

February 4, 2024

Dear LCPR Committee members,

Thank you for your work on the pension commission and taking time to read my testimony and the testimonies from other educators.

I have been an educator in Minnesota since 1990. Since I was hired after July 1, 1989 I will have to wait until age 65 for full retirement benefits. I have worked with many educators that were hired prior to July of 1989. They are able to retire with full benefits when they reach the Rule of 90. Based on my hire date, I have to work an additional ten+ years, contribute more money to TRA and have less years to receive my pension.

The state has funded many education initiatives, it is time to fund and fix the pension problem. The current pension does not serve as an incentive to recruit or retain educators. Newly graduated educators are choosing to work in surrounding states and educators are leaving the profession at an alarming rate. Minnesota educators are significantly penalized if they draw their pension prior to age 66 (age 65 after July 1, 2025). Penalties need to be lowered and career rules need to be established. The future of education in Minnesota is dependent on reforming the pension. I implore you to right the wrongs of the past and fix the pension for educators.

Sincerely,

Vickie Penick