

The Journal

WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL RETIREES' ASSOCIATION

Affiliated with the National Retired Teachers' Association (NRTA)—AARP's Educator Community



MAY, JUNE 2026

VOLUME 79, ISSUE NO. 5



WSSRA President Dottie Stevens and President-Elect Lora Brabant (& Daisy) at the State Capitol in Olympia meeting with legislators and advocating for school retirees

WSSRA At Work For You



A message from the president

Refresh, Relax, Rejuvenate



by Dottie Stevens, president

It really is everything all at once. Get ready for our annual WSSRA Convention with friends to meet, learning with senior idea mini sessions on Monday afternoon and scholar's award and banquet on Monday. Tuesday will kick off with a keynote from Washington Treasurer Mike Pellicciotti, followed by awards and Delegate Assembly to learn about and approve new bylaws. Then, the Celebration of Life with all units, followed by sharing, and a fellowship focused dinner. We'll cap off Tuesday evening with dancing and easy listening music. And lastly, a brief Wednesday breakfast with possible visit from Governor Bob Ferguson, and leadership training options for current and future leaders. Then home by early afternoon. Throughout convention there will be basket drawings and an activity room with refreshments.

We are holding in our membership numbers due to continual effort and invitation to future members to be part of the fun and fellowship at our meetings. Also, the work to be informed and present in our communities through our programs and outreach.

Speaking of outreach, a big win this year, with our legislative work culminating in the

signing of SSB 5862 – COLAs for Plan 1 TRS and PERS. We met with Governor Ferguson at the Capitol on Monday March 21st for the signing of our bill. Many thanks to all involved in this massive effort and all the Friday Zooms with Legislative Coordinator Emmett Mills. Several bills were introduced on our behalf, and the one that held, SSB 5862, was introduced by Senator Perry Dozier (Legislative District 16) after attending a meeting in Walla Walla with Unit 31 and hearing the plight of Plan 1 members as presented by E-8 Legislative Representative Jim Davison. We have been encouraged to invite legislators to our unit meetings and this one shows how it can work for us. Thank you Jim!

Looking ahead, President-elect Lora Brabant is developing more training available online for secretaries, treasurers, and a quick refresher of Robert's Rules of Order for leaders. I am looking forward to next year and Lora's leadership.

See you at the WSSRA Convention, June 8-10, 2026. The theme is, "Mermaids at the Great Wolf Lodge, in Grand Mound, Washington."



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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:
Kristin Murphy, editor
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**Upcoming JOURNAL
article deadlines:**

June 15, 2026
for July/Aug./Sep. 2026 issue

September 5, 2026
for Oct/Nov/Dec 2026 issue

WSSRA At Work For You



A message from the executive director

Artificial Intelligence Can't Replace You



by Peter Diedrick, executive director

On March 13, the Washington Post published a piece outlining which professions are most likely to be replaced by artificial intelligence (AI). Unsurprisingly, jobs requiring a person to be physically in place were the least likely to be replaced by the new hive mind. Janitors and dental assistants are good examples of lasting jobs. However, I was surprised that educators were considered to have a moderate or higher risk of being replaced by artificial intelligence. That is complete rubbish.

Education is not strictly about transferring knowledge and grading exams. You know that, even if Silicon Valley doesn't. A computer server farm cannot inspire a student more than it can be a spouse – yes, that's apparently a thing now as well. Your classroom work was and is about mentoring, teaching, training, and building relationships with the next generation of society.

Retirees' volunteer work is the same. Countless book and backpack drives. Distributing mini-grants to in-person classrooms. Mentoring new educators and encouraging experienced educators to finish strong before retirement – personal relationships. Teacher and student mentoring via AI chatbot isn't a world we want to live in.

WSSRA's political advocacy needs you, a person. Legislators are not interested in hearing from nonvoting, digitalized constituents. They want to talk to residents and voters in their districts. The legislative success our advocacy team had in this past legislative session was based on years of retirees building relationships with their elected officials. So, when the proposal came to cut retiree benefits, policymakers knew they would be harming real people.

Now, as irreplaceable as you are, AI can supplement your efforts. It's an increasingly important tool in the toolbox. The next generation of technology will be set up to serve as personal assistants to their users. It would be a mistake to eschew programs that can make life easier for retirees. For that reason, WSSRA will have a special presentation at the June Convention in Grand Mound on this topic. Kathy Bounds, our Clark County Unit 30 treasurer, is using artificial intelligence technology to help manage the school retiree unit. Kathy will teach attendees how this new technology can supplement your efforts to improve the lives of fellow retirees – not replace you!

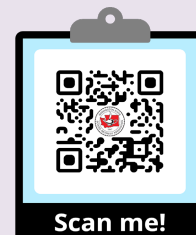
Join Us...

**79th Annual
WSSRA Convention &
Delegate Assembly**

June 8-10, 2026

Great Wolf Lodge

please see pages 9-15 for more information



Legislative News



Tireless Work by Members Leads to Positive Outcome



by Emmett Mills, legislative director



The 2026 Washington State Legislative Session was difficult for many groups as the legislature had to address another multibillion-dollar budget deficit. Despite this challenging environment, WSSRA succeeded in securing \$369 million to provide a one-time cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to TRS 1 and PERS 1 retirees. We also defeated a proposed reduction to the Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) Medicare benefit. With budget challenges likely to continue into 2027, we must be ready to defend against more attacks on our health care next year.

We prepared for the 2026 session hoping to restore an automatic COLA for TRS 1 and PERS 1 retirees. In 2025, the Senate passed a bill that would have done this by merging TRS 1 and PERS 1 with LEOFF 1, a closed pension plan for police officers and firefighters that was overfunded by \$4 billion. However, the Senate's bill could not get through the House, which introduced a competing proposal to sweep the LEOFF 1 surplus into the state's general fund. Last year neither bill passed, but with another multibillion-dollar budget deficit anticipated in 2026, pressure was mounting on the legislature to utilize the money.

We got the bad news right before this year's session began: Senate leadership had agreed to the House's proposal to sweep the \$4 billion LEOFF 1 surplus into the general fund. That was the end of any hope for an ongoing COLA in 2026.

We quickly shifted strategies and began asking for a one-time COLA for TRS 1 and PERS 1 retirees, but even that seemed to be a non-starter. Soon after session began, House leadership told us that while they would love to give us a COLA, they just couldn't afford it due to the budget deficit. With cutoff quickly approaching, we were running out of time. At the last moment, the Senate scheduled Senate Bill 5862, a one-time COLA bill, for a hearing.

The story of Senate Bill 5862 began last October at a meeting of the Walla Walla/Columbia School Retirees' Association (WSSRA Unit 31). Unit 31 invited Senator Perry Dozier (R, Waitsburg), to be their guest. At the meeting, Senator Dozier heard about the challenges that retirees face from the many members in attendance. On the spot, he pledged to introduce a COLA bill in 2026. His promise became SB 5862.

Midway through session, the Senate unanimously passed Senator Dozier's bill, and we were hearing that the House would likely follow suit. Then, with only two weeks left, we got a nasty surprise. The Senate released a budget that, in addition to funding our COLA bill, also proposed reducing the PEBB Medicare benefit. This cut would have increased annual costs for most Medicare-eligible retirees who purchase insurance through PEBB by nearly \$400. Meanwhile, the House's budget maintained the PEBB Medicare benefit but didn't fund our COLA bill. We were stuck between a rock and a hard place.

Thanks to the 6,737 emails that WSSRA members sent to legislators, the tireless work of the WSSRA Legislative Committee, and the daring heroics of a few House Democrats, we were able to escape with both our COLA bill and our full health insurance benefit.

At the end of July, TRS 1 and PERS 1 retirees will see their monthly pension amount increase by 3%, not to exceed \$110. (All other state-managed pension plans automatically receive a COLA every July). This will be their new pension amount moving forward. And the state will continue to reduce PEBB

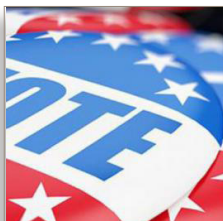
Medicare premiums by up to \$183 per month. This result would not have been possible without WSSRA and its 17,000 members. Thank you for the role you played in our success.



Governor Bob Ferguson signed SB 5862 into law in March. Several WSSRA members attended the signing.

Questions, comments, or concerns? Please contact Emmett Mills at emmett@wssra.org or (360) 413-5496 ext. 2

WSSR-PAC News



We All Need Help From Our Friends



by Edith Ruby, WSSR-PAC president



The 2026 legislative session was a real cliffhanger for the WSSRA staff and volunteer lobbyists. With a nearly \$2 billion budget shortfall legislators had to make cuts. WSSRA's priorities were to maintain the \$183/month health insurance benefit that all Medicare-eligible state retirees receive when purchasing their insurance through the Public Employees Benefit Board (PEBB) and to obtain a one-time 3% COLA for Plan 1 retirees. A week before the session ended it seemed likely that we would lose both. We badly needed the votes of legislative friends.

WSSR-PAC's purpose is to identify legislative candidates who may be those legislative friends and to give them financial support in their election campaigns. Electing legislators who understand the needs of school retirees and support legislation to meet those needs is critical to WSSRA's lobbying success.

In 2026, Washington's voters will elect all 98 members of the state House and half of our 49 senators. We would not have gained a Plan 1 COLA and maintained our \$183/month Medicare insurance benefit in the 2026 session without the strong support of legislators to whom we have contributed in the past. We need to give those legislators our continuing support and

find additional candidates we can count on when crucial votes come up.

How can you help the PAC? During the two years between legislative elections WSSR-PAC raises funds for contributions to candidates' campaigns. Handing a candidate a check gives us the opportunity to give a little education on our issues and ask for their support. How many candidates we can help depends on how much our members have contributed to our PAC treasury. At the bottom of this page is a form that you can complete and send along with a check to our treasurer. Or contribute electronically at our website WSSR-PAC.ORG. Urge your unit to do a low-cost PAC fundraiser and encourage all members to participate.

If you are attending this year's convention, please stop by our PAC table where we will have greeting cards and possibly other items to sell as well as membership forms for anyone wishing to contribute to the PAC and become a member. We also are asking each WSSRA unit to bring 2-4 bottles of wine for our dinner table wine auction (deliver them to the PAC table).

Now is the time for us to help our legislative friends so we will have friends to help us when we need them.

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

WSSR Foundation



Convention FUNdraisers



by Kay Andersen, WSSR Foundation president



The mission of the Washington State School Retirees' Foundation is to raise funds, accept donations, and manage our investments. We provide scholarships to students in Washington State who are pursuing a career in education. Fingers crossed that they land a job here in the Evergreen state and choose to spend their entire career in Washington.

We rely on the WSSRA membership to help us with our two projects at the annual WSSRA convention. Naturally, we will have the "World Famous Basket Drawings" there. You buy tickets, drop them in the basket, cross your fingers, and hope we draw your ticket. You will have five different chances to win. Helpful hint: Bring your address labels along and you won't have to write your name on the tickets! The baskets are full of gift cards, candy, wine, and lots of items that you could win! Good luck to all!

Don't forget about the "One of a Kind Silent Auction" we put together! We are so lucky to have talented members that bring

paintings, wood carvings, quilts, jewelry, all sorts of things that have been homemade or store bought... there will be lots of surprises! We will have the "buy it now" option for those of you who want to pay immediately, as well as the regular silent auction where you get to bid up your competitors.

Our five-member Foundation board wants to say thank you for generously supporting our projects throughout the years – past, present, and future. Let's bring in a record amount of money this year to add to our coffers for student teacher grants and graduating high school senior scholarships. Let's lend them a hand as they journey through this pathway of becoming our fellow educators.



WSSR Foundation
Donations
QR Code

Foundation Contributors

Mary Lou Krause - in memory of Philip Konkell

Pat Strand - donation

Unit 2 Chelan Douglas SRA - in memory of Louise Buchanan

Unit 15 Okanogan County SRA - in memory of Hazel Dezellem, Henry Hagen, Jayne Haun, Kurt Ramcke, Mary Lou Richardson, Peggy Steffen, Rudolph Peterson

Unit 18 Pend Oreille SRA - in memory of Richard (Dick) and Beulah Noble

Unit 19 Southeast King SEA - in memory of Beverly Wohlhueter, Keith Cantwell, Patricia Green, Stanley Greene

Unit 20 Seattle SRA - in memory of Arlene Lindgren, Edwin Scott, Frances Toombs, Joanne Roberts, Lois Horton, Marguerite Condon, Nona Whittendale, Paul Napolitan, Shirley Ellingson

Unit 21 Skagit, Island, San Juan REA - in memory of Bonnie Lee, Carmelita Sanchez, Doris Klaus, Gordon Odegaard, Jeanette Hollenbeck, Leona McKee, Solveig Lee

Unit 22 Sno-Isle SRA - in memory of Marianne Harvey

Unit 34 Yakima County SRA - donation

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



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myambabenefits.info/wssra

Washington State School Retirees' Association



Membership

Protecting Retirement Benefits



by Alan Burke, Membership committee chair

I've been asked numerous times by prospective Plan 2/3 members, "what, exactly, does WSSRA do to support Plan 2 and Plan 3 retirees?" They know about the lobbying associated with the unfairness of the no-guaranteed COLA situation for Plan 1 retirees, and they know that WSSRA and our advocacy partners always seek assurance that all retirement plans are funded properly. However, they often wonder, specifically, what is the organization's legislative agenda that benefits Plan 2 and 3 retirees?

After the 2026 legislative session, we have one ready answer: it's the PEBB Medicare retiree benefit. A portion of that benefit, set at up to \$183 per month since 2018, was on the budget chopping block. Specifically, the Senate's late-session budget proposal would have reduced that benefit to \$150/month, meaning a \$400 per year cut for retirees who use PEBB for their Medicare supplement.

Fortunately, after a strong lobbying effort led by our legislative committee and conducted by our members, that planned reduction was restored in the final budget that was approved by the House and Senate, and signed by the Governor. Whew!

That's good news for 2027, but what about the future? Could the benefit cut be proposed next session? In short, yes it could. The full PEBB Medicare benefit costs the state approximately \$200M per year (\$400M a biennium). The \$33/month cut proposed by the Senate would have saved the state \$11M from the January to June 2027 period (through the end of the 2025-27 biennium). A similar proposal next session would save at least \$33M for the January 2028 through June 2029 period.

There is no question that \$33M is a big pile of money for a legislature that is likely facing another large budget deficit in the upcoming legislative session. And a \$400 per year cut definitely is a big number for the 100,000-plus K-12 and state government retirees who use PEBB for their Medicare supplement.

To be sure, any proposed PEBB Medicare benefit cut will be rigorously opposed by WSSRA. Our organization exists primarily for the purpose of protecting K-12 retiree pensions and health care benefits. That is what we do. The PEBB Medicare benefit is a major plus for Washington's school and public retiree population—and it needs to be maintained at \$183/month!

Quick math shows how big that benefit is for a retiree who lives to age 85: \$183 per month x 12 months x 20 years = \$43,920. Yes, maintaining the PEBB Medicare benefit is a big deal!

So, when a prospective Plan 2/3 K-12 employee or retiree asks what WSSRA does for them, mention protecting the \$40,000-plus lifetime PEBB Medicare benefit.

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

¹FOR 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



2026 WSSRA Convention

2026 WSSRA Convention Preview

June 8 – 10, 2026 in Grand Mound, Washington

We are looking forward to seeing many of you in Grand Mound, June 8-10, 2026 for the annual WSSRA convention. The convention will be filled with opportunities for social interaction and will include times to celebrate unit achievements in 2025-26, acknowledge the work of WSSRA leadership at the state and local level, pay homage to those who have passed away, and complete the leadership transition from 2025-26 President Dottie Stevens to 2026-27 President Lora Brabant.

MONDAY, JUNE 8

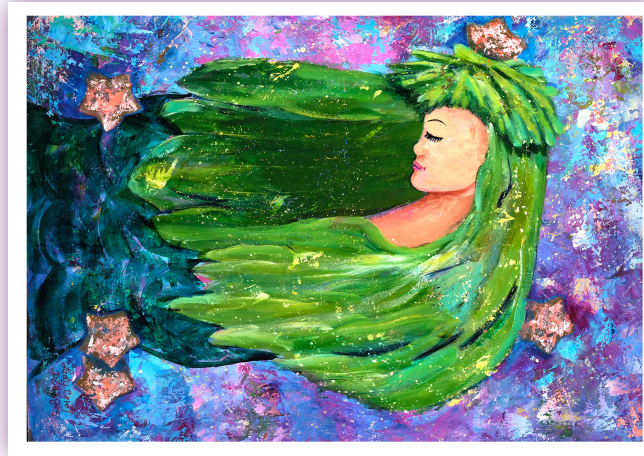
On Monday afternoon, a variety of break-out sessions are being offered, including "Legacy Downsizing," "Elder Law," "Unit Rejuvenation," and "Using Artificial Intelligence."

If those doesn't sound interesting, we've ordered charcuterie and snacks for the activity room during that time! Monday evening will feature dinner and a scholarship banquet.

TUESDAY, JUNE 9

Following the morning opening ceremonies, our guest speaker will be Washington State Treasurer Mike Pellicciotti. We'll round out the morning session with a legislative workshop.

The luncheon will feature awards and recognitions highlighting individual and unit accomplishments during 2025-26. The afternoon session will include the Delegate Assembly, followed by the Celebration of Life ceremony.



Tuesday evening will feature a banquet dinner and the installation of WSSRA's 2026-27 executive board officers. We'll close out the night with a social event including music and dancing.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10

After breakfast, Wednesday morning will be devoted to the traditional set of leadership training sessions.

And, of course, there will be many opportunities to win

WSSR Foundation baskets, bid on silent auction items, and make contributions to the WSSR-PAC, visit with old friends and meet new ones! See you at the Great Wolf Lodge in Grand Mound!

Artwork prepared specifically for the WSSRA Convention's "Mermaid" theme. Original artwork by Carol Doenges, "Lady Carol," a self trained artist, Kennewick, WA. Graphic artist-enhanced image by Albert Chosky of Charles Francis Gallery, Kennewick, WA

Convention At-A-Glance

MONDAY (afternoon and evening)

- Afternoon Breakout Session Options: Legacy Downsizing, Elder Law, Unit Rejuvenation, Using Artificial Intelligence
- WSSR-PAC Workshop
- Dinner and Scholarship Banquet

TUESDAY (full day)

- Opening Ceremonies
- Keynote Speaker
- Legislative Workshop
- Awards Luncheon
- Delegate Assembly
- Celebration of Life
- Dinner Banquet
- Evening Social

WEDNESDAY (morning only)

- Breakfast
- Leadership Meetings — unit presidents and vice presidents, membership, unit treasurers, legislative, unit secretaries, health services, retirement planning.

2026 WSSRA Convention – Delegate Assembly

Candidates



Kay Bishop for President-Elect 2026-27

Hello Everyone –

A HUGE THANK YOU to Rita Figlenski for stepping up when my husband's and my health forced me to down in February 2024. I'm blessed that the year was one of healing and restoration; and I'm honored to be asked to return as an active presence in WSSRA.

When I left there was hope that Plan 1 retirees would soon receive a permanent COLA. As we all know (now), that has not happened; yet. Adding to the burden on retirees is the threat of losing our PEBB

Medicare benefit across all pension plans.

What's ahead? Declining membership, recent retirees not being regularly contacted and invited to unit events, and not showing a desire to "give back" needs to be re-awakened among all of us.

What do we do? We must "Be the Light That Leads the Way!"



Sandra "Sandy" Grape for Southwest 3 District Representative

As an active member of Pierce County SRA, Unit 27, I have served as mini-grant chair, legislative committee member, president-elect, and president. I have regularly attended SW 3 Coordinating Council meetings and served on WSSRA awards committee for two years.

My professional journey reflects a commitment to growth and service. After a long career in the grocery industry, I followed a call to education. I began college at 40, later became a Title I para-educator, completed a degree from Tacoma Community College while working, earned a certificate in Early Childhood Education, and successfully passed the Washington State para educator test. Outside of WSSRA, I stay active in my community and enjoy time with my pets.

I am eager to serve at the regional and state levels, bringing clarity, collaboration, and a spirit of service to WSSRA and SW 3 members.

Candidates for the following to be determined:

- Northwest 1 District Representative
- WSSR Foundation Trustee



John Osegueda for East 5 District Representative

I joined the WSSRA way back in my early days of teaching in Washington and it seemed so far away that I would become a retiree. It was pointed out to me that teachers needed a voice to protect further their interests once they left the classroom. The 28-year-old me has somehow turned into a retired teacher at the age of 67. I bring up this age discussion because even in my 60s, I am on the younger side of Yakima County SRA membership. I believe an important role I play for the organization is to promote the WSSRA to younger teachers and to carry their ideals into the next generation of retirees. If we don't involve these folks, we will be looking at a declining enrollment and less clout within the state. The WSSRA does so much good for all members of the education community and its story and mission should not be relegated to the past. As a teacher, I was involved in all aspects of the work of the WEA from building rep to elected office and on too many committees to count. As I set out in education, I was an intern for governmental relations for the CTA, but we moved to Washington to raise our family. I taught for 42 years all told and spent most of that time in special education. Since joining our local WSSRA unit, I have become involved in all aspects of the work we do as a unit and look forward to taking on a leadership role. I look forward to being a part of this dynamic organization and being involved in its continued relevance.

2026 WSSRA Convention – Delegate Assembly

2026 WSSRA Bylaw Amendment Proposals

The WSSRA Rules and Resolutions Committee reviewed the organization's Bylaws and identified six proposed amendments. The Committee submitted the recommendations to the WSSRA Executive board on February 11, 2026. After review, the WSSRA Executive board recommends a "do pass" for each proposed WSSRA Bylaw amendment. The proposed amendments will be considered by the WSSRA Delegate Assembly during the annual convention. On June 9, 2026, the Delegate Assembly will vote on passage of each proposed Bylaw amendment.

*Information about each of the six proposed amendments are provided on pages 11-15.
Current Bylaws can be found at WSSRA.org, under "About," then "Governance Documents."*

PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT 2026-01

Article II.5 (Vision/Mission/Purpose)

Article III.2 (Membership and Dues)

Article X.1 (Affiliations and Alliances)

RATIONALE:

There is no formal affiliation with either NRTA/AARP.

WSSRA uses a variety of senior resources, not just the above two.

Current Bylaw Language	Proposed Amendment	If adopted, Bylaw language will read
Article II.5. Communicate to local units the activities and priorities of NRTA, AARP, and other entities that affect retired school personnel.	Article II.5. Communicate to local units the activities and priorities of NRTA, AARP, and of other entities that affect retired school personnel.	Article II.5 Communicate to local units the activities of entities that support retired school personnel. <i>This affects Article II.5; Article III.2; X.1</i>
Article III. Section 2 Membership in the Local Unit, State Association, and the National Retired Teachers Association Division/AARP is encouraged for all members.	<i>Delete in its entirety.</i> Article III. Section 2 ~~Membership in the Local Unit, State Association, and the National Retired Teachers Association Division/AARP is encouraged for all members.~~	<i>Section Deleted</i>
Article X. Section 1 The Association is affiliated with the AARP through its Division of the National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA).	<i>Delete in its entirety.</i> Article X. Section 1 ~~The Association is affiliated with the AARP through its Division of the National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA).~~	<i>Section Deleted</i>

2026 WSSRA Convention – Delegate Assembly**PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT 2026-02****Article III – MEMBERSHIP and DUES - Section 1**

RATIONALE: Provides clarification on who may join WSSRA. The state uses the term "classified" rather than "non-certificated."

Current Language**Regular Membership:**

All retired or active state-certificated or non-certificated classified school personnel, and/or their spouses, are eligible for membership upon payment of dues.

Proposed Amendment**Regular Membership:**

Washington State retired or active state-certificated or classified school personnel and/or their spouses.

Retired out-of-state education professionals residing in Washington State.

Membership is effective upon payment of dues.

~~All retired or active state-certificated, or non-certificated, classified, and/or their spouses, are eligible for membership upon payment of dues. Active education positions in Washington State and any United States retired educational professionals (certified and classified) and/or their spouses are eligible for membership upon payment of dues.~~

If Adopted, Section Will Read**Regular Membership:**

1. Washington State retired or active state-certificated or classified school personnel and/or their spouses upon payment of dues.
2. Retired out-of-state education professionals and their spouses residing in Washington State upon payment of dues.

2026 WSSRA Convention – Delegate Assembly

PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT 2026-03

Article V – EXECUTIVE BOARD: Add Parliamentarian

RATIONALE: The Bylaws do not currently address using a parliamentarian. Language is needed to provide guidance about when a parliamentarian may be used, how one is to be chosen, the type of parliamentarian, and responsibilities of the parliamentarian. The amendment provides clarification of the description and responsibility of a parliamentarian.

Current Language

The Bylaws do not currently address using a parliamentarian.

Proposed Amendment

Add:

Article V, Section 8: Parliamentarian.

Subsection 8.1: A Parliamentarian may be appointed, as an advisor, at the discretion of the WSSRA Executive Board for the purpose of ensuring meetings and delegate sessions run efficiently by providing advice on parliamentary procedure, rules, and precedents.

Subsection 8.2: In the absence of a Parliamentarian, the presiding officer will ensure procedures are followed according to Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, current edition.

Adjust section numbering for existing section 8 by renumbering to section 9 as follows:

Article V, Section 9: Fiduciary Relations

[section title and text is unchanged]

If Adopted, Section Will Read

Article V, Section 8: Parliamentarian

Subsection 8.1: A Parliamentarian may be appointed, as an advisor, at the discretion of the WSSRA Executive Board for the purpose of ensuring meetings and delegate sessions run efficiently by providing advice on parliamentary procedure, rules, and precedents.

Subsection 8.2: In the absence of a Parliamentarian, the presiding officer will ensure procedures are followed according to Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, current edition.

Article V, Section 9: Fiduciary Relations

[section title and text is unchanged]

2026 WSSRA Convention – Delegate Assembly**PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT 2026-04****ARTICLE IX – COMMITTEES: Section 3.3 – Other (all committees, state committees, coordinating councils)**

RATIONALE: Components of WSSRA that affects the budget must be reviewed, and any recommended changes must be provided each year upon WSSRA's request.

Current Language

Section 3.3: All State Committee and Coordinating Council Chairs shall submit a budget proposal for the next fiscal year before the Spring Executive Board meeting.

Proposed Amendment

Section 3.3.1: All State Committee and Coordinating Council Chairs shall submit a budget proposal for the next fiscal year before the Spring Executive Board meeting.

Add: Section 3.3.2: Upon request of WSSRA, Board members, Coordinating Councils, and Committee Chairs shall review and adjust their budgets as needed.

If Adopted, Section Will Read

Section 3.3.1: All State Committee and Coordinating Council Chairs shall submit a budget proposal for the next fiscal year before the Spring Executive Board meeting.

Section 3.3.2: Upon request of WSSRA, Board members, Coordinating Councils, and Committee Chairs shall review and adjust their budgets as needed.

PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT 2026-05**ARTICLE XVI – Acceptable Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools**

RATIONALE: The onslaught of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in everyday life (in general) requires that the Bylaws have a statement about AI. A full description of what this means will be included in Policies & Procedures over the next year.

Current Language

No current Bylaw concerning artificial intelligence (AI).

Proposed Amendment**Add:**

Article XVI. Acceptable Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools

Section 1. Responsible AI Use. The WSSRA Executive Board shall oversee and approve any use of artificial intelligence tools in WSSRA programs, fundraising, administration, or other operations. AI systems shall be used only in alignment with the mission, with appropriate human oversight, transparency, and protection of privacy and data security. Any decision affecting clients or beneficiaries that is assisted by AI must be reviewed and ratified by human decision-makers.

If Adopted, Section Will Read

(same as proposed above)

2026 WSSRA Convention – Delegate Assembly**PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT 2026-06****ARTICLE XVII - Amending the Bylaws, Policies & Procedures Document;
Submitting a Resolution; and Making a Motion**

RATIONALE: Currently, the procedures for presenting a motion and the correct format for submitting a resolution or motion are not included in the Bylaws. Propose adding a new section per the Policies and Procedures which requires the Rules and Resolutions committee to provide guidance to unit presidents and coordinating council chairs on the differences between amendments to the Bylaws, Policies & Procedures, and resolutions.

Current Language

No current language in the Bylaws concerning the procedures for presenting a motion and the correct format for submitting a resolution or motion.

Proposed Amendment

Add: Article XVII - Amending the Bylaws and Policies and Procedures Document; Submitting a Resolution; and Making a Motion

Add: Section 1. The WSSRA board shall establish the process for submitting resolutions for WSSRA Executive Board consideration and for making motions at the convention. This information is to be included as an appendix to the Policy and Procedures document, and the required forms are to be posted on the WSSRA website.

If Adopted, Section Will Read

Article XVII

Amending the Bylaws and Policies and Procedures Document; Submitting a Resolution; and Making a Motion

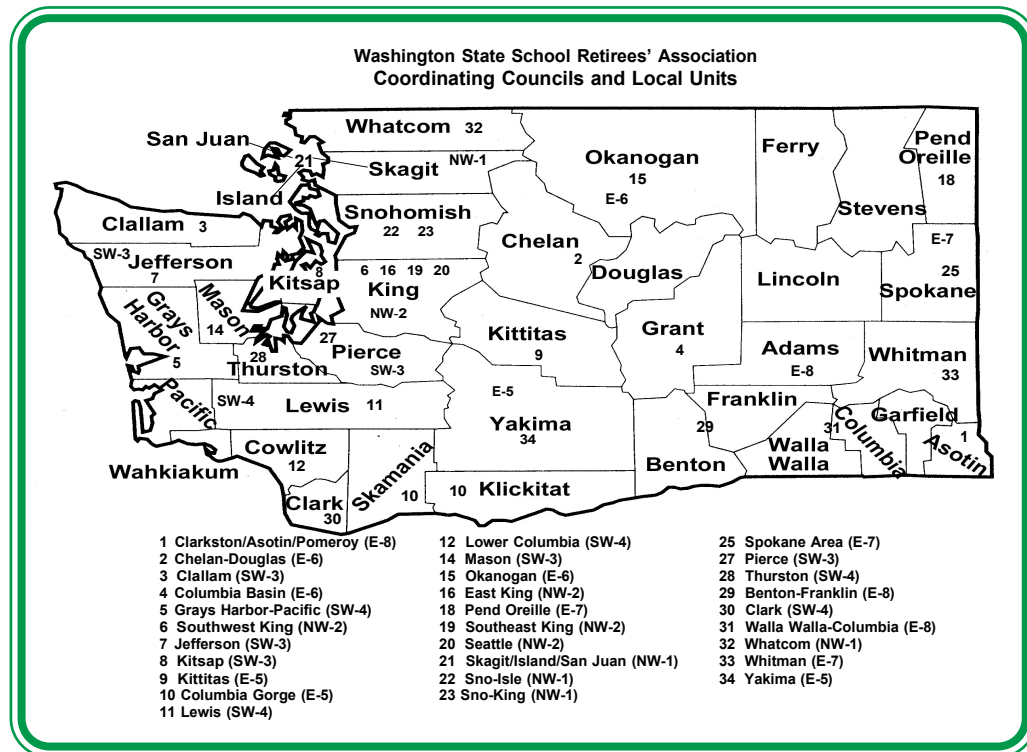
Section 1:

The WSSRA board shall establish the process for submitting resolutions for WSSRA Executive Board consideration and for making motions at the convention. This information is to be included as an appendix to the Policy and Procedures document, and the required forms are to be posted on the WSSRA website.

WSSRA Around The State

What's happening in...

From the Coordinating Councils and Local Units



NORTHWEST-1

Unit 21 Skagit/Island/San Juan:

The Unit 21 group has been busy with some big decisions recently. Unit President **Colleen Turk** presided over a meeting with discussions about the financial status of the organization. Decisions on awarding mini-grants were made in April – the Unit received at least 36 mini-grant applications this year from local educators. The Unit's legislative committee shared about decisions made during session this year. Additionally, unit members discussed the upcoming WSSRA convention and will decide which

unit members will attend as delegates to the convention this year.

The Unit's membership committee reported that unit membership is at 625 members. The group discussed ways to encourage additional members to participate. There were also discussions about ways to connect with prospective members at the various schools.

The Unit is considering partnering with the local League of Women Voters (LWV), as they have done in the past. Several unit leadership members have previously

worked with them. The LWV of Skagit county will be hosting candidate forums in the summer and fall.

Unit 22 Sno-Isle:

On April 11, many members of Unit 22 Sno-Isle gathered for **Marianne Harvey's** memorial service. **Marianne** was a longtime member of Unit 22 and very active at the state level. She was a vital member of Sno-Isle's board.

As a German teacher, in Everett, **Marianne** took numerous groups of students to Germany each summer and was known

for bringing the language and culture alive in her classroom. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, **Marianne** was one of 21 German teachers from the US chosen to travel to former East Germany to study the reunification of Germany. After retirement, she continued to substitute and while in schools recruited many new members to WSSRA.

An active member of Our Savior's Lutheran Church, **Marianne** for years organized the holiday food basket drive which grew over the years to serve more than 100 families. This last December, the first drive **Marianne** had missed in over 25 years, had donations of over \$17,000 in her honor.

At the state level, **Marianne** served WSSRA in many various roles, recently as a member of the Foundation. She and her husband **Jim** truly believed in WSSRA's mission and devoted countless hours to the cause.

When she was having trouble with her email, her daughters set up a new account, "turbo-Frau" was her new email and it fit! **Marianne Harvey** is sincerely missed by her Unit 22 Sno-Isle family.



WSSRA Around The State

Unit 23 Sno-King:

The Unit's service project in March, organized by **Lynda Hughes**, helped the Edmonds Foundation Nourishing Network. The organization provides services to low income, homeless, and in-need children and families in the Edmonds School District. Unit members, in attendance, got to work by helping break down several bulk food items from their standard packaging to more easily distributed containers.

In April, the Unit had their annual Scholarship luncheon organized by **Jim Siscel**. Parnita's of Bothell catered the lunch. **Linda Fitzgerald** and **Keith Lindass**, co-chairs of the Unit's scholarship committee, announced scholarship recipients. The Unit recognized **Keith Lindass** who is retiring after 27 years co-chairing the committee. The meeting speaker was retired Snohomish County Deputy Jim Scharf who presented information about a murder cold case that was closed using investigative genetic genealogy. He was one of the initial law enforcement officers to use this technique.

The Unit elected officers for the upcoming year with all current officers continuing for another year: President **Jim Siscel**, Vice-President **Cathy Webb**, Secretary **Jan Phillips**, Treasurer **Jennifer Altena**.



Unit 27 Pierce County:

Unit members met with State Representative Mari Leavitt (28th district) to advocate for school retirees. Pictured are (left to right) Patricia Albert, Diane Blair, Rep. Leavitt, Alan Burke, and Barb Church.

Jennifer Altena chaired the Unit's general meeting in May. The featured speaker was Debbie Dimitre, a well-known, local storyteller/actress who portrayed Nellie Bly in her travels around the world as a woman reporter.

Unit members are looking forward to the WSSRA convention in June and the annual unit picnic in July.

Unit 32 Whatcom:

The Unit's leadership board met on March 5 to discuss their upcoming general membership meeting and free catered luncheon on March 26 at the WECU Education Center in Ferndale. Four new Unit 32 members attended that meeting and luncheon. The guest speakers were Laura Ryan

from the WA State Health Care Authority who presented an overview of the PEBB retirement program and Keith Wallace provided information about Medicare, ACA, group benefits, and life insurance. They answered several questions.

The Unit's bylaws were revised, approved by membership, and sent to the WSSRA office. Likewise, unit officer elections were held, approved, and the list was sent to the WSSRA office.

Four Unit 32 members will be attending the WSSRA convention, June 8-10, 2026. Unit members designed two wonderful baskets, with themes focusing on golfing and fishing, to be given away at the convention! **Isabel Farquhar** was thanked for her efforts in

purchasing special items for both baskets.

Final preparations were discussed and members were told to make their reservation with San Juan Cruises for the Unit's Annual Crab Cruise around Bellingham and Chuckanut Bays on the evening of Thursday, July 16 from 6:00pm-9:00pm. They will be treated to delicious Dungeness crab and a wonderful dinner, too. Likewise, they will be able to see the most spectacular sea life and gorgeous scenery on their three-hour cruise!

Unit 32 leadership will take the month of August off to enjoy the remainder of summer with family and friends. They will meet on September 3 to start planning autumn activities for Unit 32.

WSSRA Around The State

NORTHWEST-2

Unit 6 Southwest King:

The Unit's March meeting was held at Wesley Retirement Community in Des Moines. The group celebrated Retired Teachers' Week and had several guests, including **Patricia MacGowan** (Unit 20 Seattle), **Sue Perez**, and **Linda Hollingsworth** (Unit 19 Southeast King).

The featured presentation was "Slam the Scam" provided by Saphronia Young from Des Moines Elder Law Firm PLLC. Her presentation provided information about how seniors are being scammed on the internet and in person. She provided handouts and talked about not only should we be

aware of internet scams but scams that take advantage of empathy and loneliness when new friends ask for money, or care givers isolate an older person. Even adult relatives can take advantage of the generosity of a family member. She gave several examples and suggested ways to avoid being scammed by calling Adult Protective Services, staying in touch with longtime friends, a minister, or a doctor that has treated you for years. Avoid being isolated from those that know you well.

Patricia MacGown, NW II legislative representative, gave a short legislative presentation on the passing of a COLA for Plan 1 for this year and the continuation of PEBB

funding of up to \$183 a month for those on Medicare.

Marty Shorb, Unit 6 education committee, reported on the mini-grants awarded by the Unit. **Marty** and **Joe Cail**, unit president are working on the Unit's new website.

The Unit's next meeting will be held at Wesley Retirement Community in Des Moines on Friday, May 22 at 10:30 a.m. The speaker will be Rebecca from RR Move Company. She will provide information about getting ready for spring with housecleaning and garage sales. She will also share tips for downsizing and transitioning to a smaller home.

On Monday, April 6, several members of Unit 19 and members of the Des Moines Garden Club worked with residents at the Puget Sound Rehabilitation Center to make small floral arrangements. The combined project called, "Love in a Cup," allows residents to take their arrangement back to their room. Cups, flowers, and other materials are provided along with design instructions prior to making the arrangements. This yearly combined community service project provides sunshine and cheer to all attending the activity.

At the regular program meeting on Tuesday, April 7, members had an incredible opportunity to learn about artificial intelligence (AI) in the classroom with Trinh Pham, Puget Sound Education Services District. Her expertise in educational technology and shared hands-on session helped demystify AI in the classroom and show its practical applications to Unit 19 members. Her energy was contagious!

The Unit's May 12 meeting featured Rebecca King, an elder law attorney. She presented about "getting your ducks in a row" and answered questions about critical legal and financial documents everyone requires. She shared that planning for future legal and financial needs is critical for seniors and their families. She also answered questions about estate planning, guardianship, and trusts.



Unit 19 Southeast King: The Renton School District board recognized School Retirees' Appreciation Week in March. Unit members **Tina Underdahl**, **Joan Morgenstern**, and **Rachel Almeleh** thanked the board for the recognition and accepted the governor's proclamation on behalf of unit members.

Unit 19 Southeast King:

On Wednesday, March 11, 2026, the Renton School District board presented to **Tina Underdahl**, **Joan Morgenstern**, and **Rachel Almeleh** the proclamation, officially signed by Governor Bob Ferguson, declaring the week of March 16–22, 2026, as School Retirees' Appreciation Week in Washington. It was an honor for representatives of Unit 19 to attend especially considering the program presented by the McKnight Middle School jazz band. The mini-grant funds given by Unit 19, to the music department at McKnight, provided the sheet music for their outstanding performance.

WSSRA Around The State

Sue Perez, Rachel Almeleh, Betsy Norton, Tina Underdahl, Robin Stroben, Bev Bly Addington, Linda Hollingsworth, Karen and Ed Jones have been chosen to attend the upcoming WSSRA convention in June.

Unit 20 Seattle:

The SSRA meeting at Ivar's Salmon House, on May 14, featured Elizabeth Burns speaking on, "Falconry and Forest Stewardship." The meeting also honored unit members who are 85 and over. The meeting started at 10:30 a.m. with a social hour followed by lunch and a presentation.

SSRA will provide six \$3,000 scholarships to Seattle high school seniors in June. The Unit will award ten \$5,000 scholarships to teacher interns in September. Unit 20 also provides \$25,000 to the Seattle Schools Scholarship Fund that awards scholarships to graduating seniors of Seattle Public Schools in recognition of students who have overcome significant life challenges to achieve their dreams.

The Unit's Seattle Education Enhancement Dividend (S.E.E.D) grants to classroom teachers and librarians provided 55 mini-grants to teachers totaling \$20,000.

Thank you to **Julee Neuhart, John Thorp, Marcia**

Lalonde, Ruth McFadden, and Sue Battin for their work on the unit financial audit review. The budget committee prepared the proposed budgets for Unit 20 Seattle's 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) budgets for 2026-2027.

Patricia MacGowan chaired the April 24th NW2 Coordinating Council meeting at Merrill Gardens in Tukwila.

Unit 20 Seattle is pleased to honor past budget chair, **Jim DeJarnett**, past community services chair, Karen Lam, and bylaw chair, **Roxanne Trees** with WSSR Foundation donations in their names.

Unit 20 Seattle bulletin and scholarship applications are available at Seattlesra.org.

SOUTHWEST-3

Unit 3 Clallam County:

Clallam County School Retirees' Association (CCSRA) met at Jazzy Joshua's Restaurant in Port Angeles on Tuesday, March 17. The guest speaker was the fire chief from Clallam Fire District 2, Jake Patterson. There was also an installation of CCSRA officers for the 2026-2027 year facilitated by **Robin Sweeney**. The officers are **Lora Brabant**, president; **Cathy Stordeur**, vice president; **Jill Oakes**, secretary; **Arlene Morganroth**, treasurer.



Unit 3 Clallam County: 2026-27 Clallam County School Retirees' Association unit officers (*left to right*): Cathy Stordeur—vice president, Jill Oakes—secretary, Lora Brabant—president, Arlene Morganroth—treasurer.

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

AARP Washington Office
1-866-227-7457 AARP.ORG
Ron Chew, state president
Marguerite Ro, Washington state director

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

WSSRA Around The State

For the meeting on April 21, the guest speakers were from Volunteer Hospice of Clallam County. The topic was Care-giving Resources.

During Teacher Appreciation Week, the first week of May, volunteers distributed tubes of lip balm with the CCSRA logo to all personnel in Port Angeles School District, Sequim School District, and Crescent School District.

Unit members continue to donate books for the annual book drive and items for the scholarship baskets which will be auctioned off at the WSSRA convention in June.

Unit 14 Mason County:

Mason County members enjoy learning about the community, making important decisions about supporting education and humanitarian resources to assist the county, and socializing at monthly meetings on the first Tuesday of each month at 11:30 a.m. The Unit meets at El Puerto de Angeles Restaurant in Shelton or on Zoom for those who prefer to join virtually.

This spring the Unit has learned about the food banks providing valuable lifesaving nutrition to needy community members. The food banks have been grateful to

receive donations from Mason County School Retirees' Association. Members have enjoyed learning how the donations are used.

The Unit officers for the next year remain the same. **Eileen Perfrement** is president, **Reva Fowler** is vice-president, **Bonnie Rice** is secretary, **Tedd Davis** is treasurer. **Tedd Davis** also serves on the WSSRA Foundation board. **Eileen Perfrement** is WSSRA executive board treasurer.

Two students from Shelton High School applied for WSSRA scholarships. Although they were not chosen for those scholarships, Mason County SRA members agreed to support them in the amount of \$2,000 for one and \$1,000 for the other. **Eileen Perfrement** will present the scholarship certificates to the students at the school's Awards Evening for family and friends on May 21.

Members enjoyed hearing from the teachers who received mini-grants from the Unit in November. **Bonnie Rice** shared the reports for those who could not make it in person to the meeting.

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 legislators.

Unit 27 Pierce County:

April was filled with vibrant energy throughout Pierce County. Between the shift into true spring weather and recent unit luncheons, the "rhythm" of the association was stronger than ever. The unit has celebrated remarkable growth this year. In the last few months, the unit has received a staggering 132 new member applications. A special guest at the luncheon was WSSRA Membership Chair **Alan Burke**.

The April program was presented by Arlene Thomas, who guided members through gentle exercises that felt good after a hearty lunch. Arlene has published the book, "Easy Balance Exercises for Seniors: A Holistic Approach to Improve Stability, Prevent Falls, and Maintain Independence for All Abilities," under the pen name Lena Ihara. Her book is available on Amazon. Thank you to **Vickie Rettke** for connecting the unit with her.

At the May luncheon, the installation of officers took place along with a memorial service honoring deceased members. Special guests included WSSRA Executive Director **Peter Diedrick** and WSSRA Legislative Director **Emmett Mills**. **Peter** provided an insightful overview of the legislative session.

Scholarship and mini-grant results will be announced soon. As the unit looks ahead,



Unit 30 Clark County: Kathy Bounds, unit treasurer and website creator, introducing the topic of artificial intelligence (AI). Her presentation provided helpful information to help members understand and take their first steps into this new era. Kathy will also offer her AI presentation during the WSSRA convention in June.

WSSRA Around The State

it welcomes the involvement of members who feel called to lend a hand, even in small ways, as its momentum continues to build.

SOUTHWEST-4

Unit 28 Thurston County:

At their March luncheon, Unit 28 Thurston County had a very informative speaker, Susan Fiksdal, from the League of Women Voters of Thurston County. It is a political, but non-partisan organization that was founded in 1920. In 1971 it admitted males. The organization reaches out to people who don't understand civics and how the government works with weekly civic quizzes, civic books for seventh and eighth graders, and outreach to high schools.

At their April luncheon, Unit 28 hosted recipients of the mini-grants that were funded by the \$15,000 received from the Nisqually Indian Tribe. Teachers shared how they used their mini-grant money. Nicole Sims, a charitable coordinator from the Tribe, will be a special guest at a future luncheon.

Unit 28 is assembling baskets for the WSSRA convention at the Great Wolf Lodge. Themes are a "patriotic basket" highlighting the 250th birthday of the United States and a "grandparents delight" basket.

Unit 28 Thurston County has nominated members for awards which are presented at the WSSRA convention in June. **Pat Slosson** was nominated for the Patrick T. Hoban Meritorious award; **Gery Gerst** for the Stan McNaughton Outreach award; and **Ann Chenhall** for the Ester Wilfong Legislative Advocacy award. The unit is very proud to nominate these members.

Unit 30 Clark County:

Unit members were asked to prioritize possibilities for 2026. As a result, an artificial intelligence (AI) workshop was held at ESD 112 and attended by fourteen folks. **Kathy Bounds**, unit treasurer and website creator, enthusiastically helped attendees begin to understand and take first steps into the "modern age."

In June, the Unit will take an outing on the Chelatchie Prairie Railroad. The Chelatchie Prairie is a heritage railroad that was formerly a branch line of the Northern Pacific Railroad.

Unit 30 has entered into an agreement with ESD 112 for future meetings. The ESD offers convenient meeting space and excellent tech support. Lunches will be catered.

Mini-grants for school staff were wrapped up with visits to building faculty meetings to celebrate and present cer-



Unit 6 Southwest King: The Unit's March meeting featured information about how seniors are being scammed on the internet and in person. Pictured are (left to right): Doug Sample, Don Fairbanks, Saphronia Young (Des Moines Elder Law, PLLC), and John Burdine.

tificates. Mini-grants awarded by the Unit included \$400 for everything from multicultural books to a mini-golf course.

EAST-5

Unit 9 Kittitas County:

The April meeting and luncheon was held at the Senior Center in Cle Elum on Tuesday, April 21. The topic of discussion was how to re-fashion the structure of unit leadership to meet current realities—lack of persons wanting to serve as unit officers. Further discussion will take place in the months ahead.

The May 19 meeting and luncheon will take place at Rosewood in Ellensburg at noon. State officials may be guests. If not, Habitat for Humanity will be asked to present a program.

Meetings and programs for the coming year will be determined in the future and announced here in the *Journal* and by a future newsletter.

Unit 34 Yakima County:

The YCSRA March 2nd general meeting was chaired by Unit President Pro Tem **Patrick Walsh**. He invited **Stephanie King** to present

WSSRA Around The State

a program. **Stephanie** is an amazing English teacher at Granger High School. Her talk was one that amazed and delighted unit members. Her activities over the last several years, besides being a mother, teacher and coach, had us all wondering when she was able to just relax. **Stephanie** has been responsible for the inclusion of all the University of Washington college credit classes in Granger School District. Her Advanced English student authors have published a book titled, "We

Are America Granger: Voice of the Nation's Future." The book was published in partnership with Sunnyside Sun Newspaper. **Stephanie** has procured over \$50,000 in grants for GHS programs. She was nominated for the Horace Mann Global Teacher Prize, an award that has been compared to the Nobel Prize. She travelled to Dubai to compete for this award. In addition to her amazing accomplishments, **Stephanie** was a warm and charismatic speaker.

In March, YCSRA Mini-Grant Coordinator, **Linda Sumner**, and committee members were invited to attend a school-wide Tap Root Theater performance. The theme of the performance, "Pet School," was ways to help students cope with being bullied. A \$500 mini-grant provided by YCSRA helped teacher Suki Covell pay for the program.

John Osegueda was the unit president pro tem for the April 6th YCSRA general meeting.

He invited Yakima School District Physical Therapist Darren Joffs to speak. Joffs presented, "Therapy Ideas for Older People." He emphasized the importance of keep moving and suggested tracking movement on a calendar. His program included sensible ideas to work on balance, stretching, and maintaining physical and mental strength. Most of the suggested ideas can be done at home but getting out of doors or frequenting local gyms were also emphasized.

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.](#)

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EAST-6

Unit 2 Chelan/Douglas:

CDSRA members were happy to get together in February after the winter break. The Unit received "thank you" letters from several mini-grant recipients. The Unit approved a donation for the upcoming event, "Every Kid at the Performing Arts Center (EKAP) Spring Fling" which two unit members attended. The Unit also donated small gifts and volunteered at the Rock Island "holiday gift store" which allowed students to use their positive behavior awards to buy gifts for their families. Also, during the meeting, attendees discussed the "unit of distinction award," updated the unit budget, and made plans for members to attend the June WSSRA convention.

February's program featured

WSSRA Around The State

a wonderful local author, Dan Gemeinhart. He has combined his history as a youth librarian and aspiring author into a motivating slide show about perseverance and grit in his journey to becoming an author. So far, he has published six books with a possible movie and more books on the way.

In March, the Unit finished business early so attendees could take full advantage of watercolor painting lessons from Wenatchee artist and former teacher, Terry Valdez. A good time was had by all the numerous CDSRA learners. While members were painting, the good news was shared that the State Legislature passed a Plan 1 COLA.

The Unit voted on CDSRA officers for 2026-27. Elected are: **Sue Kane**-executive secretary, **Kriss Crilly**-past president, **Marie Buckner**-vice president, **Christi Dekraai**-secretary, and **Sue Kane**-treasurer.

Unit 4 Columbia Basin:

Many Unit 4 Columbia Basin members recently participated in community tours of the brand-new Samaritan Hospital in Moses Lake. Some chose to go with family and friends, and one tour group consisted of CBSRA board members. Everyone was very impressed with the beautiful new facility and all its up-to-date medical equipment. A

favorite part of the tour was watching the demonstration of the robotic surgery machine. Three representatives from the hospital attended Unit 4's March luncheon. They spoke about the facility and answered questions from the large number of members in attendance.

The February luncheon was also well-attended and featured speakers from Columbia Basin Dispute Resolution Center.

The Books for Babies committee was busy preparing book packets and delivering them to the hospitals in Othello and Moses Lake. Co-President **Helen Preston** and **Patty Kisler** made the presentations.

The hiking group went on a fun trip to Palouse Falls in early April. They hiked some of the trails and enjoyed the spectacular views. The adventure was completed with lunch at a restaurant in Washtucna.

Unit 15 Okanogan:

Unit 15 members reconvened on February 24 with a surprise program on the Cosmic Crisp Apple by MIT graduate, Kathryn Grandy. Members listened intently as Kathryn, chief marketing officer, explained her marketing team's full service global and commercialization role in bringing the Cosmic Crisp Apple to the market. It turns out the #1 apple in the



Unit 2 Chelan-Douglas: In March, unit members gathered in Wenatchee for a watercolor experience provided by retired art teacher, Terry Valdez. He donated all the supplies, including water color paper, paint, and brushes.

country is the new state apple, Cosmic Crisp.

The OCSRA spring mini-grant winners include **CJ Hendrickson** (grade 3, East Omak Elementary) for gardening supplies for hands-on learning, **Jancey Marsh** (grade 4, Virginia Grainger Elementary, Okanogan) for replacement of well-loved Washington State History books, as well as maps, and laminating materials, **Heather Downey** (middle and high school Okanogan Life Skills) for "baked potato project" utilizing planning, shopping, social, job, independence, money, and cooking skills, and **Scott B. Olson** (retired

member) for grades 4 and 5 Chess Club – 21 chess sets will be purchased for students' home use for those who attend all sessions plus a tournament.

Bob and Janet Shacklett continue to provide the group with delicious homemade/handmade luncheons. The Unit covers meal costs while the chef duo pleases palates.

Unit 15 has updated its by-laws, policies, and procedures. Thanks to all who worked on the project; special thanks to **Penny Garrison** and **Evon LaGrou**.

The Unit has been enjoying notes/cards from former OC-

WSSRA Around The State

SRA 106-year-old-member, **Ruth Parman**, who is now a member of the Spokane Unit.

EAST-7

Unit 25 Spokane Area:

SAREA held a general meeting at ESD 101 on Wednesday, March 11. Kay Tomlinson, the Speakers Bureau lead for AARP WA, gave a current and informative presentation titled, "AI 101: Artificial Intelligence and Fraud" via Zoom, from Seattle. Debbie Ryan and Jan Hartman supported Kay by handing out informa-

tive pamphlets for members to take home.

A few presentation highlights include:

- Do not answer a phone number you don't know. If it is important, they will leave a message, and you can call them back. Did you know anyone can pay five dollars to have any name show up on your caller ID?
- Do not give out ANY personal information on the phone, no matter how convincing they sound. Hang up and call the company yourself by looking the number up. Do not call the number they give you.

- Do not argue with the voice on the other end or think you can outsmart them. Most likely, you aren't talking to a real person, but an AI generated voice. Just hang up.
- Red flags in romance scams include a) wanting to leave the dating site immediately and use personal email or instant messaging, b) professes love too quickly, c) claims to be from the US but is traveling or working overseas, d) plans to visit but cancels at the last minute because of a traumatic event or business deal gone sour, e) asks for money.
- Contact AARP Fraud Watch Network Helpline at 1-877-908-3360.
- Freeze your Social Security so new accounts or large purchases cannot be made in your name.
- The police/sheriff departments, courthouse, Medicare, Social Security, banks, or federal agencies will not contact you by phone. If you are unsure, call the agency yourself. Do not send crypto currency, money, or gift cards.
- AI can mimic any voice. Have a code word with family members and stress that they cannot share it with anyone. That way if you hear your loved one who is crying and appears to be in trouble, begging for help and money, just ask them what the code word is. If they don't know it, hang up and call the police.

Scholarships - **Don Kackman** organized the Scholarship committee meeting via Zoom. Twenty-seven high school

seniors, going into education, applied for scholarships. Their stories and accomplishments were so inspiring! In addition to the scholarships awarded through the WSSR Foundation, the SAREA unit gave two \$1,000 Robert J. Handy supplemental scholarships to be used the first year, one \$1,500 scholarship, and two \$1,000 scholarships to local students.

A big thank you to **Don Kackman** and the Scholarship committee for all their hard work and the heart they showed for our future educators.

Unit 33 Whitman County:

In March, Unit 33 Whitman County met at Paradise Creek Brewing Company in Pullman for lunch and a meeting. After a delicious lunch and a productive meeting, Sydney Tucker, a graduate student in the University of Idaho's College of Natural Resource Sciences, gave a presentation about the advantages of landscaping with native plants. Phoenix Project in Pullman is planting pocket prairies all around Pullman featuring native plants. The Palouse Basin Aquifer's watering restrictions, plants that need no water after being established are a real advantage. She shared materials that provided ideas and photos of popular native plants.



Unit 29 Benton-Franklin: Local school districts, Kennewick, Pasco, and Richland, recognized the unit in celebration of School Retiree Appreciation Week. Pictured are Unit President Victoria Russell, WSSRA President Dottie Stevens, and Superintendent Lance Hansen, Kennewick SD.

WSSRA Around The State

Three unit members served as scholarship readers and reviewed applications for the WSSR Foundation and PEMCO scholarship applications submitted by high school seniors. The readers also reviewed the Neil Prescott scholarship applications for student teacher/interns.

Don Kackman, E-7 representative, organized a Zoom meeting for the E-7 region with Unit 25 Spokane Area and Unit 33 Whitman County members.

The Unit has three delegates planning to attend the WSSRA convention in June at Great Wolf Lodge (Grand Mound). Members volunteered to prepare baskets and silent auction items for WSSR Foundation's basket drawings and silent auction fundraisers at convention.



Unit 4 Columbia Basin: Spring hike at Palouse Falls State Park. The hiking group went on a fun trip to Palouse Falls in early April. They hiked some of the trails and enjoyed the spectacular views. The adventure was completed with lunch at a restaurant in Washtucna. Pictured are (left to right) Gene and Carolyn Wachtel, Karen Schafer, Lanita Pomeroy, Helen Preston, and Gayle Talbot.

EAST-8

Unit 1 Clarkston/Asotin/Pomeroy: Unit 1 has been doing a great job of supporting local schools in Clarkston, Pomeroy, and Asotin. The Unit has continued with the theme of, “Making it A Souper Year!” by bringing soup, ramen noodles, etc. to send home to the families that are in need. The parent coordinators at each school know the families that will benefit from this extra donation and discreetly get the soup items to

them. It makes unit members feel good about helping and it helps them feel good in return. So, it’s a win-win situation!

The Unit’s March program was all about Future Farmers of America (FFA). Two students from Clarkston FFA presented a very informative program and unit members learned many new things about the group. Besides raising animals for the fair and helping keep the FFA barn clean, they have opportunities in classes like floral design, animal and plant science,

agriculture business, agriculture mechanics, and more. There are many leadership development events for them throughout the school year in which they can qualify for state competitions. Unit members were very impressed with the amount of community service they do and that they have a greenhouse where they grow vegetables and flowering plants.

The Unit’s “pre-retirement panel” event was well attended by 33 people from all three local school districts. It

was nice to see all walks of school life including teachers, administration, para-pros, bus drivers, custodians, and technology staff. The Unit is making a difference in helping them “manage the maze” that is retirement.

Unit 29 Benton-Franklin: The Unit had an outstanding luncheon with more than 65 members attending on March 23, 2026. Member, **Diana Baker**, was the presenter and shared her trek on the

WSSRA Around The State

Honorary Lifetime Membership

Long-standing WSSRA members can be eligible to receive honorary membership. To meet the criteria for honorary membership, a member must have reached the age of 90 by June 30, have been a member of WSSRA for at least 20 years, and have been an actively contributing member. Unit presidents can submit nominations to the executive board for consideration. This year, the following individuals were awarded WSSRA Honorary Memberships:

Ruth Ballard

Unit 6 Southwest King

JoAnn Deichman

Unit 29 Benton-Franklin

Llewellyn "Lew" Edming

Unit 29 Benton-Franklin

Margaret Racy

Unit 29 Benton-Franklin

Barbara Sowell

Unit 29 Benton-Franklin

Camino de Santiago with her daughter. The 15-day, 150-mile trip was inspirational for her, and for those hearing about her experience to see what was accomplished. She spent over a month with a weighted backpack on walks to prepare. Even though many miles were walked each day, she awoke daily refreshed and

not sore for the challenge. Accommodations were good and nutritious food was plentiful, from gracious hosts.

Also, at the March meeting, nine baskets were given away by a drawing. An update on SSB 5862 (Plan 1 COLA) was provided – many members had been following the prog-

ress of this bill and sending notes to legislative members. **Jim Davison**, E-8 legislative committee representative, has been timely in email to local members. **Leona Hasing**, unit legislative committee member, also includes members in updating timely information from WSSRA Legislative Coordinator **Emmett Mills**.

The Unit's February luncheon program highlighted artificial intelligence (AI) and its appropriate use beginning with a human request and ending with human review.

The April meeting included a presentation about the very real crisis with addiction and the area's new Columbia Valley Center for Recovery from the renovated Kennewick General Hospital.

In May, unit officers will continue as the unit moves to two-year terms. Also, the meeting will feature the annual Celebration of Life honoring unit members who have passed away this year.

The Unit is preparing for the WSSRA convention coming up in June. One major contributor, member **Sharon Cooper**, is preparing three BFSRA small baskets for the drawing.

The Unit Scholarship committee was able to attend recognition functions for WSU Tri-Cities and Columbia Basin College and meet

awardees who have finished student teaching or were in the planning stages. Several were already applying for local positions.

Unit 29 was recognized at WSSRA retiree functions at local school districts in Kennewick, Pasco, and Richland with the reading of the Governor's Proclamation honoring School Retiree Recognition Week. Unit members were in attendance and given an opportunity to speak.

Unit members attended legislative town hall meetings hosted by Legislative District 16 and thanked the local legislators for supporting SSB 5862 including Senator Perry Dozier, the sponsor of SSB 5862.

Newsletters from BFSRA are available upon request. Please contact Editor **Helen Bruggeman** at hjbrugg@gmail.com

Unit 31 Walla Walla-Columbia: During the Unit's March luncheon, members were given a guided tour of the SEATech (Southeast Area Technical Skills Center) facilities. SEATech operates as a cooperative school of six local school districts: College Place, Dayton, Prescott, Touchet, Waitsburg, and Walla Walla. Gerald Maher, CTE and SEATech Skills Center director, provided the luncheon attendees with a presentation

WSSRA Around The State

about the Skills Center. After lunch, members were given a tour of the facility.

The program for the April luncheon was a power point presentation featuring many of the mini-grant recipients and what they were able to provide their students with the mini-grant funds they received from the Unit.

Also, in April, the unit elected officers for 2026-27, including: **Roseann Groom** – president-elect, **Kathy Pritcher** - president, **Jim Briggs** - treasurer, and **Gail Harwood** - secretary.

During the May luncheon, the Unit held their candlelight memorial for members who had passed away during the past year. The Unit celebrated **Paula Nichols** for her many years (12) serving on the executive board. She also served for 10 years on the E-8 board. She will be missed, as will all her historical knowledge.

Scholarships were given at the May luncheon and a representative from Eastern Washington University was in attendance and gave a student teaching scholarship. WWC-SRA gave two scholarships to high school seniors.



Unit 31 Walla Walla-Columbia: Paula Nichols handing off the secretary notebook to Gail Harwood, the new unit secretary.



Unit 1 Clarkston-Asotin-Pomeroy: Unit President Kay Andersen and Treasurer Judie Hanley help at the Unit 1 sponsored Pre-Retirement Panel Event on March 26.

ADDRESS CHANGES

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Please Note: If your household receives more than one copy of the Journal in the mail each time, if you prefer to receive just one copy per household, please contact Michele Hunter (contact info above).



The Journal

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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.
- Communicate to Local Units the activities and priorities of NRTA, AARP, and other entities that affect retired school personnel.
- Represent all present and future Washington State school retirees, both classified and certificated.

Ask a friend to join us today...

You'll find inside...

AMBA.....7	Foundation 6	Retiree Resources 19
2026 Convention.....9	Legislative News 4	WSSR-PAC 5
Delegate Assembly Info 10	Membership.....8	WSSRA Around The State.....16
Executive Director 3	President's message 2	

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