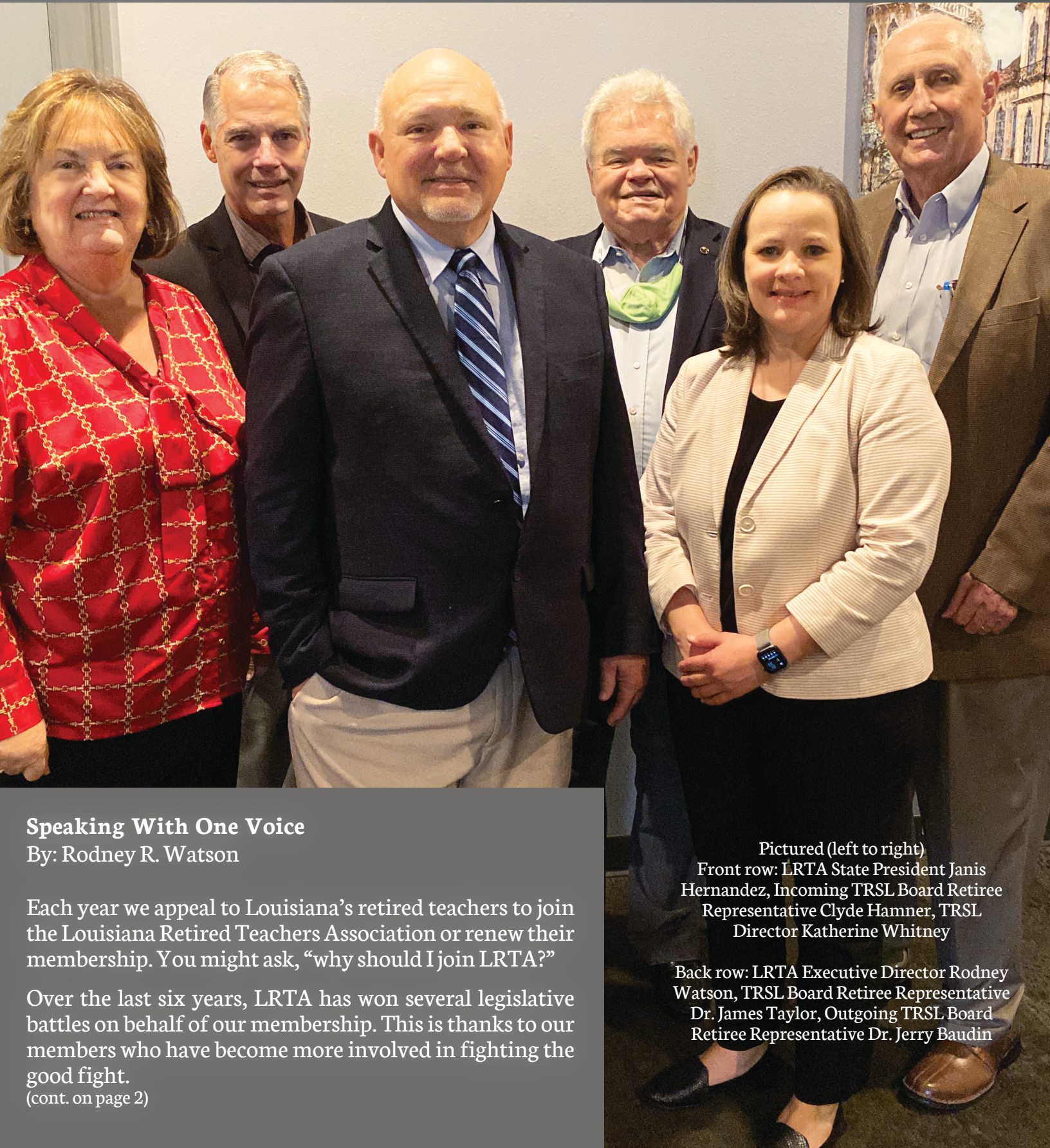




LOUISIANA RETIRED
TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Winter 2022

*Protect and Enhance
Your Benefits...*
#WhyYouShouldJoin



Speaking With One Voice

By: Rodney R. Watson

Each year we appeal to Louisiana's retired teachers to join the Louisiana Retired Teachers Association or renew their membership. You might ask, "why should I join LRTA?"

Over the last six years, LRTA has won several legislative battles on behalf of our membership. This is thanks to our members who have become more involved in fighting the good fight.

(cont. on page 2)

Pictured (left to right)

Front row: LRTA State President Janis Hernandez, Incoming TRSL Board Retiree Representative Clyde Hamner, TRSL Director Katherine Whitney

Back row: LRTA Executive Director Rodney Watson, TRSL Board Retiree Representative Dr. James Taylor, Outgoing TRSL Board Retiree Representative Dr. Jerry Baudin

MESSAGES FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND LRTA PRESIDENT



(cont. from cover)

When I became Executive Director of LRTA back in May of 2015, it was clear to me that it was time for this fine organization to move from “one voice, one lobbyist” to thousands of individuals speaking with “one voice.” Now, when we send calls to action, our members instantly respond with emails, phone calls, face to face meetings, and

letters to legislators. They show up at the State Capitol and attend committee meetings to voice their support or opposition to bills that affect their retirement.

This year, our calls to action will focus on providing a much-needed cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to our retirees. Before the end of 2021, I coordinated a meeting with the LRTA State President, Retiree Representatives on the TRSL Board of Trustees and TRSL Director (all pictured on the front cover). The meeting was both productive and historical. For the first time, LRTA sat down with leadership from TRSL and representatives from the TRSL Board to discuss impending legislation to provide a 2 percent COLA to those who have been retired for at least one year and are at least age 60 on July 1, 2022. Now that there is enough money in the Experience Account, our leaders expressed the need to move forward with legislation for a COLA and the Board echoed these sentiments.

But, we are just getting started. Even though COLAs are not financed with state funding and are paid with the retirement system’s investment earnings, we must first get legislative approval. This will require advocacy from our members, and there is power in numbers! It is imperative that retirees join LRTA to secure a COLA in 2022. LRTA will provide you with updates on the COLA as they become available. Members will also receive “Action Alerts” when it is time to contact legislators, so they will approve the COLA. I hope these words will inspire you to renew your membership or join for the first time. Become a part of LRTA and the one united voice of retired educators in Louisiana!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rodney R. Watson".

Rodney R. Watson
LRTA Executive Director



I am sure you’ve heard the good news by now! The Teachers’ Retirement System of Louisiana (TRSL) earned record-breaking returns this past fiscal year and was able to add enough funds to the Experience Account for a 2 percent Permanent Benefit Increase (PBI or cost-of-living adjustment) for eligible retirees next year! Eligible retirees must have

received a benefit for at least one year and be at least 60 years of age on July 1, 2022.

In a resolution addressed to the Louisiana Legislature, the TRSL Board took the first step in the process for what would be the first regular COLA since 2016. Now, we wait for a bill granting the COLA to be filed for consideration in the 2022 legislative session that begins in March. The bill then would need to be approved by at least two-thirds of the Legislature to become law.

We need to be prepared, and we need your help! Make sure to stay connected with LRTA by liking our Facebook page and signing up for the Email Club. It is also very important that you register for our Voter Voice program through which LRTA will provide you the tools

and advocacy resources to help you contact legislators to urge approval of the COLA. Please go to www.lrta.net, if you have not done so already, and sign up now.

As always, if you know of someone who is not a member or someone who recently retired, encourage them to join LRTA. The strength of our organization and number of legislative successes comes from our active membership. We need all retirees to become advocates through LRTA to assure approval of the COLA.

Working together we can continue to Make Retirement Years Great!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janis M. Hernandez".

Janis M. Hernandez
LRTA State President

By the Numbers

Since 2016, the Louisiana Retired Teachers Association has successfully opposed...

7

Bills that proposed changing the current Defined Benefit (DB) plan to a hybrid plan, which could have resulted in reduced or lost benefits for retirees statewide.

4

Bills that proposed a Constitutional Convention, which could have threatened the lifetime guarantee of retirement benefits currently in the constitution.

10

Other bills that would have negatively affected your retirement system or your retirement benefits.

This is thanks to our over **20,000** members who support our advocacy efforts!

#WhyYouShouldJoin

Join or Renew Today!

It's membership renewal time! LRTA is the **ONLY** membership organization in Louisiana devoted solely to advocating for the needs of the retired education community. We need your support to remain strong and to maintain a unified voice representing all retirees from Louisiana's educator community. Please consider renewing your dues or joining today!

This mailing from LRTA includes several items. Please check the chart below to ensure that you've received all necessary materials. All materials may be returned to LRTA in the enclosed postage paid envelope (if applicable). Ballots must be received by Feb. 25 to be counted.

Membership Class	Newsletter	Return Envelope	Membership Form	LRTA Ballot	Candidate Information
Lifetime Member	X	X		X	X
Continuing Member	X	X		X	X
Annual Member	X	X	X	X	X
Non-Member	X	X	X		
Associate Member	X				

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2022

SPRING DISTRICT MEETINGS

The LRTA Executive Board approved the following dates for the 2022 Spring District Meetings. Mark your calendars, and stay tuned for more details about the meetings.

Tuesday, March 8: District VIII

Wednesday, March 9: District XI

Thursday, March 10: District X

Friday, March 11: District IX

Tuesday, March 15: District VII

Wednesday, March 16: District VI

Thursday, March 17: District V

Friday, March 18: District IV

Monday, March 21: District III

Tuesday, March 22: District II

Wednesday, March 23: District I

2022 REGULAR SESSION

The 2022 Regular Session begins March 14 and must end by June 6. LRTA is already monitoring public notices, as retirement legislation must be prefiled by January 28.

We expect to see legislation for the first cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for TRSL retirees since 2016. Remember, the legislature must approve granting the COLA. This is why LRTA needs you and your support to ensure the legislation is approved and the COLA is granted!

RETIRED TEACHERS DAY

Louisiana Retired Teachers Day will be celebrated on **March 17**. LRTA will make a request to the Governor's office for an official proclamation.

This is a time for the state and your local communities to show appreciation for the many years of dedication and service provided by Louisiana's retired educators.

Please be sure to send us photos of your Retired Teachers Day celebrations. Email the photos to info@lrta.net, and your celebration could be featured on the LRTA Facebook page.



We can't wait to see our members in 2022!

Pictured: Members of District V

Mark your
calendars!

Join us for the LRTA State Spring Meeting on April 25-26 in Baton Rouge! More details to be announced in our Spring newsletter.

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