



Serving Retirees Since 1956
Membership Statewide

SPRING 2026

The Reporter

Healthcare Benefits Preserved

The State Employees Benefits Committee (SEBC) took decisive action on April 20, 2026 to preserve the healthcare benefits of Delaware's retirees by unanimously approving a Request for Proposals (RFP) that mandates the new medical plan to duplicate the current Special Medicfill plan.

The outcome was met with relief and gratitude by leaders of the Delaware Retired School Personnel Association (DRSPA) and other advocacy groups, who had been urging the committee to safeguard retirees' access to comprehensive healthcare services without prior authorization barriers or managed-care restrictions.

"We have a saying at DRSPA that while our pension is guaranteed, our medical benefits are not," said DRSPA President Denny Schwartz. "We never take our medical benefits for granted and will continue to monitor for our members. For now, we can all take a deep sigh of relief."

DRSPA was part of a community that urged SEBC to protect the healthcare plan, along with a group of SEBC members that represent retirees.

Former State Senator Karen Peterson, a voting SEBC member, said Delaware retirees will enjoy their current excellent health benefits for the next several years.

"I am delighted that we successfully fought back to prevent the SEBC from adopting language to allow "comparable" healthcare plans to be considered for Medicare retiree," said Peterson. "The Request for Proposal" will require that bidders provide benefits that "duplicate" our current plan "without any deviations." The bottom line is that we will continue to receive our excellent benefits for the next several years....A big "thank you" to everyone who took the time to write to the SEBC! Your involvement made my job easier."

In This Issue:

- President's Message.....page 2
- Annual County Meetingspage 3
- DRSPA Grants Makes Differencepage 4
- DRSPA Advocates at Leg Hallpage 5
- Scams Against Seniorspage 6
- Legislative Updatepage 7
- Executive Director's Reportpage 8

Have You Joined Us Yet?

Renew your membership today or become a new member!

DRSPA watches out for you!

Join the group that monitors health care and benefits.

Together, we are strong!

You earned it, now make sure you keep it!

Membership Year runs from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31.

Email Bonnie at drspaemail.com

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Denise Schwartz



This has been a very busy year for DRSPA! We have grown and our membership is hitting an all time high thanks to all of you! Spreading the word has really taken on a new twist- We're welcoming in many new retirees as well

as some older folks who are realizing that what we do is for you! We are advocating for you and your benefits, death benefit, and making sure that all things related to your pension stay intact!

Recently, the SEBC met and voted on the language for our health care plan. Now, as we know, it goes in front of the General Assembly, and if all things go as planned, we should be just where we want to be- with the identical health plan that we deserve! There have been many who have been working behind the scenes to make this happen. First and foremost, I'd like to personally thank retired State Senator Karen Peterson for all that she has done to promote DRSPA! She has been a force behind the scenes for many years and even in her retirement, she has continued to work her magic and establish our plan. Thank you, Sen. Peterson, we couldn't have done this without your persistence and assistance.

Advocate- that's who we are and what we do. It's all about you, our members! We've been around since '56 so for the past seventy years we've been listening to our members and advocating for what was promised to us when we signed on. We will never take you or any member for granted! Even when you think things can't get any better, we will never give up the fight to get what we want- it's as simple as that.

Many of us don't realize what this all means until we are faced with a life changing situation. In the dark times, DRSPA is there to scoop in and handle your medical issues. I know first hand what this means and believe me, you are a member of one of the best groups of advocates. DRSPA isn't going anywhere and we will stand firm in our fight to protect you! You can count on us! We're not going anywhere!

Again, thanks for all of your support, emails, and messages to our legislators. They're listening and reading out messages. It's working and we must continue to stay connected- it really does make a difference!

So please, do me and yourself a favor- keep updated on all of the business of the General Assembly and how it is paying attention and listening to us. Words are spoken and messages are sent and now it's up to us to continue our relationships with our legislators and if we can't agree let's do our best to share our stories and let them hear from us! DRSPA is never going to give up the fight! We're going to continue to work and be there for you- no matter what it takes, we'll never give up and represent you in the best way possible.

What we do? Advocate for YOU!

Just a reminder: Please put October 14th on your calendars- as this will be the statewide meeting at Modern Maturity in Dover. You won't want to miss this one!

As always,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Denise Schwartz". The script is fluid and cursive.

Denise Schwartz

Annual County Meetings Held

NCC

More than 80 people attended the annual in-person meeting of the New Castle County Retired School Personnel Association (NCCRSPA) on April 15, 2026.

Led by NCCRSPA President Dr. Mae Gaskins, the informative and lively meeting was held at Embassy Suites in Newark.

The agenda included three speakers, a business meeting, door prizes and lunch.

Retired State Senator Karen Peterson spoke about decisions before the State Benefits Employee Committee (SEBC) that impact all Delaware state employees, both working and retired.

Deputy Pension Administrator Stephenie Tatman gave an update on the state pension plan, providing fun facts and current numbers.

Finally, Alan Rachko, Chief Investigator in the Consumer Protection Unit of the Delaware Department of Justice, presented cases of seniors in Delaware being scammed out of substantial funds. He also provided tips on how to avoid being a victim.



DRSPA President Denise Schwartz and Vice-President Mae Gaskins at the New Castle County meeting

Kent/Sussex

The Delaware Retired School Personnel Association's Kent/Sussex meeting on May 14, 2026, was well attended, informative and filled with fellowship as members gathered to hear updates on grants, legislative advocacy and retiree benefits.

The event combined important organizational business with opportunities for members to reconnect and enjoy one another's company, making it both productive and fun for attendees.

Speakers included Joanna Adams, who reported on the growth and financial status of the Delaware pension system, retiree and employee statistics, health and OPEB funding, and the phased implementation of a new pension administration system scheduled to go live in 2029 before the business meeting began at 10:00 a.m.

Also speaking was Andrew Parcell of Parcell Funeral Homes, a second-generation funeral director whose family operates six locations across Sussex County, and who shared practical guidance on funeral preplanning, rising funeral costs, death-benefit assignments, and the importance of documenting final wishes for family members.

Members received a detailed report from Becky Scarborough regarding the State Employee Benefits Committee and the new Medicare Supplement healthcare plan and the meeting concluded with discussion about the importance of member involvement and unity in advocacy efforts.



Funeral Director Andrew Parsells addresses the crowd

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DRSPA Grants Make a Difference

From self-printed robots to books and games, baby chicks, and a giant inflatable obstacle course, funds from the 2025 DRSPA “Partners in Education” grants made a difference in schools around Delaware.

Since 2014, DRSPA has awarded more than \$92,000 for a diverse range of creative projects in public schools throughout the state, supported by member donations.

Grants worth up to \$1,000 are awarded by a committee of the Executive Board, which uses a rubric to score applications. Grant winners recently reported to DRSPA that the grant had an impact.

“The grant for the inflatable obstacle course has made a positive impact on the students at Linden Hill Elementary by promoting physical activity in a fun and engaging way,” said Physical Education Teacher Charmaine Davis.

Teacher Devon Scaramazza, who teaches at Odessa High School, expressed her gratitude for the funding that made it possible to purchase “The Butchering Art” for her anatomy and physiology class.

More than 130 first-grade children had a memorable week at Georgetown Elementary School as they watched chicks peck their way out of eggs and hatch.

Teacher Michelle Scarborough said the whole school got involved. “What an absolutely exciting week for not only all of our First Graders, but some visiting Kindergarten classes, as well as so many curious teachers, students, and staff at Georgetown Elementary.”

Sean Sherlock, from Delcastle Technical High School, highlighted the benefits of a new 3D printer, stating, “Thank you so much for the funding for our 3D printer! It’s been great to have the Science Olympiad students use it for building their devices and for the science students to get 3D models for supporting their learning.”

Kindergartners in the Townsend Early Childhood Center were immersed in Spanish culture through play when Teacher Mariannys Velasquez was able to purchase authentic books, costumes, instruments and playthings. “The grant funding made a tremendous impact in my classroom by providing authentic resources and materials that enhanced student engagement and enriched learning experiences,” said Velasquez.

Alexa Slavin, 4th Grade Teacher, Townsend Elementary School. “The grant supported my fourth-grade classroom by providing novel studies that helped students grow as readers and thinkers.

These dedicated educators demonstrate how grants not only enhance academic learning but also foster creativity, inclusion, and personal growth among students. Their gratitude and enthusiasm highlight the importance of continued support for educational initiatives.

DRSPA Makes Its Case at Leg Hall



Several officers of the Delaware Retired School Personnel Association visited Legislative Hall April 16, 2026 to make the case for HB2, which raises the death benefit from \$7,000 to \$8,000, the first increase in 25 years.

DRSPA officers hosted an informal Pop-In lunch for legislators, which allowed them to discuss the need to update the benefit at a time when so many retirees are facing increasing costs and pressures.

The highly successful event was co-hosted by Representative Kim Williams and Senator Elizabeth “Tizzy” Lockman and drew lawmakers from around the state.

DRSPA President Denny Schwartz said she was pleased by the high number of lawmakers that attended, and their willingness to listen. “We were gratified by how the legislators asked about our priorities,” she said. “They seemed open to our reasoning that an increase at this time seems reasonable and fair.”

The burial benefit, established as part of the State Employees’ Pension Plan in the 1980s, is not contractual and may be modified by the General Assembly. Although the benefit has been periodically increased, it has not seen an adjustment since July 2001.

Since then, the average cost of a funeral has risen steadily—by 35 to 50 percent, according to the National Funeral Directors Association.

These funds offer peace of mind to pensioners and their families. Schwartz noted, “It may not seem like a big deal but \$1,000 added to the benefit will bring some peace of mind to a lot of families.”

HB2, sponsored by Representative William “Bill” Carson, is currently in the Appropriations Committee.



Members Warned of Senior Scams



Alan Rachko, Chief Investigator for the Consumer Protection Unit of the DOJ, presents information on scams

Scams are a serious danger to everyone, and seniors in particular. In 2025 alone, reported the FBI, Delaware victims lost more than \$31 million.

To help us all better understand, DRSPA invited Chief Investigator Alan Rachko from the Consumer Protection Unit of the Delaware Department of Justice to speak about the latest scams at the New Castle County meeting in April.

Mr. Rachko discussed a variety of topics, including Romance Scams, Lottery/Sweepstakes Scams, Emails, Text Alerts and Arrest Scams.

In Romance scams, contact is made via Facebook, dating sites, email, or text messages from an unknown number, said Mr. Rachko. If it's a female the male usually tells her that he is an American business owner and is currently in Dubai on business, or

on an oil rig, or a doctor. She gets flowers, and pictures of someone. He tells her that he trusts and loves her and wants her to help with his business because he cannot get to his money while overseas. He promises that when he returns, he will marry her, buy her a new house, and whatever she wants. In the meantime, she needs to send him money to help.

If the victim is a male, she will tell him that she is single, usually with a small child and looking for an older man. The man will receive pictures. She tells him that she loves him and wants to visit, but she needs money for the ticket, or her child is sick and needs money to help. Once the child is healthy, they will come to visit, and she wants to marry him. He gets excuse after excuse as to why she could not meet as planned. Keep in mind that the pictures look real, but anyone can get pictures off the internet and pretend to be someone else.

Lottery or Sweepstakes Scams frequently begin with an email, phone call, or text, telling you that you won. Once the dialogue starts, you are told to pay upfront fees and taxes. Once you start paying the request for fees and taxes it never stops. You keep getting told you owe more in fees. You never receive the prize money.

Email and texts from strangers are often suspect, said Mr. Rachko. They can range from a phony shipping problem with a package or a text from strangers saying "Hi." Another scam is an email offering gifts or prizes from companies you have accounts with or unauthorized charges.

Scammers pretend to have a warrant for your arrest, or a family member's arrest. A target is told their grandson or granddaughter was in a car crash, and was arrested. They need bail money in the form of gift cards. The caller will tell you to go to a store and buy the gift cards. Then they will call you back and they want the numbers on the back of the gift cards. The caller will also tell you not to tell anyone why you are buying so many gift cards.

In all instances, advised Mr. Rachko, **never give** your name, address, social security number, birthdate, or account number out to anyone. Don't believe messages that pop up on your computer that say you have a virus and to get rid of it call this number. Instead turn off your computer and get someone you know to help you with this problem.

The good news is that if any scams happen to you or you suspect something does not sound right or feel right you can call the Delaware Department of Justice Consumer Protection Unit at 1-800-220-5424 or go to <https://attorneygeneral.delaware.gov/fraud/cpu/> for more information.

DRSPA Legislative Update



DRSPA is making itself heard in Legislative Hall.

While our organization's primary focus remains on maintaining and securing the health plan for state retirees, we also have legislative priorities for the 2026 session.

Chief among them is the passage of HB2, which would raise the state burial benefit from \$7,000 to \$8,000. It would be the first increase to this benefit in 25 years.

This benefit, part of the State Employees' Pension Plan since the 1980s, is subject to periodic legislative adjustment and has not been increased since July 2001.

Since then, funeral costs have risen steadily—by 35 to 50 percent, according to the National Funeral Director's Association.

Over the past 25 years, legislators have put forth bills that raise the benefit. Currently, SB31 is in committee, and calls for the death benefit to be raised to \$10,000.

Testifying before the Joint Finance Committee (JFC) in February, our executive director and lobbyist Pati Nash said that if a pension increase is not feasible this year, a \$1,000 increase seems reasonable and fair.

Wanting to ensure the bill becomes law, DRSPA leaders from around the state made HB2 a key part of their presentation and comments to nearly 20 state legislators who attended a casual Pop-In Lunch at Legislative Hall on April 16, 2026. (see full article, page 5)

Also, Pati has been actively contacting and meeting with key legislators to advocate on behalf of Delaware's retirees and the death benefit.

DRSPA members have shown strong support by writing more than 100 postcards, which were delivered to Legislative Hall. Leaders and members may be recruited as the session continues to write letters, make phone calls or comment at a committee meeting.

DRSPA leaders will follow HB2 closely and keep our members informed. This is a prime example of banding together in one voice to advocate for Delaware's more than 30,000 state retirees.

Looking ahead, we encourage all members to participate in upcoming events and legislative sessions. Your involvement—whether through reaching out to lawmakers, attending meetings, or sharing your stories—makes a significant impact. Together, we can ensure that our voices remain strong and that the needs of Delaware's retirees are recognized and addressed in the halls of government.

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Executive Director's Report:



In the past several months, the Delaware Retired School Personnel Association has honored the mission of our organization by advocating for our members' interests.

Be it following the status of our health plan, or making the case in Legislative Hall for our benefits, we have championed concerns of the state's more than 30,000 retirees.

Joining a community of observers and committee members that represent retirees, DRSPA made its position clear that our health plan remains intact. In April, the State Employee Benefits Committee (SEBC) made a key decision that protects benefits for the next several years. (See article on Page 1)

In April, several officers visited Legislative Hall to promote HB2, which proposes raising the death benefit from \$7,000 to \$8,000—the first adjustment in a quarter-century. DRSPA officers held a well-attended Pop-In lunch for legislators, providing a valuable forum to highlight the need for an update, given rising costs affecting retirees. (see article on Page 5)

Overall, the first half of the year has been marked by strong engagement, productive conversations with legislators, and steady progress toward our goals.

For the remainder of the year we have a membership drive planned – tell your friends about DRSPA! – will watch the end of the legislative session in June and will hold our 70th annual meeting on October 14, 2026.

Best, Pati