

Retirement
2020 Resolutions

William Boone, Chair, Berea Federation of Teachers, Local 1699
Cindy Antonio, Cleveland Teachers Union, Local 279
Alyssa Brookbank, Lordstown Teachers Association, Local 3789
Cassandra Carter, Cleveland Teachers Union, Local 279
Wellyn Collins, Cincinnati Federation of Teachers Retired, Local 1520-R
Patrick Davidson, Berea Federation of Teachers, Local 1699
Darmond Gates, Owens Support Staff Union, Local 6325
Teresa Green, Cleveland Teachers Union Retired, Local 279-R
Kristin Haney, Toledo Federation of Teachers, Local 250
Bonnie Hedges, Cleveland Teachers Union, Local 279
David Hess, Oregon City Federation of Teachers, Local 1080
Jeff Hood, Van Wert Federation of Teachers, Local 4088
Elizabeth Jones, Cincinnati Federation of Teachers Retired, Local 1520-R
Ari Klein, Cleveland Heights Teachers Union, Local 795
Tara Kovach, Brookfield Federation of Teachers, Local 1728
Daniel MacDonald, Cleveland Teachers Union Retired, Local 279-R
Ben Pfeiffer, Oregon City Federation of Teachers, Local 1080
Kurt Richards, Cleveland Teachers Union, Local 279
Tomi Roberts, Crooksville Education Association, Local 4988
Laura Sanregret, Cincinnati Federation of Teachers, Local 1520
Josephine Shelton-Townes, Cleveland Heights Teachers Union, Local 795
Robert Walters, Cleveland Teachers Union Retired, Local 279-R
Darold Johnson - OFT Staff

1 **STRS MEMBER BENEFITS**

2
3 WHEREAS the COLA is the method by which retirement plans manage the purchasing power of
4 benefit recipients, and

5
6 WHEREAS the STRS Board has increased the contributions and reduced benefits of active
7 members and eliminated, rather than reduced, the COLA to benefit recipients, and

8
9 WHEREAS our own STRS plan has harmed active members and retirees alike, and

10
11 WHEREAS Social Security has announced that its expenses exceed income and it still pays
12 COLA, and Social Security has decided to take a wait and see considered judgment approach
13 to a problem; however, STRS has made a jump to conclusion/shotgun approach to the same
14 problem and the STRS response is much more destructive to its members, and

15
16 WHEREAS our STRS Board has decided to listen to our employed actuaries after receiving
17 their report informing us that we are not on course to meet our thirty-year guaranteed goal, and

18
19 WHEREAS our STRS Board has taken the following five actions: 1. the thirteenth check,
20 previously eliminated, will remain eliminated; 2. the COLA is eliminated; 3. the actives' payroll
21 deduction increased from 10% to 14% while decreasing their STRS payout by forcing actives to
22 work AND pay into STRS for a minimum of thirty-five years and until they reach the age of sixty
23 to reach unreduced benefits; 4. spreading Final Average Salary (FAS) over five years and

24 reducing the benefit formula; 5. the employees of STRS will receive generous merit-based
25 salary increases and contract bonuses, and

26
27 WHEREAS the Ohio State Teachers Retirement System designed and purported to operate for
28 the benefit of teachers, has adopted a plan of benefits that serves only STRS employees, and

29
30 WHEREAS active and retired teachers now serve the STRS employees, and

31
32 WHEREAS the STRS plan is unjust, improper, and not suitable, leaving the teachers who pay
33 for the system with very little hope as evidenced in recent STRS member surveys which show a
34 decrease from 78% to 57% of members who feel their plan is an excellent or good value from
35 2005 to 2018, and

36
37 WHEREAS STRS Board are reminded of their fiduciary responsibility: ORC 3307.15 (A):
38 "...solely in the interest of the participants and beneficiaries; for the exclusive purpose of
39 providing benefits to [them] and defraying reasonable expenses of administering the system."

40
41 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED OFT, demands change, and

42
43 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that there be an immediate change of STRS's sense of direction
44 so that teachers, not STRS employees, are the primary beneficiaries, and

45
46 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that OFT will bring concerns of actives and retirees to the Health
47 Care Advocates group at every meeting of the HCA until the HCA address concerns of actives
48 and retirees to the STRS Board, and

49
50 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the STRS Board needs to be held accountable for their
51 decisions and be willing to explain how those decisions act in the best interest of active and
52 retired STRS members, and

53
54 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that OFT encourage retirees and actives to hold the STRS board
55 accountable for their decisions through their social media arenas to advocate STRS Board
56 meeting attendance and other STRS contact via telephone, mail, and e-mail, and

57
58 THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that OFT ask STRS to review the COLA policy,
59 demand the return of the COLA in some form, and make the plan more beneficial for future
60 retirees.

61
62 ADVOCATING FOR OPENNESS OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION FROM THE
63 OHIO STATE TEACHERS RETIREMENT SYSTEM BOARD TO ITS MEMBERS

64
65 WHEREAS, the STRS Board is the decision-making body for the investment fund secured
66 through the contributions of Ohio's publicly employed teachers, and

67
68 WHEREAS, the STRS Board is partially composed of seven elected contributing and retired
69 members of the Ohio public educational system who represent the totality of Ohio as well as
70 their home regions, and

71

72 WHEREAS, the STRS Board has recently, and in the past, made decisions and changes to
73 increase the contribution levels of working teachers in Ohio that more than doubles the average
74 percent wage increase realized by teachers in Ohio over the past decade, and

75
76 WHEREAS, the STRS Board has taken the drastic step of complete elimination of the Cost of
77 Living Adjustment (COLA) as their primary solution for the long-term solvency of the retirement
78 fund, and

79
80 WHEREAS, the STRS Board is no longer contributing to the retirement system healthcare
81 program that provides hospital, medical, dental, vision, and prescription drug coverage to
82 retirees, and

83
84 WHEREAS, the working, contributing, and retired public teachers of Ohio must remain engaged,
85 active, and informed of these changes and how they will impact their hard earned financial and
86 healthy futures, and

87
88 WHEREAS, the Ohio State Board of Education, along with countless other local and state
89 entities have stepped into the 21st Century and have offered their constituencies the ability to
90 view their elected representatives in action by video recording public meetings, and

91
92 WHEREAS, other public pension organizations, such as the California State Teachers
93 Retirement System and the Texas State Teachers Retirement System have also offered this
94 service to its members for years, and

95
96 WHEREAS, a December of 2019 Facebook poll of Ohio STRS members showed overwhelming
97 support for the use of video broadcasts of public meetings, and

98
99 WHEREAS, the STRS Board has the resources to enact such measures since its organization
100 has 11 Senior Staff Members and over 500 Associate Staff Members in addition to the elected
101 and appointed members of the Board, therefore

102
103 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Ohio Federation of Teachers demand the STRS Board initiate,
104 create, and maintain a system of transparent communication of Retirement Board meetings that
105 includes, but is not limited to the video and audio broadcast of the Board's public meetings that
106 are both digitally streamed live and archived on the STRS public website and/or the Ohio
107 Channel, and

108
109 THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the STRS Board initiate, create, and maintain
110 a system of email communication to individual Board members so that they may be responsive
111 to the contributing and retired members they represent, similar to those methods employed by
112 elected Ohio legislative representatives with whom any constituent may personally email and
113 receive a digital response from, and

114
115 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the STRS Board initiate STRS regional informational
116 meetings to open up a dialogue about the reasons for past and current changes in the
117 retirement pension and healthcare structures and discuss how it has positively and/or negatively
118 affected retired members and how these changes will now impact the retirement planning for
119 active teachers.

120

121 THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, the OFT strongly supports the bill which requires
122 the state retirement systems to publicly broadcast meetings.
123