free and reduced meals in the past, are encouraged to complete the Free and Reduced Lunch Application regardless of grade level. It can be found in the District calendar (see yellow section), or on the website. Eligible families of middle- and high school students must fill out the application in order to receive free and reduced meals this school year.



PTSA
everychild. onevoice.

62nd Annual Pittsford PTSA

SUPER SALE

November 8-9, 2025

at Nazareth University's Golisano Training Center

Giant, upscale rummage sale with 100% of proceeds to PTSA, distributed to all nine schools

- Donation drop off: Nov. 4-5
- Pre-sale for volunteers: Nov. 7
- Sale for the public: Nov. 8-9
- 50% off sale: Nov. 9

All funds raised go directly to Pittsford PTSA and support every Pittsford Schools student, K-12. Unsold items will be donated to local charitable organizations after the sale. Feel good about donating, volunteering, and shopping for a great cause!

Join the PTSA!

Parents and staff are invited to register for membership at ***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.





Join us for Homecoming 2025

Homecoming Week kicks off Monday, October 6 as students and staff show their school pride with **fun theme days, pep rallies, and spirit-filled activities** leading up to the big game.

Join us on **Friday, October 10 at 7 p.m.** at Sutherland High School for the **Homecoming Football Game and Hall of Fame Induction**, then keep the celebration going on **Saturday at 9 a.m.** with the **Homecoming Parade** down Main Street in Pittsford.



Friday: 7 p.m. Football Game, Hall of Fame Induction
Saturday: 9 a.m. Homecoming Parade

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.

State and National Award Winning Publication

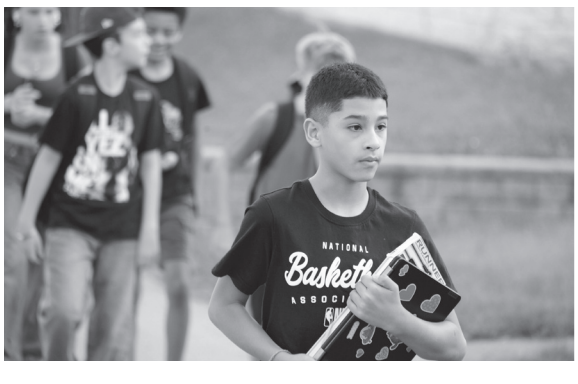
NSPRA National School Public Relations Association

PRSA Public Relations Society of America

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Pittsford
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Fall 2025

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- Two Students Become Ex Officio Members of the Board
- Incoming Superintendent Greets Families at PTSA Event
- Sustainability a Priority for Pittsford Schools
- Capital Construction Project Progresses