



MEA MONITOR

Moline Education Association

December 2013

President's Report – Susan Blackall

I wanted to take a moment to tell you how much I have appreciated having the opportunity to be your MEA president. We have a district filled with phenomenal teachers, heart-warming children, and worthy initiatives. I have had the opportunity to be in our buildings and see incredible learning taking place room after room -- child after child. It is truly something we can all be proud of. We don't get told often enough that we are doing a great job, working under increasingly difficult circumstances. But we deal with each new demand, adjust, and move forward. I am proud to be a teacher working with such talented peers.

These are important times ahead of us with contract negotiations, teacher evaluation changes, 1% sales tax initiative, and pension reform lawsuits – not to mention a second semester of educating our children. I have included some of the current information on the pension; however, the IEA website is also an excellent place to check for breaking news. The year has flown by so far, and hopefully we will return ready to jump back into the whirlwind that is education. I wish everyone a restful, joyful, and renewing holiday break. It couldn't come at a better time.

Sue Blackall

**SB 1 (Madigan-D/Cullerton-D)
Conference Committee Report**

OPPOSE

Unilaterally Reduces Pension Benefits for Current Workers and Retirees in All State Retirement Systems (TRS, SURS, SERS, GARS) Except Judges

Increases the Retirement Age for Employees Under 46 Years Old

The proposal raises the retirement age, on a graduated scale, for current Tier I members who are under 46 years old (no change for those 46 years of age or older) for both the reduced and unreduced annuities.

The retirement age is increased by the following schedule:

- Adding 4 months to retirement age eligibility for every year that an active Tier I member is under the age of 46 on June 1, 2014. Tier I members age 31 or younger on June 1, 2014, would be required to wait another 5 years until they reach age eligible retirement.

COLA Cap

The COLA cap applies to all active and retired members in the affected retirement systems. For those in TRS and SURS, the 3 percent COLA will apply to the amount of an annuity equal to the lesser of a member's current annuity amount or \$1,000 multiplied by the years of service credit. This \$1,000 amount will increase every year by the CPI. For example, a member with a \$50,000 annuity and 30 years of service would have a \$30,000 cap on the amount of their annuity that would receive a 3 percent COLA. As a result, the member's COLA would be \$900 for a total annuity of \$50,900 in the first year. The next year, assuming a 2 percent CPI, the cap would be \$30,600, resulting in a COLA of \$918 and a total annuity of \$51,818.

COLA Skip

For those members who have yet to retire, the COLA skips will be based upon your age at the time of the bill becoming law (June 1, 2014). Once these periods have expired, the COLA will be increased as described under "COLA Cap."

50 and over	one year skip over period of two years
47-49	three year staggered skip over a period of six years
44-46	four year staggered skip over a period of eight years
43 and younger	five year staggered skip over a period of ten years

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Employee Contributions

Member contributions are decreased by 1 percent. This will result in an 8.4 percent contribution rate for TRS and a 7 percent contribution rate for SURS.

Pensionable Salary Cap for Tier I Members

The legislation would cap a member's pensionable salary at the Tier II salary cap (currently set at \$110,631). Under existing state law, the salary cap rises annually. The increase is equal to one-half of the annual rate of inflation.

However, for any member covered by an individual contract or collective bargaining agreement, the cap will be the member's annualized salary (if it is higher than the Tier II cap) on the day the current contract expires. A contract cannot be amended or extended to increase the level of the cap.

For any member not under contract but with a current salary that exceeds the cap, that member's salary cap would be set at their salary (if it is higher than the Tier II cap) on the bill's effective date.

Changes the Effective Rate of Interest for TRS and SURS

The proposal directs the Comptroller to adopt a more conservative number for what is known as the "effective rate of interest" (ERI). Under current law, the ERI determines benefits for TRS and SURS participants hired before 2005.

Supplemental Contributions Beginning in FY 2020

The State currently makes payments on pension obligation notes from 2010 and 2011. Beginning in FY 2020, the state would contribute \$1 billion *in addition to* the State's scheduled contributions to the state-funded systems. The additional contributions will continue until all systems reach their funding goal.

Fails to Provide for a Solid Contractual Guarantee for the Funding of the Pension Systems

Grants the pension funds the ability to seek legal action against the State to fully fund the annual pension payment. Additionally, the legislation enacts a new funding plan starting in FY 2015-FY 2044. The language has a loophole that would allow the General Assembly the flexibility to change the required pension payment on an annual basis.

Creation of a Defined Contribution Plan

The legislation creates a defined contribution plan that allows up to 5% of participants in any pension plan to participate on an annual basis.

Collective Bargaining Exclusion

Prohibits all pension matters from being collectively bargained with the exception of the pension contribution pick-ups.

Sick Leave and Vacation Accruals for Future Participants

Prohibits the use of sick leave and vacation in the calculation of FUTURE TRS and SURS members' annuities. This would apply only to future Tier II participants. budget, the Executive Board shall have the power to employ a staff for the efficient management of the association.

Public Relations- Kim Anderson

Attention members! Did you know that the MEA has its own website (<http://mea40.org/>)? On this website, you can find archived copies of past Monitors and Connecting Lines. In addition, you can find lists of who the MEA Exec Board members and ARs are and when their meetings are held, MEA election applications and bios, how to access our contract and your Weingarten rights, tax info, John Deere-Moline / Moline Schools Special Recognition Awards, MEA Scholarship info, and links to the District, IEA, and NEA. But there is more we can do with this site!

In a section called Good News, we will feature fun, planned events by the newly formed MEA Social Committee. In addition, I would be willing to post other things such as special classroom or events or school fundraisers, outstanding awards or achievements of students or staff etc. Please feel free to send me text and pictures of anything you would like to share that you believe would qualify!

Elections – Theresa Armes

Election Results - Candidates for Representative to the IEA Convention

Elected as representatives to the 2014 RA held in Chicago in April are:

Susan Blackall – by MEA Constitution

Shelly Rumler, Scott Ehlers, Susan Hafner, and Cassie Larvenz

Alternates are Julie Bender-Peterson, Dave Strafford, and Fran Grier

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ASSOCIATION

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Executive Board

President-Susan Blackall
Vice President-Bonnie Lartz
Secretary-Emily Roberts
Treasurer-Lori McCaw

MHS at Large
Colette Guerdet
Jennifer Ulam

Middle School at Large
Susie Smice

Elementary at Large
Chris Ballard
Tina Ferreri
Dinah Leibovitz

Appointed Committee Chairs
Elections-Teresa Armes
Legislative-Fran Grier
Membership-Julie Bender
Public Relations-Kim Anderson
Social-Cassie Larvenz

Chief Negotiators-
Amber Sensabaugh
Frank Boothe

Membership –Julie Bender-Peterson

Our current membership is 463 members.

MEA Member News:

*Have a very
MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR*



NEXT EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING: JANUARY 9 AT 3:45 AT MEA OFFICE

NEXT AR MEETING: January 16 AT 3:45 AT IEA OFFICE

NEXT SUPERINTENDENT MEETING: January 23 AT 3:45 AT COOLIDGE



About Our Organization...