

PITTSFIELD POST

A FREE NEWSLETTER BY COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

"The month of August has turned into a griddle where the days just lay there and sizzle." - Sue Monk Kidd

August 20, 2025

A Q and A between the *Pittsfield Post* and School Superintendent Dr. Sandie MacDonald

One of the *Pittsfield Post*'s missions is to keep our readers informed of important and interesting information related to our town and the people who reside here. In that spirit, we present to you a Q&A between the *Pittsfield Post* and our new Pittsfield District School Superintendent, Dr. Sandie MacDonald.

Q: The state legislature has created some new education possibilities, including Education Funding Account (EFA) vouchers and Open Enrollment. Are there other major changes that the school district will have to consider?

A: At this time, there are no additional major policy changes currently enacted beyond EFA vouchers and Open Enrollment. However, several legislative proposals remain in committee that could expand open enrollment or introduce additional funding shifts. The District continues to monitor these developments closely.

Q: What is the expected impact of Open Enrollment on Pittsfield?

A: Open Enrollment poses a significant financial risk to Pittsfield. If students enroll in other districts, Pittsfield must continue covering the cost of fixed services (facilities, staffing, transportation), resulting in increased per-pupil costs for remaining students. Additionally, Pittsfield may be required to cover tuition for outgoing students at 80% of the district's per-pupil cost. The shifting of students creates a moving target that is difficult to predict. If special education students enroll elsewhere, Pittsfield remains responsible for IEP compliance and any required special education transportation. The number of buses needed within the district would not decrease, further driving up per-student transportation costs.

Summary of Open Enrollment and Fiscal Implications:

- **Fixed costs remain constant:** Student departures tend to be dispersed across grade levels, meaning entire programs or staffing positions cannot be eliminated. This results in rising per-pupil costs.
- **Higher tuition liability:** Increased per-pupil costs elevate the minimum tuition amount Pittsfield would be required to pay (80% of the home district's cost per pupil).
- **Special education obligations:** If students receiving special education services enroll elsewhere, Pittsfield may be required to:
 - Hire additional case managers to ensure IEP compliance across multiple sites.
 - Cover the cost of special education transportation if required by the student's IEP.
- **Transportation inefficiencies:** The number of bus routes and drivers needed in Pittsfield will not decrease with enrollment loss. Transportation costs will be spread across fewer students, further increasing the per-student expenditure.
- **No escrow or contingency:** The district does not maintain an escrow account to cover tuition or service costs for students placed in other public schools. These are unanticipated expenditures that can destabilize local budgets.



Q: How many Pittsfield students have transferred to other Open Enrollment districts?

A: As of today, there are five students whose families have unenrolled them from the Pittsfield School District and independently enrolled them in another public school.

Q: What is the status of Pittsfield's argument before the NH Supreme Court claiming that tuition payments by Pittsfield are not required because the town is not an Open Enrollment participant?

A: The matter is currently pending before the New Hampshire Supreme Court. A hearing is scheduled for September 16, 2025. Pittsfield maintains that because it did not elect to become an Open Enrollment district, per RSA 194-D:2 Establishment; Parental Choice; Admission. III: "No public school, except a chartered public school, shall be required to be an open enrollment school," it should not be obligated to pay tuition for students who choose to enroll elsewhere. The outcome of this case will determine the district's financial responsibility moving forward.

Q: If the town's position is rejected by the NHSC, how much money will it owe to the districts receiving Pittsfield students?

A: The total obligation would depend on the number of students who have transferred, the receiving district's tuition rate, and the percentage owed (typically a minimum of 80%). With only preliminary enrollment data currently available, the full financial exposure remains unknown.

Q: Does the Pittsfield School District have this money available in an escrow or some other contingency account?

A: No. Pittsfield does not maintain an escrow or contingency fund to cover tuition costs for Open Enrollment transfers. Any resulting obligation would need to be addressed through appropriations, potential borrowing, or additional warrant articles.

Q: How will the EFA voucher program affect the finances of the Pittsfield School District?

A: The EFA program may reduce the district's adequacy aid allocation if students withdraw from public school and use EFA funds for private or home education. Each EFA is valued at approximately \$4,400. This funding shift creates a net fiscal loss for the district due to the loss of per-pupil revenue and the continued need to maintain fixed operational costs. As a result, programs and services may need to be reduced, potentially impacting the availability of programs and services for remaining students.

Q: If the EFA voucher cost is significantly lower than the district's annual cost per student, will paying for EFA vouchers be a net gain or loss for the district?

A: A net loss. Districts do not directly pay for EFAs, but they lose per-pupil adequacy aid when students withdraw. The difference between the EFA grant and the cost to educate each student represents a revenue gap that cannot be offset, leading to reduced funding for remaining students.

Q: Teacher turnover has been a reality in past years. How many new teachers and paraprofessionals will be coming to the district in September 2025?

A: Seven new teachers are expected to join the district for the 2025-26 school year. No new paraeducators will be hired; all vacated positions are being left unfilled.

Q: How many teacher vacancies were created by contract non-renewal by the school board? How many by teacher resignation?

A: This information is not publicly available at this time. Because the district is so small, sharing data on non-renewals could compromise privacy rights. The District can provide historical data upon request in collaboration with the Finance Office and building principals.

Q: What is the starting salary for teachers in Pittsfield? How does this compare to salaries in surrounding towns?

A: The starting salary for a teacher with a bachelor's degree and no experience in 2024-25 is \$37,113.

According to Department of Education data compiled for 2023-24:

- Pittsfield Starting: \$35,668
- State Median: \$41,966
- State Low: \$31,712
- State High: \$52,650

Neighboring Districts:

- Chichester: \$41,675
- Northwood: \$39,026
- Barnstead: \$39,400
- Gilmanton: \$41,085
- Epsom: \$39,987
- Alton: \$41,992

Q: Is the school district required to operate schools in Pittsfield?

A: Yes. Under RSA 193:1, school districts are legally required to provide public education to resident students. This obligation can be fulfilled by operating schools, tuitioning students elsewhere under formal agreements, or joining a cooperative district. Pittsfield currently operates its own schools and is required to maintain public education access.

Q: Can the district issue EFA vouchers to all students, for use in schools elsewhere?

A: No. EFA vouchers are administered by the NH Department of Education through approved scholarship organizations. Districts cannot issue EFAs, nor can they replace their obligation to provide public education with universal vouchers.

Q: Does the state Department of Education have any obligation to find schools for students with vouchers?

A: No. The NH Department of Education does not place students using EFAs. Parents are responsible for selecting schools and arranging placements. The DOE's role is limited to oversight and funding through approved EFA providers.

Q: A recent *Concord Monitor* story revealed that the Pittsfield school district had overspent the budget by \$1.2 million. Is this the correct amount? What caused it to happen? How will the overspent amount be paid for?

A: The projected shortfall is currently estimated at approximately \$1.8 million, pending final audit confirmation. Contributing factors include overspending, improperly accounting for revenue, unanticipated special education costs, conducting grant-funded activities prior to approval, and failure to properly accrue summer payroll expenses. Summer payroll lapping occurred over several years; however, the origination of the practice has yet to be uncovered.

A significant financial constraint for Pittsfield (and for many other districts) stems from decreased funding in the area of special education. Pittsfield's 2024–25 Annual Report shows an 83% increase in special education transportation costs and a 90% increase in out-of-district placement expenses, reflecting escalating service demands and cost volatility. Statewide, in the 2023–24 and 2024–25 years, state and federal contributions covered only about 16.65% of total special education expenditures, leaving local taxpayers responsible for the remaining 83.35%. This leaves a substantial gap in funding available to address unanticipated expenses. A single unanticipated out-of-district placement can exceed \$400,000, placing a substantial burden on the district's budget.

To address the shortfall, the District has begun implementing stronger internal controls related to budgeting, grant compliance, and financial reporting. Legally and statutorily, the District will be required to present a deficit appropriation warrant article to voters. In addition, the District intends to reduce the FY26 budget wherever possible as a short-term measure to help offset the required appropriation. Other strategies include maximizing Medicaid reimbursements, utilizing state-provided services, expanding shared services with other school districts, leveraging grant funding, and decreasing paraeducator staffing in regular education settings.

Dr. Sandie MacDonald, Superintendent of Schools
SAU 51 - Pittsfield School District
23 Oneida Street, Unit 1
Pittsfield, NH 03263
(603) 435-5526

Dear *Pittsfield Post*,

Erica Anthony, CMC of Town of Pittsfield, has earned the designation of Certified Municipal Clerk (CMC), which is awarded by the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC), Inc.

IIMC grants the CMC designation only to municipal clerks who complete demanding education requirements, and have a record of significant contributions to their local government, community and state.

The International Institute of Municipal Clerks, founded in 1947, has 14,000 members throughout the United States, Canada, and 15 other countries, and the mission of this global non-profit corporation is to enhance the educational opportunities and professional development of its diverse membership.

In light of the speed and drastic nature of change these days, lifelong learning is not only desirable, it is necessary for all in local government to keep pace with the growing demands and changing needs of the citizens we serve. Your city can take immense pride in Erica's educational accomplishments and achievement of this milestone.

On behalf of the IIMC Board of Directors, I am honored to endorse the conferring of CMC to Erica Anthony, CMC of Town of Pittsfield. We share your pride in this achievement and we applaud your support of the role Erica plays in your city.

Sincerely

Dawn Abrahamson, MMC
IIMC President



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September

meeting	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 HAPPY LABOR DAY 6:30pm American Legion, Town Hall	2	3 6:30pm Suncook Valley Rotary Club	4 5:30pm School Board meeting 6pm ZBA meeting, Town Hall	5	6
7	8 6pm CIP Committee Meeting 6:30pm Library: Mead and Read Book Club meeting 7pm Chamber of Commerce meeting	9 5pm Selectboard Mtg., Town Hall 6pm Parks & Rec meeting 6pm Andru Volinsky School Funding Discussion	10 9:30am Library Trustees mtg 4pm Community Development Com. mtg, Town Hall 7pm Sun. Valley Sno-Riders mtg.	11 5:30pm PESPTO meeting 7pm Planning Board Meeting	12	13 8:30 - 9:30am Joy Church Free Community Breakfast 9am-1pm Pittsfield Historical Society Open House 
14	15 5:30-6:30pm Community Supper, Congo. Church 6pm CIP Committee Meeting	16 6:30pm Friends of the Library	17 6:30pm Suncook Valley Rotary Club	18 5:30pm School Board meeting	19	20
21	22 6pm CIP Committee meeting	23 5pm Selectboard meeting	24 4pm Community Development Com. mtg, Town Hall	25 7pm Conservation Commission meeting	26	27
28	29 6pm CIP Committee meeting	30	<div>Food Pantry Mon. 11am - 2pm 4-6pm Thurs: 11am - 2pm (603) 435-7300</div>		<div>Senior Center Hours Monday & Thursday 8am - 2pm Wednesday 8am -1pm</div>	

Pittsfield American Legion Chapter 75

Local Pittsfield NH Chapter 75 has an urgent need for new members in order for the chapter to remain active. If you served at least one day of active military duty since December 7, 1941 and were honorably discharged, or you are still serving active military duty honorably, you are eligible for membership with The American Legion.

In addition to the camaraderie and continuing service to our community, the American Legion provides VA benefit assistance. Accredited American Legion service officers are specially trained to provide expert assistance, free of charge, to veterans and their families. Your membership also helps support American Legion Department Service Officers nationwide who assist veterans in preparing claims and obtaining their full military healthcare benefits through the VA. The group meets once a month, and sponsors the Veteran's Day ceremony in town and other special services.

For local Chapter 75 to remain active in the community, the post needs to expand membership. Currently our roster is slightly above the minimum criteria for remaining an active post and we need to increase our membership roster to continue to remain an important local resource for our veterans and their families. If you want to join, please contact John Christakos at jc7717@gmail.com



Thank You! Pancake Breakfast Was a Big Success

The Pittsfield Fire Association and Support Group thanks all of you who came to the pancake breakfast at the fire station. We had a great turnout, the food was delicious, and it was a terrific fundraiser for our organization. We hope to see you all again next year. Thank you



Reverend David Stasiak Retires

Reverend David Stasiak and his wife, Linda, are retiring after 17 years of faithful service to the First Congregational Church, 24 Main Street. There will be a special farewell service Sunday, August 24, as we wish them well in their departure for Florida the following week. Since they have touched so many lives in our community, please plan to join us for this significant 10 a.m. service and the barbecue luncheon reception that follows, as we wish them Godspeed.

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Cooks Corner -- Tomato and Onion Pie

This is one of our favorite Summer dishes, and fresh tomatoes are lovely at this time of year. As the main event, this pie is delicious served with a hearty green salad. Or, this is an easy, tasty side for grilled steak, fish or chicken. Bon appetit! *MP Christakos*

1 cup panko breadcrumbs

2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese

3 cups sliced tomatoes (sliced in rounds)

2 large eggs, lightly beaten

½ cup thinly sliced onion (red or yellow, you decide)

3 to 4 slices bacon, chopped and cooked until crisp, drain on paper towel

Move oven rack to middle position. Heat oven to 325 degrees and spray a 9-inch pie plate with cooking spray.

Sprinkle ½ cup of the panko evenly on the bottom of the pie plate. Arrange half the tomatoes on top of the breadcrumbs, then layer half the onion. Sprinkle half of the Cheddar cheese on top of the onion. Then repeat another set of layers of tomatoes, onions and cheese.

Pour the eggs over the whole pie, and salt and pepper to taste. Top the pie with remaining panko and sprinkle the cooked, chopped bacon on top. Bake the pie in the oven for 45 minutes. Let it sit for 5 to 10 minutes before cutting and serving.



www.hiddenpicturepuzzles.com



Post-It in the Post

Do you have an interesting story to share with your friends and neighbors? Are you part of a community group that has big news?

News@PittsfieldPost.org by 9 a.m. Friday

Submission Guidelines: www.PittsfieldPost.org



Pittsfield Town Crier

Would you like an event listed? Contact Andi Riel at pittsfieldtowncrier@hotmail.com or 603-435-6346

PHS (Pittsfield High School) ALUMNI *** We need about 6 alumni to either be on the PHS Alumni Association Float or walk beside it to hand out goodies for Pittsfield Old Home Day (Sept. 13). If you can help, please contact Andi Riel at 603-451-8762.

Sun, Aug 24, 10am - Reverend David Stasiak and his wife, Linda, are retiring after 17 years of faithful service to the First Congregational Church, 24 Main Street. There will be a special farewell service, as we wish them well in their departure for Florida the following week. Since they have touched so many lives in our community, please plan to join us for this significant service and the barbecue luncheon reception that follows, as we wish them Godspeed.

Mon, Aug 25 - FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL. Good luck to all the students! Have a fun year!

Thurs, Aug 28, 7pm - Pittsfield Conservation Commission will meet at the Town Hall.

Tues, Sept 2, 9-11am - First Congregational Church of Pittsfield's Infant **Toddler Diaper Pantry** will be open for families to receive supplemental diapers once per opening, now once every month. Each family receives diapers/product per child in need, and one package of wipes per family. We generally have NB through size 6 diapers, along with pull-ups and overnights. We use the parking lot off Chestnut Street. Financial donations, donations of diapers (including open packages), and donations of wipes are always welcomed. Please call 603-435-7471 with any questions, including donation questions.

Tues, Sept 9, 6pm - Presentation and discussion of *"The Last Bake Sale: The Fight for Fair School Funding"* with author **Andru Volinsky**. Free event. All are welcome! Books will be available for purchase, and the author is willing to sign books.

Sat, Sept 13 - PITTSFIELD OLD HOME DAY and PMHS HOMECOMING are joining together! The theme of the day is "Better Together." Planning has been underway for months and more details will be coming very soon! In the meantime you can contact the committee if you're interested in entering a float in the parade, setting up for the vendor/artisan fair or bringing your cool rig to the car show. We are looking forward to this big event to

celebrate our town and all its wonderful citizens and organizations! It is a true joy preparing for this day and seeing it all come together for Pittsfield! Let's celebrate being "better together!" For information or to volunteer, contact Melissa at 603-496-3928 and for vendor information, contact Adam at 603-219-7284.

The Pittsfield Youth Workshop (PYW), 18 Park St PYW is **closed for vacation Aug 18-22** and will reopen on Aug 25. For more information, contact Zach Powers or Ashley Perron at (603) 435-8272 or text at 603-234-9788.

The Gabriel Douglas Anthony 21 Foundation was established by Gabe's family after his death to provide roadside safety equipment to all high school-aged drivers. Please visit the website at <https://gda21foundation.org> to learn more about this wonderful foundation or, more importantly, to donate. You may also contact the foundation at GDA21 Foundation, 98 Main St., Pittsfield, NH 03263; 603-470-6927 or email gda21foundation@gmail.com

Senior Center Schedule- Monday & Thursdays – 8am-2pm and Wednesdays 8am – 1pm. Activities include: Senior Community Lunch – M & TH at 11:45am; Bingo M, W & TH – 10-11:45am; Cribbage & Games – W-9-11am; Walking at the Center- M, W, TH- 8am-1pm; Sweatin' to the Oldies- Mon at 9am and Chair Yoga- TH at 9am. For more information or if you have questions, call Anne at 603-435-8482.

Pittsfield Youth Baseball/Softball Association Bingo Every Saturday, a great menu of food items along with their games, and it all benefits the children of Pittsfield for their baseball/softball program. Doors open at 3:30pm and bingo starts at 6 pm at Circle 9 Ranch in Epsom.

The Josiah Carpenter Library is seeking donations of the following items: glue sticks, card stock, pretzels, letter envelopes, cotton balls, small 1/4" stickers, white copy paper, apple juice, gallon Ziploc bags, clementines, Goldfish crackers, microwave popcorn, grapes, postage stamps, fruit snacks. All donations will benefit the staff and visitors who participate in the various children's and adults' programs offered by the library. These items will help stretch the annual budget to provide additional opportunities for our patrons throughout the year. Thank you for supporting your local library.

The **Pittsfield Conservation Commission** wants to hear from you! Please complete this anonymous survey to help us understand your joys, concerns and hopes regarding Pittsfield's natural spaces:

<https://forms.gle/zyyFqpiWGBShEehs6>

The **4-H Young Entrepreneurs** have been busy and have new seasonal products available at **Dowboro Farm**, 615 Dowboro Rd. Hours are Wed-Sat, 9:30am-6:30pm and Sun, 10am-4pm.

Check out **Marston Farm Corn Maze**, 384 Webster Mills Rd., Pittsfield. Open Sept. 5 - Nov. 1 - Fri- 1-7pm, Sat & Sun- 10am-7pm (hours are subject to change). Cost is: Adult (13+)- \$10, Child (6-12)-\$8, Child Under 5 - Free, Senior (65+)-\$8, Military- \$8. Cash, Venmo and credit cards are accepted. PLEASE visit our website at Marstonfarmnh.com for FULL details and more information about the corn maze.

Happy Birthday wishes to Ed Vien on Thurs, Aug. 21, to Chris Plante on Sun, Aug. 31, to Harry Vogt and Arlo Tuttle on Mon, Sept. 1, and to Ted Mitchell on Tues, Sept. 2.

Happy Anniversary wishes to Stacy & Rick Davis on Sat, Aug. 23, and to Rick & Jen Walter on Mon, Aug. 25.

A Very Special Happy Anniversary wish to my wonderful husband, Mark Riel, on Tues, Aug. 19.



The Trustees of the Josiah Carpenter Library wish to thank all who stopped by our Level Up Reading Program table to enjoy a yummy pudding cup.

Your generous donations help to keep our programs thriving.

Thank you so much!



Pine Campfire Wood For Sale

Dry 16", one-third cord: \$70; one-half cord: \$140; 1 cord: \$250 picked up. Pine bags-\$5 each. Hardwood bags-\$10 each. Dry Hardwood and Delivery available. 835 Suncook Valley Road, Center Barnstead, NH. 603-906-2444.



FREE Preschool for ages 3-5!*

FREE Home-Based program for pregnant parents and babies ages 0-3!*

Head Start Preschools are located in Pittsfield, Franklin, Concord, and Laconia.

Preschool hours are Monday-Friday 8:30 am to 12:30 pm.

Two meals provided daily at no cost to families for preschool children.

Enrolling now for the 2024-2025 school year.

*Eligibility guidelines do apply.

Scan below, visit www.capbm.org, or call 603-225-3295 ext. 1127 or email

Headstart@capbm.org for more information



Victory Workers 4-H Club is Collecting 1,000 pounds of Recycled Plastic

If you haven't already heard, the Victory Workers 4-H Club is temporarily taking over the plastic collection from PES PTO!

If you're not familiar with the NexTrex recycling program, it's a program where schools and non-profits are challenged to gather 1,000 pounds of recyclable plastics, weigh them, upload the tallies online, turn them in to local retailers, and "hopefully" receive a free bench if the goal is reached within a 12 month period!

The Pittsfield Community has been supporting this recycling endeavor since February for PES PTO, and they've already collected their 1,000 pounds, so jumping in to this project was quite simple for us— but we're still asking for the community's help!

There are large collection bins for the plastic at Danis Supermarket, Bell Brothers Convenience Store, Pittsfield Elementary School, Pittsfield Middle High School, Josiah Carpenter Library, and now at the Dowboro Farm Farmstand! As a result of the project already having a presence here in Pittsfield, our 4-H group has already collected and turned in OVER ONE HUNDRED POUNDS OF PLASTIC this month!

Here's a great video that explains how recycled bags are made into composite boards, which in turn, the bench we hope to receive will be made from, too!

<https://youtu.be/z0gBMWPlclU>

"With the NexTrex® program, you not only know exactly where your recycled plastic film is going but also how it will be used. Together with our commercial and community partners across the country, we are able to divert plastic waste from ending up in landfills and give it new life as beautiful and sustainable Trex® decking."

Emily Whitacre,

Recycling Programs Coordinator Trex® Company



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<p>The Pittsfield Post is a non-profit, free newsletter that serves Pittsfield citizens, businesses, town government, town schools and charitable organizations. The Post publishes relevant news, information, and special interest stories that impact residents, keeping the community informed and engaged.</p> <p>The <i>Pittsfield Post</i> is published bi-weekly, in both print and digital formats, through the efforts of a volunteer team of residents.</p>	<p>Please support your community newsletter!</p> <p>Checks made out to the non-profit: Pittsfield Center Development Corporation, memo: Pittsfield Post. P.O. Box 253, Pittsfield, NH 03263. or Via our website www.PittsfieldPost.org</p>	<p>Send us your news!</p> <p>Individuals, community groups and businesses, email us your news, opinions and creative work. Details are on our website. Deadline 9am on Friday.</p> <p>News@Pittsfieldpost.org</p>