



## MISSION STATEMENT

OEA-Retired is dedicated to meeting the needs of its members, providing member involvement within OEA and supporting public education.

### 2020-2021 Officers

Mary Binegar, Chairperson  
Carol Kinsey, OEA Director

Phil A. Long, Vice Chairperson

Peg Ham, Secretary  
John Hoyes, Past Chairperson

*OEA-R NEWSLINE* is the official publication of OEA-Retired  
Jack Boyd, Editor

OEA-R website: <http://oea-r.ohea.us>

## OEA FUND FOR CHILDREN AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

Let's help raise money to elect pro-senior, pro-union, pro-education candidates. It's quick and easy to donate electronically. Go to: <http://ohea.org> and click on the **DONATE** button at the top of the page.

## STRS

Mr. John Morrow, STRS Ohio chief investment officer, presented the proposed 2021 Investment Plan. It was a very lengthy document and was one that was very difficult to compile in our current erratic economic and political environment. With so many unknowns out there it was a challenge to decide what was best for the organization. The plan was very thorough and complete. The Callan consultants and the Cliffwater consultants both reported that the plan was well done and much more expansive than plans by other public pension systems that they deal with because we do 70% of our investments in house. The investment plan was approved. The Annual Investment Seminar that STRS Ohio usually has in March was cancelled due to the virus but has been rescheduled for September.

John reported that we earned 1.8% in returns in May. Year to date fiscal year 2020 the fund has earned +1.6% which is amazing considering the economy's current state. The fiscal year will end as of June 30, 2020. We will have the final numbers at the August Board meeting. The fund is currently valued at \$76.2 billion which is down from its high in February of nearly \$82 billion.

Mike Nehf was recognized for his years of service to STRS Ohio. He will be retiring as soon as we have a new Executive Director hired and ready to take over. The interviews for that position will be held on Tuesday, June 23, 2020. As soon as the decision is official I will let you know.

Mr. Michael Reid, VP of CEM Benchmarking reported that STRS Ohio was benchmarked against 46 leading global pension systems from the United States and Canada. STRS Ohio earned the

No. 2 ranking in service last year following the No. 1 ranking in service for the last four years and in 11 of the 22 years of the Benefits Administration Survey.

The key takeaways were as follows:

#### **COST**

\*STRS Ohio total pension administration cost of \$105 per active member and annuitant was \$2 above the peer average of \$103.

\*Between 2012 and 2019 our total pension administration cost per active member and annuitant decreased 0.9% per annum

#### **SERVICE**

\*STRS Ohio total service score was 94. This was above the peer median of 83 and was one of the highest of the CEM universe.

\*Our service score included a) our website where we added 7 online transaction tools, b) future pension entitlements availability on our member statements and c) enhanced customer experience/satisfaction surveying.

STRS Ohio's cost per member decreased from \$111 to \$105 per member in the past eight years. Our service score increased from 88 to 95 between 2012 and 2019. The pension system that was No. 1 spent almost \$70 more per member and annuitant than STRS Ohio.

Lynn Hoover, STRS CFO, reviewed the proposed budget for 2021. She had presented it at the May meeting in great detail but the Board didn't vote on it until this meeting. The proposed operating budget for 2021 reflects a decrease of \$186,200 or 0.2% from the fiscal 2020 budget. Total compensation decrease of \$958,900 or -1.5% is budgeted.

The number of FTE's has been reduced from 535 to 530. There had been an extensive discussion concerning the budget at the May meeting. Some of the Board members believed that there should be no increases in pay in the budget when there are teachers that will be losing their jobs due to the cuts in the state budget mandated by the governor. I spoke and voted for the passage of the budget as presented. I had received numerous emails from retirees encouraging me to vote against raises as long as retirees are not receiving their COLA's. STRS is a premier retirement system mainly because of its employees. I believe that it is because of our employees that we are able to maintain the system and serve all its members. The budget passed as presented. The vote was 6-5.

The most politically correct thing for me to do would have been to vote against it but I believe our job as Board members is to run the system the best we can for all its members. That is my job as a fiduciary. I hope everyone is doing well and staying safe. We do not have a meeting in July. Stay safe and well.

Submitted by: Rita Walters.

## **SERS**

The Board elected Employee-member Hugh W. Garside Jr. as chair and Employee-member Barbra M. Phillips as vice-chair for 20-21 year.

Despite challenges from the Covid-19 there were signs of some positive activity in our investments. The Board approved YF2021 Annual Investment plan which is a guide to our investment decisions for the fiscal year. Please go to the SERS Board Highlights for a further breakdown of these.

There will no proposed changes to the health care for the 2021 year. At the May meeting it was recommended that current enrollees be transitioned to the Aetna Medicare Advantage plan. This will allow savings to them while allow 99% to keep current Doctors while giving a \$1.2 million savings to SERS. No changes to the Aetna Medicare Advantage premiums were proposed. No changes in the vision and dental plans from 2020/2021. The 2021 Premium Discount Program, plan was presented and approved.

The Executive Director's Report was given. Staff and retiree safety has been a priority and they will continue to monitor the pandemic trends in Columbus and consider any modifications that may be required.

The FY2001 Budget was approved showing a 1% decrease from the 2020 budget. Matt Sanders, Administrative Services Director will retire June 30<sup>th</sup> after a 22-year career at SERS.

SERS continues the Wraparound Plan advocacy and is hopeful that current administration will be open to changes to the 2021 plan.

The board approved 170 active members retirement and 10 survivor benefits for June. The July Board Meeting was scheduled for Thursday, July 16<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 AM and Friday July 17, if necessary.

For more in-depth information, go to the SERS Website and see Board Meeting Highlights.

Submitted by: Barb Catalano

## **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

### *Mary's thoughts-*

Paraphrasing part of Lily's opening speech, she said the question is not whether or not we have a voice through NEA. We know that we have a voice with NEA. The real question is how will we use our voice? This question holds true for OEA-R also. We know that through the organization we have a voice as retirees. The better question now needs to be how will we use that voice.

The last few months we've seen most of our world is turned upside down between the coronavirus and the protest over the unjust death of far too many African-American citizens at the hands of law-enforcement. The protest in our streets remind us that we must begin to have some very difficult conversations and change the course of our nation in order to protect our democracy.

As retirees the coronavirus has threatened not only our physical health, but also our mental and fiscal health. It has shown us the inequities that exist in our country not only in healthcare but also in economic safety and the inequities that exist in our education system.

As OEA-R we will raise our voice to advocate for all students to have a quality education no matter their zip code. We will advocate for our active colleagues to be able to safely begin the 2020-2021 school year with plans to provide safe and healthy environments for staff and students whether online or in person. And we will advocate for our retired members to ensure protection of their retirement benefits throughout their retirement years.

Our voice is important but its strength depends on each of you. We must continue to speak to our legislators through calls or email to encourage the passage of the HEROES Act and other legislation that fund education and gives schools the funds they need to open safely and retain educator positions. We must individually and collectively have those hard conversations about social justice and really listen to those from backgrounds different than ours. Finally we must become better educated about our retirement systems in order to make sure the systems stay strong and viable even in the most difficult situations.

The leadership of OEA-R stands ready to stand up, speak out, and lead forward. We look forward to serving you and serving with you whether online or in person throughout the coming year. We need our members to step up, get involved, and be part of the solution.

Additional Information –

The Sept 3 OEA-R Fall Conference has been postponed until Sept, 2021. Please see the Program Services Committee report below.

Please contribute to the OEA Fund (FCPE). We need to support pro-public education candidates this Nov. Donate online at [ohea.org/donate](http://ohea.org/donate)

The NEA RA delegates will be voting this month whether or not to endorse Joe Biden for President. The vote will be tallied on Aug 5 and requires at least 58% approval rate for an endorsement.

Please contact your US Senators to approve a bill similar to the HEROES Act as passed by the House to provide badly needed funds for schools and local governments.

If you wish to be more involved, ask questions or make suggestions, please contact your OEA-R District Representative or Mary Binengar ([binegm@aol.com](mailto:binegm@aol.com)).

Submitted by: Mary Binengar, OEA-R Chair

## **2020 NEA-R ANNUAL MEETING REPORTS**

The NEA-R Annual Meeting was held virtually on June 29-30 from 3 to 5:15. Lily Garcia, NEA President, was recognized for her service and support of NEA-R. She was presented that one of the scholarships would be given in her honor. Lily reminded us that September 1 she would be one of us!!!

It was a pleasant surprise when it was announced, during the Communication Committee report, that the Western Ohio Education Association Retired newsletter, New Horizons, tied for first place in the Established Local Retired Newsletter Award category. Wayne Wlodarski is the editor.

Campaign speeches were given for the offices of President, Executive Council, Board of Directors and BOD alternate. OEA-R Chair, Mary Binengar, brought the OEA-R delegation together via zoom to discuss the candidates and those who might best serve OEA-R and NEA-R. Mary has done a tremendous job keeping the delegates informed and up to date about the Annual Meeting and RA.

The NEA Representative Assembly will also be virtual July 2-3 3-8pm each day. Carrie Pugh and Brandon Rettke, NEA Campaigns and Elections staff, talked about the need to not focus on polls and not be complacent as we move into the coming 2020 election. Brandon stressed the need for retirees to work at the polls. I loved this plug as a Board of Elections member because we are constantly looking for election officials.

It was again an honor and privilege to serve OEA-R as an NEA-R delegate for 2020.

Submitted by: Phil A. Long, delegate

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The virtual meeting for the NEA-RA was done in the format similar to the OEA-RA and was very easy to access and the closed caption was also a very helpful. Overall, I was pleased to be a delegate representing OEA. The speakers and business conducted was impressive and I believe it was a successful R.A. considering the number of participants across the world. One of the many parts of the R.A. that stood out for me was the keynote address given by President, Lily Eskelsen Garcia. She was very impressive with many points about our America historically as

well as presently. The first point she made was “we the people” unfortunately has not really been “all” people throughout history. Another point she made was she was labeled unpatriotic based on a statement she made in a recent interview “America never was America for too many Americans” her point being for far too many marginalized citizens of America this was sadly a true fact. Another point she made was “inequality is by designed, people in power keeping their power,” basically they want more which means others must have less – to keep the power-greed! She then stated as the President of the largest union she was proud to be a part of the most magnificent collective voice and collective power that refuses to be silent when we see social and racial injustices and our democracy being threaten. Her final statement was a challenged to the delegates “what are we going to do with our power?” This challenge makes me realize that OEA and OEA-R has a lot of work to do if we are going to make sure our democracy is retained and social and racial injustices are addressed. We must step up and get out and VOTE!

Submitted by: Judy Buschle, delegate

## **OEA-R PROGRAM and SERVICES**

This is to update everyone on the plans of the OEA-R Program and Services Committee.

After a unanimous vote of the committee in June, the OEA-R Cabinet supported the postponement of the 2020 OEA-R Fall Conference to 2021. The committee feels a very current and appealing program was planned and with minor changes, plan to offer the program in 2021 for OEA-R members. We must consider the safety and health of all OEA-R members, our friends and family.

The Ad Hoc Committee for the 2021 Read Across America has been making plans and will reveal those plans soon. The theme during **March 2021 is Celebrate Diversity: READ**. The committee consists of: Jeff Corbin, Susan Stuckey, Val Roldan, Beryl Burkle, Haven Readon, Beverly Woolridge, Mary Binegar, Judy Buschle, and Phil A. Long, Chair. The committee will be asking for a coordinator in each District, are reviewing books to purchase, and developing book lists on the topic of diversity and social justice. The committee and coordinators will need OEA-R volunteers – please be available and participate!!!!

The committee will continue plans for more Retired District sharing of plans, events, newsletters and procedures. The committee will also continue to encourage OEA-R member’s attendance at the STRS and SERS monthly meetings and have a presence at OEA events. We will have the materials to show our presence to active members and encourage their membership in OEA-R. An exciting new display is ready for the big reveal!!!!

The committee will be discussing Plans and Procedures for Pre-Retirement Workshops for the 2020-2021 year in each District.

Submitted by: Phil A. Long

## **DISTRICT REPORTS**

**Editor’s Note: Due to COVID-19 most district have not been meeting and have nothing to report.**

### **SWOEA:**

Since the COVID 19 began in March we have cancelled all our in-person meetings, events and General Meeting. The executive committee has met twice via zoom and has been able to discuss information about how we will proceed for the upcoming year. We have tentatively planned for a “Not Back to School Brunch” and will look at holding a General Meeting in September if things have reached a point where social distancing is no longer a part of our everyday lives. We are going to get information out this month to our SWOEA-R members through a flyer by middle to

late July to let them know what possible events might be in the horizon. For now, we are just wishing our members to remain safe and healthy.

Submitted by: Judy Buschle

**WOEA:**

WOEA-R membership chairs, Jane Rahn and Emmy Brudzynski, have been contacting WOEА retirees about joining WOEА-R. They have also cleaned up the membership list in order that the mailing and membership lists are current and correct.

Plans are underway for the 2020-21 year with programs, many postponed from the spring of 2020. An August newsletter will outline all programs and events.

Jane Rahn is thanked for her service as the At-Large representative to the OEA-R Advisory Council for the past 3 years.

Val Roldan is serving on the new OEA-R Read Across America committee using her expertise in conducting a very successful Read Across America in WOEА-R the past few years. More information will be shared.

Submitted by: Sandy Coe