

mrspa

MARYLAND RETIRED
SCHOOL PERSONNEL ASSOCIATION

news



advocate

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connect

Volume XLIV, No. 5

Spring 2026

2025 - 2026 Classroom Grant Winners



Area III North - Queen Anne's County
Bayside Elementary School
Brandie Martensson, Winner; Richard McNeal, QARSPA President; Dr. Debbie Chance, Area III North Director
The Living Lab



Area II South - Prince George's County
Oxon Hill High School
Jaqueline Marquez, Winner;
Ronald Miller, Principal
Student Ambassadors



Area II North - Harford County
Science & Math Academy at Aberdeen HS
Bill Ekey, HCRSPA Treasurer;
Mike Homishak, Winner;
Linda Chamberlin, HCRSPA President
Labs on Demand

MRSPA has once again, through our Community Service Committee, with the support of the *MRSPA Foundation*, awarded six grants to Maryland teachers to support and enhance their curriculum. One applicant from each of MRSPA's six geographical areas received a \$500 grant.

Committee members reviewed and scored 85 applications from 18 school systems. Grants are offered for projects that are not funded by the school system or parent-teacher organizations. The variety of applications shows the great need for funding to provide enhancement or enrichment of the curriculum for students.

This year, four award presentations were made in person at the school with the help of MRSPA and local leaders. Thank you to the presenters and everyone who supports our grant program by donating to the *MRSPA Foundation*. Donations can be made through our annual fundraising raffle or at any time by sending a check payable to the *MRSPA Foundation* to the MRSPA office in Odenton.

**None of this is possible without
your financial support!**



Area III South - Somerset County
Somerset Technical High School
Cortney Monar, Principal; Tillie Barckley, MRSPA Vice President; Lisa Ward, Winner
Taste of Somerset



Area I East - Carroll County
Carroll County Career & Technical Center
Thomas Riddle, Principal;
Mike Campanile, Winner
Masonry Arch



Area I West - Washington County
Hancock Middle Senior High School
Jennifer Ruppenthal, Principal;
Bethany Meyers, Winner;
Cut Flower Beds



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Betty Weller

Leo Tolstoy once said, "Spring is the time of plans and projects." During my term as President of the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association, there have been changes to our website, our logo, and our structure, focusing more directly on our vision and mission. An anonymous person said, "Spring: a lovely reminder of how beautiful change can truly be." We need to embrace change for the sake of our survival. No matter the change, however, certain things will remain constant. We will still have committees and will need committee members to accomplish our goals. These goals include working for the betterment of the lives of retired school personnel and providing opportunities to advocate, serve, and connect. We will still have legislative priorities aimed at improving the quality of life for our members and others. Our connections to active education employees and students will remain.

At the state level, MRSPA is working to remain relevant and keep up with the times. Having recently created a new Strategic Plan for MRSPA, we're focused on streamlining our structure and making sure we are effectively and efficiently working toward our Vision and Mission statements as well as our Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion. Growing membership remains a top priority.

We are a membership organization, and it is the members that define the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association. This Association has something for everyone: committees anyone can join, activities they can participate in, and opportunities to stay involved and active at whatever level a member desires. We offer discount programs that will more than pay for your dues if you take advantage of them.

Zack Braff, actor and filmmaker, said, "It's all about being a part of something in the community, socializing with people who share interests and coming together to help improve the world we live in." To me, this quote describes what Maryland Retired School Personnel is about. I've enjoyed my tenure as your President over

MRSPA News

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Editor

Debbie J. Hance

Officers

- President.....Betty Weller
- President-Elect.....Alice Mitchell
- Vice President.....Tillie Barckley
- Secretary.....Sharyn Doyle
- Treasurer.....Dr. Stephen Raucher

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these almost two years. It's been a pleasure meeting so many of you and working with you. At the Annual Business Meeting, a new President, Alice Mitchell, will be installed, and the work will continue.

Thank you all. Thank you, Wanda, our Executive Director, who has worked so hard to move the Association forward and thank you to her small, but mighty staff who do so much of the behind-the-scenes work. Thank you, Board of Directors for your dedication to the Association and to the members. Thank you, Local Presidents, and your teams for your time and leadership. It's been my extreme pleasure to work with all of you!

***Opportunities to Advocate,
Serve, and Connect***

Bylaws Committee
2026 Proposed Bylaw Amendments

<p>Current Language Article III – Membership, Section 2. Emeritus Membership, b., Emeritus members shall be entitled to participate in all activities of the Association, including chairing a committee, voting, and holding elective office and shall be exempt from further payment of dues.</p>	<p>Proposed Change Article III – Membership, Section 2. Emeritus Membership, b., Emeritus members shall be entitled to participate in all activities of the Association, including chairing a committee, voting, and holding elective office and may be exempt from further payment of dues.</p>	<p>Rationale Some emeritus members of MRSPA would like to continue paying dues to show their support of the organization. Changing “shall” to “may” allows emeritus members the option of continuing to pay dues. Each emeritus member receives a letter when they are about to become emeritus. This letter would inform them that they no longer have to pay annual dues unless they choose. Only emeritus members who choose to continue paying dues would contact MRSPA to inform us of that choice. All others would cease paying dues.</p>
<p>Article VI – Officers Section 3. Terms of Officers, c. The term of office of the Secretary shall be for three (3) years and may not exceed one additional consecutive term of three years.</p>	<p>Article VI – Officers, Section 3, Terms of Officers, c., The term of office of the Secretary shall be for three (3) years.</p>	<p>To remove term limits from the position of secretary.</p>
<p>Article VI – Officers, Section 3. Terms of Officers, d., The term of office of the Treasurer shall be for three (3) years and may not exceed one additional consecutive term of three years.</p>	<p>Article VI – Officers, Section 3. Terms of Officers d., The term of office of the Treasurer shall be for three (3) years.</p>	<p>To remove term limits from the position of treasurer.</p>
<p>Article VIII Area Directors, Section 3. Term The Area Directors shall serve a term of three (3) years and may be reappointed for one additional consecutive term upon recommendation of the local Presidents in the Area.</p>	<p>Article VIII Area Directors, Section 3. Term The term of an Area Director is three (3) years.</p>	<p>To remove term limits from the position of Area Director.</p>
<p>Article XIII – Standing Committees, Section 3. The Committee Chairs may serve a maximum of four (4) consecutive years.</p>	<p>Article XIII – Standing Committees, Section 3. The term of a Standing Committee Chair is three (3) years.</p>	<p>To remove term limits from the position of standing committee chair.</p>

2026 Proposed Bylaw Amendments Continued

Current Language	Proposed Change	Rationale
<p>Article XIII – Standing Committees, Section 4. The Standing Committees of this Association shall be: Bylaws, Community Service, Consumer Education, Finance, Legislative, Member Benefits, Membership, Nominating, Public Relations, Scholarship, and Travel.</p>	<p>Article XIII – Standing Committees, Section 4. The Standing Committees of this Association shall be Bylaws, Community Service, Finance, Legislative, Membership, and Nominating.</p>	<p>To bring the committee structure of the Association in line with the MRSPA Strategic Plan 2026-2029. Most activities of the Consumer Education, Member Benefits, and Public Relations committees will be included in the Membership Committee activities when those committees are retired. The Scholarship Committee and the grant activity of the Community Service Committee would move to the auspices of the MRSPA Foundation. Travel Committee activities would be retired with the committee.</p>

BYLAWS COMMITTEE

*Dr. John Bowman, II, Chair, Allegany County
 Matilda “Tillie” Barckley, Anne Arundel County
 Dr. Stephen Raucher, Montgomery County
 George Sparks, Jr., Baltimore County
 Betty Weller, Kent County*



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2026-2027 MRSPA Proposed Budget

MARYLAND RETIRED SCHOOL PERSONNEL ASSOCIATION PROPOSED BUDGET 2026-2027 - Page 1 INCOME

LINE #	ACCOUNT NAME	ACTUAL 2024 - 2025	BUDGET 2025-2026	RECEIVED TO December 2025	REQUESTED BUDGET 2026-2027	PROPOSED BUDGET 2026-2027
1	REVENUE					
2	MEMBERSHIP DUES					
3	Membership Dues-State	543,067	545,000	527,341	537,500	537,500
4	TRAVEL COMMISSIONS	6,263	3,000	1,310	1,000	1,000
5	INTEREST ON SAVINGS/CD	453	400	212	400	400
6	GAIN/LOSS ON INVESTMENT FUNDS	44,510	35,000	39,500	45,000	50,000
7	Annual Meeting	4,050	4,000	-	4,000	4,000
8	MRSPA Foundation	300		50	-	-
9	Retirement Folder Ads	-	-	-	-	-
10	Misc Income - Newsletter Ads	2,400	1,000	-	2,500	2,500
11	<u>Non Dues</u> Revenue	25,902	29,200	396	25,000	25,000
12	TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 626,944	\$ 617,600	\$ 568,809	\$ 615,400	\$ 620,400
13	INCOMING TRANSFERS					
14	Membership Dues - Local Associations	151,194	156,000	146,238	151,000	151,000
15	Transfer from Investment Account	0	53,416	0	45,689	47,579
16	Retiree HealthCare - LPL Financial Transfer	3,453	3,700	1,844	4,000	4,000
17	Retiree HealthCare - Retiree Contribution	1,585	1,620	814	1,700	1,700
18	TOTAL INCOMING TRANSFERS	\$ 156,232	\$ 214,736	\$ 148,896	\$ 202,389	\$ 204,279
19	TOTAL BAL FORWARD+REVENUE+TRANSFERS	\$ 783,177	\$ 832,336	\$ 717,705	\$ 817,789	\$ 824,679

MARYLAND RETIRED SCHOOL PERSONNEL ASSOCIATION PROPOSED BUDGET 2026-2027 - Page 2 Expenditures

LINE #	ACCOUNT NAME	ACTUAL 2024 - 2025	BUDGET 2025-2026	RECEIVED TO December 2025	REQUESTED BUDGET 2026-2027	PROPOSED BUDGET 2026-2027
1	OFFICERS					
2	President	1,910	4,600	316	5,000	5,000
3	Immediate Past President	0	0	0	600	600
4	President-elect	0	500	0	0	0
5	Vice-President	42	500	44	1,260	1,260
6	Secretary	45	200	39	200	200
7	Treasurer	0	800	0	800	400
8	Board of Directors	4,089	3,000	2,506	3,000	5,000
9	Executive Committee	559	1,200	14	1,200	1,200
10	AREA DIRECTORS					
11	Area I - West	134	500	0	500	350
12	Area I - East	134	180	0	180	180
13	Area II - North	206	225	172	1,260	750
14	Area II - South	72	350	0	350	300
15	Area III - North	203	200	141	250	250
16	Area III - South	26	300	166	300	300
17	TOTAL OFFICERS	\$ 7,420	\$ 12,555	\$ 3,397	\$ 14,900	\$ 15,790
18	STANDING COMMITTEES					
19	Bylaws	0	200	0	200	200
20	Consumer Education	544	1,000	17	0	0
21	Legislative	10,793	15,500	3,510	17,000	17,000
22	Membership	39,495	35,000	14,291	35,000	35,000
23	Travel	256	500	0	0	0
24	Community Service	1,174	1,000	399	1,000	1,000
25	Finance	200	400	0	400	400
26	Member Benefits	3	1,000	1,012	0	0
27	Public Relations	7,488	4,000	1,925	0	0
28	Scholarship	379	1,200	113	0	0
29	Nominating	0	150		150	150
30	Holding	0	0		6,200	6,200
31	TOTAL STANDING COMMITTEES	\$ 60,332	\$ 59,950	\$ 21,268	\$ 59,950	\$ 59,950

**Maryland Retired School Personnel Association
Proposed Budget 2026-2027 - Page 3**

Expenditures

LINE #	ACCOUNT NAME	ACTUAL 2024 - 2025	BUDGET 2025-2026	RECEIVED TO December 2025	REQUESTED BUDGET 2026-2027	PROPOSED BUDGET 2026-2027
1	MRSPA NEWSLETTER					
2	Publications	\$ 27,694	\$ 27,000	\$ 12,274	\$ 27,000	\$ 27,000
3	TOTAL MRSPA NEWSLETTER	\$ 27,694	\$ 27,000	\$ 12,274	\$ 27,000	\$ 27,000
4	ANNUAL ACTIVITIES				-	
5	Annual Business Meeting	28,707	29,000	36	29,000	29,000
6	Organization Handbook	0	300	0	300	300
7	Leadership Training	5,735	5,000	138	5,000	5,000
8	MRSPA Foundation	662	500	329	500	500
9	Local Association Presidents' Workshop	346	4,000	63	3,000	3,000
10	TOTAL ANNUAL ACTIVITIES	\$ 35,450	\$ 38,800	\$ 566	\$ 37,800	\$ 37,800
11	ADMINISTRATIVE					
12	Salaries and Wages	22,722	233,841	116,836	208,864	208,864
13	Bookkeeping - Services	14,638	15,422	7,711	17,733	17,733
14	Bookkeeping - Software Fees	1,304	1,260	774	1,680	1,680
15	Bookkeeping - Bill.com	2,452	2,600	1,359	2,600	2,600
16	Expense Account	2,957	3,000	1,374	4,000	4,000
17	Staff Development	0	1,000	0	1,000	1,000
18	Recruitment	756	4,000	0	4,000	10,000
19	Legal and Valuation Services	1,738	3,500	264	3,500	3,500
20	Auditor	16,550	13,000	0	13,000	13,000
21	Taxes (Corporate Income & Property)	119	300	2,151	2,151	2,151
22	General Supplies	89	600	119	250	250
23	Office Supplies	3,701	3,618	3,154	4,000	4,000
24	Printing	615	1,500	122	1,500	1,500
25	Postage	1,005	750	210	750	750
26	Insurance	7,406	11,000	1,270	10,000	10,000
27	Telephone/Communication	3,478	3,000	1,949	3,500	3,500
28	Office Rent	72,369	73,817	36,543	73,816	73,816
29	Office Equipment - New	0	5,000	6,311	6,500	6,500
30	Equipment Rental	3,516	4,900	1,615	4,900	4,900
31	Equipment Repairs and Maintenance	1,365	2,300	25	1,300	1,300
32	Maintenance - Software and Virus Protection	6,433	5,000	6,490	10,300	10,300
33	Web Development	0	800	0	10,000	10,000
34	Web Hosting	433		99	450	450
35	Staff Retiree Health Trust	0	0	0	0	0
36	Advertising	0	75,000	58,513	75,000	75,000
37	TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE	\$ 163,645	\$ 465,208	\$ 246,888	\$ 460,794	\$ 466,794

**Maryland Retired School Personnel Association
Proposed Budget 2026-2027 - Page 4**

Expenditures

LINE #	ACCOUNT NAME	ACTUAL 2024 - 2025	BUDGET 2025-2026	RECEIVED TO December 2025	REQUESTED BUDGET 2026-2027	PROPOSED BUDGET 2026-2027
1	OTHER					
2	Retiree Insurance	5,472	5,756	2,373	5,700	5,700
3	Reimbursement of Membership Dues	0	500	0	0	0
4	TOTAL OTHER	\$ 5,472	\$ 6,256	\$ 2,373	\$ 5,700	\$ 5,700
5	UNCLASSIFIED					
6	PayPal / Stripe Transaction Fees	1,679	2,000	1,402	1,800	1,800
7	Bank Charges	874	1,200	712	900	900
8	Payroll Taxes (SS, Medicare, FUTA, SUTA)	16,177	18,617	7,676	14,911	14,911
9	Payroll Benefits (SEP IRA)	19,761	23,793	10,822	22,034	22,034
10	Payroll Benefits (Employee Insurance)	4,879	21,000	2,383	21,000	21,000
11	Contingency Fund		-		-	-
12	TOTAL UNCLASSIFIED	\$ 43,370	\$ 66,611	\$ 22,994	\$ 60,645	\$ 60,645
13	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 343,383	\$ 676,380	\$ 309,761	\$ 666,789	\$ 673,679
14	TRANSFERS					
15	Transfer to Investment Account	-	-	-	-	-
16	Local Association Dues	150,954	151,000	146,408	151,000	151,000
17	MRSPA Foundation	-	-	-	-	-
18	TOTAL TRANSFERS	\$ 150,954	\$ 151,000	\$ 146,408	\$ 151,000	\$ 151,000
19	TOTAL EXPENDITURES & TRANSFERS	\$ 494,337	\$ 827,380	\$ 456,169	\$ 817,789	\$ 824,679

2026-2027 Proposed MRSPA Budget Notes

- Page 1, Line 3:** Income from dues is based on an estimated 10,750 dues-paying members at \$50 each for a total of \$537,500.
- Page 1, Line 11:** Non-dues revenue includes funding from AMBA per the agreement.
- Page 1, Line 16:** Transfer from MRSPA investments to fund a campaign to increase membership.
- Page 2, Line 30:** New line item includes funds from committees that may be retired via a Bylaw Amendment in keeping with the MRSPA Strategic Plan. Lines 20, 23, 26, 27, and 28 are zeroed out with funds in Line 30 should Amendment fail to pass.
- Page 3, Line 12:** Decrease from 2026 budget is result of hiring a new executive director at a lower salary upon the retirement of the current executive director.
- Page 3, Line 28:** Result of contract negotiation to hold rent steady for a year.
- Page 3, Line 32:** Includes possible purchase of new software to allow members to more easily contact legislators about legislation.
- Page 3, Line 36:** Funds advertising campaign to increase membership including a website refresh.
- Page 4, Line 9:** Payroll Tax decrease is result of lower salary for new executive director.

MRSPA Legislative Committee

The Maryland General Assembly has passed its mid-way point of the 90-day session. From the perspective of retired school personnel, so far, this has been a fairly uneventful session for two reasons: it is an election year, and Maryland is facing a budget shortfall, which typically curtails new legislation that has a fiscal note.

We have addressed the recurring bills that involve legislative attempts to set curriculum, which we routinely oppose, not because the curriculum suggestion doesn't have merit, but because our position is that curriculum decisions should be left to educators. We also have opposed bills that seem to be designed to discourage voting or make it harder for citizens to vote. The Association strongly opposes the parts of the budget that shift costs for pensions, from the state to the local subdivisions. Local associations were also asked to submit letters opposing this cost shift.

We have supported legislation that is designed to improve the financial situation for seniors living in the State of Maryland, but considering the fiscal situation, those bills are probably not going to pass. We have also endorsed income tax credits for the cost of caring for elderly relatives at home. A bill to clarify the calculation of cost-of-living adjustments for state pensions for the fiscal year received our support and is likely to pass.

On the federal level, we have contacted Maryland's federal legislators and asked that they challenge the

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Chair, Vacant, County/City
Matilda "Tillie" Barkley, Anne Arundel County
Dr. Debbie Chance, Talbot County
Christina Douette, Washington County
Carla Duls, Anne Arundel County
Nancy Gordon, Frederick County
Alice Mitchell, Dorchester County
Dr. Stephen Raucher, Montgomery County
John Sisson, Prince George's & Worcester Counties
Sally Smith, Frederick County
Betty Weller, Kent County

U.S. Postal Service's new regulations that change the date of a postmark from the date when the mail is deposited into a postal collection box to the date that the Postal Service processes the mail. This delay could affect mail-in voting, the payment of bills by mail, and the filing of tax returns.

Your Legislative Committee continues to look out for your interests in Annapolis and in Washington, D.C. After the session ends in early April, a final report of the activities of the Legislative Committee will be submitted.



Tom Slater
MRSPA Legislative Committee
Chairman



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MRSPA CALENDAR

- April 3-6.....Spring Break
MRSPA Office Closed
- April 13.....Sine Die, G.A. Session Ends
Annapolis
- May 5.....Annual Business Meeting
Turf Valley Resort
- May 25.....Memorial Day Holiday
MRSPA Office Closed
- June 9.....Executive Committee Meeting
Hybrid
- June 19.....Juneteenth Holiday
MRSPA Office Closed
- July 1.....New Membership Year Begins
Odenton, MD



MRSPA TRIPS AND TRAVEL 2026



British Landscapes: England, Scotland, Wales, April 14, 2026, Collette Tours via Travel Leaders/Action Travel, Leigh Ann Keller, 301-843-0887. <https://shorturl.at/wjH4O>

Canadian Rockies via Rail, June 17, 2026, Premier World Discovery, 877-953-8687. <https://shorturl.at/OG70r>

Iceland: Land of Fire & Ice, August 7, 2026, Mayflower Cruises & Tours, Liz Unger at 443-904-4540, or Tim Landoli at 386-569-7365. <https://shorturl.at/ubXSr>

Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta, October 2, 2026, Premier World Discovery, 877-953-8687. <https://tinyurl.com/tn8uuasj>

Canada & New England, October 8-17, 2026, Grand American Tours, 800-423-0247. <https://shorturl.at/zBPb5>

Hawaii, October 31– November 7, 2026, Grand American Tours, 800-423-0247. <https://shorturl.at/cwRmf>

Check our website at www.mrspa.org, click **Travel** to locate more information on trips.

All MRSPA trips are open to MRSPA members, their family and friends. Please use **Code: G5-28192 anytime** you travel with Grand Circle Tours to access a special deal for you and MRSPA, even if it's not a MRSPA sponsored trip.