



Grapevine

Daviess County Public Schools Staff Newsletter
January 18-22, 2021

Legislative Update: TRS

A Message from the Superintendent

DCPS Family —

By now, most of you are aware that a Teacher Retirement Bill has been filed in the Kentucky General Assembly.



Matt Robbins

I'd like to quickly summarize what this is (and what it is not) as a means to reduce your stress level. This material gets real complex, real fast. Please know that I am personally involved with listening, watching and observing this issue, along with my colleagues on the state KASS board.

This DOES NOT impact Support Staff as you are members of CERS (County Employees Retirement System). This bill is focused on TRS (Teachers Retirement System) ONLY!

The TRS bill proposes a New Tier for New Hires after Jan. 1, 2022. This bill DOES NOT impact any current TRS members or new hires prior to that 01/01/2022 date. The various professional organizations representing TRS constituents (KEA, KASA, KASS, JCTA, KRTA and

KDE) are favorable or remain neutral on this proposed change. Personally, I am supportive of this bill with recommended changes communicated through our KASS board.

I know the bill sponsor personally. Rep Ed Massey is a former long-time school board member and attorney. He and other colleagues of his have done a great job in getting input from all the stakeholder groups and making changes where necessary.

It is important to understand "Why." These reasons really are focused on two things: First, there are some long-term financial goals necessary to the financial status of the state and TRS. Second, these changes are likely to occur with or without stakeholder input. This process was well done to consider all of the relevant needs – including the future recruitment and retention of teachers. A change is necessary to ensure the long-term solvency and plans for current and future teachers.

Still, it is critical to closely watch this bill as it moves through the legislative process for any future changes that may occur to this bill – whether positive or negative. I will assist all of us in this endeavor.

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Legislative Update: TRS

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Provided below is more narrative information and links to attachments that aid in reviewing the lengthy bill, which is also attached.

The latest draft TRS New Tier Proposal that includes recommended improvements was shared on Dec. 21 with the pension work group consisting of education partners and several legislators from both the House and Senate. Representative Ed Massey has led a collaborative and transparent process to develop a proposal for a new tier of benefits for TRS members hired on or after Jan. 1, 2022. The proposal is a true hybrid that includes a defined benefit Foundational Component (Social Security replacement component) and a defined contribution Supplemental Component (401(k)-like component). With the improvements included, it will provide a path to a secure retirement for professional educators. This proposal does NOT change any benefits for existing TRS members, active or retired. See the links below for more details and information.

KASS, KASA, KSBA, KRTA, KEA, JCTA, KDE and higher education partners have been at the table throughout these discussions. The TRS retirement benefits are an important part of the equation for recruiting and retaining high quality people to serve in our schools. A pension system must have an actuarial design that is sustainable for the long term and the TRS officials have assured this proposal achieves this. Over the last several years, we have learned a great deal about our pension system and some issues that contributed to the unfunded liability. Fundamentally, there are three main components to a healthy retirement plan: 1) Contributions; 2) Years of Service; 3) Portfolio Growth.

Contributions – This includes both employer and employee contributions. We all know that employees have, without fail, made their contributions to the fund. Unfortunately, the state (the employer) has not always done so. In fact, the very first payment of \$1 million was actually \$500,000 short of the actuarial recommendation at the time. Since then, there have been numerous times TRS was underfunded in tough budget years. This has contributed to the unfunded liability.

Years of Service – Another significant factor involves how long employees pay into the system versus how long they receive pension benefits in retirement. In the late 1980s, the TRS fund was flush, and against the recommendation of TRS officials, the General Assembly reduced the minimum years of service required for full

retirement benefits from 30 to 27 years of service. This resulted in a substantial change in the average and most frequent ages of retirement. Though the TRS Board has made adjustments in the plan to incentivize longer service, the mean age of retirement is 59 with a mode of 55. According to TRS officials, this still falls short of the service trends prior to the late 1980s. This has contributed to the unfunded liability.

Portfolio Growth of the TRS Fund – This is a combination of investment returns and rebalancing the portfolio (buy low/sell high). TRS has a stellar performance history with assets worth more than \$20.7 billion as of June 30, 2020. Between 1985 and 2020, the fund grew almost \$19 billion despite negative cash flows, which don't account for the rebalancing of the portfolio (selling high value assets and reinvesting in new assets with high growth potential). Because of the strong performance, TRS has yielded a 30-year compounded gross return of about 8% on investments. Though we cannot control the market and recessions that will occur from time to time, it is apparent that TRS has a strong investment and portfolio growth history.

Contributions and years of service are the two components we can most control regarding TRS. This new proposal provides an actuarial design that ensures adequate contributions of fixed amounts for both the state and employees, and a minimum years of service requirement, to protect the integrity of the new tier of TRS and not contribute further to the unfunded liability of the current plan. KASS, KASA, KSBA, KRTA, KEA and JCTA will continue to work with Rep. Massey and others to develop this proposal to ensure it is a plan that will serve new educators and schools well. Discussions are taking place currently to include a mechanism to improve the benefits to members of this new tier when the fund reaches 130% funding that will maintain the actuarial integrity of the fund.

I hope this information helps keep you informed about this issue that will likely move forward in the 2021 Legislative Session. Please feel free to let me know if you have any questions about the proposed TRS new tier reform that you would like me to look into for you.

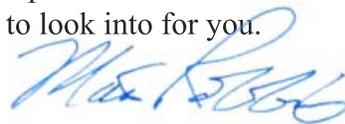
[TRS New Hire Draft #2](#)

[TRS Presentation](#)

[TRS Series Information](#)

[2021 Hybrid Plan Summary Comparison](#)

[TRS Pension Reform Information](#)



– Matt Robbins

DCPS Superintendent

Need Help with Mental Health?

My Mental Health: Do I Need Help?
First, determine how much your symptoms interfere with your daily life.

Do I have mild symptoms that have lasted for less than 2 weeks?

- Feeling a little down
- Feeling down, but still able to do job, schoolwork, or housework
- Some trouble sleeping
- Feeling down, but still able to take care of yourself or take care of others

If so, here are some self-care activities that can help:

- Exercising (e.g., aerobics, yoga)
- Engaging in social contact (virtual or in person)
- Getting adequate sleep on a regular schedule
- Eating healthy
- Talking to a trusted friend or family member
- Practicing meditation, relaxation, and mindfulness

If the symptoms above do not improve or seem to be worsening despite self-care efforts, talk to your health care provider.

Do I have severe symptoms that have lasted 2 weeks or more?

- Difficulty sleeping
- Appetite changes that result in unwanted weight changes
- Struggling to get out of bed in the morning because of mood
- Difficulty concentrating
- Loss of interest in things you usually find enjoyable
- Unable to perform usual daily functions and responsibilities
- Thoughts of death or self-harm

Seek professional help:

- Psychotherapy (talk therapy)—virtual or in person; individual, group, or family
- Medications
- Brain stimulation therapies

For help finding treatment, visit www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp.

If you are in crisis, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), or text the Crisis Text Line (text HELLO to 741741).

 www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp

We all need help sometimes. DCPS student assistance coordinator Angie Judd shared these tips from the National Institute of Mental Health as a guide to determine whether you need additional support in managing symptoms of depression or anxiety. Click [HERE](#) for more information and resources.



Nominate a Star!

If you know a DCPS Star, please complete a brief nomination form [HERE](#). Stars are selected based on empathy, passion, relationships, team player, creativity, communication, growth, and any other qualities you believe make your Star stand out.

Submit Milestone News to grapevine@dcps.org

Congratulations!

Congratulations to our DCPS team as they welcome their new arrivals!



Kailey Leiberling (AHS) has a baby girl! Laina Elise Leiberling was born Dec. 28. The baby weighed 7 pounds, 6 ounces and measured 20 inches long at birth.

Debbie Muse (AHS) has announced the arrival of her new grandson. Asher Gene Glenn weighed 7 pounds, 10 ounces upon arrival and was 20.5 inches long upon arrival on Jan. 18. Proud parents are Austin and Jacqueline Evans Glenn.

Healthy Lifestyle Tip of the Week

5 TECHNIQUES FOR STRESS MANAGEMENT

 **DEEP BREATHING**

 **MINDFULNESS**

 **MOVEMENT**

 **POSITIVITY**

 **SELF-CARE**

#DeStressMonday DeStressMonday.org **DESTRESS MONDAY**

Regardless of specific technique, at the core of many stress management practices is the idea of converting negative feelings into springs of inspiration, positivity and energy by redirecting or letting go of unpleasant thoughts and feelings. Easier said than done? Maybe. But by practicing basic stress management techniques, you'll start to find yourself free of the confining influence of stress. Commit this week to taking back control of your headspace with simple stress management practices. Learn more about these five steps to wellness [HERE](#).

These weekly fitness reminders are brought to you by the DCPS Food Services Department. We care about you! Learn more at www.moveitmonday.org



Danielle Ellis

Wow! A new year is here! I hope you have had time to refresh and reflect. DCKEA has lots of exciting things coming up in the coming months. Here is a list of important information.

■ I hope you noticed that the President's Points are coming out on Mondays instead of Wednesdays during the legislative session.

Your building rep should be sending them, but if you aren't

getting them, you can log into KEA.org and they are posted there.

■ It's that time of year when we watch the legislative session. Please take a moment to stay in the loop of legislation and how it might affect you. The TRS bill proposal that will affect new hires has been publicized in the President's Points for the last several issues and is summarized by our Superintendent on Page 1 of this newsletter. This will likely come up during the session. Please pay attention.

■ Have you always wanted to find out more about your legislators? Now is your chance. We will be doing a virtual Day of Learning this year. Any member is invited to attend; all you need to do is send me an email at danielle.ellis@daviess.kyschools.us and I will be happy to send you more information. This event will be held after school to ensure that our faculty members will be able to participate.

■ The Delegate Assembly will be held virtually this year, so if you are a delegate, please watch for information from Valerie Leathers.

■ Our next meeting will begin at 4:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 25. This meeting will be held virtually. If you would like to join us, please send me an email at danielle.ellis@daviess.kyschools.us. This will also be your DC-KEA shirt and jeans day.

Remember I am always at your service –

Danielle Ellis, DC-KEA President
 DCPS Center for Academic Improvement
 270-852-7226
danielle.ellis@daviess.kyschools.us



MLEs Discount Cards

The Meadow Lands Elementary School PTO still has a few Discount Cards left! This is a great way to save money at some of your family's favorite restaurants. This year's card features 37 local merchants with more than 45 locations. Cost is only \$10. Use the card just a couple of times and you've already saved money! Contact Carye Coomes for an order form or more information.

Putting the 'Fun' in Fundraisers

Let the Grapevine help make your next fundraiser a success! Send news about special events and sales sponsored by your school, team, club or organization to grapevine@dcps.org. Deadline is Friday the week before publication. Information about fundraisers and special events hosted by DCPS schools may also be posted on our district website on the Digital Backpack page. Click [HERE](#) to view that page.



DCPS Maintenance and Construction Update



This monthly report is provided by David Shutt, DCPS director of facilities and plant operations. His staff remains committed to ensuring safe, comfortable and attractive environments for teaching and learning.

AHS Phase III Addition

The past 30 days have seen continued masonry work on the Ag Wing. Horizontal beams have been installed in the Atrium. The

slab on grade has been completed. CMU installation is progressing toward the Engineering Wing. See photo at top right.

The next 30 days will see ongoing interior and exterior CMU installation, and first floor plumbing and electrical. Work to install the second floor joist and decking is scheduled to start in the next two to three weeks.

AHS Phase IV Renovations

RBS Design will present Design Development documents for consideration at the Jan. 21 meeting of the Board of Education. The meeting begins at 4:30 p.m. As a reminder, meetings of the DCPS Board of Education may be viewed on our district YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/DCPSTV/live>

AHS Sidewalk Project

Work is in progress on the new sidewalk that will connect the campus to Southtown Boulevard. The sidewalk is 90% complete. See photograph at bottom right. Work is scheduled to be completed in the next two to three weeks.

New Daviess County Middle School

Highlights during the past 30 days include a start on the installation of site storm drainage and structures, underground plumbing and electrical, and completion of the footings in the northeast corner of the building. Concrete for the elevator pit has been poured, and MEP rough-in has started.

The next 30 days will see continued site electrical primary conduit and transformer installation, underground plumbing and electrical in the northeast portion of the building, and the continuation of footer work moving east to west along the front of the building. Site storm drainage piping will continue.

Summer Projects

CVMS Flooring

New flooring will be installed at College View Middle School next summer. Bids for the project were opened



Exterior agriculture wing wall CMU work by A&K.



New sidewalk, looking toward Southtown Boulevard.

Jan. 12 and will be on this month's agenda for consideration by the Board of Education.

LED Lighting

The LED lighting project at Meadow Lands Elementary School has been completed. Highland Elementary School is the next school on the schedule for lighting conversions.

Thank You, Community Partners!



‘Glenmore Gives’ Grant for HP HS

Heritage Park High School was awarded a “Glenmore Gives” grant from Glenmore Distillery to purchase backpacks for their students. Justin Rhinerson, who serves as bottling assistant manager at Glenmore, presented a check for \$2,300 to Joshua Scherrer on Jan. 12.

Josh, who teaches U.S. history, government and economics at HP HS, had applied for the grant to provide support and assistance for students as they transition from in-person to remote learning on the A-B Schedule.

“Because our students are now required to carry laptops, chargers and individual school supplies to and from school during in-person instruction, we wanted to provide equitable access to HP HS-branded backpacks,” Josh said. “This will allow our students to stay better organized and keep their materials more secure. With the financial uncertainty COVID-19 has brought to many of our families, we are thrilled to alleviate a small portion of that burden by providing these backpacks to our students.”

Has your school or classroom received special support from a local business, organization or club? Let the Grapevine help acknowledge our wonderful community partners.

Send information to
grapevine@dcps.org

DC-bay!



Send DC-bay! information to
grapevine@dcps.org

Include your name, school/site, description of item, price and phone number.

Deadline for next issue: Feb. 12.

Microsoft Surface Pro X. 13-inch screen with keyboard and pen. 512 GB memory, Windows 10 Home Operating System. Purchased in June for college student, but it doesn’t meet specifications for current course load. \$1,500. Contact Megan Nicodemus (DCHS) at 270-363-4428 for more information.

Kids First Apparel Store Open Through Friday, Jan. 22



DCPS Kids First apparel is now available in a variety of styles and colors for men, women, children and youth sizes. Long- and short-sleeved T-shirts, sweatshirts, hoodies, face masks, hats and accessories are available.

Click [HERE](#) to view style, fabric and pricing options. Order deadline is 11:59 p.m. Friday, Jan. 22.

For more information, contact Seth Daugherty at Central Screen Printing at sethd@centralscreenprinting.com or 270-977-8393.

DCPS – #BetterTogether