



School Employees Retirement System of Ohio
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Press Release

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Executive Director of School Employees Retirement System Announces Retirement

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Lisa J. Morris, executive director of the School Employees Retirement System of Ohio (SERS), announced her intention to retire effective October 31, 2016. Morris will retire with more than 30 years of public service after 6 years at the helm of SERS.

The Board accepted her resignation and began the process of engaging the services of Hudepohl & Associates to conduct a national search for SERS' next executive director. According to SERS' succession plan, Deputy Director Helen Ninos will serve as interim executive director during the search.

"Lisa provided SERS with steady leadership during the Great Recession and pension reform, and she leaves the pension system on solid financial ground," said Barbra Phillips, Chair of the SERS Retirement Board. "The best interests of the members and retirees always guided her actions and we are grateful that the staff she assembled reflects that same professionalism. On behalf of the entire Board, I thank her for all she's done and wish her well in retirement. She will be missed."

Morris joined SERS as deputy executive director in 2004 and was instrumental in managing a major culture and business process change management initiative that garnered national recognition for sustained new best practices.

As executive director, Morris was actively involved in developing and building positive relationships with SERS' members, retirees, employers, and advocacy groups, as well as Ohio's legislature, public retirement systems, and the media. In addition, she encouraged staff to adopt leading and best practices at all levels of the organization, which transformed SERS into a high performing workplace that takes pride in delivering superior service to members and retirees. With the Board's assistance, Morris guided the system through major pension reform following the Great Recession of 2008-2009. She participated in numerous newspaper editorial board meetings to reassure Ohio citizens that SERS was making changes to remain financially solvent, and remind them of SERS' economic impact in communities throughout the state.

Morris retires with more than 31 years in public sector management and leadership following several years in the private practice of law. She was the chief mining regulator in Ohio for several years, and then the state's clean water director before joining the pension system.

Throughout most of her career, she also has been active in animal welfare and community service. She has chaired non-profit boards, served on public commissions and her community's architectural review commission, and worked on the first board of her local community's sustainability and healthy city initiative.

SERS is a statewide public pension fund that provides pension, survivor and disability benefits, and post-retirement access to health care benefits to non-teaching public school employees. Assets of the fund as of August 15, 2016 were \$12.8 billion. The System manages the retirement savings of 123,000 active contributing members and administers pension benefits and health care programs for 74,000 benefit recipients.

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