RETIREE eFOCUS

SCHOOL EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF OHIO

October 2025

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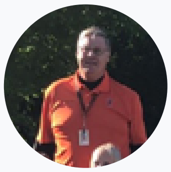

Retiree Profile
Thank You Mr. Jim

Payment Schedule

PAYMENT SCHEDULE	
October	October 1, 2025
November	October 31, 2025
December	December 1, 2025
January	January 2, 2026
February	January 30, 2026

Your payment is deposited into your bank account on the first business day of each month. If the first day of the month falls on a weekend or holiday, your payment will be deposited on the previous business day. Due to tax laws, your January payment will be deposited on January 2, 2026, the first business day of the new year.

Payment Stubs

You receive your payment stub twice a year. It details your gross monthly allowance and deductions, and these amounts for year-to-date.

You will receive your next payment stub in January 2026 with your issue of the *Retiree Focus*. You also receive a payment stub whenever there is a change in your benefit, including a change in your COLA, tax withholdings, or health care premiums. ■

Q: Will I receive a Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA)?

A: At its September Board Meeting, the SERS Board unanimously voted to approve a 2.5% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) increase for eligible benefit recipients in 2026.

By statute, SERS' COLA is based on the year-to-year change in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners (CPI-W), with a floor of 0% and a cap of 2.5%.

According to SERS' actuary Cavanaugh Macdonald, the 2.5% COLA amount will not materially impair SERS' funded status.

The 2026 COLA takes effect on the benefit anniversary of the recipient's effective date of retirement.

Benefit recipients whose benefit effective date is on or after April 1, 2018, must wait until the fourth anniversary of their allowance or benefit before receiving a COLA. ■

HEALTH CARE NEWS

Open Enrollment for Dental and Vision

Retirees can newly enroll in or cancel SERS' Delta Dental and VSP Vision coverage through November 15.

Mailings were sent in September to eligible retirees.

Current coverage renews automatically for retirees and dependents enrolled in the Delta Dental or VSP Vision plans. This means that if you are a retiree who wants your current coverage to continue in January, you do not need to do anything.

Dental and vision rates are increasing for 2026-2027 but will not change during the two-year enrollment period. ■

Health Care Coverage Changes for 2026

There are health care premium changes for 2026, but plan benefits remain the same. Premium changes include:

- Aetna Medicare Plan (PPO) premiums for all enrollees are being reduced by $20 per month.
- Aetna Choice POS II and AultCare PPO premiums for non-Medicare enrollees are increasing.

In September, current health care enrollees were mailed their 2026 Open Enrollment information, which included the new monthly premiums that will take effect on January 1, 2026.

For more information, visit www.ohsers.org/retirees/health-care-in-retirement/open-enrollment/.

If You Leave SERS' Medicare Coverage, You Cannot Return

SERS' Aetna Medicare Plan (PPO) with Part D drug coverage is a group retiree plan available only through SERS.

When you enroll in an individual Medicare Advantage or prescription plan, your SERS Aetna and Express Scripts coverage will be cancelled.

TV advertisements, sales calls, or mailings about other Medicare plans, whether from Aetna or a different insurance company, are about individual Medicare or Part D drug plans.

If you sign up for another plan in error, you need to contact SERS immediately. You must take steps to cancel the other plan if you want to continue with SERS' Medicare coverage.

Once you leave SERS' Aetna Medicare plan, you cannot reenroll.

You also will lose the SERS Medicare Part B Reimbursement of $45.50. ■

SPOT

"Serving the People Who Serve Our Schools®"

is more than just a tagline, it is the driving force behind our daily work. We are proud of the work we do on your behalf, and we are dedicated to you – our retirees – and to keeping SERS financially strong. Protecting and growing the retirement contributions of our members and their employers is our priority. ■

THE VALUE OF SERS BENEFITS

You are Lucky: Your SERS Pension is a Defined Benefit

You receive your SERS pension every month. Your SERS pension is a defined-benefit (DB) plan.

That's great news for you.

It's a paycheck for the rest of your life. This retirement income is guaranteed as long as you live.

Consider yourself lucky.

Fewer employers today are offering DB plans. Not offering a DB plan is cheaper for the employer because it costs less for employers to outsource account management to investment companies. They also can reduce company support to employee retirement funds and transfer the risk of funding benefits entirely onto the employee.

For these reasons, many employers have switched to offering their employees other retirement plans, including defined-contribution (DC) plans, such as a 401(k).

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2023, only about 29% of U.S. adults reported having access to a DB plan through their employer, and in the private sector, the number of those participating in DB plans dropped from 26 million to 12 million.

With a DB plan, the employee is paid for life. If the employee lives longer than expected, the plan still has to pay.

If you live to be 115 years old, you will still receive your SERS pension.

With a DC plan, the employer has no ongoing obligation to an employee. If the employee lives longer than expected, the 401(K) can run dry.

YOUR SERS PENSION WILL NEVER RUN OUT.

Once a 401(k) is gone, it's gone.

Not so with a DB plan. Your SERS pension will never run out.

With a DB plan, the employer pays a set retirement income, regardless of how the underlying investments perform. DB plans place the responsibility for investing employee contributions in the hands of professionals.

With a DC plan, however, investments can be negatively impacted by the stock market, and the onus of investing is placed on the employee.

Additionally, DB plans, like your SERS pension, may be eligible for Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLA). They often rise with inflation.

With a DC plan, there are no COLA increases. ■

Compare Your Retirement: A Tale of Two Plans

Defined Benefit Plan vs. Defined Contribution Plans

How does your SERS pension measure up to a 401(k) retirement plan?

	YOUR SERS PENSION Defined Benefit Plan	**401(k)** Defined Contribution Plan
Participation	**MANDATORY** *For all SERS members*	**OPTIONAL** *As a supplemental source for retirement*
Contribution Amounts	**SET BY SERS** *10% of your pay*	**EMPLOYEE CAN DECIDE** *Employee decides how much to contribute*
Employer Contributions	**MANDATORY** *Your employer contributes 14%*	**OPTIONAL** *Some employers match employee's amount with a cap*
Investment Management	**SERS INVESTMENT TEAM** *Skilled professionals invest contributions*	**EMPLOYEE MANAGED** *Employee decides how to manage funds*
Stock Market Fluctuations	**NOT AFFECTED** *Don't have to worry about market fluctuations as you receive same pension amount every month*	**AFFECTED** *Investment losses could decimate your retirement funds*
Retirement Amount	**SERS PENSION FORMULA** *Calculated based on your age, years of service credit, and average of highest three years of salary at retirement*	**BASED ON ACCOUNT BALANCE** *Varies based on performance of selected investments*
Length of Retirement Benefit	**LIFETIME BENEFIT** *Your pension is for the rest of your life*	**VARIES** *Employee withdrawal rate determines how long funds will last*
Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs)	**YES** *When eligible, Board may provide COLA on top of initial pension amount and accumulate*	**NO** *Have to withdraw more money from your account to get an increase on your benefit*
Loans, Withdrawals, and Hardships	**NOT ALLOWED** *You cannot borrow against your account*	**ALLOWED** *Typically allowed, subject to IRS penalty*

Register for Account Login: Update Your Address

Account Login is an online resource to manage your SERS account. It is a secure and convenient way to access your account anytime and stay connected with SERS. We encourage you to set up an account on our website at www.ohsers.org to monitor your pension payments and get access to other retirement information.

Account Login

ACCOUNT LOGIN

With Account Login, you can:

- Review your account
- Update your personal information, including address changes and beneficiaries

For step-by-step instructions on how to register for Account Login, visit our website at www.ohsers.org, and click "Retirees," "Forms and Publications," and "Informational Handouts." ■

RETIREE PROFILE

Life is Sweet for Retiree: Thank You Mr. Jim

In a Cincinnati suburb, known as the "Sweetheart of Ohio," James Hosea drove a school bus.

It was there, in the City of Loveland, where Hosea reinvented himself after retiring from a 30-year career in the concrete industry. He came back to the workforce as a bus driver and served the Loveland City School District.

With about 4,163 students in grades PK-12 in the district, "Without a doubt, best thing I enjoyed were my kids," he said.

After 10 years of driving, picking up, driving, dropping off, driving, parking, driving, and more driving, he retired.

It was the Spring of 2023, but something happened. He missed his kids a lot. He missed driving his bus a lot. In fact, he missed them so much that he went back to work as an "on-call sub" bus driver.

Now he works for three school districts. He basically gets "paid to transport athletes and watch their sports events," he said, "Life is good!"

In between his on-call sub runs, Hosea tries to live a healthy life. He visits the gym 2-4 times a week and plays pickleball 3-4 times a week. He also has attempted to reestablish his golf game, and he spends much time visiting his grandchildren in Illinois. ■

Thinking about Reemployment? Think Annuity

Miss your days in the SERS workforce? Thinking about coming back and becoming a reemployed retiree?

After retiring, many people reenter the workforce to make extra money or keep busy.

As a SERS retiree, the original pension you receive is not affected by reemployment unless you do not wait two months before returning to a job in the public sector. Even then, you only forfeit your pension for two months. Otherwise, you continue to receive your full pension benefits.

Once you enter the SERS workforce again, you must contribute to SERS the same as you did as a member. However, because your pension amount is set, you will instead accumulate a new benefit that will be paid back to you as a single life annuity.

You can choose to receive the annuity amount as a lump-sum payment or in fixed monthly payments for the rest of your life. ■