

HAPPENINGS

Publication of the Pierce County School Retirees' Association (PCSRA) Volume XXXVII Issue 2 Fall/Winter 2025

General Meetings/ Luncheons

IN PERSON

La Quinta Inn

1425 E. 27th Street, Tacoma

Fall/Winter 2025

Nov. 20 & Dec. 11

•

**WSSRA Convention June
8-10, 2026**

**Great Wolf Lodge,
Grand Mound**

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Pierce County School Retirees' Association

P.O. Box 112493

Tacoma, WA 98411-2493

Sandy Grape

President

Open

President-Elect

Carolyn Ohlson

Recording Secretary

Vickie Rettke

Corresponding Secretary

Derryl Finney

Treasurer

Conni Abernathy

Happenings

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WSSRA: 1-360-413-5496

wssra.org

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November 20th Topic: Jon Grahe



"Peace of Mind"

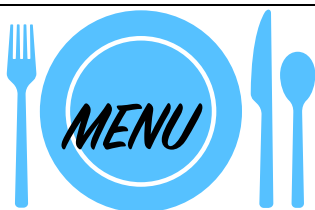
Please join us for our luncheon on November 20. Our speaker will be Jon Grahe, Advanced Funeral Planner with Powers Funeral Home and Professor Emeritus, with 30 years experience as a social psychologist, offering a "Peace of Mind" seminar.

In this short presentation he will present the benefits of planning ahead for our final wishes. The benefits include easing the financial burden with a flexible funding plan. Additionally, by documenting final wishes, people can ensure their final wishes are respected. We will discuss the degree to which arrangements are transferable and optional travel protection. In sum, this speaker will offer attendees knowledge about a topic that is rarely discussed with a lighthearted, yet thoughtful presentation.

If you know someone that you would like to bring, tell Caroline Bjerke you are bringing a guest when you call in your reservation.

Hope to see you there!

Sandy Grape, President



For November 20

Thanksgiving Buffet:

Roasted Turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy, cranberries, vegetable, rolls and butter, dessert, coffee and iced tea.

For December 11th

Meat Lasagne, Caesar salad, fresh fruit, hot vegetable medley, garlic bread, dessert, coffee and iced tea.

Cost \$15

Call Carolyn Bjerke at
253-759-3951

November 14th for
reservation for the
November meeting,
and

reservations by December
5th for the December
meeting

**“There is a foundation
of youth:** it is your mind,
your talents,
the creativity you bring
to your life,
and the lives of the
people you love.

When you learn to tap
this source, you will truly
have defeated age.” –

Sophia Loren

President’s Message – Fall/Winter 2025



Happy Thanksgiving, PCSRA!

We’re grateful for your continued membership and for all the ways you contribute to your families, communities, and to our organization.

Pierce County recently hosted our annual “Meet & Greet” with local legislators, focusing on retirees’ needs and priorities. Special thanks to Emmett Mills, WSSRA Legislative Coordinator, for his support in this important effort.



As we move into the season, our focus will be on scholarships, mini-grants, and membership outreach.

Wishing you a joyful holiday season!

Sandy Grape



President PCSRA - Unit 27

P.S. I forgot to mention something very important in the last issue: At the 2025 WSSRA Convention in June, PCSRA was honored as a “Unit of Highest Distinction!” What a proud moment for all of us!

Membership Directory

For those members who wish to receive the newly published **Lavender 2025-2026** Pierce County School Retirees Directory, call **Marianne at 253-536-6717** and she will mail one to you, or pick yours up at the luncheon. Security concerns caused us to change the way the directory is distributed.

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed this program, the smiles were overflowing and the heartfelt tears of remembrance were in many eyes. Patty Carter is such an engaging speaker and truly walks the talk, as a sponsor for many veterans herself.

Having two Honor Flight recipients (pictured with Patty are Ed Moersch and Lionel Haywood) attending from our membership was a special treat, adding that special spark that truly brings it home for us.



PUGET SOUND HONOR FLIGHTS



We so appreciate the wonderful programs that Karen Chapman arranges for our meetings. Also the catered buffet luncheons are a highlight that keeps us coming back to this venue year after year.



PCSRA Luncheon Challenge

Good job... You accepted the challenge. Now let's see if we can bring more folks for November and break a record!!

Bits & Pieces, November 2025

BY WSSRA LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR Emmett Mills <emmett@wssra.org>

October 2025 Legislative Update

A late-September update from the Economic and Revenue Forecast Council brought bleak news for the 2026 Washington State Legislative Session. State revenue is on track to fall \$500 million below expectations over the next two years. This means that the legislature will have to find ways to cut spending and/or raise more revenue. Unfortunately, the legislature already had to address a \$12 to \$16 billion shortfall earlier this year. While next year's \$500 million shortfall won't be nearly as large, few "easy" options remain on the table.

In preparation for next session, WSSRA will continue to urge the Select Committee on Pension Policy to endorse Substitute Senate Bill 5085, which would restore an ongoing COLA for TRS 1 and PERS 1 retirees. Fortunately, SSB 5085 would provide long-term savings of over a billion dollars for the state and local governments. But due to the budget situation, we might also need to play defense. The \$183 per month benefit that the state provides to retirees who get their health insurance through the Public Employees Benefits Board is not contractually guaranteed. If the legislature wanted to slash funding for retiree health care, it would be up to us to stop them.

It is more important than ever that our legislators hear from us. Getting in

touch is easy. All you need to do is dial (800) 562-6000 between 8 AM to 12 PM or 1 PM to 4:30 PM on a weekday. You'll be connected to an operator who will ask for your name and address and then type up your message and send it directly to your legislators. In your own words, tell them that the legislature needs to pass Substitute Senate Bill 5085 to restore an ongoing for TRS 1 and PERS 1 retirees and protect retired teacher and school employee health insurance.

Thank you for helping us make a difference.

PCSRA Attends Hearing

The Select Committee on Pension Policy met in House Hearing Room A, Olympia, and virtually on October 21, 2025. A group of retirees from our unit — Barb and Jim Church, Annie Ragan, Vickie Rettke, and Sandy Grape— attended in person.

The 2025–27 Operating Budget directs the SCPP to study two proposals:

- Terminating LEOFF 1 (SHB 2034)
- Merging legacy pension systems (SSB 5085)

The Committee has received briefings since June. A full report is expected in October, with review and comment in November. While no recommendation is required, one may be offered. The final report is due to the Legislature in January. PCSRA will continue to update the members as we hear. Sandy Grape, President

LEGISLATIVE MEET & GREET

A bipartisan panel of four legislators, from four different legislative districts, met with PCSRA members on October 9th.



While enjoying catered hors d'oeuvres, we listened to the panel address issues of an on-going Plan 1 COLA and support for retirement medical benefits.



Both the panel and members responded enthusiastically to the panel format and the opportunity to ask questions. A special thank you to Representative Cyndy Jacobsen, Representative Addison Richards, Senator Yasmin Trudeau and Representative Dan Bronoske for their presence and commitment. Thank you to Emmett Mills, moderator and WSSRA Legislative Director.



Rep Addison Richards, 26th.



Senator Yasmin Trudeau, 27th.



Rep Dan Bronoske, 28th.



Rep Cyndy Jacobsen, 25th

The New Pierce County School Retirees' Bylaws

At the September General Membership meeting and luncheon, it was announced that the 2025-2026 Board adopted new bylaws for the organization. The new bylaws document was recommended by a bylaws committee, formed in June 2024. To help members sort through the most important changes, there will be three articles, starting with the first in this edition, presented separately in the *Happenings*. The articles will cover the board, the delegate selection process for the state convention, and the management of scholarship funds and how awardees are selected.

The Board

Why the change: The last review of the bylaws was in 2017 at which time there was a constitution and bylaws. Having a single governing document seemed to offer a clearer understanding of positions and duties and reduce the potential for conflicts between documents. Being affiliated with WSSRA no longer required the need to have a constitution.

What changed: In the previous documents there was an executive committee, operating board, special committees, and standing committees. In the new bylaws, the executive committee, operating board, and chairs of the standing committees are now the board.

How is the board selected: The board is determined by the elected and appointed positions, and specific committee chair positions. The elected positions are the president, co-president, recording secretary, and the

president-elect. The appointed positions are the treasurer and corresponding secretary. The standing committee chairs who are automatically assigned to the board are membership, scholarship, mini-grants, legislative, programs, and historian.

How many members are on the

board: The board may have up to fifteen (15) members. In addition to the twelve (12) identified above, three additional members may be nominated by the membership to be on the board. A vacancy in any of the above positions may be filled by nominations from the membership, to include self-nominations, and approval by a majority vote of the sitting board members. The exception would be for the president, co-president, recording secretary, and the president-elect, which would need to go before the general membership for a vote.

How long do board members serve:

Board members serve for a period of one year.

Other Commitments Outside of the Board

While the board is the governing body of the organization, there are other positions that significantly contribute to the operation of the organization. There are the select committees, an advisory, and the editor. The select committees perform short term tasks and are the Financial Review, Nominations and Awards, and Budget committees. Advisory consist of our immediate past president, heath advisor, and parliamentarian.

In the next issue, Delegates to the State Convention.

Pierce County School Retirees' Association



Scholarships for 2025

We need your help to spread the word to our future educators! It's not too late to apply for the following scholarships. The application deadline is April 19th. 'Education' includes teaching, counseling, therapists, and specialists.

Information for the following scholarships are found on washboard.org. Insert 'Pierce County' in the search site.

- **Nina Ball Future Educator's Scholarships**
 - Pierce County resident
 - College Sophomore status
 - Education major
 - Amount: \$1500.00

- **Chuck Abernathy Memorial Scholarship For High School Seniors**
 - Pierce County resident
 - High School Senior
 - Seeking a degree in Education
 - Amount: \$1000.00

- **Chuck Abernathy Memorial Scholarship For Student Teachers**
 - Pierce County resident
 - Validation to begin student teaching Fall, 2025.
 - Amount: \$1000.00

Please share with family and friends!!!!

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SOCKS SOCKS SOCKS!

It is time for our Holiday Sock Drive.

Please remember to bring new socks to the General Luncheon Meeting on November 20th and/or December 11th. (*Please, no used socks.*) We need men's, women's, boys' and girls' socks. They will be donated to Saint Leo's Nativity House. Feel free to call or text me, if you have any questions. Susi Esson 253.988.5135