

## A COMMUNITY VISION

In most cities and towns in the United States, the school and the community are seen as separate from each other. In reality, they are closely connected. The future wellbeing of our town depends on our ability to provide a world-class education to its future leaders and contributors. Likewise, the strength of our schools depends on our ability to harness all of the human assets of the community on behalf of our young people. In Pittsfield, our motto—"Strong Community, Strong Schools"—is an expression of this commitment.

Through a multi-year process that included literally hundreds of conversations both within our schools and in partnership with the larger community, we have set forth a mission and vision to serve as a compass for all that we do.

### Vision & Mission

The Pittsfield School District is a school community in which all decisions are based on the best interests of our learners, supported by a learning environment that enables all of Pittsfield's young people to be fully engaged in their own learning, pursue their college and career aspirations, and be strongly supported to realize their dreams.

The mission of the Pittsfield School District is to ensure that our learners are supported in the achievement of their college and career goals through student centered learning practices and strong partnerships with our community. We encourage and guide our students to become self-directed, lifelong learners who demonstrate a high level of knowledge, skills, and social-emotional health through self-advocacy, self-governance, and commitment to community.



## PREPARING PITTSFIELD SCHOOLS FOR 21ST CENTURY SUCCESS

### JOIN US!

By leveraging federal and state grants, along with a generous multi-year investment by the New England-based Nellie Mae Education Foundation, we are making significant progress toward realizing our long-term vision. Only with your participation can we continue to build a world-class educational system that will benefit our community for many generations, and serve as a model to other school districts in New Hampshire and across the country.

For a deeper look into our work, visit our website and select *District Redesign*.

<http://pittsfield-nh.com/sau>

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# Putting Students at the Center

Since 2008, the Pittsfield NH School District has been engaged in a community-wide effort to significantly remodel our schools for the needs and demands of 21st century life. Today, our economy and our global society require that every successful young person master a broader set of higher level skills and abilities that were previously expected of just a few: the ability to write and speak well, to analyze and synthesize information, to solve problems as part of a team to prepare students for an ever-changing future.

## STUDENTS AT THE CENTER

We are proud to be part of a growing movement in New England and beyond to make education more “student-centered,” in which:

### Learning is personalized.

We recognize that every learner is different; the educational experience should be customized to support each student’s specific learning needs and passions. Personal Learning Plans help students chart a detailed course through the end of high school, enabling them to fully investigate college and career options.

### Teaching is focused on coaching and facilitating.

Like the athletic coach who motivates his players to reach their personal best, a 21st century teacher designs projects that set students’ discoveries and talents in motion. In our schools, students are in the driver’s seat of their own learning; teachers

often given them choices about what they want to learn and how they will demonstrate their understanding. Research shows—and our experiences confirm—that giving students more ownership of their learning builds their confidence and their capabilities.

### Learning reaches beyond the school walls.

Students learn through authentic, “real-world” experiences in the community. This may happen through internships, after-school clubs and activities, apprenticeships, college courses, collaborative projects, and exposure to different adult role models. They also have the opportunity to solve real-world problems on behalf of the community. In addition, online learning gives students unusual access to the wider world, with many students receiving both high school and college credit for on-line coursework. Moreover, support continues to grow from area businesses, organizations and government agencies that welcome these collaborations.

### Progress is measured by mastery, not by age or the number of classroom hours.

Just as student athletes must practice in order to be able to play the game, students must reach a level of proficiency in their academic skills and knowledge that enable them to “show what they know.” Those who demonstrate mastery in a given area can move on; those who need more time can continue learning. High-stakes exams are replaced by more everyday—and authentic—assessments of progress. For example, each student has a Portfolio, a collection of assignments and projects that demonstrate competency in a variety of subject areas and mastery of skills that are required for thriving in a 21st century global society.



### Time is a flexible resource.

In Pittsfield, learning time is not defined by a school calendar nor limited to the school day or building. Valuable opportunities to learn are available “anytime, anywhere.” Accommodating students during traditional “off times,” like summer vacations, increases these opportunities and supports our student-centered approach.

Student-centered learning often requires changing the school schedule. The confines of the traditional 50-minute class, 6-hour school day, and 180-day school year are replaced with a philosophy of “anytime, anywhere” learning. For example, many of our students see the summer and school vacations as opportunities for intensive learning experiences outside of the classroom. Even during the school year, students have flexible schedules, with some arranging to work or intern during the daytime, and others taking college courses on the weekend.