

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



## Workplace Violence Dwayne Cerbone, President

Workplace violence is defined in [PCSD BOE Policy #6125](#) as “any physical assault or acts of aggressive behavior occurring where an employee performs any work-related duty in the course of their employment.” The topic came to the forefront last year when the Governor expanded the provision of the Workplace Violence Prevention Act (WVPA) to schools. The 2006 law requires that public employers develop and implement programs to identify and prevent workplace violence, but originally exempted K-12 public schools. Under the revised WVPA, schools are now required to evaluate violence risks against employees, identify causes, and develop written programs to minimize threats. Pittsford schools responsively assembled a collaborative group of unit leaders to develop a policy and incorporate strategies with the intent to both fulfill the provisions of the act and support our local school efforts. As President of the PDTA, I have been our unit’s representative to this district committee since last February.

The need to mitigate and address violent behaviors did not arise suddenly nor because of the expansion of the act, but rather this has provided a vehicle through which the necessary conversations between parties could be initiated and our members’ concerns addressed. However, the timing of this has interestingly arisen as the PDTA,

as well as our colleagues across the state, have noted an increase in acts of violence towards our members, some of which have resulted in concerning levels of personal injury.

It is notable that member perceptions regarding this topic vary significantly. For some, the primary focus is an expectation that we should be able to perform our jobs in an environment that is safe from physical aggression while others are concerned that any focused pursuit of these interests may conflict with inclusionary practices and/or impede their ability as professionals to meet the needs of certain students. After many discussions with respected colleagues who hold these varied views, I have come to understand that these two seemingly opposing positions are equally valid and justifiably deserving of the union’s attention and support. Further, we have found that even the term “violence” can cause concern and contention, especially when directed toward an incident involving our youngest learners or those with disabilities.

With this in mind, the PDTA acknowledges that the current focus on workplace violence has raised many questions and concerns for members over the past year. Acknowledging these challenges, I have drafted what is known as an Executive Summary to provide members of the Pittsford

## In this issue:

- 1 from the PRESIDENT
- 2 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
- 3 SRP NEWSLINK, RESOLUTIONS SPECIALIST
- 4 INVESTMENT OPTIONS UPDATE
- 5-9 REMINDERS AND ADS

District Teachers Association (PDTA) guidance and pertinent information regarding the topic of Workplace Violence Prevention. It is meant to help readers understand and navigate this complex topic.

As unionists, we must not lose sight of the fact that workplace safety was a driving force behind the rise of the union movement in our early years and remains a critical duty and responsibility of today’s unions. As we engage in this work here in Pittsford, we continue to collaborate in a manner that aligns with our shared values. In summary, we have made significant progress but we have more to do as we continue to address unique and challenging workplace violence scenarios as they arise. For more details and guidance on this work, please refer to the linked [PDTA Workplace Violence Prevention Act \(WVPA\) Executive Summary](#).

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Pittsford District Teachers Association (PDTA) – A Union of Educators



## Executive Vice President Stephanie Warchol

The PDTA Student Benefit Fund was established to provide financial assistance to PCSD families experiencing difficulties that could limit the opportunity for their child to learn or participate in school-sponsored educational activities. We encourage all PDTA members to utilize the Student Benefit Fund if you know a student in need.

Funding requests can be used for items including, but not limited to: field trips, extra-curriculars, college exam fees, Pittsford Youth Services programming, health or safety needs, etc. The selection committee, which consists of the PDTA Executive Vice President, Treasurer, and one additional member of the Representative Assembly, will determine the

merit of each request and identify the amount to be allotted (\$50.00 maximum), all while keeping the information confidential. The applicant must be a current student attending Pittsford Central Schools, but there are no specific income criteria.

If you are interested in learning more, use these links to find the fund [guidelines](#) and [form](#). Once the form is complete, please return it to the PDTA Office in the Lomb Building. These requests can be used in conjunction with the PCSD Student Opportunity Fund offered through the Student Services Department, but separate applications are required. If you have any questions about the fund, please don't hesitate to contact me.



## Professional Learning Nicole Barry

The Spring catalogs for professional learning are now available in WinCap Web.

Activities run from February through May. All certificated staff members are encouraged to check their completed hours for the year to be sure they have met the contractual requirement. For any staff member who has not yet completed the required hours, there are activities in the Professional Learning Initiatives catalog to assist in fulfilling this requirement.

Please note that activities from the Electives catalog, such as Adult and Child CPR/AED and the CPI Refresher, do not count toward the contractual requirement for professional learning hours for certificated staff. In addition, activities that take place during your workday and are tracked for CTLE purposes do not count toward this requirement. If you have any questions about your completed professional learning hours, please contact me directly.

### Individual Initiatives

Certificated staff who participate in professional learning that takes place outside the district may request their principal's approval to count the hours toward their contractual requirement. To receive approval for Individual Initiatives, the professional learning must take place outside your regular workday and be aligned with your professional responsibilities. Full-time certificated staff members may receive up to 12 hours per year in Individual Initiatives. The form requesting Individual Initiative approval can be found [here](#).

### Superintendent's Conference Day – March 28th:

Professional certificate holders are encouraged to enroll in the activity Superintendent's Conference Day – March 2025 so the hours can be used toward your CTLE requirement.

NOTE: This is only for Professional certificate holders who received their certification after February 2004 and have completed the requirements to move from Initial to Professional. If you hold Permanent or Initial certification, do not enroll in this activity.

### CPI Refreshers

All staff members who have been certified in CPI are required to participate in one CPI Refresher each year. This spring we are offering a Refresher on April 29th.

Please go the Electives catalog for details and to enroll.

### Upcoming dates of interest:

- March 1st: the last day to submit a collegial circle proposal for this school year.
- March 1st – 31st: Professional Staff/Teacher Mentor Applications will be accepted for certificated staff members who are interested in joining the mentor pool.
- March 1st – 31st: Paraprofessional Mentor Applications will be accepted for paraprofessionals who are interested in joining the mentor pool.
- April 15th: the deadline for submitting an application for the PDTA Wanda Ward Study Grant for summer work. The Study Grant application can be found [here](#).
- May 15th: Collegial Circle Final Reports for this school year are due.
- May 31st: the deadline for Certificated Staff to complete contractual hours for professional learning for this school year.

Wishing you all a great spring semester!

Nicole



## Resolution Specialist Kim Chesko

### Did you know...?

· That second semester extra duty contracts were sent out to any members who should receive them? As always, check your contract for accuracy before signing and returning. If you think you should have received a contract and did not, please contact your building representative.

· That PDTA has an amazing guide to Pregnancy and Childcare Leaves? If you are wondering about maternity leaves, your first stop should be [here to read through this comprehensive guide](#). Once you have done that, contact one of PDTA's Leave Advocates - either me or Dwayne Cerbone - to further discuss questions or concerns.

· That per 159-b of New York Civil Service Law, every district employee is entitled to one non-deduct half day a school year for cancer screening? This time can be used for any kind of cancer screening, not just a mammogram. To access this legal benefit, you must:

- o Schedule a screening – remember, we get one half day so schedule accordingly so that your appointment will fall during either a morning or afternoon half day.
- o Enter the half day into the sub system – choose reason code “Pit no deduct – health screening.”
- o Fill a “Request for time off for cancer screening,” linked [here](#) or found in hard copy in your main office. You will need to bring this sheet to your screening to be signed for proof of appointment. If you forget the sheet on the day of the screening, you can obtain a note from the physician performing the screening or send your doctor an electronic copy of the form to sign and send back to you.
- o When the screening is complete, sent your request form to payroll.

As we embark on the second half of the school year, remember that your collectively bargained contract is a font of useful information and I am here to answer any related questions! Thanks for reading!



## SRP Newslink Connie Maust

### Welcome

First, I would like to introduce and welcome our newest SRP Assistant, Kelly Nanavati. Kelly is at Sutherland High School and will be helping support our CSE/ Supervisory paras and EAs with any questions, concerns or suggestions. I would like to thank Kelly for filling this role.

### Reminders:

- The spring catalog of Para Academy courses will be coming soon. These are paid learning opportunities and a great way to connect with peers from other buildings.
- You should always check your pay statement for accuracy, especially if you are being pulled for unfilled absences, working extracurricular activities or if your deductions have changed.

### Important Dates:

- Pink the Rink (Tim Horton's IcePlex @ MCC Campus): February 1, 2025 @ 6:30 pm (Wear Pink)
- **PDTA Key Election Petition Deadlines:**
  - o Tuesday, March 4, 2025 - President petitions due to PDTA Office
  - o Tuesday, March 25, 2025 - Officers & District Level Position petitions due to PDTA Office
  - o Thursday, April 24, 2025 - Assistant Building Representative petitions due to PDTA Office
- SRP Members considering retirement in June who are eligible for the Career Award are encouraged to review the contractual provisions and adhere to the related timelines. Please contact the PDTA office if you have any questions. HR needs to receive your letter by April 1st.
- Retirement Party (Eagle Vale): Thursday, May 22, 2025, at 4:30PM



# Important Retirement Investment Option Updates for ALL Faculty and Staff

Jessica Logan, MCE Speech Language Pathologist

Pittsford Central School District has had several traditional 403(b) options available for retirement planning for many years. In March 2021, we walked through several options available to us in Speak Out! **We are pleased to share that in response to PDTA's advocacy, the district has increased options even further!**

Previously, we had access to several traditional, pre-tax, 403(b) options. This means the funds would be saved pre-tax, and you wouldn't be taxed on it until you begin to withdraw your funds. However, times are changing. As of 2025, we now ALSO have several post tax (AKA Roth) 403(b) options! Each 403(b) has its own fee structure, and fees change further depending on whether you use an advisor. The addition of Roth options means you can now opt to pay the taxes **now**, and let all your retirement in those funds grow, **tax free**.

Also, the district now has a contract with the low-cost state run 457(b), called the New York State Deferred Compensation Plan (NYSDCP). This is a second option for retirement savings. You can choose to participate in the 457 (b) similar to the 403(b) – either pretax or post tax.

Thank you so much to our union, our administration, and our payroll office for working together to get these options available to all Pittsford School District employees.

More information will be rolled out in the future. For now, we celebrate more options!

## Frequently Asked Questions

## How Do I Start?

### How much can I contribute to a 403(b) in 2025?

Generally, the limit in 2025 is \$23,500. However, if you're older than 50 and want to contribute more, there are other options. For example, catch-up contributions for those 50 and older: \$7,500. Catch-up contributions for those 60–63 years old: \$11,250.

### How much can I contribute to a 457(b) in 2025?

The same limits apply to the 457(b). Regular contribution: \$23,500 for 2025. Catch-up contribution for employees 50 and older: \$7,500 for 2025. Catch-up contribution for employees 60–63: \$11,250 for 2025.

### Can I contribute to both a 403 (b) and a 457 (b)?

YES. For example, if you are under 50 and wanted to contribute a significant portion of your salary to your retirement funds, you could theoretically contribute 23,500 to your 403(b) AND 23,500 to your 457 in 2025, for a total investment of \$47,000.

### Can I contribute to both the pre tax and the post tax options?

You can! However, the TOTAL would have to be limited to \$23,500 in each option. For example, you could contribute 10,000 could go to pretax in your 403(b), and \$13,500 could go to post tax in your 403(b) for a total of 23,500. You cannot contribute 23,500 pretax in your 403(b) and 23,500 post tax in your 403(b). That would bring you over the 23,500 limit in your 403(b). You could contribute 23,500 pretax in your 403(b) and 23,500 post tax in your 457(b), since the total limit in each would not exceed \$23,500.

### If you want to change your 403(b) option:

You need to ask payroll for the 403(b) salary deferral form.

### If you want to add the 457(b) option:

For the 457(b), you FIRST need to open an account through the state plan (NYSDCP). This can typically be done through their website.

Our district's Local Plan ID is 213056. Approximately a week after you sign up, you should receive mail confirmation that NYSDCP has your account set up.

At that point, you ask payroll for the 457(b) salary deferral form.

Once you sign up through payroll, a contact at NYSDCP shared that it typically takes 2-3 pay periods for the first contribution to take place.

## Resources

- [New York State Deferred Compensation Plan \(AKA the 457\(b\)\)](#)
- [Our current options with OMNI \(see the second tab for the 457\(b\)\)](#)

## EMBROIDERED PDTA SWAG



15% of all sales go directly to our PDTA Student Scholarship Fund. We've raised over \$345 since the program began!

All products are embroidered.

Purchases are done online through the company and shipped directly to your house. Keep an eye out for sale codes and free shipping deals which are frequently offered.

Link will always be open - make purchases whenever and as often as you like.

Makes a perfect gift for yourself or your favorite PDTA member- feel free to share the link with friends or family.

[pdta.logosoftware.com](http://pdta.logosoftware.com)

## Important Information and Dates:

- 2/1: Pink the Rink (6:30PM)
- 2/6: Fix Tier Six Rally
- 3/4: President Petitions due to the PDTA office
- 3/25: Officer and District level position petitions due to the PDTA office
- 4/22: Retirement Party at Eagle Vale
- 4/24: Assistant Building Representative petitions due to the PDTA office
- 5/31: Deadline to complete Professional Development hours for Certificated Staff



**Speak Out! is edited and compiled by Murie Gillett. Feel free to contact me with any questions at [murie\\_gillett@pittsford.monroe.edu](mailto:murie_gillett@pittsford.monroe.edu).**

## 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 [murie\\_gillett@pittsford.monroe.edu](mailto:murie_gillett@pittsford.monroe.edu).

## Your PDTA Representative Assembly 2024-2025:

**President:** Dwayne Cerbone \* (SHS)  
**Executive Vice President:** Stephanie Warchol \* (CRMS)  
**Vice President for Negotiations:** Dennise Zobel \* (BRE)  
**Secretary:** Alyson Hallett \* (ACE)  
**Treasurer:** Ryan Domina \* (SHS)  
**Resolution Specialist (non-voting):** Kim Chesko \* (JRE)

### Allen Creek Elementary

Michele Riedl, Building Representative \*  
Alyson Hallett, Assistant Building Representative  
Susan Benson, Assistant SRP Representative

### Jefferson Road Elementary

Bret Burrows, Building Representative \*  
Patty Steeley, Assistant Building Rep.  
Julie Pellegrino, Assistant SRP Representative

### Mendon Center Elementary

Jen Villareale, Building Representative \*  
Nina Dezio, Assistant Building Representative  
Trisha Sullivan, Assistant Building Representative  
Deborah Ricketts, Assistant SRP Representative  
Rebecca Tan, Assistant SRP Representative

### Park Road Elementary

Spencer Jones, Building Representative \*  
Allison Luta, Assistant Building Representative

### Thornell Road Elementary

Greg Bischooping, Building Representative \*  
Kelly Sanderson, Assistant Building Representative  
Radhika Ramesh, Assistant SRP Representative

### Barker Road Middle School

Kristen Dolan, Building Representative \*  
Ann Conciardo, Assistant Building Representative  
Ellen Fox, Assistant Building Representative  
Karen Grace, Assistant Building Representative  
Connie Maust, SRP Representative \*

### Calkins Road Middle School

Melissa Althouse, Building Representative \*  
Sophie Spyra, Assistant Building Representative  
Jessica Wojcik, Assistant Building Representative  
Farida Patrawala, Assistant SRP Representative

### Mendon High School

Samantha Hyde, Building Representative \*  
Mindy Emmerson, Assistant Building Representative  
Mike Madden, Assistant Building Representative  
Brandon Mauks, Assistant Building Representative  
LaShanda Clark McCadney, Assistant SRP Representative

### Sutherland High School

Amanda Marshall, Building Representative \*  
Marc Hellems, Assistant Building Representative  
Brian Shafer, Assistant Building Representative  
Jeff Wing, Assistant Building Representative  
Kelly Nanavati, Assistant SRP Representative

### Non-voting:

Irene Hopp, Retiree Representative & Amy Lamb, Ancillary Representative

### Standing Committee Chairs:

Communications: Murie Gillett, SHS  
Extracurricular: Katie Shea, SHS  
Membership: Paul LeVan, SHS  
Political Action: Karen Grace, BRMS  
Professional Advancement: Dennise Zobel, BRE  
Professional Growth: Nicole Barry, BRE  
Public Relations: Kelly Jordan, PRE, and Allison Luta, PRE  
Safety and Wellness: Emily Natoli-Burns, SHS  
Special Events: Erica Bonin, MHS

### Delegates:

1. Dwayne Cerbone
2. Kimberly Chesko
3. Katie Shea
4. Karen Grace
5. Stephanie Warchol
6. Jennifer Simons
7. Vacant



\*Indicates Executive Committee Member

# SUPPORT VOTE-COPE!



In just the past year, this is what we have accomplished thanks to NYSUT members' voluntary donations to VOTE-COPE:

## IN NEW YORK STATE

**\$430  
MILLION**

more in school aid than was proposed in the Executive Budget

**SAVED  
SUNY  
Downstate  
Hospital**



Major reforms to

**APPR**

that return teacher evaluations to local control

**CLASSROOM  
HEAT BILL**

Passed by the Legislature



Landmark **Social Media Safety Laws**

to protect children from online dangers



Major fixes to **TIER 6  
RETIREMENT**



Workplace  
Violence

**PREVENTION  
BILL PASSED**

**What is VOTE-COPE?** VOTE-COPE is NYSUT's voluntary, non-partisan advocacy fund that supports political candidates and advances the issues that matter most to us. **No member dues are ever used for political activities.**

## IN SCHOOL BOARD & BUDGET ELECTIONS

**How does VOTE-COPE help educators and union members in our state?**

VOTE-COPE helps us protect the things that matter to all of our members:

- ✓ Good Contracts
- ✓ Pensions
- ✓ Academic Freedom
- ✓ Tenure
- ✓ Collective Bargaining

Everything we value and have fought for depends on our members working together as one. VOTE-COPE turns the separate voices of nearly 700,000 members into a single, united voice for our values.

**73**   
**NYSUT MEMBERS**  
elected or re-elected to school boards

**84%** of pro-education, pro-student candidates **WON**

**98%** of school budgets passed



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**Tier 6 has placed an undue burden on new and future public employees, offering inadequate retirement security compared to previous tiers. We know that fixing Tier 6 is essential to ensuring that all teachers, school-related professionals, and public service workers can retire with dignity and security.**

**That's why NYSUT, in partnership with the other public sector unions in our region, are rallying to demand equitable reforms to Tier 6. This is our chance to show the legislature that the voices of educators and public workers cannot be ignored.**

**Details:**

**Date: Thursday, February 6th**

**Time: 4pm**

**Location: Workers United, 750 East Avenue,  
Rochester NY 14607**

**[RSVP HERE](#)**

**Together, we CAN make a difference. Your leadership and involvement will send a clear message to lawmakers that fixing Tier 6 is a top priority for our union, and for the future of public education and public services in New York.**

**Thank you for your continued dedication to our members and for your support in this critical effort. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you need further information or have any questions.**



**Rochester Fix Tier 6 Rally**

**Thursday, February 6, 2025 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM ET**

**📍 Workers United, 750 East Ave, Rochester, NY 14607**

**Join NYSUT President Melinda Person and local labor leaders from across the Rochester and Finger Lakes Region for a rally to demand fixes to Tier 6 so that we can recruit and retain the next generation of public employees.**



# Enjoy these benefits

NYSUT Member Benefits strongly believes in the importance of making quality benefits easily accessible to the NYSUT membership. You may be interested in the following options:

**FOR FREE!**

## 1. Premium Calm Subscription:

All in-service and retiree members receive unlimited free access to the popular Calm app's full library of sleep, meditation, and relaxation content. Members can add up to five dependents (age 16 or older) to receive their own premium Calm subscription.

## 2. Peer Support Line:

Whether you're facing a specific stressful situation or would just like to speak with a supportive voice, this confidential helpline is free to all NYSUT members and their families. Call toll-free **844-444-0152** to connect with a peer.

## 3. AD&D Insurance Benefit/ Travel Assistance Services:

All in-service and retiree members are automatically provided with a \$5,000 accidental death & dismemberment insurance benefit, along with free travel assistance services from AXA Assistance.

## 4. New Member Life Insurance:

All new members are eligible to receive a free term life insurance policy providing coverage for up to \$25,000 for one year, guaranteed renewable at the end of the year.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

### Member Appreciation Event is back!

NYSUT Member Benefits is excited to announce that Member Appreciation Event will be held this March! This celebration will feature prizes donated by Member Benefits and our endorsed program providers. To be eligible to win, you must be a participant in our MAP Alert email service.

If you're not already a MAP Alert participant, simply scan the QR code, visit [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org), or call **800-626-8101** to sign up. You'll then receive weekly updates about endorsed benefits, information about new programs, and be able to take part in special prize drawings such as Member Appreciation Event.

SCAN ME



**MEMBER BENEFITS**  
**nysut**  
Working to Benefit You

January/February 2025