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# Pension Updates



THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL  
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

## Update No. 26 -- Extra Edition

Thank you to all of you who shared pictures, videos and posted about the great energy and passion we all experienced on Monday. The timing and intensity of our action once again worked to raise up our fight with legislators and the governor. In our conversations since then, they've shared and reacted to the incredible passion of teachers!

This will be a long update but there's lots to fit in.

### What will the rest of session look like?

One of the common questions we get is how will things play out through the end of session on May 23. As always, the Legislature doesn't necessarily follow a straight line and the closer you get to the end, the more it feels like the dealing and decisions are happening outside of the spotlight.

Here's how things are likely to play out in the next few weeks.

- This week: the Legislature is on break for the rest of this week and will return on April 11.
- Next week: our staff will continue working with TRA and coordinating about potential options and strategy.
- We'll also continue to meet and push legislators on additional funding for pensions. Big news on this is unlikely next week. More likely a little beyond that.
- The weeks up until May 23 will be the grind. There's going to be legislative decisions that will have ripple effects, and a deal on one issue may affect another.

Toward the end of May, there will be a final bill that needs support to be passed. When we get to that point, as we don't want a deal to fall apart at the finish line, we will want to have a final push of support. Lots yet to happen before this, but it's important to note that it's coming.

### Current goal/issue to overcome

Funding – Our negotiations and options for better improvements hinges on increasing the funding provided by the employer/state. The fund can't absorb the costs and teachers should not be taking on the entire increase needed to pay for it.

## Targets for advocacy

The Big Three – Gov. Tim Walz, Senate Majority Leader Kari Dziedzic and House Speaker Melissa Hortman.

Your legislators – If you've sent emails and messages to your legislators but haven't had a chance to meet face to face, by phone or virtually, set up an appointment to meet and seek direct support for now and in the future.

Education Finance Committee Chairs – If you are constituents of Sen. Mary Kunesch or Rep. Cheryl Youakim, it would be good to reach out and share the importance of supporting pension reforms. They will be involved directly in the conversations about additional funding for plan improvements. To be clear, both of these legislators are strong education advocates and we are looking to gain stronger support specific to pensions. This is direct advocacy with allies.

Superintendents – Currently, there are some superintendents sharing a list of "unfunded mandates" in various forms. They list bills that are introduced but not necessarily headed towards becoming law as discussions and decision making our headed in different directions. Regardless, one of the most listed items consistently is funding for pensions. Talking to your superintendents on supporting stronger pensions as a recruitment and retention tool may be necessary if your superintendent is supporting that position. We are fighting for funding from the state, whether through direct funding or funding through the formula, to improve pensions.

## Actions

Escalating effectiveness moves from letters and messages to meeting face-to-face (including virtually) with legislators.

- If your local has a lobby day established in the next few weeks, ensure that attendees are either versed in our pension advocacy or are prepared to advocate on pensions.
- If your local has already had a lobby day, either contact your president to inquire if there is release time available for an additional day or set up your own meeting outside of the duty day to meet with legislators either one-to-one or with other pension advocates.

### Bombard the Big Three

- Contact Gov. Tim Walz, Senate Majority Leader Kari Dziedzic and House Speaker Melissa Hortman and ask them to increase the funding for pensions.
- Speak with your two legislators directly and seek their action to advocate for a bigger investment.

### Constituent-based action

- If you are a constituent, contact Sen. Mary Kunesch or Rep. Cheryl Youakim about their support of employer and state funding for pension improvements.

## What can members do for the next two weeks?

Member Mondays – Talk to colleagues this Monday and the next and encourage them to take action. Goal: Each of you find two members to send a message (someone who hasn't before) or take another action.

Tuesday – Friday (Pick one or more)

- Meet – Face-to-face meetings with legislators is the next level. Set an individual appointment or with others, and check on your lobby day options.
- Call – Call and leave a message for one of the Big Three.
- Message – Send a message specific to increased funding needed for pension reform.

### Staff work

Education Minnesota staff continue to meet with TRA, SPTRFA and legislative staff to negotiate and collaborate around possible improvements. Staff also continue to meet with and pressure legislators and the governor for a larger investment from the state and employer. We feel like progress is being made by our combined staff and member advocacy. It is definitely getting the message across that pensions are a priority.

### May 20 rally

One of our actions to get all of our education bills across the finish line will be a Capitol rally for all members on Saturday, May 20.

This is something we've done in past sessions and represents another opportunity for us to show decision-makers how important investing in educators is right now. Some might think the date is too late, but legislative deals are typically happening right up until adjournment.

[Register online here!](#)

### St. Paul proposal clarification

Many questions and some misinformation/opinions have been shared on the differences between the current proposals for TRA versus the St. Paul Teacher Retirement Fund Association.

The LCPR shared how much each fund was allocated and offered TRA and SPTRFA three options, as well as the option to come up with their own ideas. Based on those conditions, SPTRFA shared that they wanted an unreduced benefit of 62/30, an employee contribution increase of 1% and to use the one-time funds to cover the employee contribution for the first two years. This benefit is being paid for by the members of SPTRFA.

This plan for SPTRFA is not set in stone. It's also important to note that the TRA plan discussions are ongoing and unfinished. With the funding that was provided, the TRA options shared by the LCPR weren't acceptable other than to keep working on better. That work continues and nothing's done until bills are signed into law.

### Resources:

Organizing and Action	General Information
<a href="#">Pension bill action alert</a>	<a href="#">Education Minnesota pensions webpage</a>
<a href="#">Legislative contact template</a>	<a href="#">EdMN Capitol Connection e-newsletter</a>
<a href="#">Tips for contacting your legislators</a>	<a href="#">TRA document on pension basics</a>
<a href="#">Find your legislators</a>	<a href="#">PERA member resources</a>
<a href="#">EdMN Lobby Days info</a>	<a href="#">Public pension terminology</a>

<a href="#">LCPR members</a>	<a href="#">TRA candidate voter guide</a>
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If you've missed any past updates, they're [available on our website](#).

If you have any questions, please email [Adam Janiak](#).

Keep organizing, sharing and talking to your colleagues about our plan. [Sign up and forward this Education Minnesota Pension Updates signup today or use the QR code below!](#)

