

PSERS Retired Member Newsletter

Volume 2 - 2022

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

Inside this Issue:

- ◆ Return to Service Reminders
 - ◆ Can you return to public school service in a day-to-day substitute position?
 - ◆ Authorizing Access to Your PSERS Account
 - ◆ HOP: Health Support When You Need it Most
- & More...

The Public School Employees' Retirement System (PSERS) provides this document for educational and informational purposes. Information in this document is general in nature, does not cover all factual circumstances, and is not a complete statement of the law or administrative rules. The statements in this document are not binding. In any conflict between the statements in this document and applicable law or administrative rules, the law and administrative rules will prevail. This document is designed solely to provide an overview of benefits available to PSERS members and is not intended to be a substitute for retirement counseling. The contents of this newsletter may not be used for any commercial purpose without PSERS' prior written permission.

Publication #9455

PSERS Retired Member/Participant Board Election

The PSERS Board of Trustees will conduct an annuitant member/participant election this fall. The annuitant member/participant will serve a three-year term on the Board beginning January 1, 2023.

Members desiring to run for election for the **annuitant member/participant** seat must:

- Be an annuitant member of the System or a Class DC participant receiving distributions.
- Submit an affidavit and nominating petition with 125 or more valid signatures from among the PSERS annuitant members and Class DC participants receiving distributions.
- Submit a completed biographical form.

Due to the ongoing pandemic-related school closures and virtual education, the Board election process will be conducted later this year. Members may request to receive a nomination packet and more information on the duties and responsibilities of Board members starting August 1, 2022. Interested members may write or email to:

Mercedes Evans
PSERS Election Coordinator
5 North 5th Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101
mercevans@pa.gov

Your completed affidavit, nominating petition, and biographical form must be returned to Ms. Evans at the email address or mailing address above by 5:00 p.m. on September 19, 2022. Late receipt will disqualify any candidate from the election ballot.

Return to Service Reminders

Except under specific circumstances, the Retirement Code prohibits retirees from returning to school service in a public school in any capacity, full-time or part-time, qualifying or non-qualifying service, while receiving a PSERS retirement benefit.

If you are a PSERS retiree, you may return to Pennsylvania public school service without stopping your pension under the following limited circumstances:

- **Personnel Shortage** - A shortage of appropriate subject-certified teachers or other personnel for as long as the shortage exists but limited to one school year.
- **Emergency that Increases the Workload** - An unforeseen emergency that increases the workload and creates a serious impairment of service to the public for as long as the emergency exists but limited to one school year.
- **Extracurricular Position** - An extracurricular position under a separate written contract that contains the statutory contractual terms and conditions. More information about the contract is contained in the *Return to Service Exceptions* publication on [PSERS.pa.gov](https://psers.pa.gov).
- **Independent Contractor** – Contractual arrangement with the employer to perform specified services, for a sum certain, and for a specific period of time as an independent contractor and not as a school employee.
- **Employment with a Third-Party Employer** – Providing services to a public school employer through employment with a legitimate third-party employer that is not a reporting unit of PSERS.
- **Enrollment in Alternate Retirement Plan** – Employment with any of the state’s community colleges, Pennsylvania State University, or the 14 state-owned universities and enrollment in an alternate retirement plan (e.g., State Employees’ Retirement System or Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association).

Can you return to public school service in a day-to-day substitute position?

You may have recently heard of schools having difficulty filling positions such as substitute teachers and bus drivers. Have you wondered if you might be able to help in a day-to-day substitute capacity without jeopardizing your PSERS pension?

You can! Act 91 was recently signed into law recognizing the current shortage of personnel in the classroom and making it easier for PSERS retirees to help in substitute positions through June 30, 2023. For the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years, school administrators have flexibility to staff the classrooms, even with PSERS-retirees in the event of a shortage.

Public school employers can receive pre-approval from PSERS to hire PSERS retirees as short-term or long-term substitutes using our School Year Approval Process. You can check the PSERS website to see if your local school has been pre-approved under our School Year Approval Process and for what positions, like substitutes or transportation drivers. If your school is listed on PSERS website and you’re asked to fill a position covered under PSERS pre-approval, then you can return to that position without your pension being stopped. If you don’t see your school’s name, be sure to encourage your school to seek PSERS pre-approval so you can assist in the classroom without jeopardizing your pension.

Additional information on PSERS retirees returning to work in a different capacity without stopping their pension is in PSERS’ *Return to Service Exceptions* publication on [PSERS.pa.gov](https://psers.pa.gov).

Authorizing Access to Your PSERS Account

At times, members may want to share their PSERS account information with financial planners, attorneys, financial institutions, housing authorities, family members, etc. Submitting an *Authorization for Release of Information* (PSRS-1273) form permits PSERS to provide account information to someone other than the member.

About the Authorization for Release of Information

The *Authorization for Release of Information* only gives access to your information. It does not authorize another to make any changes to your account. It also does not revoke or serve as a substitute for the designation of a power of attorney or a legal guardian.

When you complete the authorization, please carefully review the individual or entity you're releasing your information to, the length of time the authorization is valid, and what documents you wish to release to the individual or entity.

If you wish to revoke your authorization prior to the expiration of the term limit that you identified on the form, you must submit a letter to PSERS stating that you are rescinding the authorization for the person(s) you previously named.

Members also may find it necessary or advisable to designate another person as agent to handle their personal affairs. To designate an agent with PSERS, you can complete a *PSERS Power of Attorney* (PSRS-248) form. Submitting the PSRS-248 form provides specific power of attorney (POA) authorization for PSERS transactions only and would usually not be accepted by other organizations for their POA requirements.

You may submit a POA document other than the PSERS POA form, but it will need to be reviewed and approved to ensure it meets all legal requirements.

About a Power of Attorney (POA)

A POA authorizes your agent to make changes or perform transactions to your PSERS account, such as changing: your address, electronic transfer, federal tax withholding status, or medical insurance coverage. An agent acting under a POA has only that authority granted by the POA. Under a general grant of authority, the agent can conduct retirement plan transactions of any nature on behalf of the member but may be restricted in naming beneficiaries.

You may revoke a POA at any time by providing written notice of your revocation to PSERS.

PSERS Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule

January 13, 2022

March 10-11, 2022

June 16-17, 2022

August 4-5, 2022

October 17-18, 2022

December 15-16, 2022

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 contact Tivia Danner, PSERS Executive Office at tidanner@pa.gov.

Health Options Program: Health Support When You Need it Most

The Health Options Program offers more than just medical, prescription drug, dental, and vision coverage. The well-being programs listed below support our members should they have a serious health issue, a hospital admission, or want to focus on their well-being.

Elder Care Program	Health Care Management	SilverSneakers
<p>This program connects members with resources to improve overall well-being.</p> <p>For example, the Elder Care Program can help with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local transportation • Utilities • Prescription drug delivery • Nutrition counseling • Condition-specific support • Discount programs 	<p>For more serious health conditions or treatments, the Health Care Management program connects with our members live, over the phone.</p> <p>For example, members with a planned hospital stay or in need of skilled nursing care will receive a call from this team to assist with the transition plan and details.</p>	<p>SilverSneakers supports an active lifestyle through fitness and social connection. When members enroll in the HOP Medical Plan or HOP Pre-65 Medical Plan, they have access to SilverSneakers classes (in person and online).</p>

As a reminder, PSERS members can enroll in the Health Options Program when they have a qualifying event, such as turning age 65.

If you have a question about enrolling in the Health Options Program, call the HOP Administration Unit at 1.800.773.7725. You can also visit us at HOPbenefits.com.

Board Chairman and Vice Chair

PSERS Board of Trustees voted to elect a chairman and vice chairman at the annual public organizational meeting on January 13, 2022, each with one-year terms.

Trustee Christopher Santa Maria, an active certified member representative, was re-elected to the post of board chairman. Trustee Francis X. Ryan, who represents the state House Republican Caucus, was re-elected vice chairman.

Mr. Santa Maria has been a trustee since 2017. He is a social studies teacher in the Lower Merion School District in Montgomery County and former president of the Lower Merion Education Association. Mr. Santa Maria holds a bachelor's degree in history from Washington College and a master's 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 a retired Marine Reserve colonel. He holds a bachelor's degree from Mount 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 and oversees the operational and investment activities of the funds.

PSERS Board of Trustees Releases Internal Investigation Report; No Evidence Of Criminal Conduct

On January 31, 2022, Board of Trustees of the Public School Employees' Retirement System authorized the public release of the complete results of the nearly year-long internal investigation into the shared risk calculation error that occurred in late 2020. The internal investigation, conducted by the law firm Womble Bond Dickinson, also included a review of Harrisburg real estate purchases by the System. After receiving the report during the meeting, the Board released the Womble Bond report, including all appendices and exhibits on the PSERS website. Womble Bond Dickinson found no evidence of criminal conduct. "Today marked an important milestone in the internal investigation and provided an opportunity at PSERS for both the Board and staff," said Board Chairman Christopher Santa Maria. "We are committed to learning from this process and will continue our best efforts to serve our members."

In March 2021, the PSERS Board delegated authority to the Audit/Compliance Committee to oversee an internal investigation of the circumstances surrounding an error in the reporting of investment performance results used by the Board in its December 3, 2020, certification of member contribution rates and shared risk calculation. "I am thankful for the efforts of the PSERS Board and Audit/Compliance Committee over the past year," said Audit Committee Chairman Rep. Frank Ryan. "It was our goal to have an independent and fair investigation and I believe we achieved that. I am also pleased that the board has chosen to make the entire results of the investigation available to the public." The report can be found on PSERS website at: [https://www.psers.pa.gov/About/Board/Documents/ Reports/2022.02.01%20-%20Final%20Womble%20Bond%20 Report%20with%20Exhibits.PDF](https://www.psers.pa.gov/About/Board/Documents/Reports/2022.02.01%20-%20Final%20Womble%20Bond%20Report%20with%20Exhibits.PDF)

PSERS
5 N 5th Street
Harrisburg PA
17101-1905

Toll-Free:
1.888.773.7748

Local Calls:
717.787.8540

FAX:
717.772.3860

Website Address:
PSERS.pa.gov

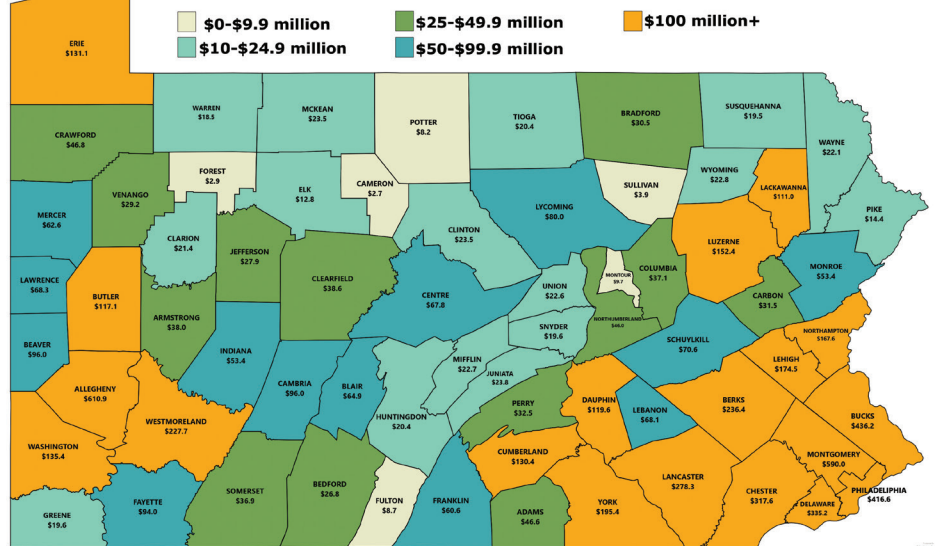
Email Address:
ContactPSERS@pa.gov

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

\$6.7 Billion Paid to PA Retirees in Fiscal Year 2020-2021

PSERS provides a stable source of revenue for local economies throughout Pennsylvania. Each year PSERS pays out billions in pension benefits to retired members who reside in Pennsylvania. In fiscal year 2021, PSERS retiree benefits totaled approximately \$7.1 billion. Of this amount nearly 94%, or \$6.7 billion, went directly into state and local economies. These pension benefits are a significant economic driver that benefit the economy of the Commonwealth.

Total Benefit Payments Made in Pennsylvania - \$6.7 Billion



Sign Up for Direct Deposit

Direct deposit is a safe, reliable way to receive your PSERS monthly payments. To sign up, please complete and mail the *Authorization for Direct Deposit – Electronic Transfer of Monthly Benefit* (PSRS-116) form located on the PSERS website.

Upon receipt of your properly completed form, we will update your account to authorize the electronic transmission of your retirement benefit to your bank account. A confirmation letter is sent when your direct deposit request is processed. Please note, it may take up to 60 days for direct deposit to become effective. You will continue to receive your paper check until direct deposit takes effect.

If you are changing the bank account where you would like to receive your benefit, please be aware that direct deposits will still be sent to the old account until PSERS processes your request. Please keep your current account open until you receive your first payment into your new account.

PSERS Member Self-Service (MSS) Portal Turns Four

PSERS Member Self-Service (MSS) Portal launched in 2018. Since then, PSERS has saved more than \$1 million in printing and mailing costs through MSS' Paperless Delivery option.

As of February 28, 2022, PSERS has sent more than 4.3 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 more than 255,000 transactions online.

Commonly completed transactions include:

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

PSERS continues to make enhancements to the MSS Portal to improve user experience. In addition to an improved navigation and the application status trackers, the MSS Portal was recently upgraded to be more user friendly on mobile devices.

Don't have an MSS account? Register today! MSS is a secure portal that provides 24-hour access to your retirement account online, anytime. You can update your home address, email address, and telephone numbers, nominate beneficiaries, view your annual *Form 1099-R*, generate income verifications, and so much more. Simply visit PSERS.pa.gov and select the Member Login (MSS) link. You will need your PSERS ID, Social Security number, date of birth, and a valid email address to create your account.

Need Your PSERS ID? The PSERS ID is a safe alternative to using your Social Security number when corresponding with PSERS and is needed to create your MSS account. Look for your PSERS ID in the top right corner of most of your recent PSERS correspondence mailed to your home. You also can connect with PSERS at ContactPSERS@pa.gov or 1.888.773.7748 to have your PSERS ID mailed to you.

PSERS sent nearly 70,000 *Form 1099-Rs* through Paperless Delivery

Members who receive their 1099-R forms electronically typically receive their forms before those who receive mailed forms.

Paperless Delivery is a safe, convenient way to receive your documents from PSERS.

You are automatically enrolled in Paperless Delivery when you register for your Member Self-Service (MSS) account.

Follow PSERS on Social Media

Follow PSERS on social media for retirement information, educational videos and fact sheets, PSERS investment highlights, and more! PSERS is on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube (PA Public School Employees' Retirement System)!

 @PA_PSERS

 @PennPSERS

**PSERS
5 N 5th Street
Harrisburg PA 17101-1905**

**PRSRT STD
U.S. Postage Paid
Harrisburg PA
Permit No. 254**

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