

SITUATION ANALYSIS

On May 1, 2020, Governor Cuomo issued executive order 202.26 which required public school districts to conduct their School Budget Votes/Board of Education Elections entirely by absentee ballot and changed the voter deadline from May 19, 2020 to June 9, 2020. Pittsford Central School District (PCSD) had to act quickly to accommodate this change in voting method, including creating and printing the ballots and associated mailing and postage-paid return envelopes to mail to voters. In order to clearly and expeditiously share details of the new voting process, the new voter deadline, and key aspects of the 2020-21 PCSD School Budget, the Communication Office devised a social media communication campaign.

PLANNING/CONTENT

Objective: To promote voter participation following the May 1, 2020, NYS executive order that required schools to conduct voting entirely by absentee ballot for the 2020-21 School Budget Vote/Board of Education Election and changed the vote date from May 19, 2020 to June 9, 2020.

Target Audience: Eligible PCSD Voters

Key Messages:

- According to NYS Executive Order 202.26, the 2020-21 School Budget Vote/Board of Education Election must be conducted by absentee ballot
- PCSD will mail two absentee ballots and postage paid return envelopes to every household; more could be requested by emailing or calling the District Clerk (contact info was provided)
- Ballots must be returned by 5 p.m. on June 9 using the postage-paid return envelopes provided or by using a lock box outside the District Main Office on June 9
- The proposed budget is balanced, within the tax cap, preserves programs and services, and keeps the tax levy growth within the Monroe County average despite a \$1.45M loss in state aid

Budget – \$0 dollars spent for the social media campaign. Printing/Mail Prep/Postage Cost for the two absentee ballots mailed to each household (plus extras), outgoing envelopes and postage-paid return envelopes: \$17,539.29.

EXECUTION

Strategy: Develop a social media campaign that raises awareness about the change from in-person voting to absentee ballot voting with a new deadline of 5 p.m. on June 9, and provide key facts about the budget and the absentee ballot process.

- Nine Facebook posts and 23 Twitter posts were shared between May 1 and the June 9 voter deadline
- Email letters were sent to PCSD staff and families
- An article was posted to the District website
- Information was included in weekly “Friday Messages” to PCSD families
- A lockbox was placed outside the District’s main office on June 9 for voters who didn’t mail their ballots

URLs: <https://twitter.com/pcsdschools>; <https://www.facebook.com/PittsfordCentralSchoolDistrict/>;

ASSESSMENT/RESULTS

Results met objective:

- The nine Facebook posts reached 7,721 people, and had 324 engagements, 39 likes, 11 shares, 9 comments
- The 23 Twitter posts resulted in 80 shares and 35 likes
- **The 2020-21 School Budget Vote/Board of Education Election by Absentee Ballot demonstrated:**
 - **140% increase** in number of voters compared to the prior year
 - **116% increase** in number of voters compared to previous five-vote average
 - **72% yes votes**