



Retiring Times



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WINTER

Montgomery County Public Schools ■ Rockville, Maryland ■

2013 COST-OF-LIVING Adjustment

If you are an MCPS pension plan or retirement plan member, you can look forward to an increase in your pension payments next year.

The MCPS pension and retirement plans include a provision for an annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) each January 1. The annual COLA is applied according to the yearly Consumer Price Index (CPI).

The COLA for benefits based on all credited service earned prior to July 1, 2011, is subject to a 3 percent cap. The COLA for benefits based on

all credited service earned after July 1, 2011, is subject to a 2 percent cap. This year's CPI totals 2.01 percent. The adjustment you receive will depend on your service dates as indicated below.

Keep in mind, if you are a member of the State core plan, the yearly COLA determination for your benefit is made each spring and is effective on July 1. For additional information, please visit the Maryland State Retirement Agency website at <http://www.sra.state.md.us/>.

MCPS Retirement Plan Members

2013 CPI = 2013 COLA
2.01% = 2.01%

MCPS Pension Plan Members Who Retired BEFORE JULY 1, 2011

2013 CPI = 2013 COLA
2.01% = 2.01%

MCPS Pension Plan Members Who Retired AFTER JULY 1, 2011

COLA for portion of your benefits based on credited service earned prior to July 1, 2011
2.01%

COLA for portion of your benefits based on credited service earned after July 1, 2011
2.0%

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DID YOU KNOW?

Submit Benefits Changes

Submit your benefits changes by the 5th of the month for them to take effect on the 1st of the following month.

Occasionally, you may experience a life event that enables you to make changes to your benefits outside of the annual Open Enrollment period. For example, if you divorce, you may remove your former spouse from your plan and reduce your healthcare premiums without waiting for Open Enrollment. You must submit your change to the Employee and Retiree Service Center by the 5th the month in order for your change to take effect on the 1st of the following month.

Learn more on our website: <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/ersc/retirees/>.

How to UPDATE YOUR BENEFICIARIES

A new year is a great time to take stock of the past year, reflect on any changes in your life, and consider whether or not you need to update your beneficiaries. If you do, follow the instructions below to update beneficiaries for your life insurance, 403(b) and 457(b) plans, and pension plans.

While ERSC is the first step for some of your beneficiary paperwork, we are not able to report or confirm the beneficiaries on your existing plans. If you are uncertain of your earlier decisions, submit a new beneficiary form to be sure that your wishes are in line with your beneficiary records.

TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE INSURANCE BENEFICIARIES:

Submit MCPS Form 455-22: Retiree Benefit Plan Enrollment.

- Indicate your desire to change your beneficiaries in Section II and indicate your changes in Section VII of this form.
- The form is available at <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/forms/455-22.shtm>.

TO CHANGE YOUR 403(B) OR 457(B) PLAN BENEFICIARIES:

Contact your vendor. If you do not know how to contact your vendor:

- Visit mcps.yourplan.info.
- Click on the “Vendors” tab.
- Select your vendor from the list to see information on updating your beneficiaries.

TO CHANGE YOUR PENSION PLAN BENEFICIARIES:

MCPS Core and/or Supplement pension plans:

- **Submit MCPS Form 455-5: Designation of Beneficiary/Beneficiaries** to ERSC.
- The form is available at <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/forms/455-5.shtm>.

State Retirement and Pension System of Maryland:

- **Submit State Form MSR004** to ERSC.
- The form is available at http://www.sra.state.md.us/Participants/Downloads/Forms/Form_4.pdf. ■

KEEPING FIT IN THE WINTER: An Indoor Option that Works Year Round!

In the spring, you started walking with a friend. At first, it was just around the block a couple of times a week. Eventually, you agreed to walk two miles each evening. You both lost weight and were feeling great!

In the fall, an early blast of cold air stopped you in your tracks.

It can be hard to exercise during the winter. The snow, ice, and cold make it difficult to stick with outdoor routines. But indoor alternatives are available. One of these, water exercise, is a great option.

Water exercise increases metabolism, builds muscle strength, improves balance and range of motion, and relieves tension and stress. Best of all, it can be adjusted to meet individual ability and needs. It is even suitable for those without swimming skills.

There also are psychological and social benefits to water exercise. People who engage in water exercise feel better about themselves, are more involved in community activities, and tend to maintain their independence longer because they are physically fit.

Water's hydrostatic pressure (i.e., the pressure exerted by a fluid at equilibrium due to the force of gravity) provides buoyancy and support for your body, so the possibility of injury is minimal. You are less likely to feel sore after water exercise and flexibility improves with less strain on your joints. This support lets you move into positions that would be impossible on land while still maintaining balance.

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DID YOU KNOW?

Your MCPS Employee ID Number Helps Us Help You

Do you know your MCPS employee ID number?

When you call or e-mail ERSC, be sure to give us your employee ID number so we can provide you with the best possible customer service. It allows us to verify your identity without asking for your Social Security Number. It also allows us to track your inquiries so that we can follow up with you as necessary.

If you do not know your MCPS employee ID number, here is where to find it. If you are a member of UnitedHealthcare health insurance, your employee ID number is listed on your insurance card as your Member ID number. For your convenience, your employee ID number also has been added to the mailing label of ERSC publications, including this issue of *Retiring Times*. Look for the four- or five-digit number located in the top corner of the label. Please refer to this number when contacting ERSC. ■

Medicare, Disability, and Your MCPS RETIREE BENEFITS

Do you or your spouse (or other covered dependent) receive disability benefits from the Social Security Administration?

If you or your dependent has received disability benefits from the Social Security Administration for 24 months, regardless of age, then you are eligible for Medicare Parts A and B. As a requirement for continuing to carry MCPS health benefits, any person eligible for Medicare Parts A and B must enroll in **both** parts—A and B—when first eligible or the person will lose his or her MCPS coverage.

Medicare Parts A and B are effective on the first day of the 25th month of your Social Security

disability benefits entitlement. About three months before the Medicare-effective date, the Social Security Administration automatically will enroll you in Medicare Parts A and B and mail you a Medicare ID card. While Social Security gives you the option to decline Medicare Part B,

REMEMBER: You MUST enroll in Medicare Parts A and B when you and/or your spouse or dependent are first eligible or risk the termination of your MCPS benefits. Don't wait until your benefits are in danger!

you MUST keep Part B if you wish to continue your MCPS benefits.

Your MCPS benefits cost is reduced when you enroll in Medicare Parts A and B. Medicare becomes your primary medical coverage and your MCPS plan becomes your secondary medical coverage, thus reducing the amount you must pay for your MCPS plan. When you become Medicare-eligible, you must notify the Employee and Retiree Service Center to reduce your medical premiums.

If you or your dependents are Medicare-eligible, notify ERSC at ERSC@mcpsmd.org or 301-517-8100. ■

What Is Your STORY?

We want to hear your story about how you prepared for retirement! Now that you are retired, you can help others understand what it is like and the best ways to prepare by sharing your experiences.

How did you prepare for retirement—financially and emotionally? Did you supplement your pension plan with a 403(b) or 457(b) savings plan? Did you save with other investments? Did you downsize in retirement, or did you build your dream home? How did you make it all work amongst competing demands? Sharing your story can help active MCPS employees make decisions that will benefit them when they get ready to follow in your footsteps. Your story could appear in *For Your Benefit* or other employee materials.

Share your story by e-mailing Marcia Welch, communications specialist for the Employee and Retiree Service Center, at Marcia_J_Welch@mcpsmd.org. Be sure to include your full name and contact information. Marcia will contact you if your story will be used. ■

“Money planning constituted only one tiny fragment of my transition to retirement. Filling my post-teaching life with meaningful growth was even more important. I was not retiring to vegetate until my death; I was retiring to reclaim dreams that had been put on hold.”

So begins Carol Westreich Solomon’s after-career story, which she submitted in response to an earlier *Retiring Times* request for stories about retirement preparation. Solomon, a retired MCPS English teacher and administrator, describes the principles that guided her first year of retirement and how these values have shaped her life since. We will share her retirement journey in the winter 2013 issue of *For Your Benefit*, which you will find online beginning January 18, 2013, at <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/ersc/employees/publications/>. ■

2013 COLA continued from page 1

will be 2.01 percent. The COLA for the portion of your benefits based on credited service earned after July 1, 2011, will be 2 percent.

MCPS RETIREMENT PLAN MEMBERS

- Retirement plan members will receive a COLA of 2.01 percent, in line with this year's CPI. The changes above were only to the MCPS pension plan. ■

KEEPING FIT continued from page 2

Water provides resistance as well, which strengthens and tones muscles and improves cardiac fitness levels. The resistance allows you to burn more energy than you would if doing similar movements on land.

There also are psychological and social benefits to water exercise. People who engage in water exercise feel better about themselves, are more involved in community activities, and tend to maintain their independence longer because they are physically fit.

Although water walking and jogging require little training, you may wish to enroll in a class to learn the proper techniques for other water exercises. Montgomery County Recreation (MCR) offers classes throughout the county. To learn more, visit the MCR website at <http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/rectmpl.asp?url=/content/rec/thingstodo/aquatics/exercise.asp>. AARP is a great resource for finding water exercise classes at a discount. Visit AARP's website at <http://www.aarp.org/>. ■



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