

MRTA

E-News

A NEWSPAPER FOR RETIRED EDUCATION PERSONNEL

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A New Era at MRTA

At MRTA, we are excited for our future under the leadership of Maria Walden, MRTA's first female executive director. Ms. Walden is a familiar face to many MRTA members, as she served almost 14 years as the director of legislation and policy with the Public School and Education Employee Retirement Systems of Missouri (PSRS/PEERS).

Through Maria's leadership, we have already started building a new culture at MRTA. A culture that involves not only a new approach to how we do business, but also a more collaborative effort with the education community to improve both public education and the lives of our members.

You will notice changes in our publications, in the way things look, and the way we conduct business. Every change that we

make is designed to benefit our public schools, our teachers, our administrators, education personnel, and most importantly, you, our members.

MRTA is fortunate to have members in nearly every metropolitan area, city, town, and village in the State of Missouri. We represent every type of school district employee in every area of the state. This provides us a very diverse membership with unique perspectives, opinions, and experiences.

Because we value your perspectives, opinions, and experiences, we plan to survey our members and learn straight from you how we can better serve public education and our public school retirees. We want to gain a better understanding of why you joined MRTA and what MRTA means to you. As a result of your feedback, you may notice some small changes over time. Rest assured, any changes will be made to provide a better experience for our members and to make MRTA stronger.

In Missouri, MRTA is uniquely positioned compared to other educational associations. Working together with those associations, we plan to strengthen and improve public education in Missouri. The stronger our school systems are, the more benefit they provide to their local communities and to the State of Missouri. Public schools improve our local and state economies, and the lives of all Missourians.

As an MRTA member, you enjoy another important benefit of having a strong public



school system – a strong retirement system to provide well-deserved retirement benefits to all those who dedicate their lives to public school students. We will continue to work to ensure that the retirement system remains strong and stable for future generations of retirees.

Ms. Walden stated, "I am excited to begin my work on behalf of the 284,000 public school teachers, educational employees, and retirees of Missouri. I look forward to working with our leadership team and collaborating with others committed to supporting public education and our retirement system." She added, "We have a great opportunity to grow and strengthen the association by working strategically and proactively on good, solid legislation that supports our mission. Without strong public schools, there won't be a strong retirement system."

We are grateful for all of our members who have helped us accomplish so much over the years. Now, as we move forward with an updated vision for MRTA, we do so together, stronger than ever. We hope you are as excited as we are as we look forward to the great things we will achieve!

MRTA Phone2Action

Please sign up for MRTA Phone2Action! With MRTA Phone2Action, you can now sign up to have all of our Legislative Updates sent straight to your phone. PLUS, we have made it easier to write your legislators. With Phone2Action, you can now write your legislators with just a few taps on your smartphone! Text MRTA to 52886 to get started, or click this link: <https://p2a.co/VwWKtNZ>.



Legislative Update

The General Assembly returned for the second half of the 2022 Legislative Session. We have just under six weeks left until they adjourn for the year. These last final weeks of session are the most crucial in determining which bills are moving and could potentially become law. These are the days when the legislature works late into the night and issues can be added as amendments to omnibus legislation.

The last half of session we have to be particularly diligent in monitoring the progress of legislation. Please pay attention to your email to stay informed on bills that could have an impact on the retirement plan and education. Please sign up for our Phone2Action to stay apprised of the latest legislative actions.

House Pensions Committee recently heard **HB 2161 and HB 2430**, and MRTA Executive Director Maria Walden testified in support of these bills. Both allow PSRS retirees that work 32 or more years to receive a 2.55% factor. A similar provision was sunset in 2014, but that bill allowed for a 2.55% formula factor after 31 years of service. This provides an annual savings to PSRS of \$21.1 million per year, according to this year's fiscal impact statement. These bills will also reduce the actuarial contribution rate for all active teachers by 0.45%. This is a way assist with teacher shortages in Missouri by providing an incentive for teachers to stay in the classroom longer. It also provides some relief to the active teachers in their contribution rate. MRTA has been a proponent of this legislation since its sunset in 2014.

MRTA has testified on several bills relating to retirement this year. **HB 1881 (Black)** makes changes to the critical shortage provision. Currently, a retired teacher or a retired noncertificated employee who is receiving a retirement benefit from the Public School Retirement System of Missouri (PSRS) is allowed to work full time for up to two years for a school district covered by such retirement system if the system has a shortage of certified teachers or noncertificated employees. This bill allows these retirees to work full time up to four years for such districts. MRTA testified in favor of this bill. It was reported out do pass from Rules Committee. It will be placed on the calendar so that it can be taken up for perfection.

HB 2114 (Black) also contains the language from HB 1881 and includes another working after retirement provision. Currently, any teacher retired from the Public School Retirement System (PSRS) can be employed in a position covered under the Public Education Employee Retirement System (PEERS) without stopping their retirement benefit. Such teacher may earn up to 60% of the minimum teacher's salary, and it will not contribute to the retirement system or earn creditable service. This bill will allow such teacher to earn up to the annual earnings limit applicable to a Social Security earning limit.

Representative Pike's **HB 2799** allows teachers who are receiving a retirement allowance under the Public School Retirement System (PSRS) or the Public Education Employee Retirement System (PEERS) to work in a school district without a discontinuance of the person's retirement allowance until June 30, 2026. This language mirrors the Governor's waiver provision that expired in March. MRTA testified in favor of this bill to provide another option for addressing the substitute teacher shortage. **HB 2304** also contains a provision that exempts substitute teachers from the working after retirement statute. This bill has been referred to Senate Education.



Below are educational bills that are also moving through the legislative process.

Education Bills

HB 1998 (Davidson) allows school districts to issue school district teaching permits for persons without a certificate of license to teach granted by the state board of education. The bill was reported out do pass from Rules Committee. It will be placed on the calendar so that it can be taken up for perfection.

HB 1552 (Richey) increases the funding for charter schools. This bill was heard in the Senate Education Committee last week. The bill was reported do pass, which means it can be added to the Senate Third Reading Calendar for debate before the entire Senate. Our active educational associations are concerned about the impact on this bill.

HB 1814 (Pollitt) allows for open enrollment for public schools. It established transfer procedures for students in nonresident districts. This bill was hearing in Senate Education Committee on March 29th. Our active educational associations are concerned about the impact this bill might have on rural school districts.

HB 1750 (Bayse) is an Omnibus Education Bill which was perfected on March 9th. The bill was sent to House Fiscal Review. It was voted out of committee on March 30th. There were 16 provisions added to the bill during perfection. They did add the provision that repeals the working after retirement provisions for substitute teaching for 3 years. This essentially places into statute a waiver of the working after retirement statute.

We will continue to work to ensure that the retirement system remains strong and stable for future generations of retirees. Please watch your email for any changes and stay informed on bills that could have an impact on the retirement plan and public education. Please sign up for our **Phone2Action** to stay apprised of the latest legislative actions.

2022 MRTA Unit President Summit

March 7th-9th
Stoney Creek Inn - Columbia, MO



left: Wendy Bernier, MRTA Region 5 Vice President is congratulated by MRTA Executive Director Maria Walden. Wendy purchased an MRTF Raffle ticket for a friend who was chosen as the \$3,000 ticket winner.



above: The 2021-2022 MRTA Board of Directors. Front row (l-r): Connie Firner, Arleta Godwin, Maureen Hacker, Julia Platt, Sherry Brandes, Wendy Bernier, Marilyn Skipper, and Erma Nevels-McNeil. Second row (l-r): Mark Cook, Virgie Cook, Jane Callis, Gay Dittmore, Sue Groves, Linda Lueckenhoff, and Nancy Craig. Third row (l-r): Sunni Wilson, Idella Warden, Martha Schatz, Karen Miller, Georgia White, Randy McClain, and Jack Poston. Not pictured are Dr. Dave Baker, Richard Phillips, Sandy Applegate, and Marlin Kinman.



above: Community Service Committee Chair Marlin Kinman and Vice Committee Chair Cheryl Adams announced MRTA members donated over \$19 million worth of community service hours in 2021.



above: MRTA President Nancy Craig and Lt. Governor Mike Kehoe.



above: The 2021-2022 MRTF Board of Directors. Front row (l-r): Sandy Berry, Linda Holt, Margaret Smith, Vicki Orr, Mary Ridge, and Arleta Godwin. Second row (l-r): Mark Lueckenhoff, Marlin Kinman, Jan Powers, Jack Poston, Karen Miller, Jenifer Young, Fred Price, and John Moyer.



Missouri Retired Teachers Association
& Public School Personnel

Retired Teachers' Golf Fundraiser

Supporting the Missouri Retired Teachers Association Vision and Mission

All proceeds will support the vision and mission of MRTA advocating for Missouri's retired teachers, administrators, and education personnel. Please call 1-877-366-MRTA for more information.

REGISTRATION: 8:00 a.m.

SHOTGUN START: 9:00 a.m. (Lunch provided for golfers)

FORMAT: Four-person scramble

2 putt maximum

Mulligans available for purchase

Lunch provided (additional tickets available for \$25 each)

\$125 per person or \$500 for a team

Eagle Knoll Golf Course

Hartsburg, Missouri

June 23, 2022



Eagle Knoll

FUN

- Door Prizes
- Lunch for Golfers
- 2 Free Drink Passes
- Silent Auction
- Raffle

Registration Deadline - Friday, June 7, 2022

Missouri Retired Teachers Association

3030 DuPont Circle

Jefferson City, MO 65109

All proceeds will support the vision and mission of MRTA advocating for Missouri's teachers, public schools, administrators and public education personnel. Please call 1-877-366-MRTA for more information.

_____ **Number of Players.** Golf registration forms need to be submitted for all players, including those covered with sponsorship levels. We expect the course to fill up fast, so early registration is requested.

Lunch Only (\$25) _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

If you want to pay by credit card:

Credit Card Number: _____ CVV: _____

Expiration Date: _____ Name on Credit Card: _____