

**OEA Retirement Systems Update**  
**Report to the OEA Board of Directors: February 2020**

**Please distribute to other OEA members**

**OEA Endorses Andrew Smith for STRS Board**

The OEA Board of Directors has endorsed Andrew Smith for the upcoming election for an active member seat on the STRS Board. Andrew is a school social worker in the Sheffield-Sheffield Lake City Schools. He is a dedicated association and community leader with 20 years of service in STRS.

In December, a screening committee made up of OEA members in STRS conducted interviews with three candidates for a possible endorsement. Andrew Smith was recommended based on his leadership, knowledge of the issues and passion for being an advocate for the retirement security of his fellow educators both active and retired.

Currently, possible candidates for the STRS Board are collecting signatures to qualify for the ballot. If there is a contested election, ballots will be mailed to active STRS members in early April. OEA will provide members with additional information about how to support OEA's endorsed candidate Andrew Smith in this election.

**OEA Endorses Beverly Woolridge for SERS Board**

SERS is currently holding an election for a retiree seat on the SERS Board of Trustees. The OEA Board of Directors has endorsed Beverly Woolridge for election to the SERS Board. Beverly has 39 years of service with the Akron Public Schools and is a former member and leader of the Akron Association of Classified Professionals. She has previously served on the SERS Board from 2009-2013 as an active member and from 2015-2019 as a retiree member. An OEA screening committee of SERS members interviewed Beverly Woolridge and current Board Chair Catherine Moss and recommended Woolridge for endorsement.

SERS retiree members have been sent ballots to vote in the election. Votes must be received by March 2, 2020. OEA encourages support for Beverly Woolridge!

**OPERS Announces Planned Health Care Changes**

In January, the OPERS Board of Trustees voted to make several changes to the OPERS health care program. These changes will be effective beginning on January 1, 2022. Unlike pension benefits, health care benefits are guaranteed but subject to revision by the OPERS Board without a change in state law. The stated purpose of the changes is to extend the life of the health care fund which currently receives contributions because incoming revenue is needed to fund the OPERS pension benefits. OPERS had stated that the expected life of the health care trust fund prior to the change was only 11 years.

The biggest change for those under 65 years old is the discontinuation of a health care plan sponsored by OPERS. Instead, OPERS will partner with a service provider to help retirees find a plan. OPERS will provide a monthly allowance to help pay for coverage. The allowance percentage is determined by a member's service credit and initial age when coverage began. The base amount will be \$1,200 per month and will remain at that level for three years but could be adjusted afterward by the Board.

For Medicare coverage, OPERS will continue to offer the Medicare Connector to those age 65 and over who qualify for Medicare parts A and B. The biggest change is that the base allowance will be reduced from \$450 a month to \$350. All current retirees who have access to coverage will maintain it, however, all retirees and disability recipients will be subject to the allowance table.

More information about the 2022 changes is available on the OPERS website at [www.opers.org](http://www.opers.org)