

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [ ] Title I [ ] Charter [ ] Magnet [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Ms. Melissa Julian  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Pittsford-Mendon High School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 472 Mendon Road  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Pittsford State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 14534-9598

County Monroe County

Telephone (585) 267-1602 Fax (585) 267-1679

Web site/URL https://www.pittsfordschools.org/Domain/734 E-mail melissa\_julian@pittsford.monroe.edu

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Superintendent\* Mr. Michael Pero E-mail Michael\_Pero@pittsford.monroe.edu  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Pittsford Central School District Tel. (585) 267-1000

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Mrs. Amy Thomas  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2020 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2014 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 5 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 2 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 9 TOTAL

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)  
 Suburban  
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2019 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	100	116	216
10	123	144	267
11	131	135	266
12 or higher	139	133	272
<b>Total Students</b>	493	528	1021

\*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0.1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 11.9 % Asian
  - 3.5 % Black or African American
  - 5.1 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 75.1 % White
  - 4.3 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2018 - 2019 school year: 2%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	5
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	18
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	23
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	1035
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %  
0 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 3 %

Total number students who qualify: 31

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %

110 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>15</u> Autism                 | <u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>1</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>55</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>17</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>12</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>6</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	3
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	58
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	31
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	18
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	10

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 21:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	99%	98%	98%	98%	98%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2019.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	239
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	94%
Enrolled in a community college	6%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes  No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

The Pittsford Mendon High School community works collaboratively to inspire and prepare our students to be their best, do their best, and make a difference in the lives of others.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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The strength of Pittsford Menon High School comes directly from our students and our community. Mendon High School is unique in that the students are truly special. They believe in working hard to achieve their goals and hold themselves to very high standards. For a school of our size, our course offerings and opportunities are truly remarkable. We have a distinctive curriculum to meet the needs of our talented students. Students have the ability to choose from approximately 160 courses including 21 Advanced Placement (AP courses), 16 honors courses and many courses that end in college credit. We want our students to be well rounded and encourage them to participate in extra curricular activities, community service opportunities and participate on our many sports teams. If a student can't find something that interests them, they can apply to create their own club, which are often approved.

The Pittsford community is a prosperous, residential, suburban community located seven miles southeast of Rochester, New York. Pittsford is known for its historic village, fine suburban neighborhoods, and excellent schools. With approximately 33,000 residents, the community rallies around the schools. Our families and school community collaborate to ensure student success in a variety of ways. For example, in addition to each school having a Parent, Teacher, Student Association (PTSA) to support a number of school initiatives, there is also an overarching PTSA for the district. This group works as the governing board and oversees all school activities as a whole. This way, every school has their own unique group that helps organize special events or activities, but then there is unity among the two high schools, two middle schools and five elementary schools. Any time the school needs a hand to help make something happen, the PTSA is always willing to jump in and help. This includes recognizing 100 days before graduation for seniors, purchasing agendas for all incoming students, and helping to obtain guest speakers. Parents are actively engaged partners of the school. Any time we need support, parents are available and willing to help however they can.

Two years ago, we created a Principal's Advisory Council. This group, comprised of students, works directly with the principal and the administrative team. Their purpose is to provide a voice for students within the school to share ideas and provide feedback. The group has approximately 24 members, each of whom had to apply with a letter of support from a trusted adult. One area of focus for the group this year was "celebrating each other." The students wanted to create student and staff honors that would recognize individuals who were living our school mission: to be the best, do the best and make a difference in the lives of others. When someone in the school witnesses an act of kindness, demonstrating their best effort or work, or making a difference in the lives of others, students and teachers can nominate one another. They would then be acknowledged on the announcements and receive a certificate. Entirely led by our student leaders, the purpose was to spread our mission and spotlight students in positive ways. In addition to the Principal's Advisory Council, students are a part of our Building Leadership Team, and our Social Emotional Learning Team to have a voice at the table as we discuss issues in the school. Our students have implemented programs that benefit all students in the school community.

Within the Pittsford School District, we are student centered, believe in supportive environments for all, are progressive, collaborative and believe in continuous improvement. All of these are witnessed every day at Mendon High School. Our Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) is composed of student leaders, teachers, parents and administrators. The ILT's purpose is to research, recommend and support best practices related to instructional goals and district initiatives. Every year, they utilize data to construct building wide goals that include both academic goals and social emotional goals. For the past three years, we have worked on developing opportunities for teachers and students to provide WIN (What I Need) time. In addition to our daily assistance for students, these pilots have allowed us to creatively work within our schedule to carve out an additional thirty minutes two to three times a year for students to meet with their teachers for additional help. During that time, students have the option to work with a teacher of their choice, to work with their colleagues in small groups, conduct research in the library, or study mindfulness, among many other opportunities. Our WIN days are done in pairs. Therefore, one half of teachers are meeting with students in small groups while the other half of teachers are meeting with their collaborative teams. Then, on the second rotation, the teachers who had met with each other, work with students and vice versa. The goal is to embed WIN into our practice around key times during the school year, including at the end of the first quarter, prior to midterms, and before AP exams. After each session we perform a student and staff survey to work through any changes or suggestions that are made. Overall, this small change has helped students get additional time to focus on an area where they feel they needed additional support.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

**1a.** Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas

Within Pittsford Mendon, “the mission of our curriculum is to engage all learners in authentic, rigorous learning experiences so that upon graduation students will be able to independently use their learning to achieve their goals and become contributing members of the global society”. In each curricular area, we have teacher leaders who are Standards Leaders. The Standards Leaders work collaboratively within their curricular areas to lead instruction in partnership with the District and Building administrators. Each Standards Leader has a steering committee made up of department leaders and additional teachers from all of the secondary schools. The group is responsible for identifying the essential learnings within each curriculum area. We have chosen this approach because having teachers as leaders in the curriculum is a better model for our students. The Standards Leaders are both leading the work while teaching in the classroom to design the best curriculum for our students.

Each curricular area’s team identifies power standards, formative and summative common assessments. When teachers plan their units and lessons, they start with enduring understandings and essential questions. Thus asking students to think about larger topics and broader contexts. Within each of the department areas, teachers have worked together to develop common summative assessments. After each assessment, the results are analyzed to determine next steps within the instruction including re-teaching when necessary. This process then drives the formative instruction teachers are using daily within their classrooms. Throughout the courses, educators are consistently using quick checks and tasks to provide ongoing feedback to the students. This is done through a variety of approaches depending on the instructional area. Many of the educators have implemented problem based and project based assessments that tie back to the enduring understandings and essential questions. For example, in Biology, students have to defend whether or not crickets are sustainable sustenance for people. Throughout the unit of study, the students are continually trying to prove or disprove the question using data and research.

### **1b.** Reading/English language arts

The Mendon High School English department offers multiple levels of instructional challenge and interest in our program to encourage all students to actively participate in our program and become life long readers and writers.

For our 9th, and 10th graders, they have the option to participate in one of the following course: Honors or a New York State Regents level course. In addition, our Regents level courses may be co-taught by a special educator. Our 11th and 12th graders can choose to take either the AP Literature course or the AP Language course as well. Within the 12th grade year, students take a full year English course with a concentration in one of the following areas based on their interests: Creative Writing; Film Analysis and Theory; Theater Arts; Composition and Contemporary Texts; Art of Public Speaking, Rhetoric, and Composition; Critical Media Literacy; Visibility: Investigating Race, Class, Ability, and Gender. In addition, students can take either a half year of creative writing or public speaking as an elective at any point in their high school career. All of the courses are aligned with the NYS Next Generation Standards as well as the Pittsford Central School District’s Next Generation Skills that help build our students’ “soft skills” like collaboration, communication, problem solving, amongst others.

Our goal for our students is to cultivate literate citizens who think critically, write clearly, communicate effectively and read with both understanding and appreciation. As a result of participating in the English Language Arts program, our students will be able to independently and effectively comprehend a range of media and text sources, generate questions and seek out answers, develop a critical eye and appreciation for the written word and embrace lifelong learning and reading for enjoyment.

We believe in offering our students' choice, according to their abilities and interests. That is why we

approach not only the scheduling but also the delivery of instruction based on our students' needs, not the generic needs of students to pass state and national exams. We know Mendon students can do and want more than what the state asks of them.

We offer balanced assessments—both formative and summative—and participate in collegial circles and collaborative teams to create, analyze, and assess student work. Formative assessment comes in many forms—informal and formal, in and out of class—and involves opportunities for students to revise as needed. It is common for students to engage in creating assessments and rubrics with their teachers.

We have an eye toward integrated media instruction, using the district-provided platforms and an Instructional Technology Specialist on a regular basis. (Turnitin.com; Remind; Zoom; FlipGrid; Office 365 apps, such as Teams, etc.) Our students self-assess and reflect regularly, setting goals for themselves and meeting with teachers for one-on-one conferences to reach those goals. We purposefully incorporate technology, media, speaking, and listening opportunities to encourage our students to become deep thinker and participants in a constantly changing world.

### **1c. Mathematics**

The Mathematics Department believes all students can learn math, should learn math, and should be challenged to achieve at high levels. From Algebra 1 to Multivariable Calculus, our teachers meet students at their current level of understanding and support them as they continuously develop their critical thinking and problem solving skills. Within each course, there are multiple levels including cotaught Regents level courses to honors so that students can always find the right fit between challenge and success. In addition to the linear pathway of courses from Algebra 1 through Multivariable Calculus, students can also explore electives such as AP Statistics and two levels of AP Computer Science. All of our courses are aligned to both New York State Common Core Standards and the Pittsford Central School District's Next Generation Standards.

Teachers collaborate on an ongoing basis so that students enrolled in the same course learn the same standards at the same level regardless of the teacher. The teams of educators study the curriculum for each course and create common learning activities and assessments. They work together regularly and use data from their classes to inform their instruction. Teachers use both informal, anecdotal data as well as data from quizzes and tests to inform their instruction. The cycle of plan, teach, assess, reflect, and repeat is a never-ending process. This process has been extremely beneficial as we run our "Office Hours" for students. During one of their free periods, students can drop in to work with a math teacher who is available to help them. Our aligned work means that even if the teacher is not the student's classroom teacher, they can still receive the help they need.

Teachers have found different ways to communicate and connect with their students. Remind is an app teachers use for quick, safe, texting. Teachers can send out a quick reminder about an upcoming assignment, assessment, or to tell a group of students they did a great job in class that day. Microsoft Teams allows teachers and students to keep all class notes and materials in one location. The use of OneNote and Class Notebooks within Teams helps students stay organized and gain access to materials if they miss a class.

We recognize that feedback is essential to learning and a part of our everyday practice. During class, students & teachers engage in continuous informal feedback as they discuss topics and answer each others' questions. Written feedback is exchanged between students and teachers daily within learning assignments, as the class prepares for assessments. Once teachers have enough evidence, a summative assessment, a quiz, unit test or benchmark, is then given. Even these normally summative assessments are used in a formative way as the teachers bring the evidence back to their collaborative group to reflect on the success of the learning within a unit and make adjustments for the next time that unit will be taught.

### **1d. Science**

One unique attribute of Mendon is the number of our students who are passionate about sciences. Many go on to study the science field in college and beyond. As such, we provide a wide variety of courses for our

students. Each of our core courses Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry and Physics' offer various levels including honors, Regents levels, and a general course providing opportunities for all students to find success. In addition, we offer four Advanced Placement courses in Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Environmental Science. While each course is guided by NYS standards, the content, scope and sequence is created through the collaboration of the teachers responsible for the course. Teachers work together on the instructional approaches, interventions, and assessments, both formative and summative that are used throughout our classes. To further enhance our students' experiences and opportunities, our teachers created extensive elective courses including: Oceanography, Astronomy, Animal Behavior, Genetics, Microbiology, Anatomy 1 and 2 and Criminalistics.

All of our courses are taught using differentiated instruction approaches. Some of these include project based learning, solving problems, and utilizing various technological platforms such as Microsoft Teams. In addition, students go out in to the field to participate in hands on experiments such as partnering with the local zoo, having students study stream samples, and working on the Gene Annotation project at the University of Buffalo to name a few.

Teachers collaboratively create formative and summative assessments to monitor student learning daily. These assessments may be informal, such as a classroom tickets to leave or a hands on experiment. Formative assessments are used to help students monitor, grow and revise their learning when needed prior to a summative assessment.

Students are encouraged to ask questions and investigate interests on personal levels. We have students participating in internships at the University of Rochester laser lab, medical center and astronomy department, volunteering at Pittsford ambulance and Students against cancer, creating environmental solutions and elementary learning platforms. All of these experiences enhance student and staff collaboration, growth and learning in the field of science.

#### **1e. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement**

A student at MHS is exposed to all areas of Social Studies, from the study of civics and economic theory, to the social sciences of Sociology, Psychology, and Anthropology, to the historical considerations of ancient and modern history. Our curriculum ranges from NYS required courses, such as Global History, US History, Government and Economics to multiple AP classes, for example: AP United States, AP European History, AP Economics, to half year electives. By the end of four years in Social Studies, students will have a well-rounded exposure to curriculum in a wide variety of courses in the social sciences.

For our courses, common assessment and teacher collaboration lead us to attainment of learning standards. In each course, teachers work together in professional learning communities to determine how to meet the learning standards and measure the progression towards those same standards. The work of those collaborative groups inform the instruction and help us towards the goal of success. All of our courses have common midterm and final exams, graded collaboratively. Regardless of the teacher, students receive the same attention to their learning and performance in our courses.

Our Social Studies department makes use of technology to aid instruction and formative assessment. Teachers use online test practice to help create individualized review and give formative feedback. For example, many of our teachers use Castle Learning, an online testing website, to help students create a database of their weaknesses in the course content and skills.

Many of our teachers use test retake systems in their classrooms to transform the role of an assessment in the course; instead of a test being an end point, it becomes a chance to grow and learn. Students are given multiple opportunities to show their grasp of concepts and their growth in understanding.

#### **1f. For secondary schools:**

Within the district, our Next Generation Skills, were developed over the course of several years with various key stakeholders, such as teachers of core and elective areas, parents, administrators and students, to foster

college and career readiness. Within the framework, they focus on the “soft skills” such as communication and collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, information literacy and research, and learning mindsets. These skills cross all curricular areas and are embedded within the content in each classroom. Whenever curriculum work is crafted, one of the key components of the process is identifying which of the Next Generation Skills will be utilized and how will it specifically be taught and accessed. Our graduates participate in both an 18 month and five year survey to help us continually hone our programs and offerings. The Next Generation Skills were developed based on the feedback received from the surveys.

Our students can also take advantage of opportunities such as our Leadership Development Seminar (LDS), Career Internship Program (CIP), and our Community Service Program (CSP). Starting as freshmen, students can sign up for the LDS. This seminar, meets weekly during lunch and help students by developing and refining their workplace skills. The materials focus on job safety, work ethics and responsibilities, communicating for success and leadership. After LDS, students can participate in the Career Internship Program. This school to business partnership provides students the opportunity to obtain non-paid, on-site, career exploration experiences. Students engage in real world experiences within interested career fields in order to help them make informed career and college choices for the future. Our Community Service Office, works with students to pair them to an unpaid opportunity and then helps them track their experience. In addition, our students can submit their hours for their service work to potentially earn up to one credit in high school. Many of our students are very involved in community service opportunities as they feel it is imperative to give back.

### **1g. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:**

#### **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

One of our core beliefs is that we are student centered which includes students’ choice for elective courses. When building the master schedule, we do our best to ensure every student gets their first choices, which may involve hand scheduling some students, but it is one of our core values. Our elective courses are open to all students in grades nine through twelve.

Physical education is a NYS required course for graduation. All students take physical education every other day throughout the four years they are with us. Within the course, students participate in real life activities that mirror opportunities they will have outside of school. For example, students learn yoga, various forms of dance, tennis, weight training, etc. The teachers provide feedback to help hone the students’ skills well also working with students trying new challenges and having a growth mindset. Students know that as long as they are doing their best and keeping a positive attitude working with one another, they can be successful within the course. In the month of January, we offer elective classes, which include Dance, Martial Arts, Yoga, Archery, and other areas based on student interest.

Our World Language program offers students the option to take French, Latin or Spanish. The students begin in grade eight and have the option to take up to five levels of their language choice, which end in AP courses and the option for college credit. The primary mission for the World Language program is to develop global citizens who are linguistically and culturally equipped to communicate and participate successfully in a pluralistic American society and abroad. Our teachers work diligently to provide real world, hands on learning opportunities including primary source materials like newspapers and magazines. In the upper courses, the entire class is usually conducted within the language providing opportunity for students to practice their skills.

The art program within Mendon is rigorous and robust. Students have the opportunity to take classes that incorporate technology skills such as Graphic Design I and II, Animation I and II and then more hands on courses of Ceramics, Sculpture and Drawing and Painting and for some students who choose to finish with an AP course. The mission of the art program is to prepare students to be visually literate, foster an appreciation for the arts, express or communicate original ideas and understand the interdisciplinary and cultural connections to the world in which we live. As they take art classes, students are pushed to develop their critical thinking skills, exchange and share ideas with one another, experiment and take risks and

engage with the artistic process.

Mendon provides numerous business courses for our students to take. The goals for the courses are to assist in the development of gainfully employed citizens who utilize our Next Generation Skills and incorporate business practices and technologies to ensure college and career readiness. Students start with Business Dynamics I and II where they learn the basic principles involved with working in the business field. By their senior year, we have students participating in a capstone course called Virtual Enterprise where students run their own business from inception and have to participate in a trade show. The teacher involved helps facilitate the students' learning but the course is entirely derived and built based on the students. This requires students to assume various roles from the Chief Executive Officer to marketing and sales. Repeatedly, the students share how beneficial the course was preparing them for college and the work place.

In addition, we have a robust technology program that includes more traditional hands on courses such as manufacturing systems and automotive I, II and III, to engineering courses through the Rochester Institute of Technology's Project Lead the Way (PLTW) program that can lead to several college credits. All of the courses are hands on and require students to critically identify and analyze situations, apply the engineering design process to solve problems, organize, communicate, and collaborate effectively with others and to self-reflect in order to have continuous improvement. Throughout the courses, students utilize the same overarching rubric and each project includes an area for students to self identify the strengths and areas of improvement for the project.

### **3. Academic Supports:**

#### **3a. Students performing below grade level**

The Instructional Support Teams (IST) are the primary intervention teams at Mendon for students who have academic, behavior, social or emotional challenges. We have two teams within the building to address student needs. Each team is comprised of an assistant principal, a special educator, the counselors for that section of the alphabet and teachers from each of the core areas. Each student who is referred to the IST is assigned a case manager, a teacher who has volunteered to work in a one-on-one situation with the student to develop an individualized improvement plan. This plan can include a variety of resources including after school homework club, and ongoing monitoring by the IST. An additional resource we have for our students is to put them in a smaller structured study hall. In the small group setting, our educational assistant will help students get organized, work with them to plan assignments, help them gain access to materials and supplies and works as an advocate for the students. We have found that even after students show improvement or success, they wish to remain in that setting as they see the benefit overall. In some cases, we will bring the student and the family together with the team to talk through a student's progress. In all cases, the team closely monitors the student's progress during their time with us, even as students show improvement.

In addition, we also offer Academic Intervention Services (AIS) to our students in reading and math. Utilizing data, such as assessment scores, teacher feedback, grades, and midyear reports students can be placed in small group instruction for more one on one attention in each of those areas. Within that setting, teachers work with the students on skill development as opposed to content specific instruction. Therefore, the growth helps the students succeed in various settings and classes.

#### **3b. Students performing above grade level**

As previously shared, many of our students are performing above grade level in a variety of areas. One of the unique opportunities provided to Mendon students is the flexibility in sequencing courses. For example, while we recommend that students take AP Economics in 12th grade, students who have excelled in mathematics can and have taken it as early as tenth grade. Our Math program offers enrichment and course offerings to include up to AP Calculus BC and a Multivariable Calculus course. We have also collaborated with local colleges if a student exhausts our math options, to take college courses. We have many students who want to study sciences and medicine in college. These students may double up in their sciences and math in high school so that they can take multiple AP courses before they graduate to be as prepared as

possible in their next phase.

Within our course offerings, we encourage students to challenge themselves and offer many Honors and AP level courses to accommodate those who are performing above grade level. Students have the ability to enroll in these courses based on a combination of past performance in the prerequisite classes, and teacher recommendation. Each year we offer over 1000 AP exams for students enrolled in the AP courses, as well as for students who wish to challenge an exam based on self-study or other accredited method of preparation.

Mendon also offers a variety of award winning academic clubs which compete, for those students who excel in a variety of curricular areas, including Masterminds, Math League, Robotics, Science Olympiad, and Speech and Debate.

### **3c. Special education**

The Special Education Department at Pittsford Mendon High School prides itself with providing strong, consistent and effective support in order to help students with disabilities achieve at the highest level they are capable of achieving. There are many different ways we achieve this.

Each student with a disability has an IEP (Individualized Education Program.) This IEP outlines a student's learning style and academic strengths. Teachers are required to become familiar with and implement a student's IEP. Mendon High School is extremely successful at differentiated instruction for our students with disabilities. Our general education and special education teachers spend a great deal of time and energy collaborating on ways to differentiate instruction for students with IEP's. This differentiation occurs in, but is not limited to, our many Integrated Co-Taught classes and our Special Classes. Differentiation is based on student need, giving every student the opportunity to develop to their fullest potential. Some examples of differentiated instruction includes instruction presented in small groups, group demonstrations and/or visual concrete examples to illustrate abstract concepts. Teachers also use other scaffolding strategies such as graphic organizer, copies of class notes and listening to audio recordings of books/text to enhance learning. In order to measure a student's understanding of class material, students are able to demonstrate what they've learned in different ways (paper-pencil tests, group/individual projects, answering questions orally vs written form.)

Students with IEP's receive support outside of class in a resource room setting. State regulations require a 5:1 student/teacher ratio; however Pittsford schools provide resource rooms with an educational assistant (5:2 ratio) to support students. This additional adult supports goals listed on students IEP's including self-advocacy and executive function skills. We also run a "Core" class which supports student's social/emotional needs which in turn improves academic level of students.

**3d.** ELLs, if a special program or intervention is offered

**3e.** Other populations (e.g., migrant), if a special program or intervention is offered

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

At Pittsford Mendon High School, students are supported through our core values and our mission. Each day, we remind students to “Be their best, do their best, and make a difference in the lives of others.” This mission is communicated in many ways, including through committee work, extracurricular clubs and within our school touchstone. Students engage in a variety of activities at school to support their academic, social and emotional health such as Sources of Strength, Link Crew, Diversity Club, and students serve as members of our building Instructional Leadership Team and Social Emotional Learning team. We developed our building touchstone with feedback from all students and staff, who shared with us what it meant to be a Mendon High Viking. The result was Viking S.T.R.O.N.G., Spirited, Together, Respectful, Original, Nurturing, and Genuine, and this message is displayed on staff emails, in school artwork, and teachers share examples of what this looks like in their classrooms.

We start introducing our freshmen with the concept of being Viking S.T.R.O.N.G. during their 8th grade year when they visit Mendon High School and take a tour. Then as part of our summer orientation, Link Leaders, who are current high school students, meet with them to discuss highlights of our school and further reframe the concept of Viking S.T.R.O.N.G. This work continues within our Freshmen Seminar. Every freshman is placed within a small group that meet once a week for the first five weeks of school with two voluntary teachers. Throughout the program, they use community circles, share traditions, have guest speakers and help our newest Vikings acclimate to the building.

Sources of Strength, a district initiative, which Mendon has embraced for the last three years promotes peer to peer connections focusing on hope, help and strength, as their motto. Students are trained yearly as peer leaders on the importance of connections and helping each other identify individual strengths pictured in their iconic wheel including family support, positive friends, mentors, healthy activities, generosity, spirituality, medical and mental health assess. The peer leaders, with the support from their advisor, create several school wide campaigns that highlight one or more of the supports for the wheel for staff and students at Mendon. For example, our “Trusted Adults Campaign” where we ask students to identify a trusted adult within the building. This helps us seek out and continue to encourage strong relationships between our staff members and our students.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

Our parents are key partners in ensuring the success and development of our students. Parents are a regular part of the educational process through our Parent Portal and attend team meetings when dealing with academic planning or concerns. Our PTSA also supports the academic progress of students and celebrates academic, athletic and fine arts accomplishments of our students in conjunction with the school, such as annual Awards ceremonies, NHS recognition, and athletic signing celebrations. Parents are included as part of the building’s Instructional Leadership Team which meets monthly with the student leaders, administration, department leaders, and teacher association representative. This forum meets to discuss academic challenges, achievements and ideas. Parents are included as part of the group as part of the PTSA and the larger contingency in this shared decision-making meeting.

Pittsford Youth Services (PYS), a community mental health organization, has worked as a building partner for the last 20 years. Through this partnership, we have had a social worker in our building as a resource for our students. These services began as one day a week support. Over the years, and as the need for mental health support became more necessary, we now have a full-time social worker in our building working alongside our school psychologists and school counselors.

Mendon has two self-contained classrooms for our students with the most significant needs. These classrooms support up to twelve students. Due to the nature of the students' needs and the support required, parents are involved frequently in the decision making for their students. These programs hold multiple individual parent meetings to discuss current progress, and options and opportunities for growth. Parents

have an equal seat at the table during those discussions and help to drive the direction of education for their student and others of significant need. For example, an incoming group of parents saw the need for a life skills area in order for students to practice living on their own. From these collaborative discussions, a room was constructed into a studio apartment, which includes a full kitchen, washer and dryer, bedroom area and all the furniture. Since its completion, the apartment has been used daily by both programs for students to learn and apply life skills in an authentic manner.

We believe in parent involvement throughout students' high school years, and we continually work hard to grow and maintain the relationships we have.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

In our school, we believe in continuous improvement as well as collaboration and support. This is reflected in our professional learning opportunities and the teachers' work in collaborative teams. Teachers work in a Professional Learning Community (PLC) environment in collaborative teams to co-plan, examine student work, and identify essential learning outcomes for our students. This has been a focus for us and we have devoted sacred time to this work for all staff. Within our grades 9-11, we have several classes where general education teachers and special educators coteach a class. They work collaboratively to plan, implement and assess our students. This may or may not be a teacher's PLC group but these teams co-plan together multiple times a week. Additionally, our observation process is one of support and learning as teachers and administration discuss goals and strategies prior to classroom observations, and at the post observation meeting we discuss best practices and steps for ongoing growth.

Our approach to professional learning is very diverse. One of the strengths within the district is our Teacher Center. Within our contract, we require teachers to engage in 12 hours of professional learning each year, which can be done via courses offered through our Teacher Center. In addition, we provide a number of learning opportunities during our staff meetings and Superintendent's Conference Days. We offer a variety of rigorous and relevant opportunities for our staff members to avail for themselves.

Furthermore, in order to provide teachers opportunities to identify their own learning needs and specific areas of growth, we provide opportunities for both collegial circles and budget for individuals to attend conferences. We have also used a model of EdCamp, in which our teachers were the in-house experts and facilitated small group learning with their colleagues. This highlighted the expertise of our staff as well as met the professional learning needs of many within the building. One unique opportunity that many of our teachers continue to be a part of is the Monroe Assessment Project (MAP), which helps teacher focus on, develop and design high quality standards aligned and embedded formative assessments, and feedback that can help teachers inform student growth and teacher's instruction. This intense training provides instruction throughout the school year for teachers.

Due to the large number of students with IEPs in our building, including the self-contained programs, we have many paraeducators. Paraeducators are also included in the professional development opportunities provided by our building and district. In addition to those professional development options, we also provide Crisis Prevention Intervention training for them yearly so that they have a bag of tools in which to pull from regardless of their educational experience.

### **4. School Leadership:**

The leadership roles in our school are both formal and informal in nature. Formally, we have a building Principal and two Assistant Principals. The roles of all three are specifically defined with tasks that support the school's function, student concerns, academic programs, parental contact, and the like. The assistant principals are assigned half of the student body each to create relationships with students and their families as they follow the students from ninth grade to their graduation.

One of the unique strengths of Mendon is our collaborative nature. Within the academic setting, each department has a Department Leader and a district-wide Standards leader. The department leader is the voice of his/her academic department and works with administration with scheduling and staffing, academic

course offerings and acts as a liaison between the department's teachers and the building administration. One thing that is unique to Mendon is the level of involvement and the collaboration that occurs within the departments. Department leaders' professional opinions are highly valued. We regularly engage them before moving forward with a decision to ensure success. The Standards Leaders work with the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction on curriculum, essential learnings, and course proposals within their departments for several grade levels and school buildings. Even though the process takes a little longer, our collaborative approach always provides a better result and is one of our greatest strengths.

In addition to these groups, our school has a PTSA structure in which there are parent leaders that work collaboratively with our school, and teachers and administrators are invited to be a part of that group. Within the school, principals and department leaders, along with parents and students, comprise the make up of our Building Leadership Team in which we discuss academic programs, resources, and structures and how those things lead to student success. We believe that all groups need to be a part of the discussion of the academic program and the focus is always on students' success, well-being, and accessibility to resources. It is with these relationships and shared beliefs that collaboration and communication among all these groups ensures that policies and practices are agreed upon and implemented thoughtfully.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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Pittsford Mendon's strengths rely heavily on our relationships and collaborative nature. We pride ourselves on forming relationships with our students, parents, community partners, teachers, staff members and administrators. The one practice that makes us as successful as we are, is our collaborative approach and, as a result of bringing everyone together, the relationships we have cultivated.

When one enters Mendon, it is unlike many high schools. Students have a lot of freedom throughout their time with us. For example, upper classman can earn free periods where they are not assigned to a study hall but rather can work in the library, spend time in the Commons (cafeteria) working with peers, meet with teachers, or take a breath during the day. This is a cultural aspect of Mendon that has been successful because our students value their educational opportunities, have a strong sense of responsibility and do not take advantage of the privileges they have obtained over time.

Working with administrators and staff members, our students have a lot of voice in the daily aspects of our program. They have high expectations for our teachers and staff, which requires us to continually improve our lessons and maximize our instructional time. Our students hold themselves to high expectations and therefore expect the same from their educators. As a result, our teachers work together to continually provide a rigorous and robust education that challenges all students from diverse backgrounds and abilities. They are consistently willing to research new strategies, apply new instructional strategies, analyze data and rework their lessons and plans, based on what the needs of the students are around them.

Our staff members have an unwavering dedication to our students' success and continually challenge themselves and each other. Our Instructional Leadership Team leads the learning for all of our stakeholders in the building. With input from teachers, students, parents and administrators, we work together to identify areas where we can grow. We then establish goals, create and implement the action steps necessary to achieve those goals, and progress monitor along the way. Throughout the process, every voice at the table carries the same weight and we collect input from all of our stakeholders. Often the students' voices carry the most weight because every decision we make directly affects them. As a team, we truly believe we are Viking "S.T.R.O.N.G" together and can achieve whatever we put our minds to. While our model may look different, it is the key to our success and one we are happy to share.