

The Journal

WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL RETIREES' ASSOCIATION



OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER 2026

VOLUME 80, ISSUE NO. 2



School Retirees Celebrate the New School Year

Several units across the state, including Unit 4 Columbia Basin (above), gathered to mark the first day of school and celebrate being retired!

WSSRA At Work For You



A message from your 2026-27 WSSRA president

Make an Impact



by Lora Brabant (& Daisy), president

As we move through 2026, I am reminded daily of the extraordinary power retired school employees continue to hold in shaping our communities. This year, WSSRA has embraced a simple but meaningful theme, "Make an Impact." It reflects not only what we do, but who we are.

Every member of WSSRA carries a lifetime of experience, service, and commitment. Retirement did not diminish that influence—it expanded it. Across Washington, our units are demonstrating that impact takes many forms: mentoring a student, supporting a local school, advocating for pension security, volunteering in community programs, or simply showing up to strengthen the work of your local unit. Each action, no matter how small, contributes to a stronger, more connected educational community.

Our **legislative advocacy** remains one of the most powerful ways we make an impact. Your voices—through letters, calls, district meetings, and conversations—ensure that lawmakers understand the importance of secure pensions, sustainable healthcare, and equitable cost of living adjustments. When retirees speak together, we are heard. When we persist, we are respected. And when we advocate, we make an impact that reaches far beyond our own membership.

We also see remarkable impact in the growing number of retirees returning to schools as volunteers. Whether reading with students, assisting teachers, or supporting enrichment programs, your presence reinforces the message that education is a life-

long commitment. Students benefit from your wisdom, patience, and encouragement. Schools benefit from your reliability and experience. Communities benefit from your leadership.

Our statewide **WSSRF Scholarships** continue to focus on future educators, exemplifying this year's theme. These scholarships remind us that our impact is intentional, consistent, and rooted in the values that define WSSRA. By supporting the next generation of teachers, we extend our legacy and strengthen the future of public education in Washington state.

Internally, WSSRA is strengthening its own impact through improved training, clearer workflows, and expanded support for unit officers. We are committed to ensuring that every leader has the tools needed to operate confidently, compliantly, and effectively. Strong units create strong statewide advocacy. Strong advocacy protects and advances the benefits retirees depend on.

As we look ahead, I encourage each of you to consider how you can make an impact this year. It does not require grand gestures. It begins with showing up, staying informed, lending your voice, and offering your time. Together, we continue to build a

statewide community that honors our past, serves our present, and prepares for the future.

Thank you for your dedication, your service, and your ongoing commitment to making an impact—every day, in every community, across Washington state.



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JOURNAL INFORMATION

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Material appearing in The Journal, in addition to records of action by the board, councils, committees and units, is presented to promote the general welfare of WSSRA members and otherwise to fulfill the purposes of this association, as defined in Article II of the bylaws.

JOURNAL articles to:
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**Upcoming JOURNAL
article deadlines:**

December 5, 2026
for Jan/Feb 2027 issue

February 5, 2027
for Mar/Apr 2027 issue

WSSRA At Work For You



A message from the executive director

Dark Clouds are on the Horizon



by Peter Diedrick, executive director

A budget storm is brewing in Washington state and retirees' benefits are at serious risk of being eliminated or reduced. Retirees have time to prepare and defend their interests in the budget, but action will be necessary.

The state is going through many of the maneuvers that individuals do when they have dramatic financial hardships. Some readers might be familiar with the drill. First, you cut Netflix and dig through the couch for quarters. Then tap savings and take on some part-time work. In the end, folks face the hard choices of selling the family car, skipping mortgage payments, or limiting meals. State budget writers are going through a political and corporate version of this.

That's where the Washington State Legislature is now. They've made easy cuts, scraped the surplus accounts, and raised taxes. Once again, the state is facing a billion plus dollar mega shortfall. Only hard choices are left. One of those hard choices will likely be eliminating funding for school retiree health insurance. If the state chooses to save money there, each school and state Medicare retiree on PEBB insurance could see an annual premium increase of \$2,196. Add in a spouse, at that becomes \$4,392 per year. They don't want to do it, but sometimes medical gets cut to pay the proverbial mortgage.

To be successful in this upcoming legislative session retirees will have to be engaged with their legislators. There is no other option. Every other constituent group will be screaming about potential cuts, and the quietest groups will get cut. And to be clear, success in this environment means "no cuts." No one is getting extra money – there is no extra money. When the call goes out, contact your elected representatives. Have your friends contact them and have their friends do it too. Otherwise, everyone is going to be digging in the couch for rogue quarters.

Emmett Mills will offer more details of our challenges and advocacy plans on page 6. However, please take this as a call to action. Retirees' well-being depends on it.

In This Issue...

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Please visit us at
WSSRA.ORG

2026 Election

2026 Candidate Endorsements



The WSSRA Executive Board in conjunction with the WSSRA Legislative Committee have voted to endorse the following candidates for the Washington State Legislature. Endorsement decisions were based upon each candidate's legislative voting record, their political positions on WSSRA's issues, and their openness to meeting with WSSRA members. Endorsements are listed by WSSRA regions and districts.

NORTHWEST REGION 1

*Skagit/Island/San Juan, Sno-Isle,
Sno-King, and Whatcom County*

District	Legislative Candidate	Position
1	Davina Duerr (D)	House, Pos. 1
1	Shelley Kloba (D)	House, Pos. 2
10	Clyde Shavers (D)	House, Pos. 1
10	Dave Paul (D)	House, Pos. 2
21	Marko Liias (D)	Senate
21	Strom Peterson (D)	House, Pos. 1
21	Lillian Ortiz-Self (D)	House, Pos. 2
38	June Robinson (D)	Senate
38	Julio Cortes (D)	House, Pos. 1
38	Mary Fosse (D)	House, Pos. 2
39	Sam Low (R)	House, Pos. 1
39	Ida Keeley (D)	House, Pos. 2
40	Debra Lekanoff (D)	House, Pos. 1
40	Alex Ramel (D)	House, Pos. 2
42	Michael Shepard (D)	Senate
42	Alicia Rule (D)	House, Pos. 1
42	Joe Timmons (D)	House, Pos. 2
44	John Lovick (D)	Senate
44	Brandy Donaghy (D)	House, Pos. 1
44	April Berg (D)	House, Pos. 2

NORTHWEST REGION 2

King County area and Seattle area

District	Legislative Candidate	Position
5	Zach Hall (D)	House, Pos. 1
5	Lisa Callan (D)	House, Pos. 2
11	David Hackney (D)	House, Pos. 1
11	Steve Bergquist (D)	House, Pos. 2
30	Claire Wilson (D)	Senate
30	Jamila Taylor (D)	House, Pos. 1
30	Kristine Reeves (D)	House, Pos. 2
31	Drew Stokesbary (R)	House, Pos. 1
32	Cindy Ryu (D)	Senate
32	Lauren Davis (D)	House, Pos. 2
33	Tina Orwall (D)	Senate
33	Edwin Obras (D)	House, Pos. 1
33	Mia Gregerson (D)	House, Pos. 2
34	Emily Alvarado (D)	Senate
34	Brianna Thomas (D)	House, Pos. 1
34	Joe Fitzgibbon (D)	House, Pos. 2
36	Noel Frame (D)	Senate
36	Julia Reed (D)	House, Pos. 1
36	Liz Berry (D)	House, Pos. 2
37	Chipalo Street (D)	Senate
37	Sharon Tomiko Santos (D)	House, Pos. 1
41	Janice Zahn (D)	House, Pos. 1
41	My-Linh Thai (D)	House, Pos. 2
43	Jamie Pedersen (D)	Senate
43	Nicole Macri (D)	House, Pos. 1
43	Shaun Scott (D)	House, Pos. 2
45	Manka Dhingra (D)	Senate
45	Roger Goodman (D)	House, Pos. 1
46	Javier Valdez (D)	Senate
46	Gerry Pollet (D)	House, Pos. 1
47	Claudia Kauffman (D)	Senate
47	Debra Entenman (D)	House, Pos. 1
47	Chris Stearns (D)	House, Pos. 2
48	Vandana Slatter (D)	Senate
48	Osman Salahuddin (D)	House, Pos. 1
48	Amy Walen (D)	House, Pos. 2

2026 Election

2026 Candidate Endorsements

SOUTHWEST REGION 3

*Clallam County, Jefferson County, Kitsap County,
Mason County, and Pierce County*

District	Legislative Candidate	Position
2	Andrew Barkis (R)	House, Pos. 1
23	Greg Nance (D)	House, Pos. 2
24	Adam Bernbaum (D)	House, Pos. 1
24	Kaylee Kuehn (D)	House, Pos. 2
25	Cyndy Jacobsen (R)	House, Pos. 2
26	Deborah Krishnadasan (D)	Senate
26	Adison Richards (D)	House, Pos. 1
27	Laurie Jenkins (D)	House, Pos. 1
27	Jake Fey (D)	House, Pos. 2
28	Mari Leavitt (D)	House, Pos. 1
28	Dan Bronoske (D)	House, Pos. 2
29	Sharlett Mena (D)	Senate
29	Melanie Morgan (D)	House, Pos. 1
29	Patrick Stickney (D)	House, Pos. 2

SOUTHWEST REGION 4

*Grays Harbor/Pacific, Lewis Co., Lower Columbia,
Thurston Co., Clark Co. (Vancouver)*

District	Legislative Candidate	Position
17	Ben Christly (D)	House, Pos. 1
17	Diana Perez (D)	House, Pos. 2
18	Randi Knott (D)	House, Pos. 1
20	Peter Abbarno (R)	House, Pos. 1
20	Ed Orcutt (R)	House, Pos. 2
22	Beth Doglio (D)	House, Pos. 1
22	Lisa Parshley (D)	House, Pos. 2
49	Monica Stonier (D)	House, Pos. 2

EAST REGIONS 5 and 6

*E5: Kittitas Co., Yakima Co., Columbia Gorge
E6: Chelan/Douglas, Columbia Basin, Okanogan Co.*

District	Legislative Candidate	Position
7	Shelly Short (R)	Senate
7	Andrew Engell (R)	House, Pos. 1
7	Hunter Abell (R)	House, Pos. 2
12	Mike Steele (R)	House, Pos. 2
13	Alex Ybarra (R)	Senate
13	Tom Dent (R)	House, Pos. 1
14	Gloria Mendoza (R)	House, Pos. 1
14	Deb Manjarrez (R)	House, Pos. 2
15	Jeremie Dufault (R)	Senate
15	Chris Corry (R)	House, Pos. 1
15	Reedy Berg (R)	House, Pos. 2

EAST REGION 7

Pend Orielle Co., Spokane Area, Whitman Co.

District	Legislative Candidate	Position
3	Natasha Hill (D)	House, Pos. 1
6	Jeff Holy (R)	Senate
7	Shelly Short (R)	Senate
7	Andrew Engell (R)	House, Pos. 1
7	Hunter Abell (R)	House, Pos. 2
9	Joe Schmick (R)	House, Pos. 2

EAST REGION 8

*Clarkston/Asotin Co./Pomeroy, Benton/Franklin,
and Walla Walla/Columbia*

District	Legislative Candidate	Position
8	Nikki Torres (R)	Senate
8	Stephanie Barnard (R)	House, Pos. 1
8	April Connors (R)	House, Pos. 2
16	Mark Klicker (R)	House, Pos. 1
16	Skyler Rude (R)	House, Pos. 2



Legislative News



A Call to Action

 by Emmett Mills, legislative director

If you read WSSRA Executive Director Peter Diedrick’s article on page 3, then you understand the gravity of the budget situation and the threat that it poses to current and future retirees. As Peter mentioned, our primary fear is that the legislature will reduce or eliminate the health insurance benefit that is received by all Medicare-eligible retirees who purchase health insurance through the Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB). The goal of this article is to educate you about what exactly that benefit is and what you can do to help protect it.

What is the PEBB Medicare Benefit?

It is a benefit that you automatically receive if you are enrolled in a Medicare plan offered through the Public Employees Benefits Board. Money in the state budget is automatically applied to reduce the monthly premium that you pay for your PEBB Medicare plan. The benefit is equal to 50% of your monthly premium, not to exceed \$183 per month.

Unlike Pensions, This Benefit is Not Guaranteed

Washington State is not contractually obligated to provide the PEBB Medicare Benefit. This means the legislature has the authority to reduce, alter, or eliminate it. Look at the “Full Cost of Plan” column (*see chart below*) to get an idea of what your monthly premium would be if the benefit were eliminated. Any changes to the benefit likely won’t come into effect until 2028, so they won’t affect your 2027 premiums.

Why are we Worried?

Earlier this year, the Washington State Senate passed a budget that would have reduced the PEBB Medicare Benefit from \$183 to \$150 per month. We were able to prevent the cut from ending up in the final budget, but it was a very close call. With another shortfall anticipated next year, we fully expect our benefit to be targeted again for cuts. Please make sure your voice is heard before the legislature convenes on January 11.



PEBB Medicare Plans Offered in 2027	Full Cost of Plan	PEBB Medicare Benefit	Monthly Premium for Retirees
Kaiser NW Senior Advantage w/ Part D	\$343.82	\$168.69	\$175.13
Kaiser WA Medicare Advantage w/ Part D	\$404.88	\$183.00	\$221.88
Uniform Medical Plan Classic Medicare w/ Part D	\$579.02	\$183.00	\$396.02
UnitedHealthcare (MA-PD) PEBB Complete	\$525.87	\$183.00	\$342.87
UnitedHealthcare (MA-PD) PEBB Balance	\$462.61	\$183.00	\$279.61
Premera Medicare Supplement Plan F Retired*	\$329.07	\$161.32	\$167.75
Premera Medicare Supplement Plan F Disabled*	\$554.91	\$183.00	\$371.91
Premera Medicare Supplement Plan G Retired*	\$280.40	\$136.98	\$143.42
Premera Medicare Supplement Plan G Disabled*	\$472.17	\$183.00	\$289.17

*Does not include drug coverage. You can purchase an additional Medicare Part D plan on the private market.

Legislative News



Take Action Today – Call Your Legislators

Please pick up your phone and contact your state legislators by calling the legislative hotline at (800) 562-6000. You will speak to an operator who will take down your message and send it to all three of your legislators. Below you will find a short script you can read or adapt into your own words.

“Hello, my name is [Name], and I am a retired Washington educator. I rely on Medicare insurance offered to retired public servants through the Public Employees Benefits Board. Without the state’s contribution to this program, I would struggle to afford quality health care. I’m extremely concerned because earlier this year, the State Senate passed a budget that would have increased my annual health insurance costs by nearly \$400. Fortunately, the cut didn’t make it into the final budget, but I’m worried that the idea will be revisited next year. Will you commit to protecting the PEBB Medicare Benefit?”

About Open Enrollment

PEBB Medicare open enrollment is from October 26 to November 23. You may have noticed substantial premium increases for your plan. Unfortunately, this is a broad trend across the health insurance marketplace. As mentioned above, you can have confidence in the listed premiums for next year because any changes to the PEBB Medicare Benefit likely won’t come into effect until 2028. Please remember that if you opt to enroll in a non-PEBB Medicare plan, you won’t be allowed to reenter PEBB in the future.

Not enrolled in PEBB Medicare Insurance?

We often get questions from retirees who are not enrolled in PEBB Medicare insurance and wish to participate. The state has very strict rules about PEBB Medicare eligibility. Typically, it is necessary for you to enroll in a PEBB plan as soon as you go on Medicare. If you are already enrolled in a non-PEBB Medicare plan, it is usually too late for you to participate. If you are a retiree with questions about your eligibility, contact PEBB at 1-800-200-1004. If you are an employee with questions about transitioning to PEBB Medicare, contact your payroll or benefits office.

Visit WSSRA.ORG
“Legislative”



Upcoming Webinars Hosted by WSSRA

WSSRA is excited to host informational webinars for our members this fall. One is specifically for those who have not retired yet. While the other will offer information that both retirees and those still actively employed in schools may find helpful.

Register online for the webinars

WSSRA.org

“webinars” heading

wssra.org/index.php/webinars

Tuesday, October 14, 2026
1:00 p.m.

Retiree Healthcare

Health Care Authority will share information about PEBB insurance and rate changes for 2027

Tuesday, October 27, 2026
5:00 p.m.

Pre-Retirement:

“Health Insurance and Early Retirement”

*Presentations by
 WA Health Care Authority and
 WA Health Benefits Exchange*

If you are unable to attend the live webinars, you are welcome to view the recording at your convenience.

Recorded webinars are available on our website, WSSRA.org, under the “webinars” heading.

WSSR-PAC News



Supporting Our Legislative Friends



by Edith Ruby, WSSR-PAC president



In January, 147 legislators will meet in Olympia. Decisions will be made that will harm or benefit our financial lives as current or future school retirees. This November's election will determine the legislators who will make those decisions. With legislators facing a \$3 billion budget deficit, the threat of financial harm is great.

For the past two years, WSSRA members have contributed to the WSSR-PAC treasury so the PAC could contribute this fall to campaigns of legislative candidates who understand retiree needs and will defend retiree benefits.

After the August primary, WSSR-PAC's executive committee, board members, and WSSRA staff gathered electronically to discuss primary results and to decide which candidates should receive WSSR-PAC contributions and recommendations for WSSRA endorsements. Decisions were not easy. For incumbents we considered support given WSSRA priority bills in past legislative sessions as well as willingness to meet and speak honestly with WSSRA's Legislative Committee members. For all candidates, we looked at responses to PAC questionnaires, constituent and unit recommendations, other relevant activities, and likelihood of being elected. As a nonpartisan PAC we contributed to and endorsed both Democrats and Republicans.

After hours of discussion, it was decided to contribute to 30 candidates. Names of these candidates and contribution amounts are found at WSSR-PAC.org. Names of a larger number of candidates for endorsement were forwarded to the WSSRA Legislative Committee which then sent them on to the WSSRA Executive Board for final approval and publication in the *WSSRA Journal* (see page 4-5). We urge you to find the names of endorsed candidates in your legislative district, contact them, and let them know that as WSSRA members we appreciate their support and are counting on them to pass legislation ensuring all school retirees a financially secure retirement.

It is those WSSRA members who contribute to the PAC either by check or electronically by small monthly contributions who make it possible for the PAC to give financial support to candidates we count on for help during difficult legislative negotiations. While all WSSRA members benefit from the actions of supportive legislators, less than 2 percent of WSSRA's 17,000 members have contributed to the WSSR-PAC this year. These generous contributors make the PAC possible, but we could certainly be more effective with more contributors. More and larger contributions speak more loudly to legislators. Please become a PAC contributor. It is in your own best interest.

Support the WSSR-PAC — Contribute Today!

Contributor Name and Spouse (if applicable):

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Unit #/Name:

Contribution Amount \$

In memory of
(if any):

Can we publish your name on the WSSR-PAC
Wall of Support list? ☐ Yes ☐ No

I certify that this contribution is not organized under the laws of and does not have its principal place of business in a foreign country. This contribution is not financed in any part by a foreign national, and foreign nationals were not involved in making decision regarding the contribution in any way.

Signature: _____

Mail Form & Contribution to:

WSSR-PAC

**2621 SW 167th Place
Burien, WA 98166**

WSSR-PAC.ORG

Membership

Window for Growth



by Alan Burke, Membership committee chair

As the 2026-27 school year opens, so too does a new set of activities and events for the 30 WSSRA units. This is a reminder September is the time that unit meetings are scheduled, speakers are identified, activities are scheduled, and community outreach events are planned.

And therein lies a window for membership growth. The initial unit meetings of the fall provide a great opportunity to reach out to non-members (and members who rarely attend) with an invitation for lunch. What could be better than joining a gathering of like-minded retirees to hear a great speaker, and to socialize with folks who share the commitment to support K-12 education.

So, let's all plan to attend upcoming unit meetings, and be sure to bring a friend with you!

Overall membership numbers continue to hover around 17,000—which is a good number but can always be increased by many actions, including all-important member to non-member outreach. Our power with the legislature is sourced in the size and strength of our members. We come from all corners of the state, have developed strong relationships with the 147 elected state legislators, and understand that “winning” in Olympia requires year-round advocacy.

But we need more retired educators to join us! Please do your part in spreading the word about the important work that WSSRA does to support K-12 retirees in pension and health care advocacy.

With a difficult 2027 legislative session in front of us, we can use the energy of a set of new members to make sure that lawmakers don't mess with the \$183 per month PEBB Medicare benefit—and offer a much-needed COLA to our Plan 1 members.

Visit WSSRA.ORG
“Join/Renew WSSRA”

WSSRA Membership Enrollment Form

Share with a friend today!



WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL RETIREES' ASSOCIATION
 PO Box 5127, LACEY, WA 98509 WSSRA.org
 Questions: michele@wssra.org or 360-413-5496

Name (first, middle, last):

Phone:

Email:

Mailing Address:

City, State, Zip:

SS Number:

WA Retirement Plan (circle):

TRS-1 TRS-2 TRS-3 PERS-1 PERS-2 PERS-3 SERS-2 SERS-3

Local WSSRA Unit (if known) or School District Last Employed:

Membership Type (choose one):

___ PENSION DEDUCTION¹: \$7 per month

___ PAYROLL DEDUCTION¹: \$7 per month

___ ANNUAL CASH DUES: \$84 per year

¹**FOR AUTOMATIC DUES DEDUCTION:** I authorize the Washington State Department of Retirement Systems to deduct dues and any future increases as voted by the membership from my monthly paycheck, or retirement benefit check, and to pay them monthly to WSSRA. Deductions will continue until WSSRA receives written notice of cancellation. Dues are not tax deductible.

Signature:

Date:

*For more information...
 Use the QR code
 and visit WSSRA.ORG*



WSSR Foundation



Charitable Giving to the WSSR Foundation



Please consider the WSSR Foundation (WSSRF) if you are making decisions about charitable giving. The IRS allows for two different mechanisms for charitable giving from your tax advantaged retirement accounts. The following are brief descriptions of each option. As always, please consult with a tax accountant or IRA custodian to make sure you follow current IRS rules.

RMD

Required Minimum Distribution

- Age 75 (as of 2026)
- If inherited - Age 72
- Standard penalty if not taken – 25% excise tax
- Taxable income except part already taxed—unless donated directly to a charity
- **Contact IRA custodian or your accountant**

QCD

Qualified Charity Deduction

- Age 70½
- Donation to 501(c)(3), such as WSSRF
- Direct Transfer
- Tax Exclusion
- Annual Limit (\$108,000 per person)
- **Contact IRA custodian or your accountant**

Foundation Contributors

Michael and Brenda Adams - donation
 Keitha Bryson - donation
 Ed and Diane Gonion - in memory of Rita Requa
 Jill Hashimoto - in memory of Pat Cygan
 Karen Keller - in memory of Barbara Breslin and Rita Requa
 Barbara Landrock - donation
 Carl and Sue Nickerson - in memory of Ann Marie Zorn
 Patricia Siggs - donation

Ann Varkados - in honor of Despo Varkados
 Eileen Wascisin - donation

Unit 2 Chelan/Douglas SRA - in memory of Patricia McLaren

Unit 20 Seattle SRA - in memory of Beth Brennan-Claseman, Beverly Strain, Charles Vollbrecht, Darieen Damon, Genevieve Redcamp, Janice Grubbs, Michael Hathaway, Patricia Cygan, and Russell Quackenbush

Unit 21 Skagit-Isle-San Juan REA - in memory of Edith Porter, Marilyn McGuire, and Mary Byerly

DONATION FORM

WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL RETIREES' FOUNDATION

PO Box 5127, Lacey, WA 98509

Please Print

Donor Name _____ Phone _____

Mailing Address _____ City _____ St _____ Zip _____

Donation \$ _____ In Honor \$ _____ In Memory \$ _____

NOTE: If you would like the person notified of this gift, you must include their full name and address below.

☐ In Honor ☐ Memorial \$ _____ Name _____ Person to be Notified _____ Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____	☐ In Honor ☐ Memorial \$ _____ Name _____ Person to be Notified _____ Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
---	---

☐ Please check box if you would like to receive a receipt for your records.
 The WSSR-Foundation is a 501(c)(3) and donations are tax deductible within the limits of the law.

Check \$ _____ # _____
 Cash \$ _____

ONLINE FOUNDATION DONATION
wssra.org Foundation link > Online Donation Form



BENEFITS STILL FIT?

CONSIDER ADDITIONAL INSURANCE COVERAGE

As your life changes, consider some of these benefits and discounts from **WSSRA & AMBA**:

- Dental & Vision Plans
- Long-Term Care
- Accident Insurance
- Medicare Solutions
- Final Expenses Whole Life & Guaranteed Acceptance Life Insurance
- Hearing Benefits
- Hospital Stay Coverage
- Discounts on Travel, Dining & more

1.877.556.4582

myambabenefits.info/wssra

Washington State School Retirees' Association



Health and Wellness



The Benefits of Strength Training for Older Adults



by Geraldine (Geri) Dennis, Unit 10 Columbia Gorge

As we age, we lose bone and muscle mass, but we can offset that with strength training two to three times a week. Beginning in our 40's we begin to lose muscle. We lose approximately 15% of our muscle mass by age 65 and up to 50% by age 80. With muscle loss, comes the loss of bone density. Strength training exercises not only improve muscle mass, but also reduce the risk for numerous chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, osteoporosis, and arthritis.¹

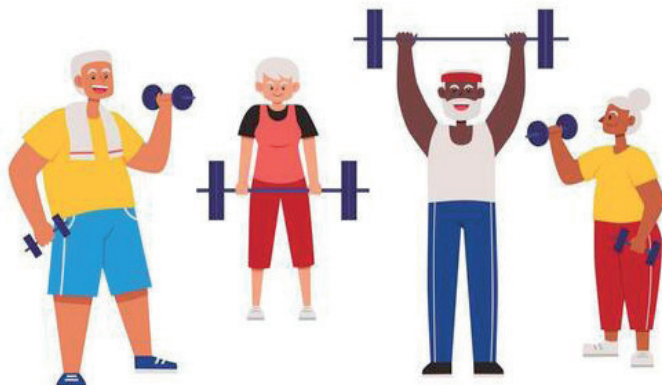
Resistance, or strength training generally refers to exercises in which the muscles in the body move against some type of opposing force that is provided by various types of equipment, or the participant's own body weight. When we use weights or bands to increase bone density and muscle mass we are putting stress on the muscles, which triggers bone-forming cells to generate more tissue. Strength training causes muscle fibers to repair and grow stronger, improves body composition by reducing fat, and enhances joint stability. Long-term, it boosts metabolism, increases energy expenditure, and strengthens the nervous system for better balance.²

Strength training classes using ankle and free weights can be found at fitness centers, senior centers, and YMCAs. Water aerobics, yoga, and Pilates are other ways to improve bone density and muscle mass. When a participant is holding their body weight for an extended time, they use the resistance of their body weight to increase muscle mass and bone density. I am a certified instructor with Strong People, which offers strength training classes in southwest Washington. This program was created by researchers Dr. Miriam Nelson and Dr.

Rebecca Seguin-Fowler in 2003 at Tufts University. I also have been a water aerobics instructor since the mid 90's. Both of these fitness programs include strength training. Strong People uses hand and leg weights, along with body weight to create resistance. In the pool, foam barbells, and long arm and leg movements through the water create the resistance. In addition to the more common body strengthening programs, the SAIL program (Stay Active and Independent for Life) is available across Washington state. The sailfitness.org website provides locations for classes in Washington state.

It is recommended that strength training be performed for 30 to 60 minutes two to three times per week. I have been attending Strong People classes since 2014. I personally have less arthritis inflammation, better balance, improved sleep, and my most recent DEXA (bone density scan) showed improvement from my previous scan over a decade ago. I attribute this bone density improvement to the strength training programs I have participated in or led on a regular basis for the last twelve years.

As with any exercise program, it is important to check with your health care provider before beginning a new program. Paperwork is recommended for participants who will be joining a fitness program. This medical information ensures that the instructor is able to assist you as you find the optimal weights and if you require any exercise modifications. An Iowa State University of Science and Technology article in 2021 listed some advantages of group exercise. Exercising with others can become a fun social activity. Participants are more likely to stick to a program if it satisfies some basic psychological needs, such as meeting new friends, weight loss, sleeping better, and having more energy, to name a few.³ Strength training can empower older adults to live a fuller, more engaged and active life.



¹ Seguin R, Nelson M. "The Benefits of strength training for older Adults. Article. The American Journal of Preventive Medicine, Oct. 2003.

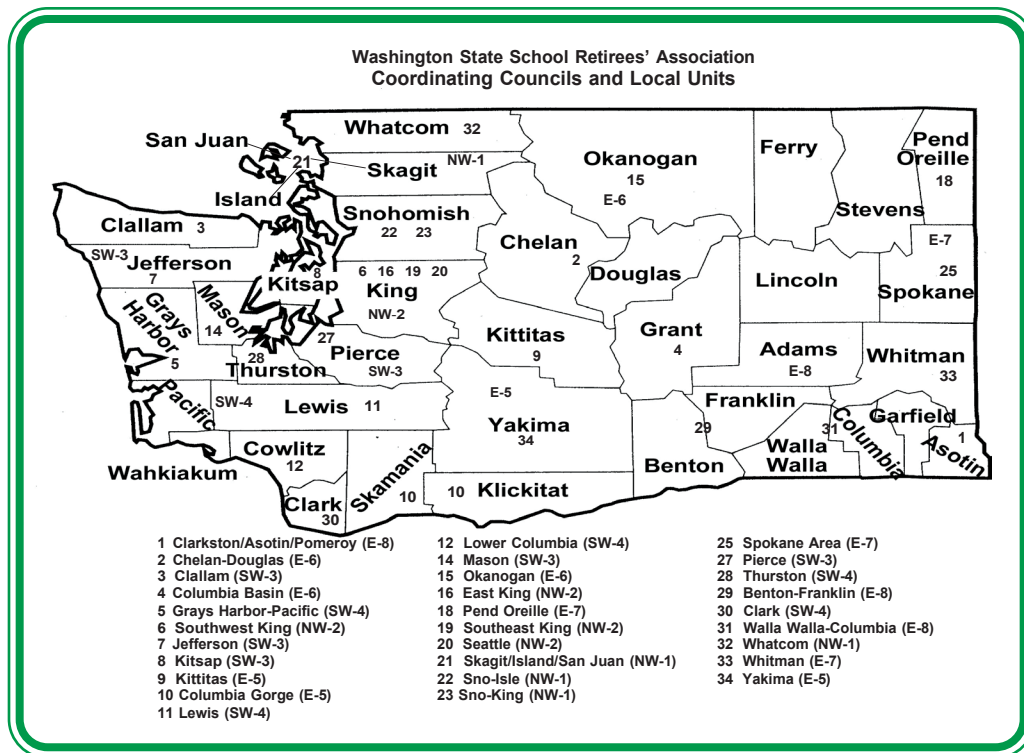
² Rebecca Seguin-Fowler and the Strong Women/Strong People Program. 2022.

³ Article by Iowa State University scholars L. Alison Phillips, associate professor of psychology, and Jacob Meyer, assistant professor of kinesiology, 2021.

WSSRA Around The State

What's happening in...

From the Coordinating Councils and Local Units



Isle members get their unit information electronically. The board is encouraging the other 450 members to share their email to stay informed. Members can find updates on the unit's Facebook page (Sno-Isle SRA) or the Unit 22 Sno-Isle website, sno-islesra.info

Unit 22 and Unit 23 will jointly sponsor a candidate forum on October 16 with representatives from Legislative Districts 1, 21, 32 and 38.

Unit 23 Sno-King:

Unit 23 held its annual July picnic at Edmonds City Park. It was a cool rainy day, but attendees were protected by a shelter. WSSRA President **Lora Brabant** installed unit officers: President **Jim Siscel**, Vice-President **Cathy Webb**, Secretary **Jan Phillips**, and Treasurer **Jennifer Altena**. **Emmett Mills**, WSSRA legislative director, gave an update of what members can expect for the 2027 legislative session. Also, attending was WSSRA Past President **Dottie Stevens**.

The SKSR board met for the annual planning retreat at Lynndale Elementary in August. Next year's budget was discussed. The board decided on programs and speakers for upcoming unit meetings. Unit board members volunteered to contact the necessary organizations or individuals for the programs and speakers.

NORTHWEST-1

Unit 21 Skagit/Island/San Juan: Unit 21 has been busy! They held their annual retreat this August where many new items learned at this year's WSSRA Convention were shared. The board members discussed ways to get in touch and continue a more personal relationship with active members and recruit new members to the Unit.

The members were busy this summer preparing and delivering goodie bags to the active members in the schools they serve. The Unit is gearing up for their annual mini-grants for school employees which

will be awarded at the end of October.

Unit 21 has scheduled their annual holiday luncheon to be held December 5. The Unit would like to invite any executive board members to attend.

This year Unit 21 is hosting NW1 Coordinating Council meetings. The first meeting is set for October 7, any executive board members are invited to attend. Unit board members remain dedicated to the continuing goal of supporting unit members (both active and retired) and the local community! New ideas are constantly being discussed,

and ideas are welcome from fellow units.

Unit 22 Sno-Isle:

Unit 22 board members met in September to map out the year. It was decided to scale back the number of events for the coming year. Another change will be the discontinuation of a paper newsletter. The cost was rising with each mailing and taking away from the valuable contributions to classrooms and the unit's scholarships. Unit news updates will be emailed via Constant Contact and the sender will be, "Sno-Isle 22 Retired School Employees." About 500 Sno-

WSSRA Around The State

Unit 23 decided to work with Sno-Isle Unit 21 to invite those individuals running for legislative office in the four immediate legislative districts to come listen to school retirees' concerns.

Unit 32 Whatcom Co.:

Unit 32 sent four members to the WSSRA Convention in June, and everyone enjoyed themselves — it was very worthwhile!

Members attended the Unit's July Crab Cruise on Bellingham and Chuckanut Bay. A few members from another unit were able to join the cruise as well. Members enjoyed a delicious Dungeness crab dinner and the marvelous scenery on the water!

Unit 32's leadership board met on September 3 to discuss final arrangements for the unit's general membership meeting on October 15. Likewise, the next unit newsletter was discussed, along with other unit business as well.

NORTHWEST-2

Unit 6 Southwest King:

Unit 6 is in a rejuvenating process. This seems to be a process similar to other established units. Kudos and Ludos to WSSRA office and leaders for the assistance and support that all units receive.

Unit members enjoyed attending an outstanding WSSRA annual convention at the Great Wolf Lodge in June. Speakers

and topics were both interesting and timely, and the convention was well organized.

Unit 6 is proceeding through maintenance items including updating the member list, developing an email list, establishing a post office box, creating accounting procedures to modernize unit finances, and looking into a USPS bulk mail permit to reach members without emails. Although reaching 100% of unit members may not be possible, email is an effective way to significantly reduce mailing costs.

If any unit members recently tried to report any contact changes (name, address, phone, email) to WSSRA Membership Coordinator **Michele Hunter** — her email provided in the unit letter was printed incorrectly. Please email your changes to michele@wssra.org. (*Apologies for the incorrect information, the adage of, "if you want to see an error — publish it" is true!*).

Marty Shorb, unit education chair, is putting the final touches on the Unit 6 website. This should be functional by the time you read this *Journal*.

Trinh Pham, PSESD technical director, presented an informative presentation, "AI for Seniors." Trinh's presentation is very easy to understand and has great information about artificial intelligence. The Unit may host a follow-up presentation with a question-

and-answer session about "integrating AI to education" in the spring.

On Monday, November 16, 2026, from 1:00-3:00 pm, there will be a Legislative Forum for the local legislators from the 33rd legislative district at Wesley Homes (815 S 216th St, Des Moines WA 98198). This will be an opportunity to both hear and be heard regarding issues before the legislature in January.

On Friday, January 22, 2027, the Unit will host a presentation on how to navigate the unit website by Auggy Bang and Alex Cail.

Unit 19 Southeast King:

Unit 19 started work during the summer months on the **Naomi Mathisen** Mini Grant award. The committee, **Karen Zink, Tina Underdahl, Rachel Almeleh, Sue Perez, and Bev Bly Addington** met with Dr. Wade Barringer of the Kent School District in August and chose one school for their award. River Ridge Elementary in Kent School District has the highest multilingual education count in the district. After meeting with principal, Trish Stallman, the committee got to work on a book drive. It is Ms. Stallman's goal that every scholar in her school be able to take one book home. Heading that project was **Linda Hollingsworth**, community service chair. **Linda** and her team



Unit 27 Pierce County: The Unit's annual summer picnic in Puyallup was a sunny, perfect day. Marilyn Hicks and Edie Moersch taking a moment for a photo while holding their beanbags during the August picnic's cornhole game.

WSSRA Around The State

have worked diligently to make that dream come true and have collected nearly 600 books (with more coming daily) to donate to the school in October. Each book will have a customized bookplate stating the book was donated by Unit 19, Southeast King School Retirees' Association.

Tina Underdahl and **Rachel Almeleh** had the pleasure of meeting with Irene Aguilar of the Kent School District on August 5 regarding the Unit 19 Student Teacher/Internship scholarships. Kent will have approximately 30 student teacher/interns this year.

The program committee started searching for a convenient location to hold their program meetings. September 1st found Unit 19 at the downtown Renton King County library learning about the decline of the Wild West with Chris Staudinger from Pretty Gritty Tours. The program committee is in the process of finding more engaging programs.

The legislative committee, **Edward Jones** and **Gordon Fisher**, had arranged for State Representative David Hackney (11th Legislative District) to meet with Unit 19 members on September 2. Representative Hackney is seeking re-election. However, the meeting had to be canceled at the last minute. The legislative committee and Rep. Hackney are looking for another date to meet. When held, this will be

the first meet and greet held by Unit 19 with a local legislator in over ten years – thanks to the persistent hard work of **Ed Jones**.

The Unit is happy to have found a venue for their executive board meetings at the Kent Historical Museum in Kent for the second year.

Unit 20 Seattle:

The board met in late August to reflect on the last school year achievements and begin planning for the 2026-27 year. Last year, Unit 20 awarded 55 grants to teachers and librarians.

September 1st was the deadline for submitting unit scholarship applications for college students doing their classroom internship this fall. As of mid-August, several applications had already been received. The Unit's scholarship committee expects to award ten \$5,000 scholarships this fall. This is an increase from eight awards in previous years.

The Unit's board has set the dates and selected speakers for the next three general membership meetings. The meetings are held at Ivar's Salmon House Restaurant in Seattle. Check out the SSRA website, SeattleSRA.org for more information.

On October 1, 2026, the unit meeting speaker was Dr. Lance Rhoades, of the

Remembering



Rita Requa

**WSSRA President,
2009-2010**

Rita Clare Requa passed away peacefully on August 7, 2026, at age 92, in the comfort of her home, surrounded by her children.

Born May 9, 1934, Rita grew up in Chicago with her parents, Estelle and Peter Madsen, and her siblings, Rosemary, Pat, Karen, and Leonard. She earned a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Illinois and later completed her master's degree while working as an elementary school teacher.

Rita taught elementary school for more than 30 years in the Shoreline School District and became a respected leader and advocate in education. She served as president of the Shoreline Education Association, a union representative, and President of the Washington State School Retirees' Association, among many other leadership roles. She was deeply committed to supporting teachers and improving education, and her influence reached countless students, colleagues, and fellow educators.

A lifelong advocate for women's causes, Rita supported the Women's Political Caucus and her teaching unions. She was also a talented watercolor artist who traveled widely for inspiration. An avid reader, she belonged to numerous book clubs and relished their lively conversations. She loved playing poker, bridge, and mahjong, always with plenty of laughter and good-natured competition.

Rita had a rare gift for making people feel special. Her bright spirit, infectious laughter, quick wit, and generous nature made her an extraordinary friend. She loved being surrounded by people and somehow always had a full calendar. Wherever Rita sat, the table became more lively, more interesting, and much more fun.

When asked how she would like people to remember her, Rita wrote: "That I was kind, helpful, fun, good storyteller."

Those working with Rita in WSSRA know she was a wonderful leader and advocate. Rita was also a thoroughly good, kind, and decent person. In addition to being Association President for 2009-2010, Rita served as a volunteer lobbyist advocate on the Legislative Committee and in many other roles for the Association. She will be deeply missed both in her Unit 23 and at the State Association.

WSSRA Around The State



Unit 3 Clallam County: WSSRA President Lora Brabant (*center*) with Larry and Robin Sweeney, recipients of Clallam County School Retirees' Association Community Service Award.

University of Washington Department of Cinema Studies. He spoke about monster movies and shared film clips from famous films. Halloween costumes were welcome for this meeting.

For the December 3, 2026, unit meeting, the speaker will be the new Seattle Schools Superintendent, Mr. Ben Shuldiner. He joined the district last summer, coming from the Lansing, Michigan district.

In March 2027, the unit meeting speaker will be Dr. Lorraine McConaghy, who was a historian working for many years at Seattle's premier museum, the MOHAI (Museum of History and Industry). Dr. McConaghy has lots of inter-

esting stories to share about Seattle history.

A big project for the unit board this year will be to find a replacement for **Sue Battin**, the unit's dedicated treasurer. **Sue** served as the unit's treasurer for about 10 years and decided to hang up the checkbook at the end of the school year. It will be very hard to fill her shoes.

SOUTHWEST-3

Unit 3 Clallam County: The annual Clallam County School Retirees' Association (CCSRA) picnic was held at 4-Seasons Ranch Clubhouse in Port Angeles on June 16.

Guests included members from American Heritage Girls which included President **Lora Brabant's** two granddaughters and two of their leaders. They explained their participation in the project, Wreaths Across America, which puts wreaths on the graves of veterans in December. Mini-grant recipient Brenda Manson, who teaches Robotics and Computer Science at Stevens Middle School in Port Angeles, spoke and demonstrated some of the bots made by her students. Unit members **Larry and Robin Sweeney** received the Clallam County School Retirees' Association Community Service Award for their work in the organization and beyond.

On August 15 at a Port Angeles school, CCSRA volunteers helped distribute 600 backpacks full of school supplies for a back-to-school event. A few members attended the Port Angeles School District benefit fair on August 31.

The executive board met on August 25 for a planning session and brunch at the home of Vice President **Cathy Stordeur**.

The first general meeting was held at Jazzy Joshua's Restaurant in Port Angeles on Tuesday, September 15. The meet-and-greet event included Senator Mike Chapman and Representative Adam Bernbaum and three people running for state representative

in Legislative District 24: Eric Pratt, Kaylee Kuehn, and Marcia Kelbon.

The last week of September a few CCSRA members attended the Olympic Peninsula College and Career Fair at high schools in Port Angeles, Sequim, Port Townsend, and Forks.

Unit 14 Mason County:

Mason County members enjoy meeting and contacting legislators about important legislation to protect retirement and health care insurance, giving grants to teachers to improve classroom teaching, awarding scholarships to students who wish to pursue degrees in education, and learning about community needs from support organizations who provide shelter and food to needy residents. Since the meetings are at a local restaurant, El Puerto de Angeles, in Shelton, at 11:30 am, unit members also enjoy socializing while learning about the schools, community, and legislation. Unit meetings are on the first Tuesday of each month.

The members heard from Shelton City Councilman **Miguel Gutierrez**, also a WSSRA member. He alerted members about issues facing the city of Shelton. He is concerned about the effects of Flock cameras on citizen privacy. The city is still funding Youth Connection, a

WSSRA Around The State

non-profit supporting youth in Mason County who face troubling home lives and the effect on school success. In extreme cases they provide temporary housing. He talked about the difficult choices the Council will need to make on the budget for the next year. All departments have reduced their budget, but it is not enough to balance the budget.

Ed Stewart, Shelton School District administrator, spoke of the testing requirements of students for college entrance and graduation requirements. He also enlightened members about the process of placing students at Shelton High or one of the two alternative schools.

The deadline for school employee mini-grants is October 30, 2026. The Unit will fund 10 grants for up to \$250. The members decided to keep the level at \$250 to reach more school employees across the seven districts in Mason County. Looking forward to approving worthy projects.

Mason County members are proud of the community support for food banks and shelters, educational support for teachers and students, and legislative communications with the state legislative candidates and incumbents.



Unit 6 Southwest King: Unit 6 members preparing the membership list mailing in August. Pictured are (left to right) Doug Sample, Julie Polwarth, Ruth Ballard, and Sandra Hart.

RETIREE RESOURCES

WA Dept. of Retirement Systems (TRS, PRS)
1-800-547-6657 DRS.WA.GOV

PEBB and Health Care Authority
(health insurance)
1-800-200-1004 PEBB.HCA.WA.GOV

SHIBA - Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors 1-800-562-6900
INSURANCE.WA.GOV/SHIBA

Social Security Administration (SSA)
1-800-325-0778 SSA.GOV

Senior Citizens' Lobby
360-754-0207 WASENIORLOBBY.ORG

Unit 27 Pierce County:

What a sunny, perfect day at Clark's Creek South Park in Puyallup! Unit 27 started the fiscal year on a fun note, with the Unit's annual summer potluck picnic. The event had a great turnout and a cornhole game that pulled everyone out of their seats.

What a surprise for most! Representative Mari Leavitt's support and willingness to rearrange her schedule made it possible for her to be the featured speaker at the September unit luncheon, stepping in for Representative Sharlett Mena. Her flexibility and kindness were deeply appreciated by members.

October's cooler afternoons did not keep members from turning out for the Unit's an-

nual "Meet & Greet" event at La Quinta-Tacoma. With hors d'oeuvres and time to visit with local legislators, the event offered a meaningful way to highlight senior and retirement concerns before the late afternoon wrap-up. Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make this year's gathering such a positive one.

As the calendar year closes out, unit members are grateful for the steady support and participation that makes Pierce County such a strong and welcoming unit. Members look forward to gathering again in 2027 and beginning another year.

Save the dates — the 2027 unit luncheon dates are: February 11, April 8, and May 6, all at La Quinta-Tacoma.

WSSRA Around The State

SOUTHWEST-4

Unit 28 Thurston County:

Unit 28 hopes everyone had a great summer and are looking forward to an exciting year. Unit 28 is celebrating its 72nd birthday and has a wonderful schedule of luncheons and programs planned.

The Unit kicked off the year in September with a welcome back picnic. The October program was provided by member **Art Dolan**, who arrived in costume and spoke about the

Declaration of Independence and its 250th anniversary in 2026.

The unit has some changes for the monthly newsletter. The new unit directory and a newsletter were mailed the first week of September. Going forward, Unit 28 newsletters will be sent only via e-mail and posted on the unit website. If any Unit 28 member did not receive the September or October issue via email and want to receive the newsletter, please follow the instructions

on page 9 of the unit directory or send an email to **Sharon Dennis** at sed6501@outlook.com for assistance.

Unit 30 Clark County:

Following the Unit's outing on the Chelatchie Prairie Railroad in early-June, the general membership took a summer hiatus. The Unit's executive board held a meeting to review the activities of '25-'26 and make plans for '26-'27. The board decided

that "giving back to the buildings" would be the major emphasis next year. Committees will organize activities for contributing through mini-grants to support teachers and scholarships for students. In addition, unit members will also have the opportunity to serve on committees for legislative lobbying and increasing membership.

The Unit's cooperation with ESD 112 for meeting location has been very successful and will be continued. General unit meetings will be shifted earlier from 10:00 am - 12:00 pm and include pastries and beverages.

The work of the WSSRA office team supporting the Unit's efforts over the past year is much appreciated.

Join the WSSRA Email List

Now, more than ever, technology has been become a critical way to connect with people and stay informed.

Email is a simple, quick, and inexpensive way for WSSRA to connect with members.

Join the email list in 3 easy steps:

- 1. WSSRA.org**
- 2. Scroll to bottom of the page**
- 3. Join Our Email List**

Connect and Stay Informed...

- Legislative updates
- Zoom events
- Unit happenings
- and, more!

WSSRA does not share email addresses outside the association.

Join our email list!

*** Email**

*** First Name**

*** Last Name**

By submitting this form, you are consenting to receive marketing emails from: WA STATE SCHOOL RETIREES' ASSOCIATION, PO BOX 5127, LACEY, WA, 98509, US, <http://www.wssra.org>. You can revoke your consent to receive emails at any time by using the [SafeUnsubscribe®](#) link, found at the bottom of every email. [Emails are serviced by Constant Contact.](#)

Submit

Constant Contact

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EAST-5

Unit 9 Kittitas County:

The Unit has the following luncheon meetings planned for the upcoming year:

Tuesday, September 15, 2026 at 11:30 am at the Palace Café in Ellensburg. Attendees ordered from the general menu and self-paid. However, first-time members had their lunch paid for at their first meeting. The featured speaker was from the local Habitat for Humanity. Nominations for officers took place at the business meeting.

WSSRA Around The State

Wednesday, October 21, 2026 at noon at the Cle Elum Senior Center. Members will pay \$5 toward the meal. State Representative Alex Ybarra (13th legislative district) will speak. WSSRA staff may also attend.

Tuesday, April 30, 2027 at noon at the Cle Elum Senior Center. Members will pay \$5 toward the meal. The speaker will be from Suncadia and will share how their presence benefits the community.

Tuesday May 18, 2027 at noon at the Palace Café in Ellensburg. Attendees will order from the general menu and self-pay for the lunch. The featured speaker and program are undecided at this time.

Unit mini-grant chair, **Joy Lessard**, will be gathering requests from active educators this fall. Unit 9 has again authorized \$4,000 in mini-grant funds to be awarded to local educators to support various projects benefiting students.

Members are encouraged to please read the *Journal* to keep track of legislative news.

Unit 34 Yakima County:

Summer in Yakima was very smokey! Wildfire season was a blight on an otherwise beautiful summer in Yakima Valley. Local kiddos have settled back to school. Yakima County has 20 school districts as well as many pri-

vate schools and the Yakama Nation schools. It seems that school buses are everywhere, morning and afternoon.

Yakima County School Retirees do not meet during the summer. On August 10, **Kathy and Nick Schultz** hosted a luncheon for 15 board members at their home as a thank you for all they do for YCSRA. Attendees enjoyed croissant sandwiches, chips, veggies platter, watermelon slices, and fresh picked blueberry shortcake for dessert. It was very relaxing to visit and share about summer activities. No business!

The first board meeting of the new year was held on September 7, 2026. Programs for the year were planned. Board members were assigned to act as "president of the month" for unit meetings. The Unit does not have a president or vice president and instead have chosen this option, which has worked well. Everybody helps!

Future projects and meetings will include reviewing unit bylaws for updates, reviewing the unit budget, and making decisions regarding allocations to local organizations. Unit members will continue to advocate for legislation for programs that support school retirees.

The Unit's mini-grant applications are going out to members in the October and November newsletter. The



Unit 28 Thurston County: Patty Kilmer, Unit 28 member, made these beautiful handmade cards. They were delivered to Jean Holman, the Unit's Care and Concern Chair. Jean composes the most eloquent messages of comfort, sympathy, get well or happy anniversary to unit members.

Unit gives a total of \$12,000 with a cap of \$500 per application. The winners will be announced in December.

EAST-6

Unit 2 Chelan/Douglas:

The Unit's June meeting was quite unique. The Unit sponsored and attended a Wenatchee School District "bond tour" of Wenatchee High School. The entire Wenatchee School District staff and friends were invited on a guided tour to see how the passing of the upcoming bond would help the entire

school district and especially the high school. Tour attendees viewed learning spaces that are not adequate for teachers and students' needs. Also, learned that the old HVAC systems no longer work efficiently. New systems are needed that will also filter air during the wildfire seasons.

Unit Membership Coordinator, **Vinny Lee**, and member volunteers attended the benefit fairs for Wenatchee and Eastmont school districts. They gave out CDSRA pens and sticky notes to members and friends and recruited new members.

WSSRA Around The State



Unit 25 Spokane Area: SAREA's Community Service Committee – (left to right) Diane Hunter (sitting in for husband Jeff), Char Schelling, Kathy Braid, Kathy Beal, and Kris Stopperan.

The CDSRA board gathered in September to finalize the budget and make plans for the upcoming year's programs and newsletters.

Unit 4 Columbia Basin:

Columbia Basin retirees and active members enjoyed a busy summer traveling, visiting with families and friends, engaging in various projects and activities, and volunteering in their communities.

The Grant County Fair provided numerous opportunities for CBSRA members to offer their time and talents to make the fair a success. Unit 4 Co-President **Lanita Pomeroy** volunteered many hours as the Superintendent of the Arts and Crafts building, where she was in charge of all the displays. Quite a few of the

unit members worked at the Moses Lake Lions booth, where they served up tasty treats to fairgoers. **Susan Hickok, Pat Simmons, Cynthia Swan, Brian Sargee,** and Moses Lake School District Superintendent **Carol Lewis** spent numerous hours helping their organization, while also helping their community. **Linda Bishop** and **Louis Logan** volunteered at political booths where they hosted candidates, answered questions, and signed up new voters. All of these people, and many more, made the fair a huge success.

The Columbia Basin Annual Hallelujah Luncheon was held outside this year. Thirteen members gathered at the Japanese Peace Gardens and Dick Deane Family Picnic Shelter. Everyone brought their own lunches to celebrate the first

day of school in the company of former colleagues and old friends. Unfortunately, the celebration was cut short when a sudden windstorm changed their plans, but luckily everyone had finished eating by then.

Unit 15 Okanogan:

Okanogan County School Retirees are once again planning a limited meeting schedule. The 2026 fall meetings are slated for St. Anne's Episcopal Church at Omak.

The Unit's first fall general meeting was scheduled for September 29.

October's meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 27, at 11:00 am. That meeting's group will vote on fall mini-grant winners. Meeting attendees are treated to a free lunch—yes, there is such a thing as a free lunch!

In addition, E5/E6 unit officers and unit committee chairs will meet on Wednesday, October 28, at the Wenatchee Golf and Country Club. OCSRA is an E6 Unit.

The Unit awarded Anna Bergh, Tonasket, who is working to attain a degree in Early Childhood Education at Eastern Washington University, a \$2,000 scholarship from OCSRA.

EAST-7

Unit 25 Spokane Area:

SAREA held their retreat luncheon on August 26. It was a fabulous way to start a new year, say hello to friends and hear what they did for summer fun. The board luncheon had 100% attendance. **Don Kackman**, E7 district representative and coordinating council chairman, and **Linda Marler**, president of Unit 33 Whitman County and the WSSR Foundation, and their spouses attended as well. Costco provided a delicious lunch of turkey pinwheels, assorted cheeses and meats, fruit and veggie trays, chips and a delicious chocolate dessert and chocolate chip cookies. The group outlined important dates and goals for the upcoming year.

Recently, the Unit has been very cost-conscious on behalf of unit members and the association, while continuing to offer events that allow for making fun and meaningful connections through socializing. In keeping with this goal, the Unit decided to continue having the beautiful holiday luncheon in December, at CenterPlace in the Valley. Instead of having a scholarship luncheon in May, the Unit will have a scholarship celebration at ESD 101, complete with cake, punch, mints, and nuts. Unit members and scholarship recipients will be guests and enjoy listening to an inspirational guest speaker

WSSRA Around The State

and the students will give a brief speech about their future goals in education while thanking unit members for their scholarships.

Unit 33 Whitman County:

The Unit 33 Whitman County executive board met at Paradise Creek for lunch and planning for the coming year. Ross Swan, retired teacher who works at WSU with student teachers, provided information about his position and the teacher internship program.

The Unit's November 10 meeting will have a luncheon and entertainment by cast members from the Colfax High School musical and director Emily Bopp.

EAST-8

Unit 1 Clarkston/Asotin/Pomeroy: The Unit has gained four new members already this school year—yay!

Clarkston School District Superintendent **Thaynan Knowlton** gave the Unit permission to have an information table at the school district's "Back to School" assembly. This included staff from all grade levels (K-12) as well as administration, school board, and support staff. It was a fun way to wish them a good school year as well as inform them of what WSSRA does



Unit 4 Columbia Basin: Several unit members volunteered their time to help make the Grant County Fair a success, including Pat Simmons, Susan Hickok, Cynthia Swan, and Lanita Pomeroy. Lanita served as a Grant County Fair Superintendent.



for them. The Unit is hoping to be able to do this again next year. It gave WSSRA great exposure!

The Unit's executive board met to make plans for the year. A full slate of programs are planned ranging from becoming a master gardener to Happiness 101 to how to recognize scams. The end-of-the-year field trip, in May, worked out well, so this year the Unit plans to take a tour through the Asotin County Museum following a picnic in the Asotin park.

The Unit plans to bring soup and boxed ramen for local school kids. These are easy one meal items that even a student can prepare. Each unit meeting throughout the year, members are asked to bring items for this effort. Last year,

the Unit donated them to local elementary schools. This year, middle schools will be the focus.

Unit 29 Benton-Franklin:

Hallelujah luncheons were held for retirees from Richland on September 1 and Pasco on September 2.

The August unit luncheon was attended by 50+ members with an indoor barbecue and the fun of Bingo with 20 winners. Also, there was a collection of school materials for local students through SHAKE (Seniors Helping all Students Education).

The Unit's mini-grant committee met and revised the application to be more invitational. This year, \$6,000 was

allocated with mini-grants up to \$300 each. Applications are being processed now for local educators.

The Unit's September 28 luncheon focused on legislative issues with E-8 Legislative Representative **Jim Davison** and state officers. Some unit members and state officers will also visit the Three Rivers Convention Center in Kennewick, the site of the WSSRA Convention for 2027. The annual convention will be held June 7-9, 2027, and the theme will be either "Fun in the Sun" or "Fun, Fun, Fun, Fun in the Sun."

Future unit meetings:

October 26 - luncheon will focus on presenter and member, **Marjy Leggett**, a female aviator who has flown with the 99s female pilots.

WSSRA Around The State



Unit 1 Clarkston/Asotin/Pomeroy: Unit members hosted a WSSRA information table at the Clarkston School District's "back to school" staff event, (left to right) Superintendent Thaynan Knowlton, Steve Stroschein, Judie Hanley, Christy Simons, and Bonnie Hill.

November 23 - luncheon will be festive and focus on the Unit's annual Toy Drive for the Salvation Army.

Also, some unit members will attend the E-8 Coordinating Council meeting on October 13 at the Walla Walla Community College Tech Center with a hybrid option.

A welcome surprise for the WSSR Foundation Scholarship Banquet at the June 8th evening celebration when seven recipients and their families attended. E-8 Representative **Ardith Eakin** assisted with name tags and welcomed Marlene Martinez and family from Pasco as a scholarship recipient

and future student teacher at WSU Tri-Cities. All seven recipients spoke and introduced their families.

Unit 31 Walla Walla-Columbia: Unit 31 executive board met in August at President **Kathy Pritchler's** home in Walla Walla for their 2026-27 planning session. The board set the luncheon dates and speakers for the year.

In September, the luncheon hosted three superintendents from the Walla Walla area. **Jim Fry** from College Place School District, **Ben Gauyan** from Walla Walla School District, and Mark Pickel

from Starbuck School District. Each superintendent gave an update on their schools and what to expect the coming school year.

During the October luncheon there was a full speaker agenda. The state representatives from Legislative District 16 and their challengers were on hand to discuss their thoughts on the upcoming legislative session, including State Representative Skyler Rude and his challenger Derek Sarley for Position 2 and State Representative Mark Klicker and his challenger, Kyle Palmer for Position 1. In addition, Senator Perry Dozier was there to receive his Legislative Champion Award. Senator Dozier introduced the TRS 1 and PERS 1 COLA bill after

attending a meeting of Unit 31 Walla Walla-Columbia School Retirees Association. The Unit members made a direct impact on this bill.

The November luncheon was busy with a dessert silent auction; the funds will go to the Unit 31 scholarship fund. The speaker was Amy Watkins from the Walla Walla Public Library. The library is undergoing a total renovation and is currently being housed at the WaFed building on main street. The mini-grant recipients for the fall were announced. Eight were given to the Walla Walla and College Place school employees and eight were given to the outlying school districts. Each recipient received a \$250 check.

ADDRESS CHANGES

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Washington State School Retirees' Association





The Journal

Washington State School Retirees' Association
PO Box 5127, Lacey WA 98509

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Washington State School Retirees' Association

Vision — Mission — Purpose

WSSRA, a non-profit Association, is dedicated to preserving, protecting, and improving the benefits of educational retirees.

The Association's Vision will provide leadership and promote action relevant to all retired and active school personnel.

The Association's Mission is to...

- Develop, propose, and implement action that will benefit all school retirees.
- Propose legislation and legislative action that will enhance school retirees' lives.
- Provide the support necessary to strengthen local units of WSSRA.
- Foster involvement by school retirees in educational and community activities and organizations.
- Represent all present and future Washington State school retirees, both classified and certificated.

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