Active Members | NOVEMBER 2016

PSRS for your Benefit

PUBLIC SCHOOL RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF MISSOURI

Contribution Rates Remain Constant for 2017-2018 School Year

Your Annual PSRS Member Statement Has Mailed

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PSRS

PUBLIC SCHOOL RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF MISSOURI

PSRS For Your Benefit is published by the Public School and Education Employee Retirement Systems of Missouri.

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Contribution Rates Remain Constant for 2017-2018 School Year

At the October 24, 2016 Public School and Education Employee Retirement Systems of Missouri (PSRS/PEERS) Board of Trustees' meeting, the Board voted to maintain the current PSRS contribution rate for the 2017-2018 school year. This action was based on the recommendation of the System's actuary, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC).

2017-2018 PSRS Contribution Rates

Employee Rate	Employer Rate	Combined Rate
14.5%	14.5%	29%

Trustees have the important fiduciary responsibility to set contribution rates to adequately fund the System. Rates are recommended annually by the System's actuary, and by law cannot increase more than 1% per year. PSRS active members and employers each currently contribute 14.5% of salary.

PSRS is primarily funded by investment earnings, but also through the contributions made by you and your employers.

20-Year Average

Note: The member amount shown above is slightly higher than the employer amount because it includes funds paid by members to purchase and reinstate service, as well as their contributions.

While PSRS was able to keep contribution rates steady for the 2017-2018 school year, the need for future rate increases will heavily depend on investment performance. Investment earnings provide 61 cents of every dollar paid, so they are important in the funding design of the plans. Low investment returns or interest rates could result in contribution rate increases and have a negative impact on the pre-funded status in future years.

About Your PSRS Contributions

PSRS contributions are automatically deducted from your pay and are credited to your individual membership. You do not pay taxes on your contributions until you receive them back from PSRS as monthly benefits or a lump-sum payment.

Your contributions are always returned to you in the form of monthly benefits, or a lump-sum payment to you or your beneficiaries.

For specific information regarding the contributions you have made to PSRS during your membership, log in to view your membership information at PSRS Web Member Services, or refer to your annual ***Member Statement***, which mailed in November.

Actuarial Funding Policy Amended, PSRS/PEERS Funding Status Remains Healthy

The Public School and Education Employee Retirement Systems of Missouri (PSRS/PEERS) Board of Trustees voted unanimously to amend the current PSRS/PEERS Actuarial Funding Policies in various areas during their June 14, 2016 meeting. The changes to the policies are, in part, a result of the recent Actuarial Experience Studies and Asset Liability Studies conducted by the Systems. These studies are conducted regularly and changes are applied as necessary to keep the Systems financially healthy.

The various assumptions within the Funding Policies that are being amended include inflation rates, payroll growth, mortality rates, investment returns, individual salaries, cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs), retirement rates and refund rates.

The objective of the Systems' Funding Policies is to achieve a funded ratio of 100% over a fixed period, not to exceed 30 years. The principles of the policies are to:

- Maintain adequate assets in order to fund all benefits expected to be paid to members and their beneficiaries
- Maintain stability of contribution rates
- Maintain accountability and transparency
- Promote intergenerational equality
- Provide a reasonable margin for adverse experience to help offset risks
- Review the investment earning assumption in conjunction with the Asset Liability Studies and in consideration of the Board's investment risk profile and tolerance
- Review demographic and economic assumptions in conjunction with actual experience

This allows PSRS/PEERS to continue progress toward reducing the Systems' unfunded liabilities, while keeping member and employer contribution rates at or near current levels.

The Big Impact on Pension Liabilities: Improved Mortality Rates; Lower Investment Returns

There are two key areas of change facing not only PSRS/PEERS, but all retirement plans: improved life expectancies (mortality rates) and lower expected investment returns. Changes in these two areas have a significant impact on the financial condition of the Systems.

- People are living longer. Mortality is improving, not just in Missouri, but also across the nation. As a result, actuaries are utilizing updated mortality tables, which reflect this trend. PSRS/PEERS conducted Actuarial Experience Studies to compare our actuarial assumptions to the actual experience of the Systems. In other words, are members living as long as we assumed they would, or are they actually living longer?

> **"Educators, and people in general, are living longer and we have to account for that when looking at the liabilities of the Systems. The studies show we will be paying our members longer than was previously assumed. Consequently, the revised mortality assumptions better reflect PSRS/PEERS' actual experience, which results in an increase of over $2.1 billion in liabilities to the Systems."**
>
> Aaron Zalis, Board Chairman

- Interest rates and future investment returns are projected to be lower than historical returns. This is reflected in the current low interest rate environment. As a result of recently conducted Asset Liability Studies, the Systems' investment consultant and actuary recommended the PSRS/PEERS assumed rate of return for investments be lowered from 8% to 7.75%. "The 30-year return history for the Systems remains above 8%. But with the volatile market environment we have seen this year, and will likely see for the next several years, changing the assumed rate of return was a prudent decision," stated Chief Investment Officer, Craig Husting. While the change seems modest, the impact is an increase in the Systems' liabilities in excess of $1.2 billion.

Available Options

Due to the impact of these increases in liabilities on the financial stability of the Systems, the Board thoroughly explored the three areas in which they can positively impact the financial condition of the Systems: investment earnings, contribution rates and benefits.

Investment Earnings

The Board reviewed the current investment asset allocation looking for ways to increase PSRS/PEERS' expected investment return. Upon review, and with the recommendation of the investment consultant, the Systems made minor changes to the asset allocation to optimize the investment portfolio. These modest changes will not materially impact the long-term PSRS/PEERS expected return.

Expected investment returns and risk are highly correlated. Thus, if an investor takes on additional risk, there is an expectation for higher returns. However, the Board believes that the proposed asset allocation provides a prudent level of risk. It was determined that PSRS/PEERS should not make major changes to the asset allocation that would cause the Systems to take on significantly more risk in hopes of improving returns.

Contribution Rates

As fiduciaries, PSRS/PEERS Trustees have the important responsibility to annually set contribution rates to adequately fund PSRS. Rates are recommended annually by the System's actuary, and by law cannot increase more than 1% per year. PSRS active members currently pay 14.5% of their salaries, with employers also paying 14.5%. The overall contribution rate of 29% is in line with the national average of similar plans. However, PSRS is unique in that both members and employers pay equal contribution amounts. Because of this, the PSRS employee contribution rate is currently one of the highest in the country.

Benefits

PSRS/PEERS benefits are established under Missouri law. Consequently, the Board has very little flexibility within the law to alter the current benefit structure without action of the General Assembly. One area in which the Board has limited discretion is setting annual benefit increases in the form of COLAs.

The factors evaluated by the Board when setting the COLA include:

- Changes in the cost of living reflected by the Consumer Price Index for Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for the preceding fiscal year
- The recommendation of the PSRS/PEERS actuary based on the CPI-U and the PSRS Funding Policy

PSRS retirees are eligible for COLAs the second January following their retirement date. Since 2011, the PSRS Funding Policy stated that a 2% COLA would be granted in the years when the change in the CPI-U for the previous fiscal year was between 0% and 5%.

Because of the recent low CPI-U, this policy resulted in retirees receiving more than the actual CPI-U over the previous five years. The fiscal-year-to-date 2016 CPI-U remained considerably under the 2%, which would have continued this trend.

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The Impact of COLAs is Significant

It is important to note that COLA payments have a material effect on the overall cost of the retirement plan. The actuary has projected that the estimated cost of a one year 2% COLA is a $450 million increase in PSRS/PEERS' liabilities.

The Board therefore amended the COLA policy to state that in years when the CPI-U for the previous fiscal year is between 0% and 2%, no COLA will be given. As a result, the Board voted to set the COLA at 0% during the September 7, 2016 Board meeting. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the increase in the CPI-U from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016 was 1.0%.

Changing the way COLAs are granted results in the following:

- PSRS/PEERS experiences an overall savings of $2.7 billion in liabilities, which is expected to keep current contribution rates steady.
- The pre-funded status remains above 80%, which is considered a healthy status.
- Actuarial assumptions provide that retirees will still receive an average annual COLA of 1.5% over their retired lives.
- Retirees have peace of mind that the annual benefit increase will be 2% if actual inflation is 2% or greater.
- Retirees retain upside protection if inflation is high. If the CPI-U is greater than 5%, a 5% COLA would be granted.
- Active and retired members continue to share a commitment to the future financial health of the Systems. This is because COLAs are applied to both current and future benefits.

"As Trustees, our responsibility is to keep the Systems financially healthy. Amending the current Funding Policies is necessary in keeping with that responsibility. The Board feels the COLA change will help keep contribution rates steady, while at the same time, still provide protection against inflation when needed for our retirees. However, the overall financial health of the Systems and future contribution rates will be heavily influenced by investment markets moving forward."

Aaron Zalis, Board Chairman

The Goals Remain the Same

Implementation of all of these policy changes allows PSRS/PEERS to continue to fulfill the Funding Policy objective and principals, as well as the overall goals of the Systems that have been in place since 1946.

- To provide retirement security to Missouri's educators and education employees after a full career of service
- To help school districts attract and retain the best and brightest educators and employees for Missouri's school children
- To manage the Systems in a prudent and cost efficient manner

The challenges of increased life spans and low interest rates are being felt by pension plans all across the country. It is important to note that PSRS/PEERS remains in healthy financial condition. But making changes now only helps the Systems continue to provide strong, stable and secure retirement benefits for both current and future members.

PSRS Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Investment Return Falls Below Goal

PSRS Return: 1.84%

Negative returns in the global stock market provided a difficult environment for institutional investors in fiscal year 2016 (July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016). However, the strength in the U.S. bond and real estate markets allowed the Public School Retirement System of Missouri (PSRS) to achieve positive returns during the year. The System's assets increased through investment earnings by over $530 million from the previous year, with a total fund performance of 1.84% (or 1.64% net of all fees and expenses). This return is well below the 8%[1] investment return goal previously set by the Board of Trustees. Nevertheless, over long periods of time, PSRS continues to produce investment returns that exceed the System's objectives. The annualized investment return for PSRS over the last 30 years is 8.3%.

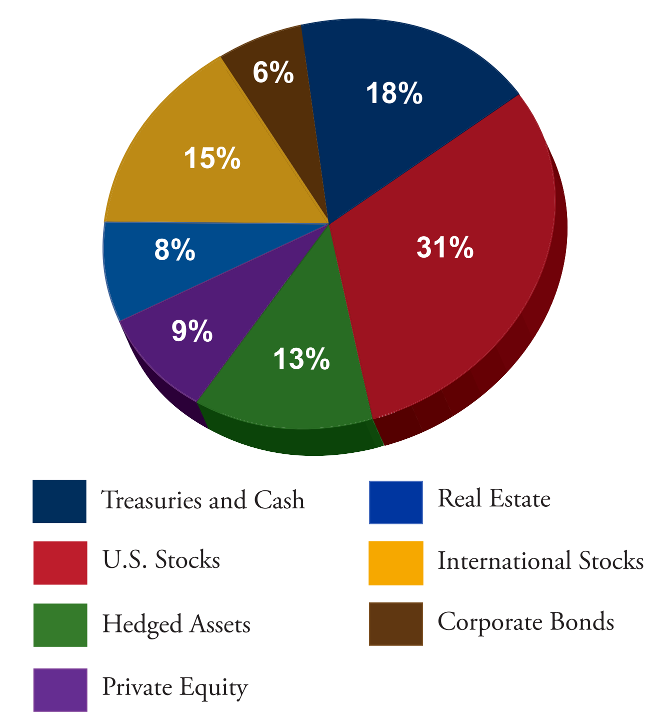
"Our long-term goal is to provide consistent and meaningful investment returns to support the retirement benefits of our members," says Steve Yoakum, PSRS executive director. "While we did not meet our return target in the most current year, the PSRS investment return of 1.84% did exceed the returns of 75% of the pension plans in the United States with assets in excess of $1 billion. Our internal investment staff is committed to managing the System's assets in a prudent manner, and has consistently over the last five years, produced investment returns that rank in the top 25% of similar plans in the United States while maintaining a risk level that is much lower than the national average."

The total plan return of 7.4% over the last five years fell just short of the historical long-term investment goal (actuarially assumed return) of earning 8%, but exceeded the total plan policy benchmark [2] return of 6.9%.

Five-Year Investment Results Period Ending 6/30/16	
PSRS Investment Return	7.4%
PSRS Return Goal	8.0%
Benchmark Return	6.9%

As we begin fiscal year 2017, we are mindful of the fact that it will become increasingly more difficult to achieve the new return target of 7.75% in the near term, due in part to historically low interest rates. However, as a large institutional investor, we believe that we are particularly well suited to navigate upcoming markets given our ability to invest over a 30-year time horizon. The following chart indicates the PSRS asset allocation, which is highly diversified among a number of different investment classes.

PSRS Asset Allocation
as of June 30, 2016



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The asset allocation is balanced with a significant distribution to return-seeking assets such as stocks and private equity, but also a healthy allocation to more defensive investments such as Treasury securities, cash and hedged assets. As the stock market continues to reach new highs, we believe it is prudent to maintain a structured portfolio that has an opportunity to participate if the markets continue to move higher, but also has substantial downside protection in the event of a market correction. In each year or market cycle, every specific asset class within the PSRS investment portfolio performs a valuable function. The following chart indicates the investment return for each major asset class in the PSRS portfolio over the last five years, for the period ended June 30, 2016.

Five-Year PSRS Investment Returns By Asset Class	
Treasuries and Cash	2.6%
U.S. Stocks	11.5%
Hedged Assets	5.0%
Private Equity	13.1%
Real Estate	12.2%
International Stocks	3.0%
Corporate Bonds	4.0%

The market value of invested assets for the Public School and Education Employee Retirement Systems of Missouri (PSRS/PEERS) combined were approximately $38.7 billion on September 30, 2016, making the joint entity larger than all other public retirement plans in Missouri combined, and the 45th largest defined benefit plan in the United States. For the most recent PSRS/PEERS investment news, visit us on the web at **www.psrs-peers.org**.

[1]The assumed rate of return was 8.0% from 1980 through fiscal year 2016. The Board adopted a new assumed rate of return of 7.75% at the June 14, 2016 Board meeting. The 7.75% assumed rate of return is effective with the June 30, 2016 actuarial valuation and fiscal year 2017 investment performance.

[2]The plan policy benchmark is a standard to measure investment performance and indicates the return of the PSRS asset allocation if passive market rates of return were achieved.

Your Annual PSRS Member Statement Has Mailed

This month, ***Member Statements*** were mailed to all of our active members. We send this important document to you each year, providing you a comprehensive look at your membership.

Your statement provides you a complete summary of your membership, including a look at your salaries and contributions with PSRS, and a list of your employment and the service you have earned by school year.

Your statement also provides information on possible disability and survivor benefits for which you and your loves ones may be eligible, and current information on any service purchases you may have.

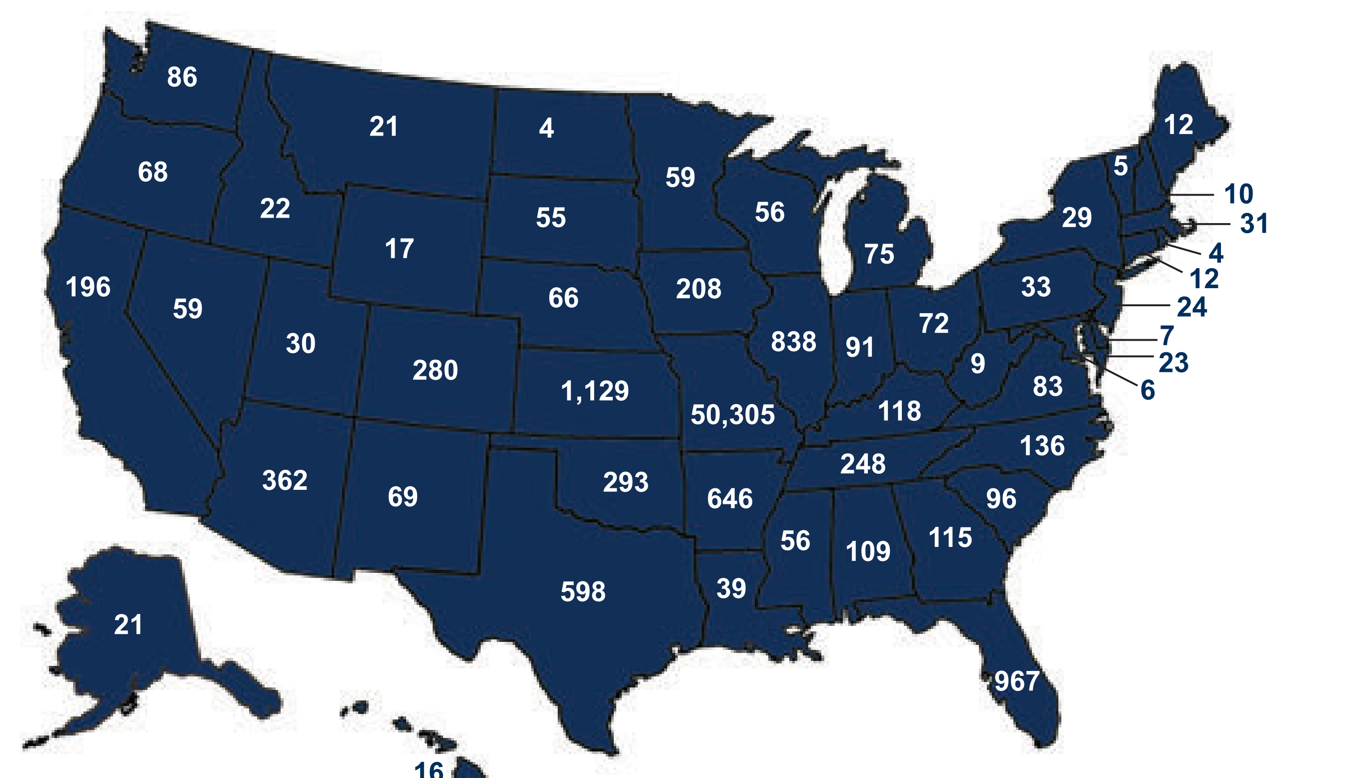
In addition, you can view your current beneficiary designation with PSRS. Remember to keep this information up to date so benefits are paid according to your wishes.

But perhaps the most exciting feature of your ***Member Statement*** is that it gives you estimates of your future service retirement benefits based on your current membership, including the dates you will be eligible for early and normal (full) benefits!

This information is available online by logging in to view your membership information using Web Member Services at **www.psrs-peers.org**.

Where Do PSRS Retirees Live?

While most PSRS retirees remain in Missouri after retirement, others can be found residing all around the U.S.! Here is a look at where PSRS retirees live, as of June 30, 2016.



4 in U.S. Virgin Islands

4 Ways to Get Retirement Ready with PSRS

No matter what stage of your life and career you are in, it is never too early to learn about your retirement system and the benefits it provides. At PSRS, we offer you a variety of ways to learn about your retirement plan, retirement eligibility, benefit options and more, and you can do so at no charge, in your community, from the privacy of home, or at our office in Jefferson City. Get the information you need to make confident, informed decisions about your retirement and know when and how to file your paperwork. Get in the know and get ready for retirement!

1 Attend a Pre-Retirement Planning Seminar in Your Area

If you are considering retirement, we recommend that you first attend a PSRS Pre-Retirement Planning Seminar. Seminars are held around the state throughout the year, providing valuable information you need to know as you prepare for retirement. A retirement counselor will deliver an overview of benefits, benefit payment plans available to you, and how to file your paperwork. You will also receive a personalized benefit estimate.

Register early – seating is limited and we cannot accept late registrations. Log in to Web Member Services at **www.psrs-peers.org** to register or call us toll free at **(800) 392-6848**. You need an idea of your retirement date, and your beneficiary's name and birth date. If you are unsure of your retirement date or eligibility, call us and we will be happy to help. **See the following page for our list of upcoming seminar dates and locations.**

2 Prefer Online Learning? Participate in a Retirement Ready Webinar

To help make it even easier for you to get retirement ready, we offer webinars on different retirement-related topics. A convenient and easy way to learn about specific topics of interest to you, webinars will take place on the third Tuesday of each month starting at 3:30 p.m. Register using the link found at **www.psrs-peers.org**. Upcoming webinar topics include:

Webinar Topics	
January 17	When Can I Retire? The Basics of PSRS Retirement Eligibility
February 21	Get More from your Membership: Reinstating and Purchasing Service with PSRS
March 21	Understanding Your Benefit Estimate
April 18	How and When to Apply for Service Retirement
May 16	Working After Retirement: Rules and Reminders to Prevent Lost Benefits

3 Ask Your School to Invite PSRS to Your In-Service or Professional Development Day

Our member education counselors are happy to visit your school and provide free retirement presentations for in-service or professional development days at your school.

These programs are done by request, and can be tailored to meet the needs of early career, mid-career or pre-retirement stage members.

Early/mid-career focused presentations are designed for members who are just starting out, or who are in the middle of their careers, with a general overview of PSRS, including the many advantages of being part of a Defined Benefit (DB) plan.

Registration is required for pre-retirement in-service presentations, so we can prepare personalized retirement information packets for attendees.

School officials and organizational leaders desiring to arrange retirement in-service programs can call **(800) 392-6848**, email **psrspeers@psrspeers.org**, or use the meeting request form on our website. These programs are offered free of charge.

Attend a Pre-Retirement Planning Seminar in Your Area

Date	Location	Address	Time	Closing Date to Register
December 19, 2016	PSRS/PEERS Office	3210 W Truman Blvd, Jefferson City	10:00 am	December 12, 2016
January 5, 2017	Arnold Fox C-6 Service Center	849 Jeffco Blvd, Arnold	4:30 pm	December 14, 2016
January 10, 2017	Joplin East Middle School	4594 E 20th St, Joplin	4:30 pm	December 16, 2016
January 17, 2017	Rolla 31 School District Board Office	500 A Forum Dr, Rolla	4:30 pm	December 27, 2016
January 19, 2017	Smith-Cotton High School	2010 Tiger Pride Blvd, Sedalia	5:30 pm	December 27, 2016
January 24, 2017	Cape Girardeau Career & Tech Center	1080 S Silver Springs Rd, Cape Girardeau	4:30 pm	January 3, 2017
January 25, 2017	Clinton Building (Parks & Rec Dept)	501 Campanella Dr, Sikeston	4:30 pm	January 3, 2017
January 26, 2017	Chillicothe High School	2801 Hornet Rd, Chillicothe	5:30 pm	January 9, 2017
January 31, 2017	Stoney Creek Inn - Columbia	2601 S Providence Rd, Columbia	5:30 pm	January 10, 2017
February 1, 2017	Hannibal Quality Inn	120 Lindsey Dr, Hwy 36, Hannibal	5:30 pm	January 13, 2017
February 2, 2017	Nevada High School	800 W Hickory St, Nevada	4:30 pm	January 17, 2017
February 7, 2017	Ozarks Technical Community College	815 N Sherman Ave, Springfield	4:30 pm	January 19, 2017
February 7, 2017	Blue Springs High School	2000 NW Ashton Dr, Blue Springs	4:30 pm	January 18, 2017
February 15, 2017	Liberty Early Childhood Center	9600 NE 79th St, Kansas City	4:30 pm	January 26, 2017
February 16, 2017	Ft. Zumwalt South High School	8050 Mexico Rd, St. Peters	5:30 pm	January 27, 2017
February 23, 2017	Lodge Des Peres	1050 Des Peres Rd, Des Peres	4:30 & 7:00 pm	February 6, 2017
March 1, 2017	PSRS/PEERS Office	3210 W Truman Blvd, Jefferson City	4:30 pm	February 9, 2017
March 2, 2017	Pattonville Senior High School	2497 Creve Coeur Mill Rd, Maryland Heights	5:30 pm	February 9, 2017
March 7, 2017	Camdenton Middle School	280 Minor St, Camdenton	4:30 pm	February 16, 2017
March 9, 2017	Winnetonka High School	5815 NE 48th St, Kansas City	5:30 pm	February 16, 2017
March 14, 2017	Stoney Creek Inn - St. Joseph	1201 N Woodbine Rd, St. Joseph	4:30 pm	February 22, 2017
March 16, 2017	Parkway West High School	14653 Clayton Rd, Ballwin	5:30 pm	February 23, 2017
March 22, 2017	Francis Howell Board Office	4545 Central School Rd, St. Charles	4:30 pm	March 6, 2017
March 29, 2017	Joplin East Middle School	4594 E 20th St, Joplin	4:30 pm	March 10, 2017
March 30, 2017	Ozarks Technical Community College	815 N Sherman Ave, Springfield	4:30 pm	March 10, 2017
April 4, 2017	Lee's Summit West High School	2600 SW Ward Rd, Lee's Summit	4:30 pm	March 15, 2017
April 6, 2017	Rockwood Summit Senior High School	1780 Hawkins Rd, Fenton	4:30 pm	March 20, 2017
April 12, 2017	Fort Osage High School	2101 N Twyman Rd, Independence	5:30 pm	March 22, 2017

New Weekly Seminars at PSRS

4 Attend a Pre-Retirement Seminar at the PSRS Office

If you prefer, you can attend a Pre-Retirement Planning Seminar held at our office in Jefferson City. The information provided is the same, in-depth review you receive at a traveling seminar, but in a smaller setting (limited to 15 members). In-office seminars are held on **Monday and Friday of each week starting at 10 a.m.** Register online after logging in to Web Member Services or by calling **(800) 392-6848**.

PSRS
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Omar Davis Named PSRS/PEERS Director of Employer Services

Omar Davis, of Columbia, MO, has been named director of employer services for the Public School and Education Employee Retirement Systems of Missouri (PSRS/PEERS) effective September 26, 2016. He replaces Jeff Russler, who recently retired.

"Omar brings experience and a proven track record with public pension systems that we are confident will make him an invaluable member of the PSRS/PEERS team," said Steve Yoakum, executive director. "We are pleased to welcome him to the Retirement Systems."

Most recently, Davis served as the investment legal and compliance counsel for the Missouri State Employees' Retirement System (MOSERS). Prior to that, he was general counsel at the MoDOT and Patrol Employees' Retirement System (MPERS). In addition, he served as director of revenue at the Missouri Department of Revenue from 2007 to 2009 and was director of the Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations from October to December 2007.

Davis holds a Juris Doctorate degree from the University of Missouri - Columbia School of Law and a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology from Kansas State University.

Learn more about the PSRS/PEERS management team on our website, **www.psrs-peers.org**.