

mrspa

MARYLAND RETIRED
SCHOOL PERSONNEL ASSOCIATION

news



advocate ●

serve ●

connect ●

Volume XLV, No. 2

Fall 2026

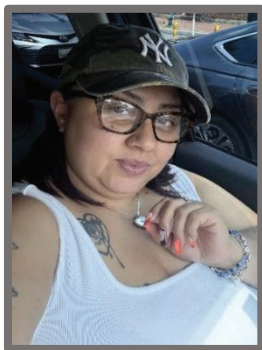
MRSPA Foundation 2025-2026 Scholarship Winners



Patricia Picard
Instructional Assistant
II/Media Associate,
Prince Street ES,
Wicomico County,
Bachelor of Science in
Education/Early
Childhood Education,
University of Phoenix



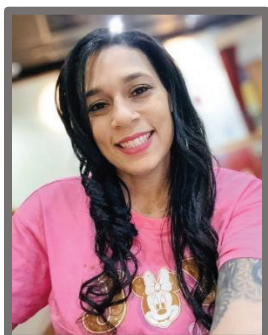
Oliver Bertalo
6th Grade Earth & Space
Science Teacher,
Edgewood MS, Harford
County, M.Ed. in
Curriculum and Leadership,
Liberty University



Monique Noble
Autism Paraprofessional,
Allenwood ES, Prince
George's County, BS in
Early Childhood and
Special Education,
Grand Canyon University



Tierra Morgan
Social Emotional Special
Education Teacher,
Dundalk MS, Baltimore
County, MA in Special
Education, Loyola
University



Michelle Campbell
2nd Grade Teacher,
Bedford ES, Baltimore
County, MA in Special
Education, Loyola
University

The Scholarship Committee thanks everyone who purchased raffle tickets or made donations to the MRSPA Foundation in support of our scholarship program. Watch future newsletters for the opportunity to purchase raffle tickets. Congratulations to our 2026 recipients!

Congratulations

From the

President

Alice Mitchell



I bring you greetings with a smile. One may ask, why a smile? This is my second President's Message to the members of the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association. Whenever I addressed the members in my home county, I always began with a note of gratitude - which makes me smile.

I hope that we can all smile when we think about and reflect on the paths that we each had to forge to get to this moment. All the children we taught, supported, directed, corrected, and sometimes even fed. Reflect on the parents, neighbors, friends, and family and how we helped to shape their young person's life in one way or another. WE are the ones who have made this generation of learners possible. This country is operated by the adults we see now because of the time and commitment WE put in those years ago. This is worth a smile.

When we decided to pass the torch of our duties and begin the retirement phase, we turned to MRSPA for support. In true teacher fashion, 23 retired educators in 1945 saw a need for an association to advocate for us and make sure that we received the benefits that we worked so hard for. The vision grew to include anyone who was involved in the education of children regardless of the position in the system. Everyone in the school system adds to the life of a child, and everyone deserves representation. There is strength in numbers, so it is important that we continue to grow our numbers. We can make a bigger impact when we go to advocate with a large number of retirees standing with MRSPA. It makes me smile to know that there is an organization that is going to bat for us. This is not easy work, but the organization does it because we are worth it!

I also have a big smile as I welcome MRSPA's new Executive Director, Maria Granone. Maria will assume the position on September 8, and Wanda Twigg will retire (again) at the end of September. On behalf of MRSPA, I welcome you, Maria, and

MRSPA News

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Madeline Hubbard

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Past President.Betty Weller
Vice President.....Dr. John Bowman II
Secretary.....Sharyn Doyle
Treasurer.....Dr. Stephen Raucher

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look forward to having you with us. I have learned that there are multiple moving parts involved with the daily functions in the MRSPA office, and I am sure you will do a great job!

As you all know, I am new to this position and have a lot to learn, but the office staff, committee members, past president, past vice president, Wanda, and others are helping me through the learning phase. This is a new chapter for MRSPA, and I am excited to see what lies ahead.

These are the reasons that I SMILE!

Advocate, Serve, Connect



From the

Executive Director

Maria Granone



Dear MRSPA Members and Board of Directors,

I feel honored and excited to introduce myself as the new Executive Director of the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association.

Beginning this new role with MRSPA marks a meaningful next chapter for me. Throughout my professional life, I focused on associations, advocacy, employee benefits, pensions, and helping organizations serve their members. My work also includes direct experience with retirement plans and retiree benefits, including pension fund management, service as a trustee for retirement and health and welfare funds, and legislative work involving pensions and employee benefits.

These experiences have given me a deep appreciation for the importance of protecting the benefits people worked a lifetime to earn. They also gave me a firsthand understanding of the importance of advocacy when policymakers make decisions about retirement security. MRSPA's mission holds special meaning for me because of my experience.

I learned the importance of strong leadership, thoughtful decision-making, and, most importantly, listening to the people an organization represents. I also learned that successful organizations depend on trust, open communication, and a willingness to listen before making decisions.

On a personal level, I find the most rewarding part of my work in the people I serve. I enjoy listening, understanding what matters to someone, and finding ways to help and follow through. One of my greatest joys comes from helping people with their individual needs and making sure they feel heard, respected, and supported. Sometimes a personal conversation, a listening ear, or simply taking the time to help someone work through a concern can make all the difference. I look forward to bringing this personal touch to my work with every MRSPA member.

As I begin my role with MRSPA, I will make listening a priority. I want to hear from you -- the members, local units, committees, and Board about what works well, where we can improve, and what you want MRSPA to look like in the years ahead. Strong associations grow through relationships, trust, communication, and a shared commitment to their members.

I appreciate the Board's confidence in me, and I look forward to what we can accomplish together. MRSPA carries a strong history and an important voice in Maryland. I look forward to building on the work of those who came before me, working with you to strengthen our organization, and continuing to advocate for the benefits and interests of retired school personnel.

Thank you for welcoming me to MRSPA. I look forward to meeting you, hearing your stories, learning what matters most to you, and getting to work.

Vision Statement

The Maryland Retired School Personnel Association envisions members enjoying the peace of mind of a well-earned, secure, stable, informed, dignified retirement.

Mission Statement

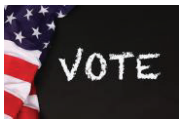
The ABC'S of Maryland Retired School Personnel Association (MRSPA) are to:

- ***Advocate for pension protection***
- ***Bring reliable information***
- ***Create member connections***
- ***Support school communities***

Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

We, the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association, are evolving to reflect the goals and aspirations of a contemporary organization. Through our shared values, we create an environment where all members are included, respected, and appreciated.

Election 2026 – Do Your Homework and VOTE!



The November 3, 2026, General Election offers voters options to ensure every registered voter can cast a vote. The State Board of Elections website has all the information you need for voter registration, early voting, voting by mail, or voting on Election Day. Their website is www.elections.maryland.gov. We encourage everyone to register and vote in this very important gubernatorial election year. There are Congressional races, General Assembly races, and local races including county council and school board members that require our attention. Remember to ensure candidates support you as a retiree and that they will protect your defined benefit pension and other retirement benefits, as well as our public schools and the funding needed to protect your retiree health insurance benefits. There will be three Constitutional Amendments on the ballot this year. Please check them out on the website above! Get educated and vote!

Register to Vote

In Maryland, you can now register at the time you vote. Be sure to take proof of identification with you when registering to vote. A government-issued ID like your driver's license or change of address card will work, as will a bank statement, paycheck stub, or utility bill. See the website above or visit your local Board of Elections or their website to register. Registering now will make voting go more quickly come early voting or election day. Registering to vote is easy!

Early Voting October 22 through October 29, 2026

Every jurisdiction in Maryland has at least one early voting center that will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Many jurisdictions have

multiple early voting centers. Centers are accessible for voters with disabilities and are open on the weekend during the early voting period. Check the location of your county's early voting centers on the Board of Elections website.

Mail-in/Absentee Voting – Late September to November 3, 2026



Mail-in voting was previously called absentee voting. Mail-in/absentee ballots can be requested by any registered voter before October 27, 2026. Mail-in ballots should be completed in black ink and placed in the return, postage-paid envelope provided, and sealed. The envelope must be signed by the voter before either mailing through the US Mail or being placed in a ballot drop box at your local voting center by 8:00 p.m. on election day. Mail-in ballots sent via US Mail must be postmarked by November 3, 2026. Placing a ballot in a mailbox on November 3, 2026, does not guarantee that it will be postmarked that day. The Board of Elections recommends that mail-in ballots be mailed prior to November 3, 2026, to avoid postal system delays or use the drop box option. You can also request that a ballot be faxed or emailed to you by contacting the Board of Elections.

Election Day In-Person Voting November 3, 2026



Be sure to check the location of your local precinct before heading to the polls. It may have changed. You can check your precinct on the Board of Elections website. In-person voting will occur on November 3, 2026, from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Membership Awards 2025-2026

Membership Awards are given annually to the small (up to 199 members), medium (200-899 members), and large (900+ members) local associations who have increased membership the most numerically and by percentage. Unfortunately, none of our large local associations ended the year on the plus side, even with their great recruiting efforts. **The 2025-2026 Membership Awards were proudly presented to the following associations.**

Small Local: Worcester County – Numerical Increase – 6

Percentage Increase – 4.38%

Small/Medium Local – Calvert County – Numerical Increase – 13

Percentage Increase – 6.74%

Medium Local: Howard County – Numerical Increase – 39

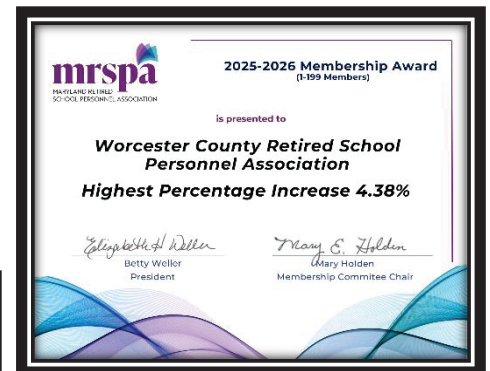
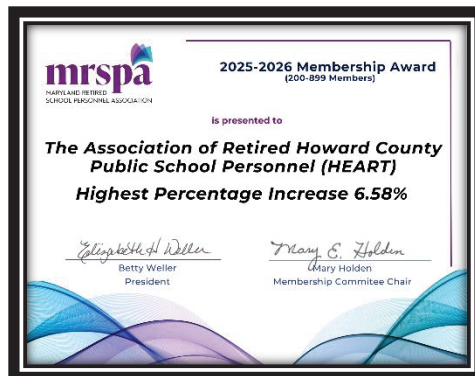
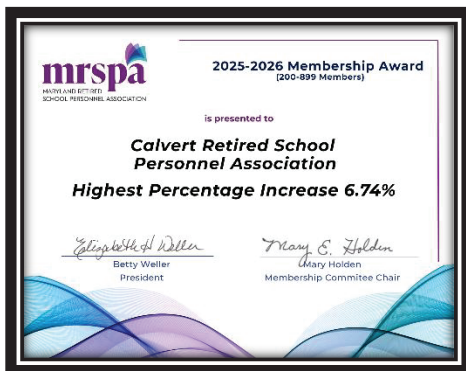
Percentage Increase – 6.58%



Calvert County Retired School Personnel Association began the membership year as a small local with 193 members. They ended the year with 206 members. This increase moves them up a category, so they are now a medium-sized local for the 2026-2027 membership year!

All of you who work on membership for your local know how hard it is to increase membership. For every member you lose, you must recruit 2 to get back on the plus side. This makes the numbers you see for the winning locals even more special. They all experienced losses and were able to recruit more than they lost. A remarkable feat!

On behalf of the MRSPA Membership Committee, we thank and congratulate all our locals for their work recruiting, retaining, and regaining. And we extend our sincere congratulations and thanks to our local association Membership Award winners!



2025-2026 Community Service Awards Presented

The 2025-2026 Community Service Awards were presented during our May 5, 2026, Annual Business Meeting. Winners were recognized by Kathy Campagnoli, Chair of the MRSPA Community Service Committee. The Committee congratulates all our winners and nominees!



Karol Wolgemuth of (SMCPSRA) St. Mary's County Public Schools Retirees Association is the 2026 Outstanding Individual Award Winner. Karol's volunteerism centers on the food insecure and homeless in the community, while

also continuing to support students and her church. She volunteers over 60 hours each month in her community. St. Mary's Caring Soup Kitchen, WARM (Wrapping Arms 'Round Many), Feed St. Mary's, and Southern Maryland food pantry benefit from Karol's caring heart and time. Additionally, she organizes and holds a community Thanksgiving dinner each year for over 175 attendees, working with multiple churches and organizations to secure food and volunteers. She also works in her church pantry and is the church newsletter editor. Karol volunteers in the Leonardtown Middle School library and at the Historic Sotterley Plantation, continuing to work with the students she holds dear. In SMCPSRA, Karol's the Program/Lunch Committee Chair.



Paul Humphrey is a member of the Cecil County Retired School Personnel Association (CCRSPA) and is our Honorable Mention Individual Award Winner. Paul volunteers close to 60 hours per month to his local, his church, and

community. He is the treasurer and a member of the Board of Directors of CCRSPA. He is a trustee of the Elkton United Methodist church, overseeing everyday repairs and updates to the church and grounds. Paul is also a member of the choir and plays additional roles in the Elkton Town Band, Swing City, Music Masters, and Rhythm Doctors. He enjoys playing big band, jazz, and show tunes for area civic, church, and community events. Paul also serves on his homeowner's association Board. He meets monthly to address concerns, keep grass cut, oversee snow clearing, and ensure the wet pond and bio-retention area meet county specifications.

Nominees for the 2025-2026 Community Service Awards were Cecil County, Paul Humphrey; Frederick County, Ginny Brace; St. Mary's County, Karol Wolgemuth; and Wicomico County, Alison Soper.

Congratulations!

2026 Pension System Returns Exceed Benchmark



SRPS
MARYLAND STATE RETIREMENT
and PENSION SYSTEM

The Board of Trustees of the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System announced a net return on investment of 13.19%, exceeding the 6.80% target for the 2026 fiscal year, which ended on June 30, 2026. The fund has exceeded its target benchmark over the one-, three-, five-, and ten-year periods. Over the past 10 years, the fund has produced an annualized net return of 8.25%, annually outperforming the policy benchmark.



Call 240-595-2219 Email osher@jhu.edu

A gift membership to the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Johns Hopkins University is more than a present – it's an investment in curiosity and connection.

Contact us to register for **one of the COMPLIMENTARY noncredit classes below** (held either in person (IP) at our Columbia site OR virtually(V) via Zoom:

- **Hopkins Heroes**, 5 weeks (9/14–10/19) IP
- **My Favorite Comedies**, 6 weeks (10/26–12/7) IP
- **The Psychology of Thriving After 60**, 6 weeks (9/16–10/21) IP
- **Edgar Allan Poe**, 6 weeks (9/16–10/21) IP
- **Happy for Now: Romance Books' Modern Endings and What They Teach Us About Life** (9/16–10/21)

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MRSPA CALENDAR

September 29.....Leadership Workshop
Virtual

October 7.....AARP MD Andrus Awards
Kurtz's Beach

October 15.....MSCHF Awards
Ten Oaks Ballroom

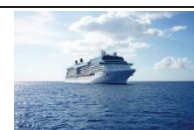
November 3.....Election Day
MRSPA Office Open

November 11.....Veteran's Day Holiday
MRSPA Office Open

November 26-27..Thanksgiving Holiday
MRSPA Office Closed



MRSPA TRIPS AND TRAVEL 2026



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.

During the May 5 Annual Business Meeting, delegates voted to amend the Bylaws by changing the Standing Committees of the association re-aligning them with the Strategic Plan. For this reason and because so few members took advantage of MRSPA trips, the Travel Committee was eliminated as a Standing Committee. Therefore, there will be no further MRSPA-sponsored national or international trips following the trip to Hawaii. We know some of you will be disappointed, and we are truly sorry about that. We encourage members to continue to use the travel companies we have partnered with over the years. Information will be available about those companies on our website and in a future edition of the *MRSPA News*. The Grand Circle offer mentioned above will continue to be available.