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## Contribution Rates to Remain at Current Levels for Fourth Consecutive School Year

The 2014-2015 school year contribution rate for PEERS members and employers will remain at a combined total of 13.72%, with PEERS members paying 6.86% and employers paying 6.86%. These rates have been in effect since July 1, 2011.

### 2014-2015 PEERS Contribution Rates

Employee Rate	Employer Rate	Combined Rate
6.86%	6.86%	13.72%

At the October 28, 2013 Public School and Education Employee Retirement Systems of Missouri (PSRS/PEERS) Board of Trustees' meeting, the Board voted to maintain the current contribution rates for the 2014-2015 school year. This action was based on the recommendation of the Systems' actuary, PricewaterhouseCoopers. The ability to hold the contribution rates at the same level is primarily due to the Board's adoption of the Funding Stabilization Policy in 2011.

"The Funding Stabilization Policy was adopted, in part, to maintain contribution rate stability for our members and our employers," said Dr. Aaron Zalis, chairman of the PSRS/PEERS Board of Trustees. "The actuary's recommendation to keep rates stable demonstrates the effectiveness of the policy."

According to PricewaterhouseCoopers, PEERS remains over 80% pre-funded and is considered to be financially stable.

As part of the Funding Stabilization Policy, the Board also recently approved a 2% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for all eligible benefit recipients effective January 2014.

Eligible service and disability retirees may receive cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) on monthly benefits beginning the fourth January following their retirement date. Qualified beneficiaries may also receive COLAs.

PEERS and companion system, the Public School Retirement System of Missouri (PSRS), proudly partner with Missouri's public school districts and our members to provide retirement security to almost 242,000 active and retired public education employees and their families.

## Attend a Pre-Retirement Planning Seminar

Do you have questions about retirement? PEERS Pre-Retirement Planning Seminars are an excellent resource. Registration is required and easy to complete.

Register early – seating is limited and we cannot accept late registrations. To register, you need an idea of your retirement date, and your beneficiary’s name and birth date. If you’re unsure of your retirement date or eligibility, call us and we can assist you. We look forward to seeing you at a seminar!

Date	City	Time	Location	Address	Deadline to Register
January 8	Park Hills	7:00 p.m.	Mineral Area Community College	5270 Flat River Rd.	December 19, 2013
January 11	Chesterfield	10:00 a.m.	Parkway Central High School	369 North Woods Mill Rd.	December 23, 2013
January 14	Springfield	7:00 p.m.	Ozarks Technical Community College	815 N Sherman Ave.	December 26, 2013
January 15	Joplin	5:30 p.m.	Holiday Inn - Joplin	3615 S Range Line Rd.	December 26, 2013
January 22	Rolla	7:00 p.m.	Rolla School District Board Office	500 A Forum Dr.	January 6, 2014
January 23	Chillicothe	5:30 p.m.	Chillicothe High School	2801 Hornet Rd.	January 6, 2014
January 28	Sedalia	5:30 p.m.	State Fair Community College	3201 W 16th St.	January 14, 2014
February 4	Independence	5:30 p.m.	Bingham Middle School	1716 S Speck Rd.	January 15, 2014
February 6	Hannibal	5:30 p.m.	Hannibal Quality Inn	120 Lindsey Dr. Hwy 36	January 22, 2014
February 11	Maryville	7:00 p.m.	Maryville High School	1503 S Munn Ave.	January 28, 2014
February 12	Nevada	7:00 p.m.	Nevada High School	800 W Hickory	January 28, 2014
February 20	Blue Springs	5:30 p.m.	Blue Springs High School	2000 NW Ashton Dr.	January 30, 2014
February 20	O’Fallon	5:30 p.m.	Ft. Zumwalt North High School	1230 Tom Ginnever Blvd.	February 3, 2014
February 25	Sikeston	7:00 p.m.	Clinton Building (Parks and Rec Dept.)	501 Campanella	February 6, 2014
February 26	Cape Girardeau	5:30 p.m.	Cape Girardeau Career & Tech Center	1080 S Silver Springs Rd.	February 6, 2014
March 4	Maryland Heights	5:30 p.m.	Pattonville Senior High School	2497 Creve Coeur Mill Rd.	February 13, 2014
March 8	Columbia	10:00 a.m.	Stoney Creek Inn - Columbia	2601 S Providence	February 19, 2014
March 11	Jefferson City	7:00 p.m.	PSRS/PEERS Office	3210 W Truman Blvd.	February 25, 2014
March 12	Kansas City	7:00 p.m.	Winnetonka High School	5815 NE 48th St.	February 25, 2014
March 19	Joplin	5:30 p.m.	Holiday Inn - Joplin	3615 S Range Line Rd.	February 27, 2014
March 20	Springfield	7:00 p.m.	Ozarks Technical Community College	815 N Sherman Ave.	February 27, 2014
March 25	St. Joseph	7:00 p.m.	Stoney Creek Inn - St. Joseph	1201 N Woodbine Rd.	March 11, 2014
March 27	Ballwin	5:30 p.m.	Parkway West High School	14653 Clayton Rd.	March 11, 2014
April 2	Clinton	7:00 p.m.	Clinton High School	1106 S 2nd St.	March 19, 2014
April 8	Independence	5:30 p.m.	Fort Osage High School	2101 Twyman Rd.	March 25, 2014
April 9	Fenton	5:30 p.m.	Rockwood Summit Senior High School	1780 Hawkins Rd,	March 26, 2014

## Ask Us When You Need Information about your PEERS Retirement

When you need PEERS specific information or assistance, it is best to come directly to us. Our retirement counselors are experts on PEERS retirement and are here to help. Whether you have questions about your retirement benefits or need help completing the necessary applications and forms, our highly trained staff is here to assist you free of charge.

“Helping with retirement paperwork is an important part of our service to members,” said Amanda Bryant, PEERS Benefits Supervisor. “We will make sure you have all the information you need, when you need it. There is never a cost for this service.”

Many PEERS members choose to enlist the help of a financial planner when preparing for retirement. A qualified, trusted financial planner can provide valuable advice through an evaluation of your overall financial situation.

Even when working with a financial planner, it is important to remain engaged in your retirement planning. Make it your goal to understand all your options, so you can work with your financial planner to make decisions that are right for you.

## Member Statements Mailed in October; Available Online

Your 2012-2013 PEERS *Member Statement* was mailed in October. Your statement includes membership information as of June 30, 2013. Reviewing your statement provides a quick and comprehensive overview of your retirement account.

Your *Member Statement* is a valuable source of information about your membership, including your:

- Total contributions and interest earned, and payments made to purchase or reinstate service
- Annual salary, including employer-paid health, dental and vision insurance premiums
- Total membership service you have earned, purchased and reinstated
- PEERS beneficiary designation

Your statement also includes:

- Details of your PEERS covered employment, including the name(s) of your employer(s), and service and salary earned each year
- Information on your service purchases and reinstatements, showing not only service for which you have paid, but also any service you have on record for which you have not yet paid

Based on your membership status with PEERS, your statement contains information on vesting, qualifications for service and disability retirement, and benefits payable to your beneficiaries if you die before retirement.

Please note that interest shown on this statement should not be reported for tax purposes, unless your contributions and interest are refunded to you, and you receive an IRS Form 1099-R from our office.

You can also login to your secure online account at [www.psr-peers.org](http://www.psr-peers.org) to find an electronic copy of your *Member Statement*, as well as membership information that is updated daily.



## PEERS Investment Return for Beginning of 2013-2014 Exceeds 7.0%

The Public Education Employee Retirement System of Missouri (PEERS) earned an investment return of approximately 7.3% for the first four months of fiscal year 2014 (July 1 through October 31, 2013). The System has directly benefited from the Federal Reserve's commitment to a quantitative easing program, along with recent improvements in the growth of the economy, as stock prices have reached new all-time highs.

Despite the strong investment return for PEERS during the beginning of fiscal year 2014, there continues to be a great deal of uncertainty regarding the global economy and expected investment returns going forward. As stewards of your retirement assets, we will continue to focus on the long-term investment horizon, but also adjust the PEERS portfolio as market dynamics change.

The market value of invested assets for PEERS and companion plan, the Public School Retirement System of Missouri (PSRS), was approximately \$35.4 billion on October 31, 2013.

## 2013 Employer Conference a Valuable Resource for PSRS/PEERS Employers

PSRS/PEERS Employer Services hosted the 6th Annual Employer Conference Monday, October 14, at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Jefferson City.

This year, over 200 school district personnel from all parts of the state attended the conference. First held in 2008, the conference is designed to help educate employers about reporting payroll to PSRS/PEERS and to provide general information on the Retirement Systems.

Staff from both Employer Services and Member Services presented information on various topics of interest including the OASIS pension administration system, retirement reporting, working after retirement, benefit options, disability, survivor benefits and refunds, and purchasing service. This year, Vandee DeVore, state social security administrator, also spoke to the group about certain positions that are required to be covered by Social Security.

"We try to provide a wide range of information to help our employers better understand not just how to report to us, but also why it is so important," said Jeff Russler, employer services director. Another key component of the conference is to review the basics about the Systems and the benefits of PSRS/PEERS membership. "After all, those who report to us are members themselves," Russler added. "In many cases, they are viewed by their co-workers as a resource person for their questions about the Retirement Systems. We want to give them as much information as we can."



## How to Calculate Final Average Salary

PEERS provides lifetime monthly retirement benefits based on a pre-determined formula. That formula consists of a benefit factor set by law, your final average monthly salary, and your years of service.

### PEERS Normal Benefit Formula Example

<b>Benefit Factor</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Final Average Monthly Salary</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Years of Service</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>Lifetime Single Life Benefit</b>
1.61%	X	\$2,500	X	20	=	\$805

### Figuring Your Final Average Monthly Salary

Your final average monthly salary is determined by taking your three highest consecutive annual salaries, **including** health, dental and vision insurance premiums paid for you by your employer, and dividing the total by 36. You can get these salaries from your annual *Member Statement* or by accessing your personal account information on our website.

### Final Average Salary Calculation Example

The three highest consecutive annual salaries are typically the last three years of service, but can occur at any time during your PEERS-covered employment.

School Year	Service	Salary
2011-2012	1.00000	\$30,000
2012-2013	1.00000	\$30,000
2013-2014	1.00000	\$30,000
	<b>3.00000</b>	<b>\$90,000</b>
<hr/>		
<b>Final Average Monthly Salary</b>		
<b>\$90,000 ÷ 36 = \$2,500</b>		

### Final Average Salary Cap

PEERS uses a 20% cap or limit on increases in salary during your Final Average Salary period. The cap helps prevent salary spiking at the end of one's career for the purpose of increasing a retirement benefit.

Increases in salary as a result of overtime pay and employer-paid health, dental and vision insurance premiums can cause your Final Average Salary to be capped.

This cap does not apply to increases in salary that are due to a genuine change in position or employer, increases required by state statute or district-wide salary schedule adjustments for previously unrecognized education-related service.

If you have questions about what constitutes a change in position or employer, please have your employer's business office contact the district's PEERS Employer Service Representative (ESR).

For more information on Final Average Salary, visit the *Member Handbook* online at [www.psr-peers.org](http://www.psr-peers.org), or contact our office.

## Is Your Beneficiary Designation Up-to-Date?

PEERS provides valuable financial protection for your family. If you die before service retirement, your beneficiary can receive a lump-sum refund of your account balance, or may be eligible for monthly benefits.

Life-changing events, such as marriage, birth of child, or divorce, void your beneficiary designation. If this happens, don't forget to file a new designation with PEERS. Keeping your beneficiary designations up-to-date helps ensure that any benefits payable to your loved ones are distributed according to your wishes.

You can view your current beneficiary designation at [www.psr-peers.org](http://www.psr-peers.org) by logging in to your secure online account. Update your beneficiary designation at any time using the *Pre-Retirement Beneficiary Designation* form available on our website, or by requesting one from our office.



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## PEERS Provides Disability Benefits

If you develop an illness or sustain an injury that prevents you from earning a livelihood, you may be eligible for PEERS disability benefits. The cause of your disability does not have to be work-related.

Disability eligibility requirements:

- Have at least five years of PEERS-covered service
- Are under age 60
- Become permanently disabled while working in covered employment, or within one year after, if the condition causing the disability begins while you are employed
- Incapable of earning a livelihood in any occupation (currently defined as earning \$18,000 or more a year)
- Have ended all employment with PEERS-covered employers

Disability benefits are payable for life unless you recover and can earn a livelihood, return to PEERS-covered employment before age 60, or exceed the limits on working after retirement that apply once you reach age 60.

If you believe you may be eligible for disability benefits, or you are planning to take an account refund because you cannot work due to a disability, call us at **(800) 392-6848** and speak to a counselor about disability benefits.

## Web Counseling: Meet Personally with a Retirement Counselor from the Comfort of Home

If you want to meet personally with a PEERS counselor and you are comfortable using computers and the internet, web counseling may be a good option for you.

Web counseling is open to all PEERS members who want to meet face-to-face with a retirement counselor in a private, individual session, without the drive to Jefferson City. You can see and speak with a counselor and share documents during the session.

If you wish to discuss retirement, your web counseling session will include the review and discussion of your retirement eligibility and options. A personalized retirement information packet will be mailed to you prior to the session. You and your counselor can then view and discuss your benefit estimates and other retirement information specific to your membership.

Web counseling is also a great way to get more information about purchasing or reinstating service with PEERS. You can find out if you are eligible to purchase or reinstate service and why it may benefit you, discuss the requirements to make a purchase and review an estimate of your cost with your counselor, all on your computer.

We recommend using a computer with a high-speed internet connection, a web camera and microphone for best results.

Register for a web counseling session today at [www.psr-peers.org](http://www.psr-peers.org) by logging in to your personal account, or call us at (800) 392-6848.

**PSRS/PEERS RETIREMENT | BY THE NUMBERS**

- 86%** of PSRS/PEERS benefits are paid to Missouri residents
- Average PSRS retirement age **59**
- Average PEERS retirement age **63**
- More than **\$2 billion** in PSRS/PEERS retirement benefits are paid every year
- 537** school districts participate in PSRS/PEERS
- Most retirees get back all of their contributions within years of retirement – and continue to get benefits for life
- 5** PSRS/PEERS is the **44<sup>th</sup>** largest defined benefit pension plan in the U.S.
- 209,887** Missourians are PSRS/PEERS members
- That's almost **4%** of the state's population
- Market value of PSRS/PEERS' invested assets as of June 30, 2013 was **\$33,474,640,765**



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Sign up today and join over 5,000 other members who receive their PEERS newsletters via email. It's an easy way to help us save natural resources and money while staying informed about your retirement system. Simply visit [www.psr-peers.org](http://www.psr-peers.org) and log in to your personal account information to subscribe.

