



PSERS Active Member Newsletter

Volume 2 - 2020

A publication of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Public School Employees' Retirement System

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Publication #9285

Recognizing the uncertainty surrounding the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19), PSERS has established contingency plans to ensure that you remain our highest priority and that we continue to provide mission critical operations. Remember, stay calm, have patience, and follow PA Department of Health guidance to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Please monitor PSERS website and social media for messages from Executive Director Glen Grell regarding PSERS operations.

Active-Certified Member Board Election

The Public School Employees' Retirement System's (PSERS) Board of Trustees will conduct an election this fall for an active-certified member to serve a three-year term on the Board from January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2023.

Members who desire to run in the active-certified seat must:

- Be an active-certified member of PSERS. (Certified members are those in a position requiring certification by the Department of Education).
- Submit an affidavit and nominating petition with 500 or more valid signatures of other PSERS active-certified members.
- Submit a completed biographical form.

To receive a nomination packet and more information on the duties and responsibilities of Board members, interested active-certified members may email, fax, or write to:

Mercedes Evans, PSERS Election Coordinator
5 N 5th Street
Harrisburg PA 17101-1905
Email: mercevans@pa.gov
Fax: 717.772.5372

Your completed affidavit, nominating petition, and biographical form must be returned to Ms. Evans at the email address, mailing address, or fax above by 3:00 p.m. on September 11, 2020*. Late receipt will disqualify any candidate from the election ballot.

**The deadline for the submission of election materials, including signatures, has been extended to September 11, 2020, due to office closings from the COVID-19 pandemic.*

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Enhanced Online Security

New to the Member Self-Service Portal: Multi-Factor Authentication

PSERS will deploy Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) to the Member Self-Service (MSS) Portal this fall.

MFA is an authentication method in which an MSS user is granted account access only after successfully presenting two or more pieces of information (factors). It provides additional security beyond requiring a standard username and password so your sensitive data remains secure.

How will MFA Work in MSS?

It's simple! The MFA process should take a couple of minutes at most. Beginning this fall, MSS will require you to enter a unique verification code each time you log in to your account. You can choose to receive this code either by email or a text or phone call.

1. When you log in to the MSS Portal, you will be prompted to complete the MFA process. Your options include receiving an email, text, or phone call. If you choose for the verification code to be delivered via text or a phone call, you may select either one of the displayed phone numbers PSERS has on file for you or a new number.
2. The MFA verification code is sent via the method you selected.
3. Enter the code, then click DONE.

More detailed instructions will be provided at psers.pa.gov when MFA is implemented.



PSERS Board Elects Chairman and Vice Chairman

PSERS Board of Trustees voted to elect a new chairman and vice chairman at the annual public organizational meeting (Jan. 16, 2020) held at PSERS headquarters.

Both positions have one-year terms and are responsible for running PSERS public Board meetings in accordance with Pennsylvania law.

Trustee Christopher SantaMaria, an active-certified member representative, was elected to the post of board chairman. He replaces Melva S. Vogler, the retired member representative, who did not to seek another term as chairman.

Trustee Francis X. Ryan, who represents the state House Republican Caucus, was elected vice chairman. He replaces Trustee Nathan G. Mains, who opted not to seek another term. Mains is the Chief Executive Officer of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association, Inc.

"I'd like to thank my fellow trustees for the confidence of their votes and the trust they have bestowed on me and Frank to lead this fine board in 2020," said Mr. SantaMaria. "I mostly want to say to Mel how greatly I appreciate your service to the board and your service as board chair. Your great legacy as chair will include steady leadership through the worst financial crisis of my lifetime at least. You...maintained progress towards fulfilling the promise of a well-earned retirement benefits to about half a million Commonwealth citizens."

Ms. Vogler and Mr. Mains remain on the board as trustees.

"PSERS executive team welcomes the Trustees' new leadership team and looks forward to a strong working relationship," said Executive Director Glen Grell.

Mr. SantaMaria has been a trustee since 2017. He is a social studies teacher in the Lower Merion School District in Montgomery County. He was formerly president of the Lower Merion Education Association. Mr. SantaMaria holds a bachelor's degree in history from Washington College and a masters' degree in education from Cabrini College.

Representative Ryan has been a trustee since 2019. He is an elected state representative, representing parts of Lebanon County. He is a certified public accountant and retired Marine Reserve colonel. He holds a bachelor's degree from Mt. St. Mary's College and a master's degree in business administration from the University of Maryland.

The 15-member Board of Trustees is an independent administrative board of the Commonwealth. The Board stands in a fiduciary relationship to the members of PSERS regarding investment decisions and disbursements of the System's funds. The Board also performs other functions outlined in the Public School Employees' Retirement Code, such as certifying contribution rates, authorizing the actuarial valuation and independent audit of the System, and publishing an annual financial statement of the condition of the Retirement Fund. In addition, the Board oversees the operational activities performed by the System's Executive Director and Chief Investment Officer.



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holidays)
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

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psers.pa.gov

Email Address:
ContactPSERS@pa.gov

PSERS Member Self-Service (MSS) Portal Turns Two!

MSS Portal Turns Two!



Since MSS launched:

- **PSERS saved more than \$650,000 in printing and mailing cost.**
- **PSERS sent more than 1.5 Million pieces of correspondence electronically.**
- **Members completed more than 175,000 transactions online through the MSS Portal!**

PSERS Member Self-Service (MSS) Portal launched in 2018. Since then, PSERS has saved more than \$650,000 in printing and mailing cost through MSS' Paperless Delivery Option. As of February 29, 2020, PSERS has sent over 1.5 million pieces of correspondence electronically! Thank you for your continued commitment to help PSERS Go Green!

If you do not receive your correspondence electronically, PSERS encourages you to register for an MSS account and retain Paperless Delivery.

Members also completed over 175,000 transactions online. Commonly completed transactions include:

- Retirement Estimates
- Nomination of Beneficiary
- Address Change
- Income Verification

PSERS also looks forward to introducing upcoming enhancements to the MSS Portal which include:

- Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) *(see page 2 for more information)*
- Secure Messaging Availability
- Improved Performance with Apple® products and mobile devices

Importance of Keeping Your Beneficiary Information Current

Keeping your nomination up to date ensures that your death benefits are paid according to your wishes.

Did you know that if you do not have a beneficiary on file with PSERS or if your named beneficiary dies before you, your death benefit is paid to your estate? Naming a beneficiary with PSERS ensures that you have the final say on how your death benefit is distributed.

Nominating beneficiaries and updating beneficiary information is quick and easy through PSERS Member Self-Service (MSS) Portal. If you cannot access the MSS Portal, you can complete a *Nomination of Beneficiary* (PSRS-187) form—please remember, the most current form on file supersedes all previously filed nominations.

PSERS regularly encounters scenarios similar to these after a member dies:

- **The member did not nominate a beneficiary.**

Mike, a Pennsylvania public school employee, forgot to nominate beneficiaries. His wife and children depend on his income.

Mike passes away and his death benefit of \$500,000 is payable to his estate. To obtain that money, his family has to open an estate, which requires the payment of additional taxes and fees. If he would have nominated his wife and/ or children as beneficiaries, they would have received his death benefit directly and sooner, without having to pay estate taxes.

- **The member did not keep their nomination of beneficiaries up to date.**

Kate began her career as a Pennsylvania public school employee and nominated her mother and father as her beneficiaries. Years later, she marries and has two children, but never updates her nomination of beneficiaries.

Kate passes away, leaving behind her husband and two children. Her husband contacts PSERS inquiring about the death benefit of about \$700,000. Because Kate did not update her nomination, the death benefit is payable to her mother and father. Her husband and sons receive nothing. Even if her parents attempt to share the death benefit, the full amount is taxable to her parents. Any amounts given to Kate's husband or children would be subject to the tax rules regarding gifts.

You can view your most recent beneficiaries through the MSS Portal. Your beneficiaries are also listed in your annual *Statement of Account*, unless you opt not to display that information.

When should you review your beneficiary information?

Keeping your beneficiary information up to date with PSERS ensures that your death benefit is paid promptly and in accordance with your wishes. At a minimum, we encourage you to review beneficiary information if:

- You marry or divorce.
- You have a child or adopt a child.
- One or more of your beneficiaries changes their name or address.
- One of your beneficiaries dies.

Digital Inheritance: PSERS MSS Accounts

What happens to a member's PSERS MSS account once the member passes away?

To prevent fraudulent activity, PSERS will deactivate the member's MSS account once we receive notification that a member is deceased.

It is important to consider digital assets when estate planning. While PSERS will deactivate a deceased member's account, some companies and organizations may not close or may not know to close accounts. These open accounts could be vulnerable to hackers which may put information of family and friends at risk.*

** SANS Security Awareness, OUCH! January 2020*

PSERS Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule

June 11, 2020

August 6, 2020

October 8, 2020

December 2, 2020

PSERS Board meetings are held in Harrisburg at PSERS, located at 5 N 5th Street.

In addition to 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 Dennis Filipovich, PSERS Executive Office at 1.888.773.7748, extension 4617.

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

Voya's Secure Accounts for Everyone® (S.A.F.E) Guarantee

PSERS Class T-G, Class T-H, and Class DC members have a defined contribution (DC) participant account with Voya Financial®. You should access your account online to monitor and manage your investments. You may access your DC participant account online by signing into your Member Self-Service (MSS) account and clicking on the link under *Voya Account Access*.

Committed to Keeping Your DC Participant Account Secure – Message from Voya Financial

Voya is committed to safeguarding your financial accounts and personal information from the risk of fraud, cyber threats and unauthorized activity. As part of this effort, Voya established the Voya S.A.F.E.® (Secure Accounts for Everyone) Guarantee. If any assets are taken from your workplace retirement plan account due to unauthorized activity and through no fault of your own, Voya will restore the value of your account subject to satisfying a few key steps. Voya takes the issue of fraud and cyber risk seriously, and is focused on doing their part to maintain your trust and confidence.

Voya also believes that keeping your account secure is a mutual responsibility. Your responsibility includes:

1. Access your DC account through the PSERS MSS Portal or by registering for your DC account online at *PSERSDC.voya.com*.
2. Reviewing your account information on a regular basis and keep your contact information current. Voya recommends that you review your account information when you receive your quarterly financial statements.
3. Promptly reporting any suspected identity theft or unauthorized activity.
4. Practicing safe computing habits. (For example, do not share your username/password information, change your password periodically, be aware of phishing scams, do not open suspicious attachments or links, use current anti-virus software on your device, do not reuse login credentials)

Please note that in the event of a fraud claim, you will be required to cooperate in Voya's investigation. This may include reporting the claim to the appropriate authorities, providing a written affidavit, submitting your device for examination and signing a release. Following the investigation, Voya will determine how and to what extent the account will be restored (i.e. in cash or shares of securities).

Please also be aware that the provisions of this guarantee are subject to change from time to time to best reflect the current or changing risk environment and the appropriate security protocols.

PSERS Behind the Scenes

Introduction to PSERS' Information Technology Office – Business Architecture Center and Information Security Office

Mission of PSERS Information Technology Office (ITO): To provide information technology leadership that advances PSERS' mission, provides strategic direction, and delivers excellence in the technology services provided to PSERS' members, employers, internal staff, and the Board of Trustees.

PSERS' Chief Information Officer oversees ITO which includes the following:

- The Business Architecture Center (BAC) ensures that PSERS' browser-based pension administration system adheres to the agency's business rules, policies, and procedures. This center includes staff who collect, analyze, and document PSERS' processes, information systems and data, and perform detailed impact analysis. BAC serves a liaison between PSERS' business areas and application developers, translating business needs into technical requirements for developers.

What project is BAC currently working on? BAC is testing and implementing upgrades to the Member Self-Service (MSS) Portal, including the secure messaging function. See page 4 for more information about MSS upgrades.

- The Information Security Office (ISO) oversees information security policies and standards; provides compliance oversight and risk assessments; coordinates information security efforts, cyber security awareness, and security response if an incident were to occur. The ISO works in conjunction with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Office of Administration to protect the confidentiality, integrity and availability of member information.

What project is ISO currently working on? ISO is applying Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) to offer additional security in MSS. See page 2 for more information about MFA.

PSERS' ITO also includes the Bureau of Information Technology (BIT) and Project Management Office (PMO) which will be introduced in a future newsletter.

The ITO team is committed to advancing PSERS' mission, living by PSERS' core values and providing our membership with the highest-level of IT tools and services available.

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Important Information from the
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania