



Improve Retirement Benefits for Public School Bus Drivers, Cafeteria Workers, Custodians, and Maintenance Personnel

THE ISSUE

- School bus drivers, cafeteria workers, custodians, and maintenance personnel deserve to retire with dignity, reflecting their importance to the education our 1.8 public school children. **Current monthly benefits for PSERS retirees average \$290 a month.** Some of these valuable contributors to a child's education work in school systems that do not participate in the Social Security System.
- 52,000 current and former staff professionals are covered by the **Public School Employees Retirement System (PSERS)**, established in 1969 (O.C.G.A. Title 47, Chapter 4). Those in supervisory roles within those functions participate in the Teachers Retirement System (TRS).
- Monthly benefits are calculated by years of creditable service multiplied by a specific dollar amount, which is determined by the Georgia General Assembly. Effective July 1, 2023, the current dollar amount is \$16.50, a 50 cent increase over 2022. Currently, state law caps that multiplier at \$16.50.
- In 2021, the Senate Study Committee on Retirement Security for Georgians, in its [final report](#), recommended: "enhancing salary and benefit packages offered state employees in order to improve recruitment and retention."

GAE RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ **Eliminate the cap so that the legislature can increase monthly pension benefits.** [SB 105](#), sponsored Sen. Larry Walker and co-sponsored by former Senate Retirement Committee Chair Randy Robertson, would do that.
- ✓ **Increase funding** in the 2024-2025 state budget to increase the multiplier to **\$20**.
- ✓ Consider an actuarial study of the cost to **allow PSERS members to choose participation in Teachers Retirement System (TRS)**, as was the [recommendation](#) of the **2000 Senate Study Committee on School Transportation, Nutrition, and Support Personnel** chaired by former State Sen. Jack Hill, and an actuary study to review implementation of **annual cost-of-living adjustments**.
- ✓ [SB 335](#) would allow ESPs covered by the Public School Employees Retirement (PSERS) the option of joining the Teachers Retirement System albeit at a increase to employee contribution, from a flat \$10 to 6% of the eligible employee's salary.