

APPROVED BY THE PITTSFIELD SCHOOL BOARD

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT #51
PITTSFIELD SCHOOL BOARD**

MINUTES

Pittsfield School Board Meeting
April 26, 2021
Pittsfield Middle High School

I. CALL TO ORDER

Members Present: Adam Gauthier, Chairperson
Justin Clough, Vice Chairperson
Jessica Drouin, Member

Others Present: John Graziano, Interim Superintendent of Schools
Jessica Bickford, Director of Student Services
Melissa Brown, PMHS Assistant Principal

Mr. Gauthier called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. SCHOOL BOARD RESIGNATIONS

Mr. Gauthier shared resignations from two board members. Ms. Douglas and Mr. Mitchell submitted letters of resignation effective immediately. Mr. Mitchell submitted his letter Tuesday, April 20, 2021. Ms. Douglas submitted her resignation Wednesday, April 21, 2021.

Mr. Clough moved to accept Mr. Mitchell's resignation with regret. Ms. Drouin seconded the motion. The motion to accept Mr. Mitchell's resignation with regret passed unanimously 3-0.

Ms. Drouin moved to accept Ms. Douglas's resignation with regret. Mr. Clough seconded the motion. The motion to accept Ms. Douglas's resignation with regret passed unanimously 3-0.

The letters of resignation received will be attached to these minutes.

Mr. Gauthier requested that Dr. Graziano write letters of thanks to both Ms. Douglas and Mr. Mitchell thanking them for their years of service to the Pittsfield School District.

III. REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INTEREST

Mr. Gauthier stated he would like to post the open school board positions and request letters of interest from community members to be submitted. Mr. Gauthier stated that he wanted letters to be accepted until May 3, 2021 at 3:00 p.m.

Mr. Clough stated he would like a school district email to be included in the proposed posting.

It was agreed upon that a notice would be posted requesting interested community members to submit a letter of interest to the SAU office.

IV. ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION

Mr. Clough stated that the current board members have joined the board in order to improve the school district. Mr. Clough stated he is passionate about improving the education of our children. Mr. Clough stated that he would like to see it proven that our students would be better served in another school district versus our own. Mr. Clough wants to improve the district, and feels like it needs to happen quickly. Mr. Clough made it clear that he doesn't want his children to go elsewhere, unless it is undoubtedly proven that they would be better served elsewhere.

Dr. Graziano stated he wants to work together to do what's best for the students in Pittsfield. He looks forward to working with the Board.

Mr. Clough shared that he believes we still have the personnel to do great work for our students.

Ms. Brown stated that she is optimistic, and would not be in favor of closing the schools for multiple reasons.

Mr. Gauthier welcomed dialogue with himself and other board members to better understand the administration.

V. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Thursday, May 6, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. in the Pittsfield Middle High School Lecture Hall.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Mr. Clough and seconded by Ms. Drouin, the meeting was adjourned at 6:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Bickford/John Graziano
Recording Secretary

On Wed, Apr 21, 2021 at 6:10 PM Ted Mitchell <tmitchell@pittsfieldnhschools.org> wrote:

This isn't an easy email for me to send. As you may know, I've been very passionate about and involved with the School District for over 12 years. However, during the past year I've come to admit to myself that my passion is gone. I used to look forward to School Board meetings but now dread them. Another factor I've been dealing with is stress concerning the uncertain future of our schools. This has resulted in countless hours of lost sleep. This isn't good for this "young" 70-plus year old. It is not right for me to continue as a Board member if I can't put my best effort into my obligation. Also, it isn't fair to you or the School District. Therefore, I am resigning from the School Board, effective as of now. I know this decision adds another challenge for you but it is the right and necessary decision.

In parting I do want to leave you with a word of caution. Do not start second guessing the school's administrators and micro manage them. That will destroy morale and good will, making improvements in student education impossible. It would show disrespect and lack of trust in their skills, training and decades of experience in education.

There is a chain of command within the School District as there is in the military (which I was an intelligence administrator and aviation administrator for 21 years. I know what jumping the chain of command does when allowed!) It is absolutely inappropriate for a School Board members to insert themselves directly into the decision-making, planning, reports and day-to-day functioning of the administration.

John, please provide this email to administration.

Adam, please provide this email to Board members

Sincerely,
Theodore D Mitchell

April 22, 2021

Dear Dr. Graziano and Adam,

It is with a very heavy heart that I write this letter. It has been a difficult decision but one that needed to be made.

Effective immediately I am resigning from the Pittsfield School Board. I can no longer serve my community, students and staff for a number of reasons.

I have been in education for over 30 years, have a Masters of Education degree in curriculum and instruction and have spent decades in the classroom. I have served as a team leader, as a curriculum chairperson, and a supervisor and mentor for student teachers and new incoming staff. I have served on the board for a little more than 8 years.

While on the board I have taken part in a number of committees and work sessions and have watched our school grow in many, many ways. Pittsfield has been recognized not only on a local level but by our last commissioner of education, senators and our governor. Pittsfield schools have had and continue to have many hurdles placed in front of them but have worked diligently for continuous improvement. With full knowledge that our work is never done and that we always reach for the best we can be our administrators and teachers always are reaching for better and what is best for our kids. Chichester was one of the many schools that have visited the Pittsfield schools so that they could improve their work in competency education. What was happening in the classrooms here was pretty amazing.

I will not be part of a board that publicly discredits our administration and staff, that does not follow any chain of command. One that participates and promotes one of the most negative social media pages I have seen in a very long time' I do not wish to work with those that base their opinion of our district on a test score instead of individual student improvements, good teaching practices, and strong curriculum or those that feel they have the right to berate other board members with no knowledge of personal circumstances. We are heading in a direction that is going to be such a detriment to our district that I do not want to be a part of it.

I used to feel like I made a difference, was respected (even when there was a disagreement) and that my knowledge and background in education was helpful. That is no longer the case.

I believe in our schools, our administrators and our staff. Pittsfield has been my home for most of my life. This is not a decision I make lightly but one that I know has to be made.

I am not sleeping at night, my blood pressure is not good, my oncologist has been pushing me to make this move for some time because of the impact the stress is having on my health. This is something I must do.

In parting, I hope that your actions and words are said and done with thoughtfulness, kindness and with our students and staff in mind. Let our educators do the jobs that they are trained to do and do on a daily basis with dedication and passion. Ask them what you can do to support them. That is where true "school improvement" happens.

Sincerely,

Bea Douglas