

To view this email as a web page, go [here](#).

# Pension Updates



THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL  
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

## Update No. 34 - Extra Edition

### Purple for pensions pride!

Yesterday's special LCPR meeting was well attended by educators donning purple for pensions and was successful in getting our voices heard and unified around bills [HF3294/SF3314](#). Huge appreciation to the teachers who testified in person and virtually and who [wrote testimony](#) for the hearing. And a huge thank you to all the educators that packed the room!

### 5-4-23 LCPR meeting recap

The informational hearing was a necessary step both procedurally and to create an opportunity for discussion about the bill. Procedurally the bill had to be heard in order to move forward and be a part of one of the final omnibus bills. More on that below.

The LCPR discussion provided clarity on many points and positions.

- Testifier after testifier shared a consistent message: This bill is a good first step, improvements are badly needed and this needs to be the beginning of improvements, not the end. This message was extremely well received by legislators who support pension improvements and is essential when paired with the legislative position "we can't do everything in one year to solve 20 years of underfunding." We should continue with positive, informational and productive emails to lawmakers, because that's what's working.
- Some of the unsupportive legislators tried different ways to bring reasons not to support this, including trying to pit teachers needs against another group, trying to argue additional costs of deferred members that doesn't exist, and that it's not really a cost savings for districts to have teachers high on the salary schedule retire, to name a few.
- TRA shared that they now support the benefit improvement as long as the funding is secured, with one caveat. They voiced their position is unchanged in that they believe the benefit should be for both Tier 1 and Tier 2, but they framed it as they want the LCPR to be aware of their concern and will support the benefit improvement in the bill. This was surprising, and we suspect it was largely because of many members contacting them. Thank you!
- It was made clear that with the funding of the \$145 million in one-time funding from the earlier LCPR bill, a .5% employee increase and a 1.0% employer increase, the funding would cover the entire cost of the benefit

increase. The employer increase would be funded through the pension adjustment formula, meaning that the employer would get funded for their 1% (so districts would be paying, the state would fund it). A reminder, the funding still must be secured. See more in next steps below.

- Many thanks to the bill's authors: Rep. Dan Wolgamott and Sen. Steve Cwodzinski. Their continued advocacy for teachers is so appreciated. If you have time, it'd be good to reach out, thank them, and put wind in their sails.

Check out the written testimony [here](#).

The recording is [here \(starts at 6:46 mark\)](#).

### **Process/next steps**

The conversations around funding for this bill will continue and soon the committee work to create final omnibus bills will begin. Chair Kaohly Vang Her shared that the money will most likely need to be found in the tax bill or the education finance bill. This is the work that we will need to support and is our big push to the end. The session has a little over two weeks to go and we need as many legislators as possible supporting the funding.

We need to:

1. Make sure every legislator understands the issue, and particularly understands the difference between Tier 2 TRA members and Tier 2 licensed educators. They need to hear your voice now.
2. Identify to leadership of the House and Senate Education Finance and Tax Committee chairs that this is an essential priority for teachers this session, and to join the push to find the funding.
3. Make it clear that no money should be given in tax breaks to richer Minnesotans while both our schools and pensions are in crisis.

### **Vital action steps for the next two weeks**

What will be most effective: Legislators have responded well to educator's sharing the need for pension improvements, that need being created by underfunding by the state and the messaging that a big step is needed now and needs to continue in the future. It resonates well when we talk about how this is for the future of the profession. The positive energy created from the LCPR session was in part due to the consistent messaging. This is a strong step forward, we need support from the state to lift up the profession and we should have a pension system that provides for a dignified retirement, not a flawed benefit that most can't attain.

### **What will not be effective**

Legislators have shared with us that aggressive messages blaming and shaming them have not been well received. Holding people accountable is one thing -- and legislators say they aren't talking about messages like that -- but the movement isn't helped if we resort to personal attacks. We are trying to build stronger levels of support and partnership.

### **Action targets**

In our final push we need to continue to build support from your own legislators as well as the speaker, majority leader and governor. Please remember you can personalize our template or create your own letter as well.

Use this [call to action](#) or write your own letter to contact your legislators in support of the proposal.

Contact Gov. [Tim Walz](#), Senate Majority Leader [Kari Dziedzic](#) and House Speaker [Melissa Hortman](#) and ask for their support to fund [HF3294/SF3314](#)

**Join us at the Capitol again on May 20!**

One of our actions to get all of our education bills across the finish line will be an educator rally at the Capitol on Saturday, May 20. This will be another opportunity for members to show decision makers how important investing in educators is right now.

[Information and registration here.](#)

**Resources:**

Organizing and Action	General Information
<a href="#">NEW pensions 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>

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!](#)

