Membership Section of the MRSPA Resource Manual

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• MRSPA - Can You See Us Now? (PowerPoint Presentation on Branding and Visibility)

Revised Spring 2020
I. Membership in MRSPA

Priority #1

 Maryland Retired School Personnel Association (MRSPA) is the only organization in Maryland that has the full actuarial funding of Maryland’s defined benefit teacher pension/retirement trust fund as its top priority. Membership in MRSPA is critical to the protection of members’ retirement pensions and health benefits.

MRSPA Membership:

- keeps members informed with the newsletter, MRSPA News, five times a year
- offers group travel to destinations around the world as well as in the United States
- provides voluntary benefits to members at discounted rates
- Legislative Update available on the MRSPA website. Contains a list of legislation with positions taken by the Committee.
- Legislative Priorities Brochure is an annual publication.
- Financial support for local reception/meetings with legislators is available.
- Online resource for links to the Maryland General Assembly and contact tool to communicate with local senators and representatives by legislative districts.
- Legislative Workshop Day is an annual event in Annapolis to brief and discuss issues anticipated in the upcoming legislative session.
- Speakers are available for local meetings to update membership on current issues/topics.
- Collaboration/cooperation with other organizations including AARP Maryland, National Council on Teacher Retirement (NCTR).
- Legislative Aide monitors bills that are filed and shares the relevant proposed legislation with the committee. Testifies before the committees of the General Assembly on specific legislation when the committee has taken a position for the association.
- Local leadership is encouraged to share with membership the tools available through MRSPA, especially on the website, to contact elected officials on MRSPA’s legislative priorities and positions. This broad and coordinated effort with the state and locals working in partnership is an effective strategy to advance the priorities.
“Unified” membership means that retirees join both MRSPA and their local association. Locals monitor and interact with local Boards of Education other post-employment benefits (OPEB). Which may include health, life and other insurances along with additional services.

**Local Organization Membership**

Offerings vary from local to local depending on the preferences of members. Examples include:

- Monitoring of health insurance and other post-employment benefits (OPEB) offered by the local Board of Education and lobbying efforts when those are threatened.
- Offering breakfast, luncheon or dinner meetings with opportunities for socialization, entertainment or informative guest speakers.
- Providing opportunities to volunteer in a variety of ways.
- Supporting a scholarship program to benefit public school students who are enrolled in a teacher education program, students attending a summer camp program or Board of Education employees attending courses or programs.

Reference:

www.mrspa.org
Maryland Retired School Personnel Association White Paper
II. Types of Membership

Active Membership

1. All retired school personnel are eligible for active membership in the Association upon payment of annual dues.
2. Active members shall be entitled to participate in all activities of the Association including chairing a committee, voting, and holding elective office.

Emeritus

1. Active members who have reached the age of ninety shall be recognized as Emeritus members.
2. 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.

Honorary Membership

1. Honorary membership may be accorded to any person who is not eligible for membership and who has distinguished himself/herself in work related to the Association or to all retired school personnel.
2. Honorary members shall be entitled to participate in all activities of the Association except chairing a committee, voting and holding elective office.

Associate Membership

1. Associate membership may be accorded, upon payment of dues, to members’ spouses or surviving spouses who are supportive of the goals and purposes of the Association.
2. Associate membership may be accorded, upon payment of dues, to currently employed school personnel and their spouses.
3. Associate members shall be entitled to participate in all activities of the Association and be eligible for benefits, except chairing a committee, voting and holding elective office.

Eligibility for Benefits

1. Members shall retain membership in order to continue to receive benefits.
2. Eligibility shall be reviewed on an annual basis.

Resource:
Bylaws of the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association, Inc.-Article III- Membership
III. Membership Planning

Planning is the key to effective leadership and achievement of goals.

The state and locals develop plans around membership goals and strategies using the “Action Plan” format. Each local develops plans unique to their county yet common to other locals across Maryland.

Plans are updated each year as goals and strategies are updated.

A plan is easily shared with members as a roadmap for the organization and sets the direction for members.

*Activities/strategies used in planning are found under Membership Strategies listed in this section as well as the Public Relations Section of the Resource Binder.

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**Membership Action Plan for Local Organizations**

July 1 - June 30 Year______

County______________________ Date____________

Goals: Recruiting/Regaining/Retaining

Objective(s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action/Activity</th>
<th>Person(s) Responsible</th>
<th>Date Completed</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Public Relations</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Additional Support Needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sample Forms in Appendix
# Membership Timeline

**Goals:** Recruit, Retain, Regain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCAL</th>
<th>MRSPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>July</strong></td>
<td><strong>July</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;- New membership year begins</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; - New membership year begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• MRSPA Recruitment Incentives</td>
<td>MRSPA Recruitment Incentive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Begin identifying non-renewals and contact</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;-Emeritus Status if 90 yrs. old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;-Last day to notify MRSPA of new dues deduction members for July deduction</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;-Membership report sent to locals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; and final billing notice goes out to cash payers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;-Dues deduction info goes to retirement agency for July dues deduction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blind Recruitment Mailing sent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Annual dues deduction from pension/retirement system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aug</strong></td>
<td><strong>Aug</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• MRSPA Recruitment Incentives</td>
<td>MRSPA Recruitment Incentive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• $ Dues received from MRSPA</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;-Membership report sent to locals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No Postage $ received from MRSPA due to electronic mailings.</td>
<td>Check sent by MRSPA to local for dues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;-Last day to notify MRSPA of new dues deduction members for August deduction</td>
<td>Final billing notice sent to unpaid cash dues members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO Postage check sent by MRSPA for newsletter mailings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;-Dues deduction for new and switch and save members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sept</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sept</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• MRSPA Recruitment Incentives</td>
<td>MRSPA Recruitment Incentive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• List of non-paying members received from MRSPA.</td>
<td>List of members who have not paid sent to locals to contact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local will contact members for renewal of dues.</td>
<td>Unpaid cash member follow-up sample letter emailed to local presidents and membership chairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;-Last day to notify MRSPA of new dues deduction members for Sept.</td>
<td>30&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;-Dues deduction for new and switch and save members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Oct   | • Membership rosters sent to local by MRSPA  
• 6<sup>th</sup>-Last day to notify MRSPA of new dues deduction members for October deduction  
• Oct. 31 dues deduction |
| Nov   | • Oct dues deduction reconciliation $ received  
• 6<sup>th</sup>-Last day to notify MRSPA of new dues deduction members for November deduction |
| Dec   | • 6<sup>th</sup>-Last day to notify MRSPA of new dues deduction members |
| Jan   | • 6<sup>th</sup>-Last day to notify MRSPA of new dues deduction members for January deduction |
| Feb   | • Jan. dues deduction reconciliation $ received  
• List of deceased members sent to MRSPA  
• 6<sup>th</sup>-Last day to notify MRSPA of new dues deduction members  
• Feb.17<sup>th</sup>- Notify MRSPA of any dues changes for upcoming year |

**MRSPA Recruitment Incentives**

- 1<sup>st</sup>-Membership report sent to locals  
- 1<sup>st</sup>-Membership report sent to locals  
- Unpaid members dropped  
- 30<sup>th</sup>-Dues deduction for new and switch and save members  
- 1<sup>st</sup>-Membership report sent to locals  
- 31<sup>st</sup>-Dues deduction for new and switch and save members  
- 1<sup>st</sup>-Membership report sent to locals  
- Jan 31<sup>st</sup>- Dues deduction for new and switch and save members  
- Former member letters mailed to members dropped on November 2  
- 1<sup>st</sup>-Membership report sent to locals  
- Check sent with printout  
- 28<sup>th</sup>-Dues deduction for new and switch and save members  
- Deceased member list sent to locals to confirm for ABM Memorial Book

**Recruitment Incentives**

- Will send check with printouts  
- Will send check with printouts  
- Deceased member list sent to locals to confirm for ABM Memorial Book

**31<sup>st</sup>-Dues deduction for new and switch and save members**

**Former member letters mailed to members dropped on November 2**
| Mar | • Membership recognition given to locals at annual MRSPA meeting in May based on March 1st deadline. | 1\textsuperscript{st}-Membership report sent to locals |
| Apr | • Membership rosters received  
Recruitment Incentives | 1\textsuperscript{st}-Membership report sent to locals  
2\textsuperscript{nd}-Deadline to notify MRSPA of local dues increase for next year |
| May | Recruitment Incentives | 1\textsuperscript{st}-Membership report sent to locals |
| June | Recruitment Incentives | 1\textsuperscript{st}-Membership report sent to locals  
First Billing Notices sent to cash/credit card dues members |

**Be sure to review your reports and relay any changes or deaths to the MRSPA Office via phone, email, or US mail.**

**Gift Card Incentive:** The Membership Committee reviewed data provided and decided by consensus to continue the $10 gift card incentive for recruiters of new members who sign up for dues deduction. This will be an on-going incentive.

**Switch & Save** Incentive will also continue as an on-going incentive. Current cash paying members who switch and register for dues deduction will receive a one time $10 discount for their MRSPA membership only.

If you need new membership applications or other brochures, please contact the MRSPA Office. We can be reached at 410-551-1517, or toll-free at 877-625-6782. You may also reach us by email at mrspa@mrspa.org. Thank you for all that you do!
IV. RECRUITING Members Strategies

Opportunities to recruit new members are widespread. The organization and individual members should always “be prepared” to recruit. Some opportunities are planned, and others happen by chance.

The following is a list of strategies compiled from all local organizations as well as workshops and meetings held across the state.

To facilitate using these suggestions they are formatted to align with the local “plans of action” for increasing membership.

A. How to Recruit

The best approach in recruiting is the “personal approach”.

- Word of mouth
- Promoting “Each One, Reach One”.
- Personal phone calls
- Emails to small groups or individuals
- Personal notes
- Invitations to attend a meeting and pay for the invitee’s meal
- Invitation to attend an activity of the organization
- Create a “Call-Out” team to make personal calls and provide feedback on responses
- Do a personal follow-up on all referrals

B. Recruitment Materials

Recruitment materials are available through MRSPA and local organizations.

- Create recruitment materials for all school support personnel customized for your local and reinforcing MRSPA goals.
- Display both the local and state association logos in publications.
- Send out materials (packets, brochures, etc.) with a follow up call. The call will make the difference!

C. Make signing up to join EASY!

- Provide electronic applications to new members for easy access and duplications. This is a great email option!
- Designate a “Recruiter” or “Recruiter Team” for your group. All members are recruiters, but this team will spear head the efforts.
D. Recruitment Events

➢ “First Day of School” Retiree Events
  o Plan a day for retirees to gather and receive information about their benefits

➢ Pre-Retirement Seminars
  o Plan this event with your local Board of Education or as part of your own organization’s activities

➢ Social Events
  o Plan a social time for invited retirees to gather, socialize and learn about the benefits of being a local & MRSPA member.
  o Social Hours
  o Crab Feasts
  o Bus Trips
  o Meet & Eat
  o Holiday Tree Decorating

➢ Plan a Retiree Reception/ Dinner to honor retiree and share retiree information.

E. Visibility

Your visibility as an organization makes a difference as to how others perceive you! Who you are and how you publicize yourself is important as to whether a new member joins and if they continue with their membership?

➢ Local Boards of Education
  Build relationships with your Board of Education and other community groups to promote your organization.

➢ Local Public Schools
  o Send newsletters/brochures to each school to be posted in an area accessible to all employees. Example: Why Join?
  o Send a greeting card when appropriate- holidays, Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week, etc.
  o Email teachers currently employed in schools.
  o Write “Thank You” or “Congratulation” notes to schools and teachers still working in the system.
  o Recognize special stall at schools during special times of the year.
  o Treat staff at schools with “treats” and/or lunches. (Testing Week)
  o With permission, post local & MRSPA information in HR office of BOE.
F. Publicity

Publicize yourself!

➢ Social Media
  o Facebook
  o Twitter
  o Websites
  o Emails

➢ Marketing & Branding
  o Banners
  o Display boards
  o Business Cards
    o Members will carry business cards with local and MRSPA pertinent information
  o Newsletters
  o Brochures
    o Develop a local brochure highlighting “Who you are” and “What you do” with pictures to tell your story.
    o Special brochures can be developed around specific topics such as activities of the local, local health benefits, etc.

➢ Public Service Announcements
  o Radio
  o TV

Refer to the Public Relations Section of the Resource Manual for more information.

Refer to Document: CAN YOU SEE US NOW?
Handout presented at MRSPA Leadership Workshop, Sept. 18, 2019.

G. Recruiting for All Types of Membership

➢ Recruit for a “United Membership” which includes MRSPA and Local.
➢ Highlight “Associate membership” as a membership option
➢ Reach out to “Locals Only” to join MRSPA.

H. Who to Recruit?

Expand recruitment invitations to all school personnel.
(Classified and Certified)
I. Retiree Target Lists

- Local Board of Education
- Pre-Retirement meeting with BOE
  - Have retirees complete a brief information form to be placed in a drawing at the end of the event.
- Use BOE websites to get lists of retirees
- Search local association and BOE archives for names of previous retirees

V. RETAINING Members Strategies

- Knowing why a member joined is helpful in knowing how to keep that person as a member for years to come.

- Survey your members periodically to find out why they joined and what they would like to have the organization provide for them. It may be a social connection, a professional interest but it will be what the organization has to offer them. It is probably a combination of all three. If you know what the target is, it is easier to hit.

- Not all members will want to be active or involved in all meetings and activities. Sometimes it is the information you are providing them that is the most part of why they joined.

Checkoffs for keeping your members happy.

- Vary the times when the group meets
- Develop a calendar of events for the year which includes a variety of activities for the wide range of interests in your group
- Continue to have personal contact with your members through phone calls, emails, Facebook, etc.

- Feature different members in your newsletter or Facebook entries.
- Send a personal note listing upcoming events. Example: a holiday card listing upcoming events.
- Be visible in your community. Engage in community events. Examples: Charity events, volunteering, projects
- Plan trips to interesting areas (Near or far) Day trips may be more affordable for some.
- Provide Emeritus member recognition
- Stress pension/health benefits
- Remind members of “switch and save” option for renewing.
- Use your newsletter to bring current issues to members and provide updates in membership.
- Provide a variety of programs throughout the year, not just at general meetings. Plan programs around the interests of your members. (All ages, gender, and talents)
✓ Send cards to members who are sick or in need of support.
✓ Follow-up with spouses and/or family when a member becomes deceased. They may be interested in becoming an Associate Member.
✓ Use Email BLASTS for announcements, updates to members and important information.
✓ Send out “Thank You” notes or letters to current members in the spring thanking them for their continuing membership. Before renewal letters go out!
✓ Offer to provide rides to events.
✓ Plan a recognition time at meetings or events to recognize members who have volunteered or contributed in other ways.
✓ Provide “mini-workshops” during the year for special interest groups. Example: Estate Planning, Reverse Mortgages, etc.
✓ Encourage cash paying members to switch to “dues deduction”.
✓ Partner with other organizations in the community to work together on events or projects.
✓ Speak at other community groups to share what you do in the community.
✓ Have members bring “someone” special to a meeting. It could be a potential member or friend.

VI. REGAINING Members Strategies

Members may leave for different reasons. Contact those members who no longer belong and ask them to rejoin your group. It may be just the call they need to get them back onboard. They will know you cared about their previous membership and valued them as a member.

Stress why we need them back and what we can do for them!

Strategies to try:
- Create a target list of previous members
- Survey previous members to find out why they discontinued their membership.

Personal contact is a must here!
- Call them directly by phone.
- Email them personally. No group email here.
- Mail out personal notes.
- Mail out a personal letter.
  - Ask them why they are no longer a member.
  - Ask what we can do to help them make the choice to join.

Stress the importance of joining to protect their pension and retirement benefits.

*These strategies are a compilation of ideas shared by all locals during the 2019 Membership “March Across Maryland” area workshops.
VII. Appendix

- MRSPA- Why Join the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association? (White Paper)
- MRSPA Membership- Reasons to Join List
- Membership Action Plan Forms for Local Organizations
- Sample Membership Welcome Letter and Sample Letters for Recruiting, Retaining, and Regaining Members
- Sample Testimonials for Use in Letters or Publications
- Posters:
  - You’ve Thought About Protecting Your Home…
  - Re-Member MRSPA

References Not in the Appendix:

- The Public Relations Section of the MRSPA Resource Manual
- MRSPA - Can You See Us Now? (PowerPoint Presentation on Branding and Visibility)
Why Join the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association?

Membership Committee, 2016-2017
Judy I. Thompson, Frederick County, Chair

Ruth Clendaniel, Dorchester County
Carla Duls, Anne Arundel County
Thomas Hickman, Montgomery County
Carol Kirby, Anne Arundel County

Henrietta Lease, Garrett County
Nancy Jean Martin, Washington County
Dr. Norma Martof, Prince George’s County
Carolyn Nichols, Baltimore City

Ex Officio Members
Frances “Fay” W. Miller, Kent County, President
Max E. Muller, Anne Arundel County, Past President
Lorraine W. Johnson, Prince George’s County, Vice President
Bev Yurek, Wicomico County, Area III South Director

Executive Director
Wanda Ruffo Twigg
July 2017
Why Join the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association (MRSPA)?

Given the importance of one’s pension/retirement, joining MRSPA is wise because MRSPA is the only organization that has as its top priority the full actuarial funding of Maryland’s defined benefit teacher pension/retirement trust fund.

Equally important is unified membership, meaning retirees join their local association. Local associations monitor and interact with local Boards of Education concerning other post-employment benefits (OPEB), which may include health, life and other insurances along with additional services.

MRSPA and local Retired School Personnel Associations (RSPA) memberships are important allies in the protection of members’ retirement benefits.

The prudent retiree needs to consider his/her needs and priorities. Membership in MRSPA is vital to the protection of retirement needs.

All retirees, for their own protection, must be aware that funding of public education has to remain a priority at all levels - local, state and national. If local Boards of Education are to continue to
- make retirement contributions both for retired and current employees,
- maintain the quality of education they provide, and
- meet their commitments to retirees,
we, as retirees, must support their work and be supportive of their funding.
Groups Serving Retired Educators in Maryland

Retired education personnel in Maryland have several associations or groups that aim to meet a variety of their needs. Each strives to gain retirees’ membership. Many retired educators choose to take advantage of the activities and benefits that each offers by joining and participating in one, two, three or all four of these groups.

The four groups are
- Maryland Retired School Personnel Association (MRSPA)
- Local Retired School Personnel Associations in each Maryland county and Baltimore City
- American Association of Retired Persons/National Retired Teachers Association (AARP/NRTA)
- Maryland State Education Association-Retired/National Education Association-Retired (MSEA-R, NEA-R)

MRSPA, MSEA-R, and AARP offer members
- Activities for socialization,
- Travel, and
- Opportunities for political action or advocacy at the local, state or national level.

AARP provides as part of dues paid a professional educators’ membership in NRTA. In addition, NRTA maintains a collaborative working relationship with a network of state and locally-based Retired Educators Associations (REAs) who collectively represent over 750,000 retired educators. MRSPA is one of those REAs.

HISTORY & CURRENT BENEFITS

Histories intertwine between and among groups. Knowing our history connects us with the values of our founders and enhances our current vision.

Many benefits are offered by each group at no cost other than membership dues while others are offered at reasonable prices. Benefits listed are not all-inclusive.

1. Maryland Retired School Personnel Association (MRSPA) was founded in 1945 by twenty-three retired teachers who gathered at the YMCA in Baltimore City. Mary Ellen Logan was leader of the group and served as the 1st president for 7 years, the longest tenure of any president. Initially named the Retired Teachers of the State of Maryland, the group was re-named the Maryland Retired Teachers Association in 1954. In 2006, the name was changed to the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association. MRSPA is an AARP/NRTA affiliate by virtue of the work of Dr. Percy Andrus. NRTA maintains a collaborative working relationship with a network of state and local retired educators’ associations (REAs).

2. https://mrspa.org/history-of-mrspa
Selected Benefits of MRSPA Membership (*denotes at reduced cost)

- A paid and registered lobbyist, the MRSPA Legislative Aide, who reviews proposed legislation in the Maryland General Assembly for possible action by the MRSPA Legislative Committee
- Scholarships available to employees in the Maryland public school systems to obtain educational certification in Maryland
- Opportunities to serve as an MRSPA officer, committee chair, or committee member and enjoy interacting with colleagues from across Maryland
- Experienced, dedicated and professional MRSPA office staff
- International and domestic trips with colleagues
- Quarterly publication, MRSPA News, with association updates
- Life, dental, vision, long-term care and other insurances*
- Legal Benefits program*
- Abenity on-line discount program, password protected for members only
- Auto rental discounts - Avis, Budget and Hertz*
- Technology discounts - Apples and Dell*
- Association Member Benefits Advisors offers numerous benefits including Medical Air Services Association, identity theft solutions, final expense insurance, Road Scholar program, etc.*
- Fast Park and Relax at BWI Airport*
- PetsBest Health Insurance*

“Sure we have fun, we give scholarships, we help children, etc. But most important — we are the advocacy group that stands up for our pensions and benefits.”

II. MRSPA/Local Associations⁴ - Local associations exist in each county and in Baltimore City that are affiliated with the state organization.

Selected Benefits of Local Association Membership - Offerings vary from local to local depending on the preferences of members. Examples include:

- Monitoring of health insurance and other post-employment benefits (OPEB) offered by the local Board of Education and lobbying efforts when those are threatened
- Offering breakfast, luncheon or dinner meetings with opportunities for socialization, entertainment or informative guest speakers
- Providing opportunities to volunteer in a variety of ways
- Supporting a scholarship program to benefit public school students who are enrolled in a teacher education program, students attending a summer camp program, or Board of Education employees attending courses or programs

Donating food, clothing, books, toys, etc. to schools for families in need
Scheduling local, national and international travel opportunities
Keeping members informed on local issues and group activities through newsletters
Maintaining and offering a local membership directory

“This association keeps me up to date on issues that impact me; allows me to use my skills and talents when and if I choose, and permits me to be involved close up or from afar! Plus, it’s fun fellowshipping with someone with whom you can share a glance and know that you have a meaningful, but amusing past!”
Barbara Woolford, Dorchester County

III. The National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA)\(^5\) was founded by Ethel Percy Andrus in 1947. The chief goal was to provide reasonably priced health insurance and a livable pension to retired educators. In 1958, she agreed to form the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) to provide the same benefits to more Americans. Today retired school personnel who join AARP can become a member of NRTA, AARP’s Educators Community at no additional cost.

Selected Benefits of AARP/NRTA membership

- Home owners insurance as well as life and other insurances
- Discounts on travel, dining, entertainment, phone plans, technology, clothing, drugstore purchases, services, gifts and more
- Publications - AARP Bulletin and AARP The Magazine
- Advocacy in Washington on issues like Medicare, Social Security and consumer safety
- Advocacy at the state level on issues affecting members, such as utility costs, care giving, etc.
- Member assistance programs, such as Driver Safety, Tax-Aide Program, etc.

IV. The National Education Association (NEA)\(^6\) was founded in 1857. Forty-three educators gathered in Philadelphia to found what would become the NEA. Zalmon Richards from Columbian College (now George Washington University) became the first president.

Since schools were segregated, Black educators formed the American Teachers Association. NEA worked actively for the integration of schools, and as this occurred, Black educators became a part of NEA. NEA and NEA-R membership is open to teachers and educational support staff. NEA-R was first created as a membership category in 1950 and in 1983 became a division of NEA. In Maryland retired educational personnel may continue their membership in the Maryland State Education Association by joining MSEA-R.

Benefits of NEA-R/MSEA-R membership

- Government relations and legislative action, including lobbying efforts
- Regional and national conferences

6. [www.nea.org/home/1704.htm](http://www.nea.org/home/1704.htm)
While both NEA/MSEA and NEA-R/SEA-R support funding of teacher retirement systems and public education, commitments to current employees preclude making funding of retirement systems their *top priority*. Since MSEA’s primary membership are those currently working in the schools, their primary concerns are those that are of importance to current educational personnel. Things like state-wide student testing programs, teacher and supportive staff ratings systems, funding of public education, and teacher salaries are the priorities MSEA must lobby for each year.\(^7\)

This is understandable since it is estimated that in Maryland 75\% of the current teachers will never draw a pension from the Maryland State Teachers’ Pension/Retirement System.\(^8\)

Data to explain this statement include the facts that

- Current teachers, those hired on or after July 1, 2011, must accumulate 10 years of eligibility … in the Teachers’ Pension System\(^9\)
- “Maryland had the 8th highest percent of first and second year teachers in 2014”\(^10\)
- In Maryland, “Nearly half (47\%) of teachers who completed one full year …of teaching have left the field by the beginning of the third full year of teaching”\(^11\)
- The percentage of teachers with experience indicates that the number of teachers with experience continues to decline, as shown in the chart on the following page\(^12\)

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   Welcome to the Employees’ and Teachers’ Pension System. [Brochure]. (2017.) (n.p.) Maryland State Retirement and Pension System


We invite you to join the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association (MRSPA).

- First and foremost, MRSPA is the only organization that has as its top priority the full actuarial funding of Maryland’s defined benefit teacher pension/retirement trust fund.
- The MRSPA Legislative Aide, a registered lobbyist paid by MRSPA, reviews and addresses all bills coming before the General Assembly. The MRSPA Legislative Committee discusses the legislation and decides what position and action to take on these bills. The Legislative Aide works under the direction of MRSPA’s Legislative Committee, MRSPA President, and the MRSPA Executive Director.
- In addition, you become the beneficiary of money-saving benefits that meet your needs as a retiree.
- Finally, enjoy the socialization of group events and the satisfaction of promoting scholarships and volunteer activities that continue to support schools and students.

For membership information, please contact the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association at 1.877.625.6782 (Toll-free) or by email mrspa@mrspa.org or visit us on the web @ www.mrspa.org.

Don’t wait another minute to become involved!
MRSPA Membership.....

- keeps members informed with the newsletter, MRSPA News, five times a year
- offers group travel to destinations around the world as well as in the United States
- provides voluntary benefits to members at discounted rates
- Legislative Update available on the MRSPA website. Contains a list of legislation with positions taken by the Committee.
- Legislative Priorities Brochure is an annual publication.
- Financial support for local reception/meetings with legislators is available.
- Online resource for links to the Maryland General Assembly and contact tool to communicate with local senators and representatives by legislative districts.
- Legislative Workshop is an annual event in Annapolis to brief and discuss issues anticipated in the upcoming legislative session.
- Speakers are available for local meetings to update membership on current issues/topics.
- Collaboration/cooperation with other organizations including NRTA, AARP Maryland and National Council on Teacher Retirement (NCTR).
- Legislative Aide monitors bills that are filed and shares the relevant proposed legislation with the committee. Testifies before the committees of the General Assembly on specific legislation when the committee has taken a position for the association.
- Local leadership is encouraged to share with membership the tools available through MRSPA, especially on the website, to contact elected officials on MRSPA’s legislative priorities and positions. This broad and coordinated effort with the state and locals working in partnership is an effective strategy to advance the priorities.
### Membership Action Plan for Local Organizations

**July 1-June 30  Year_______**

**County______________________ Date____________**

#### Goal I Recruiting

**Objective**

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<th>Action/Activity</th>
<th>Person(s) Responsible</th>
<th>Date Completed</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Public Relations</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Additional Support Needed</th>
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Spring 2020
Goal II Retaining

Objective

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Goal III Regaining

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Spring 2020
Sample Letters for Welcoming, Recruiting, Retaining and Regaining Members

The purpose of these sample letters is to provide additional ideas for your use. Your local association's personal information is to be inserted.

Recruiting Letters: Samples 1, 2, 3, 4

Retaining/ Renew Letters: Sample 6

Regaining Letters: Sample 7

Welcome Letter: Sample 5
Dear Fellow Retiree,

Congratulations on your retirement! I hope you are enjoying the benefits of this milestone in your life. You are now eligible to join your former colleagues in your organization. As Membership Chairperson, I would like to invite you to become a member of both the state and local retirement organizations. These organizations are open to all retired school personnel. There are benefits and joys in belonging to both associations.

The state organization, Maryland Retired School Personnel Association, MRSPA, is the only organization serving exclusively as an advocate for retired school personnel. It is through this organization that our voices are heard in Annapolis. There are ongoing efforts to protect our retirement/pensions, and legislative updates are given. There is strength in numbers, and your membership will allow MRSPA to continue to work for the collective group to fight to counteract or support issues that negatively or positively impacts our organization. You will receive a quarterly newsletter from MRSPA informing you of pertinent information for your benefit.

Our local organization, which meets number times a year, affords you the opportunity to have lunch and fellowship with other retirees. Local issues are discussed, pertinent information is shared, short programs are featured, and door prizes are given at each meeting. We provide number newsletters with current information, high school students with college scholarships, and involvement in community service projects.

Meetings scheduled for this year are as follows:

The luncheons are held at the location from time. The cost of the meal is $ per person. However, as a recent retiree we invite you to be our guest to the (first) month meeting.

Dues are total annually, which include $45.00 state dues and $ local dues. The money that goes to MRSPA supports their work on our behalf. The money that stays with local's name is used for scholarships given each year and other activities. Please find enclosed an application. I will gladly assist you with any questions, your phone number/email address. The preferred method of payment is by dues deduction from your retirement/pension check. We encourage the dues deduction method of payment because of the tremendous amount of time and money it saves the organizations. Alternate forms are by personal check or credit card.

Thank you to those retirees who have become MRSPA and your local members. Those of you who have not become a member, please consider becoming a member of both organizations even if you are unable to attend our meetings (although we'd love to have you come). By so doing, you will be helping to ensure the welfare of yourself and other retired personnel. We hope that you will join us in this endeavor to stay informed, renew old friendships, and begin new ones.

Become a member now! YOU and your ideas are important to us! Together we can make a difference! Our first luncheon of the year is date. To let us know you will be attending, please call or email our Luncheon Chairperson, name, phone number or email address.

Sincerely,

Your name
Membership Chairperson
Enclosure: Application
You have the opportunity to become a member of both your organization (       ) and the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association (MRSPA). Membership is open to ALL retired school personnel in our school system.

As a member of these organizations, you will benefit personally through meeting with other your county County Public School retirees and supporting the ongoing efforts of your organization and MRSPA to protect your retirement/pension benefits.

Some of the activities include:

* MRSPA acts as a legislative watchdog to protect the welfare of retired members.
* Members are kept informed through local and state newsletters and the internet.
* Local association meetings are held.
  Meetings are luncheon meetings held number times a year at location and time beginning in month and ending in month. Meetings include a short informative or entertainment program and time to socialize with former colleagues and other retired members.
* MRSPA meetings are open to those members who are interested in participating in statewide issues.
* There is involvement in the National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA) and its programs.

You will be invited to be our guest at our first luncheon meeting and will receive number, your local organization newsletters. Dues for each association are minimal and can be deducted from your pension check annually. If you have any questions, suggestions, or ideas please contact me, phone number and email address.

Please complete the information below and return to ____________________________.

Sincerely,

Your name
Membership Chairperson

Please print
Name ________________________________
Address ________________________________

_______ YES, I AM interested in receiving more information about joining your organization and MRSPA.
_______ NO, I am NOT interested in receiving more information about your organization and MRSPA.
Dear (Retiree Name),

We hope that you are enjoying your retirement. It offers so many more opportunities that we were not able to take part in while we were busy taking care of the education of our students in (your county) County Public Schools.

We are hopeful that you will now be able to join our association and MRSPA. I have enclosed an application for your convenience.

If you have any questions about our organizations, please feel free to email me, (email address), or call, (phone number). Our president, (name, email address), would be glad to answer any questions. We also welcome your suggestions and ideas.

Sincerely,

(Name)
Membership Chair

(Name)
President

Enclosures: Application
Flyer
Dear (Retiree Name),

We are hopeful that you will join our association even though we have not been able to add you to our membership roll yet this year. Perhaps hearing what several members who come from different occupation groups within (your county) County Public Schools give as their reasons for belonging may provide the encouragement needed to become a member.

These members were asked: What do you like about MRSPA AND YOUR LOCAL? Why do you belong to MRSPA AND YOUR LOCAL? (Include Sample Testimonials page.)

We'll leave it up to you. We hope you will become a member of our organization and MRSPA. You are welcome to join us any time. Feel free to contact either of us with questions, suggestions, or ideas.

Sincerely,

(Your name)
Membership Chair
(Email address)

(President's name)
President
(Email address)
Dear (Name),

Welcome to the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association (MRSPA) and (your organization). We are so glad that you have joined us.

As membership chair for your local, I check with our new members to let them know when to expect newsletters, to give you an idea of our various activities, and to answer any questions you may have.

Your local newsletter will come by US mail from (newsletter editor, phone number, email address) about (number) weeks before the luncheon meeting. If you provide (newsletter editor) with your email address, you will receive your newsletter via email about (number) weeks earlier.

Your MRSPA newsletter will also come by US mail unless you request that you receive it through email. Again, the email newsletter will come earlier than US mail. If you want to receive your newsletter via email, please contact the MRSPA office, mrspa@mrspa.org or (toll free) 877-625-6782.

Remember, we invite you as our guest to our first meeting. The meeting is (date) at (location and time). If you are able to attend, please contact (name) at (phone number) or (email address) by (date).

If you have any membership or any other questions, please feel free to email me, (email address), or call me at (phone number). (Name), our president, is ready to do the same at (email address). We welcome your suggestions and ideas.

I am looking forward to meeting you at one of our events this year. I hope your summer has been a fantastic one!

Sincerely,

(Your name)
Membership Chair
Dear (Member Name),

I want to send you a special note to say “Thank You” for your continuing membership in (Local & MRSPA). As you know, these organizations are important as they continuously work to protect our pension and benefits as retirees.

MRSPA:

- is the only organization in the state that works exclusively for retired school personnel
- is the only organization that advocates solely for the funding of the Pension Retirement Trust Fund.
- advocates for its members’ interests locally in Annapolis and nationally in Washington
- is represented on the Maryland Retirement/Pension System Board of Trustees
- collaborates with other organizations that advocate for retirees and/or seniors, including AARP Maryland and United Seniors of Maryland
- keeps members informed of legislation proposed in the General Assembly related to retiree issues.

(Local) works actively with MRSPA to support and protect our retiree benefits. We work locally to provide programs which insure the well-being of our retirees and students.

Through your membership, we can provide a more powerful unified group than we could ever do as individuals. Your membership matters!

Best regards,

(Name)
President, (Name of Organization)
Dear Colleague,

We miss you!

MRSPA continues to advocate for our retirement/ pension. (Your organization) continues to (add your various activities). We would love to have you return and be a part of your (organization name) again. We need your fresh ideas and suggestions. Our next luncheon is (date & time) at (location). Please contact (name) at (email) or call (phone number) to let (her/him) know you are attending.

If you have any questions, please contact me email or call phone number.

I look forward to seeing you at the luncheon. I would enjoy having the opportunity to talk with you.

Sincerely,

Your name
Membership Chair

Enclosure: Flyer
Sample Testimonials

**Secretary / Administrative Assistant**
Nice getting together with all the others who have retired. Nice to have the feeling of belonging within the group.

**Middle School Math Teacher**
Membership supports the organizations that advocate for school retirees, especially in the state legislature, and then share the info with members. The social aspect, the food, the speaker’s presentation on COIPP comes to mind, and the Community Service- school supplies, scholarship funds.

**Office of Human Resources**
My main reason is to see friends and acquaintances from my years at ___. Gives me the opportunity to see people who’ve retired, catch up, laugh and have a great time! I also hear what’s going on via the state and local newsletters. They have a wealth of information. I think it’s an excellent organization. I highly recommend joining to everyone. You are missing something if you’re not coming to the meetings.

**Elementary Principal**
I belong because of the advocacy you provide to entire retiree group, like insurance, for example, with the most recent information on life insurance changes.

**High School Social Studies Teacher**
I joined MRSPA for 2 reasons. The first is selfish in that they work to protect my retirement benefits as well as offer hearing, insurance, car-buying, and travel programs. The second reason is more altruistic in that they support initiatives for the betterment of citizens of our county and state.

**Reading Specialist**
I belong because I enjoy the meetings, catching up with fellow members and hearing the latest news. It’s always fun and informative.

**Custodian**
I belong because of the years I was in the system. I worked at several buildings and spent 17 years at Central Office. It’s good to see some of the principals, some of the teachers, and some of the people that I used to work with. That’s why I belong for the fellowship.

**Elementary Special Education and Guidance**
Even though I am at a distance and can’t participate in activities, I’m grateful for the advocacy that the organization sponsors.
You’ve Thought About Protecting Your Home..

But What About Your Pension?

MRSPA Helps Protect YOU
Maryland Retired School Personnel Association
Join Today
RE-MEMBER MRSPA

I remember when you were a member of MRSPA. Please take the time to rejoin us and support what we do to protect your benefits and pension!