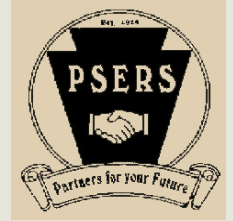


Spring 2009 Inside...

- *From the Executive Director*
- *Before You Retire*
- *Leaving Employment*
- *Desert Storm & Shield Veterans*
- *Information for a Diverse Membership* *and More...*



Active Certified & Non-Certified Member Elections

The PSERS Board of Trustees will conduct two elections this fall. One is for an active **certified** member and one for an active **non-certified** member, each to serve a three-year term on the Board beginning January 1, 2010.

Members desiring to run for election for the active **certified** member seat must:

- ☑ Be an active certified member of the System (*Certified* voting status designated on the annual *Statement of Account*).
- ☑ Submit an affidavit and nominating petition with 500 or more valid signatures of other PSERS active certified members.
- ☑ Submit a completed biographical form.

Members desiring to run for election for the active **non-certified** member seat must:

- ☑ Be an active non-certified member of the System (*Non-certified* voting status designated on the annual *Statement of Account*).
- ☑ Submit an affidavit and nominating petition with 250 or more valid signatures of other PSERS active non-certified members.
- ☑ Submit a completed biographical form.

To receive a nomination packet and more information on the duties and responsibilities of Board members, interested members may **write** to:

Donna Peterson
PSERS Election Coordinator
PO Box 125
Harrisburg, PA 17108-0125



Please be sure to specify in your request that you want information on the active **certified** or active **non-certified** member seat.

Your completed affidavit, nominating petition, and biographical form must be returned to Mrs. Peterson at the above address by 4:30 p.m. on June 19, 2009. ***Late receipt will disqualify any candidate from the election ballot.***

The *PSERS Active Member Newsletter* is intended for general informational purposes and to alert members about important deadlines, changes, and developments in the law or retirement policy. It should not, however, be relied on as providing legal advice or as the basis for individual retirement planning and decisions. The Public School Employees' Retirement System provides personalized retirement information and counseling services that can be accessed by calling toll-free, 1-888-773-7748. The contents of this newsletter may not be used for any commercial purpose without PSERS' prior written permission.

From the Desk of the Executive Director

A Message from PSERS Executive Director, Mr. Jeffrey B. Clay...

As I write this article its February and we are in the midst of a historic downturn in the economy. These times are very frightening for everyone, including active and retired PSERS members. You may be worrying whether you will ever be able to retire, or you may be worrying if your pension benefit will continue to arrive or if it will be enough to live on. Everyone is being affected by the downturn in the economy.

As a result, we have received a number of questions from concerned members and thought it would be helpful to share the responses to their questions.

1. I have read numerous articles about budget cuts and potential layoffs and furloughs in state government. If these cuts occur, will my pension benefit check still arrive on time each month?

Yes, your pension benefit will arrive on time each month, even in the event of budget cuts and layoffs and furloughs in state government. Paying our member's benefit payroll each month is a critical function of the agency and will remain the top priority for PSERS.

In addition, as a member of a defined benefit pension plan, your pension benefit is guaranteed by law and is not affected by the downturn in the financial markets.

2. My pension benefit does not seem to stretch as far in this economy, can I return to service at a public school without impacting my pension benefit?

The Public School Employees' Retirement Code generally does not permit school retirees to return to work in a Pennsylvania public school without suspending their monthly retirement benefits. Public schools include charter schools, community colleges, Penn

State University (PSU) and state-owned universities in addition to local school districts, vocational technical schools, and intermediate units.



Jeffrey B. Clay

There are two exceptions under which a school retiree may work in a public school without a suspension of benefits: emergency or shortage of personnel or an extracurricular position.

If a retiree working for a public school does not meet the emergency or shortage of personnel or the extracurricular position exceptions, the retiree's PSERS monthly benefit is suspended and the retirement account is subject to frozen annuity treatment.

For details about returning to service and frozen annuities, refer to the PSERS *Active Member* and *Retired Member Handbooks* on PSERS website at www.psers.state.pa.us. If you are already retired or considering retirement and think you may want to work for a Pennsylvania public school after retiring, contact PSERS' Member Service Center at 1-888-773-7748 to discuss how your employment could affect your PSERS benefits.

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PSERS
5 North 5th Street
PO Box 125
Harrisburg PA
17108-0125

Toll-Free
1-888-773-7748
Local Calls
717-787-8540
TTY (Text)
717-772-5379

Weekdays
(except holidays):
7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Website Address:
www.psers.state.pa.us
E-mail Address:
ra-ps-contact@state.pa.us

**PSERS is proud to be an
equal opportunity
employer supporting
workforce diversity.**

PSERS Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule

May 1, 2009
June 12, 2009
August 13, 2009
October 2, 2009
December 11, 2009

PSERS' Board meetings are held in Harrisburg at PSERS, located on 5 North 5th Street. In addition to these Board meetings, Committee meetings are held throughout the year. All PSERS Board meetings are open to the public.

For exact meeting times or if you would like to attend and require an accommodation to participate, please call Barbara Flurie, PSERS Executive Office at 1-888-773-7748, extension 4617.

Continued from page 2

3. Why can't PSERS grant a COLA or an Early Retirement Incentive?

PSERS legally does not have the authority to lobby for or seek benefit enhancements for our members, active or retired. That task resides with retiree and active member organizations, like the Pennsylvania Association of School Retirees (PASR), or the Pennsylvania State Education Association – Retired (PSEA-R).

That does not mean that PSERS is totally passive in this matter. Indeed since Act 38 of 2002, PSERS has worked closely with members of the General Assembly who have tried to craft COLAs or Early Retirement Incentives for our members. PSERS' activities include providing cost estimates, design suggestions, preparing proposed legislation, and testifying before various legislative committees.

4. Where can I view an update on the PSERS' investments?

PSERS is committed to providing access to public records to the fullest extent required by law to both PSERS' members and the general public. PSERS provides extensive data on the Fund's operations both on its website and through its publications.

PSERS releases investment information on a quarterly basis. This information includes quarterly investment performance, a list of investment managers, and net asset value information, as well as other detailed investment policies and guidelines and asset allocation information. This information is available on the investment page of PSERS' website at

www.psers.state.pa.us/invest/invest.htm. Please note there is generally a one to two month delay at the end of each quarter in posting the information to the website. This delay is common among public pension funds and is necessary to gather, review,

and check the investment information gathered from hundreds of managers and thousands of investments.

5. Is PSERS taking steps to control costs during the economic downturn?

Yes, PSERS is taking additional steps to control its own costs. PSERS is funded from the earnings of the Fund, not from the Commonwealth's General Fund, which means any funds we save go back to PSERS and not to the Commonwealth's General Fund. In addition, under the Retirement Code, PSERS Board and Staff are subject to both a duty of loyalty and prudence, meaning that they are obligated to operate the Fund as efficiently as possible. PSERS Board and Staff take these duties very seriously, not just during difficult economic times but each and every day. For example, PSERS operates its own internal equity trading room and manages nearly a third of its assets internally which saved nearly \$4 million in Fiscal Year 2008.

In light of the current downturn, PSERS created an internal budget reserve to further restrict spending. As a result PSERS is expected to lapse or return unspent budgetary dollars to the system at the end of the current fiscal year. The amount of the lapse will probably exceed the \$2.7 million savings from last year's budget.

In addition to cutting back costs, while not a General Fund agency, PSERS is subject to the Governor's Management Directives implementing a hiring freeze and banning most out-of-state travel. In addition, PSERS management employers are subject to the Governor's wage freeze for the both the current and next fiscal year.

PSERS will continue to look for ways to cut costs and operate as efficiently as possible without impacting service to our members.

Borrowing From Your PSERS Account?

The Pennsylvania Public School Employees' Retirement System Retirement Code (Act 96 of 1975) not only establishes the rules for PSERS to manage your retirement account, but it protects your PSERS benefit as well.

Under this law, PSERS may not loan you money. Your funds in PSERS may neither be used for collateral nor attached or assigned. The only way PSERS members receive their contributions and interest from their account is to terminate employment with all public school employers and apply for benefits.

These provisions under the law help to ensure that once you have retired, your benefit is protected well into your future.

Name & Address Changes

If you are an active member of PSERS, please report any change of your name or address to your employer. It is up to your employer to notify PSERS of any changes.

If you are a vested member who terminated active employment, please submit any name or address changes in writing to PSERS. Be sure to include your name, social security number, and your signature in the letter.

To ensure your security, e-mailed name and address changes will not be accepted.

Attention Desert Storm & Desert Shield Vets

A Message for Veterans of Desert Storm and Desert Shield...

Act 29 of 2006 established the Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Benefit Act. The program created by this Act allows compensation to be paid to eligible service members as well as certain surviving relatives of deceased veterans. The Pennsylvania Department of Military & Veteran Affairs (DMVA) has asked PSERS to help them notify veterans of Desert Storm and Desert Shield of the benefits available to veterans through this Act.

Any individual who served in the U.S. Armed Forces, Reserve component, or the Pennsylvania National Guard in the Persian Gulf Conflict during the period from August 2, 1990, through August 31, 1991, may be eligible to apply.

Eligible veterans qualify for a payment of \$75.00 per month (maximum of \$525.00) for each month of active service in theater. A benefit of \$5,000.00 may be awarded to a prisoner of war or certain family members of a veteran who died in active service or as a result of service-connected injury or disease.

The deadline for applying for this benefit is August 31, 2015. Details of the program are available on the DMVA website, www.persiangulfbonus.state.pa.us or by calling the program's toll-free number, 1-866-458-9182 (TTY 1-866-835-8983 for the hearing impaired).

If you know a veteran of Desert Storm or Desert Shield, we encourage you to share this important information with them.

Leaving Employment

If you are planning on leaving Pennsylvania public school employment at the end of this school year, please remember to inform your employer of your plans. It is important that your employer is aware of your resignation, as your employer needs to confirm with PSERS your termination from employment. PSERS cannot process your *Application for Retirement* or your *Application for Refund* without your employer's verification.

There are exceptions for those who apply for a disability retirement benefit. PSERS does not require those applying for a disability benefit to terminate school employment.

Your employer may have additional resignation requirements based on your contract with your employer. Please contact your employer for any additional requirements that your employer may have for their employees.

Foundations for Your Future (FFYF)

As a part of its educational outreach, PSERS provides *Foundations for Your Future* seminars for active members. PSERS regional representatives present these seminars throughout the school year to provide all active members with general information about PSERS benefits and services. Attendance at a *Foundations for Your Future* seminar will help you begin to plan for your retirement early in your career. These programs review PSERS related topics such as: benefit options, withdrawal of contributions, rollovers, taxes, employment after retirement, legislative actions affecting PSERS, and health insurance.

Listed below are meetings scheduled from mid-April 2009 through August 2009 (not inclusive, more dates may be added in some areas). Meetings prior to mid-April are listed on the PSERS website at www.psers.state.pa.us/regional/FFYF_Schedule_Overview.htm.

If you need directions to any of the meeting sites, please contact your regional office, the PSERS Member Service Center at 1-888-773-7748, or access the PSERS website at www.psers.state.pa.us/regional/FFYF_Schedule_Overview.htm. If there is a demand for additional seminars during the year, PSERS may add seminars and post them to the PSERS website. PSERS employers in the area will receive seminar notices as well.

Please Note: Advance registration is not required to attend any of these programs. If you require an accommodation to participate, please contact your PSERS regional office.

As this printed schedule is subject to change due to weather or other unforeseen conditions, we highly suggest that prior to leaving for a meeting, you verify the dates and times listed through the schedule posted on the PSERS website.

Southwest Region, Toll-Free 1-888-773-7748, extension 5775				
Counties Served: Allegheny, Fayette, Greene, & Washington				
County	City	Location & Address	Date	Time
Washington	Charleroi	Mon Valley Career and Technology Center, Classrooms 1 and 2, 1 Guttman Blvd.	August 5, 2009	1:00 p.m.
Allegheny	Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers Building, 10 South 19 th St.-at the river	July 8, 2009 July 22, 2009	1:00 p.m. 1:00 p.m.
Washington	Washington	Trinity Middle School, Auditorium, 50 Scenic Dr.	July 21, 2009	1:00 p.m.
Greene	Waynesburg	Waynesburg Central High School, Auditorium, 30 Zimmerman Dr.	July 29, 2009	1:00 p.m.
Southeast Region, Toll-Free 1-888-773-7748, extension 5575				
Counties Served: Bucks, Delaware, Montgomery, & Philadelphia				
County	City	Location & Address	Date	Time
Bucks	Jamison	Middle Bucks Institute of Technology, 2740 Old York Rd.	July 30, 2009	10:00 a.m.
Montgomery	Kulpsville	Best Western Inn at Towamencin, 1750 Sumneytown Pk.	July 9, 2009 August 19, 2009	10:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m.
Delaware	Morton	Delaware County Intermediate Unit, Education Service Center, Rooms 171 & 172, 200 Yale Ave.	July 7, 2009 August 5, 2009	10:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m.
Philadelphia	Philadelphia	Philadelphia Ramada Northeast, 11580 Roosevelt Blvd.	July 8, 2009 August 13, 2009	10:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m.
Bucks	Quakertown	Quakertown Area High School, 600 Park Ave.	August 11, 2009	10:00 a.m.

Foundations for Your Future (continued)

Southcentral Region, Toll-Free 1-888-773-7748, extension 5675 Counties Served: Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Mifflin, Perry, & York				
County	City	Location & Address	Date	Time
Lancaster	Lancaster	Lancaster-Lebanon IU, 1020 New Holland Ave.	April 15, 2009	4:30 p.m.
Mifflin	Lewistown	Lewistown Area High School, Auditorium, 2 Manor Dr.	April 23, 2009	4:30 p.m.
Lancaster	Lititz	Warwick Middle School, Auditorium, 401 Maple St.	August 11, 2009	10:00 a.m.
Northwest Region, Toll-Free 1-888-773-7748, extension 5175 Counties Served: Beaver, Butler, Clarion, Clearfield (DuBois Area School District only), Crawford, Erie, Forest, Jefferson, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, & Warren				
County	City	Location & Address	Date	Time
Clarion	Clarion	Riverview IU, 270 Mayfield Rd.	July 28, 2009	1:00 p.m.
Erie	Edinboro	Northwest Tri-County IU, 252 Waterford St.	July 23, 2009	1:00 p.m.
Venango	Franklin	Rocky Grove Jr/Sr High School, Auditorium, 403 Rocky Grove Ave.	August 4, 2009	1:00 p.m.
Beaver	Monaca	Community College of Beaver County, Library Resource Center, 103 Conference Room, 1 Campus Dr.	June 30, 2009	1:00 p.m.
Centraleast Region, Toll-Free 1-888-773-7748, extension 5475 Counties Served: Berks, Carbon, Chester, & Lehigh				
County	City	Location & Address	Date	Time
Lehigh	Allentown	Days Inn & Conference Center, 1151 Bulldog Dr.	August 19, 2009	10:30 a.m.
Carbon	Jim Thorpe	Jim Thorpe Area High School, 1100 Center St.	August 5, 2009	10:30 a.m.
Chester	Malvern	Great Valley Middle School, Choral Room, 255 N. Phoenixville Pk.	July 9, 2008	10:30 a.m.
Berks	Reading	Reading-Muhlenberg Career & Technology Center, Warren Rd.	July 29, 2009	10:30 a.m.
Northeast Region, Toll-Free 1-888-773-7748, extension 5375 Counties Served: Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Northampton, Pike, Susquehanna, Wayne, & Wyoming				
County	City	Location & Address	Date	Time
Lackawanna	Archbald	Valley View Jr-Sr High School Auditorium, 1 Columbus Dr.	April 16, 2009	4:30 p.m.
Centralwest Region, Toll-Free 1-888-773-7748, extension 5875 Counties Served: Armstrong, Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Indiana, Somerset, & Westmoreland				
County	City	Location & Address	Date	Time
Blair	Altoona	Ramada Inn-Altoona, Plank Road exit	August 14, 2009	10:00 a.m.
Cambria	Ebensburg	Comfort Inn, 111 Cook Rd.	August 3, 2009	10:00 a.m.
Westmoreland	Greensburg	Mountain View Inn, Route 30 East of Greensburg	July 24, 2009	11:00 a.m.
Indiana	Indiana	Best Western University Inn, 1545 Wayne Ave.	August 7, 2009	11:00 a.m.

Foundations for Your Future (continued)

Northcentral Region, Toll-Free 1-888-773-7748, extension 5275				
Counties Served: Bradford, Cameron, Centre, Clearfield (all districts except DuBois Area), Clinton, Columbia, Elk, Lycoming, McKean, Montour, Northumberland, Potter, Schuylkill, Snyder, Sullivan, Tioga, & Union				
County	City	Location & Address	Date	Time
Centre	Smethport	Smethport Area Junior/Senior High School, Auditorium, 412 S. Mechanic St.	April 14, 2009	4:30 p.m.
Tioga	Wellsboro	Wellsboro High School, Auditorium, 225 Nichols St.	April 28, 2009	4:30 p.m.
Lycoming	Williamsport	Holiday Inn Williamsport, 100 Pine St.	June 23, 2009	1:00 p.m.

The PSERS Active Newsletter... Providing Information for a Diverse Membership

Your PSERS member newsletter is changing to address the needs of our greatly diverse membership. Not all articles may apply to you personally, but with the diversity of PSERS members, we are attempting to provide as many members as possible with useful information. Whether you are actively contributing to PSERS or pending membership qualifications, new to PSERS with a few years of service or approaching retirement, a certified or non-certified employee, we hope to eventually provide you with answers to the questions you've thought about but never asked.

While in the past we have focused solely on changes in laws affecting members, explanations of current processes and regulations, we hope that this new direction addresses a broader audience. We took the first step in our PSERS *Update* by addressing inquiries of many members who asked PSERS about

all types of financial concerns and more detailed information about the type of plan in which they participate.



We will still provide information about legislative changes affecting our members, procedures, upcoming meetings, etc., but we hope to expand the information contained in our newsletters to cover everyday issues facing our members.

Before You Retire

For retirement benefits to begin promptly, PSERS must receive your *Application for Retirement* within 90 days of your termination date. If your *Application for Retirement* is received within 90 days of termination, your date of retirement will automatically become the day after your termination date.

If you select an alternate date of retirement, you may select any date after your date of termination, as long as PSERS has received your *Application for*

Retirement within 90 days of your termination date. If your application is not received within 90 days of your termination date, your retirement date will default to the date PSERS receives your application, or an alternate date of your choice, whichever is later.

It is important to remember this information when submitting your *Application for Retirement*.

**PSERS
5 N 5th Street
PO Box 125
Harrisburg PA 17108-0125**

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Public School Employees' Retirement System
Important Information from the
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania