On Thursday, September 9, PCSD will officially welcome back students for the first day of school. Educators and staff members have worked hard to prepare for a safe and healthy return to full-time in-person learning. Classrooms and building spaces have been modified to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students as students will be seated three feet apart in classrooms, to the extent possible, and all students and staff, regardless of vaccination status, will wear masks and receive mask breaks throughout the day. Students and staff members must also wear masks on buses. Buses will be at capacity and have assigned seating to assist with contact tracing, if necessary. As another layer of safety and security, the District has installed and tested Emergency Alert Buttons in every school’s main office and high school principal’s offices.

Mental Health Supports for Students

In response to the increased stress and anxiety students are experiencing as a result of COVID-19 and the myriad of adjustments that had to be made due to the pandemic, Pittsford Central School District has increased mental health services across the District.

Over the summer, PCSD middle and high schools each held a program that provided social and emotional learning support to assist students with their transition back to full-time in-person learning and relieve stress and anxiety associated with the transition and the COVID-19 pandemic. These programs allowed students to connect with their peers and school staff members and included art, technology, cooking, escape rooms and outdoor activities. The programs were open to PCSD students in middle and high school and were funded through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act and the American Rescue Plan Act grants.

This school year schools will see increased student support in the areas of counseling services and social work support. School counselors provide classroom lessons on anxiety and mindfulness, community circles, overall wellness strategies and preventative strategies and training for teachers. School Psychologists are also part of the comprehensive school team that meets regularly at each building to discuss student
and staff needs. They assess student behavioral, emotional, social, and academic needs. Additionally, two nurses in each building work with the mental health team regularly to support the physical and emotional health of students.

**URMC Mental Health Clinic for Families**

Families will also have access to a URMC clinic, which is housed at Barker Road Middle School, to support K-12 students and families throughout the District with easier access to mental health care. Offered through the Golisano Children’s Hospital Pediatric Health and Wellness Center, URMC clinics provide outpatient mental health services to students that they would typically receive outside of school, beyond what a school counselor would provide. Medical personnel are able to diagnose and treat children with a variety of mental health problems including depression, anxiety, attention deficits, emotional regulation difficulties, mood disorders, and other behavioral concerns. Families work with a primary therapist who is responsible for coordinating all aspects of care and is a member of a team that includes specialists in psychiatry, psychology, social work, counseling, and nursing. A URMC clinic was housed at Park Road Elementary School last year for K-12 students District-wide, and the clinic now at Barker Road Elementary School will offer URMC’s mental health services to Pittsford families throughout the 2021-22 school year.
Behavior Specialists

In addition to the expansion of mental health services, Behavior Specialists will continue to work with staff at each school building to provide preventative strategies to address student behavioral needs and work directly with students on strategies for self-regulation, anxiety, and other mental health needs. The Behavior Specialists are responsible for Functional Behavioral Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans as well.

Health and Wellness

As another tier of mental health support for students and families, the District’s Health and Wellness Committee continues to support student and staff wellness initiatives, and the School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation (SHAPE) committee will continue to work to bring forward initiatives based on data, such as data-based sleep hygiene recommendations the committee is currently working on.

COVID-19 Protocols and Updates

In addition to expanding mental health services and supports for students, the District has also been working on revising its COVID-19 protocols. To view updates and a re-opening of schools Q&A, please visit https://www.pittsfordschools.org/Page/25179. The information on these webpages will continue to be updated as processes, procedures and guidance evolve throughout the school year.