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Calendar

January	
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	21
State police board meeting	24
Public school board meeting	31

On the Horizon

- State employees board meeting - February 7
- Valentine's Day - February 14
- Washington's birthday - February 18

Quick Links

- [ORS Member Website](#)

Public school reform is over! (or not)

For the public school members, the election window closed on January 9, 2013. Here are the final counts:

- 86.7% of public school members logged in to miAccount
- 82% (175,672) eligible public school members logged in and made an election

In the last few weeks of the window, the ORS crew was hopping.

- CS provided information to our members through the call center, the miAccount Message Board, and walk-ins
- AST and ER worked to have the new benefit plan structures ready to go in Clarety on February 1
- ER also worked closely with employers to help them prepare and implement reporting changes for new hires, new member benefit and healthcare plans, and new contribution rates
- CE added four more reform information webinars for members and gave a presentation for Detroit Federation of Teachers
- PS tracked everything from communications and miAccount logins to elections, member contact information, and more



While the election window closed for our members, efforts for the public school reform will continue at ORS. New forms, letters, processes, websites, policies, procedures, and more are being put into action.

CS will continue to take calls from members who still have questions. PS will image confirmation letters and new hire election forms and compile the data we need to show our success. Er will continue to work closely with employers as they implement new reporting changes, service credit bill changes, and contribution rates, and update the Reporting Instruction Manual. CE will send out confirmation letters and continue to update the member website, employer website, and publications.

And as always, we will address each question, letter, and call with the high level of

- [ORS Employer Website](#)

service we provide to all of our customers.

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Commonly Used Acronyms	
AST	Application Support Team
BLA	Business Leadership Assembly (<i>EPC, BPOs, and BPLs</i>)
BPD	Benefit Plan Design
BPL	Business Process Leader
BPO	Business Process Owner
CE	Customer Education
CS	Customer Service
DB	Defined Benefit
DC	Defined Contribution
DTMB	Department of Technology, Management and Budget
EPC	Executive Process Council (<i>Phil, Laurie H, Laurie M, and Anthony</i>)
EPO	Executive Process Owner
ER	Employer Reporting
ORS	Office of Retirement Services
PRIM	Preretirement Information Meeting (<i>public school employees</i>)
PRO	Preretirement Orientation (<i>state employees</i>)
PS	Process Support
SME	Subject Matter Expert
UAT	User Acceptance Testing

PoP launches a New Year's blitz

You've seen them: the posters, the framed art at your supervisors' desks, notepads, even an email template. What's all this fuss about? For an explanation, we spoke with **Anthony Estell** and **Tim McCormick**, who've been leading us in our Power of Perspectives and Forging Breakthroughs training:

AE: More than 2,300 years ago, Aristotle said "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." The more we're reminded of the concepts and ideas we learned in the Power of Perspectives and Forging Breakthroughs trainings, the more we're going to act upon them.

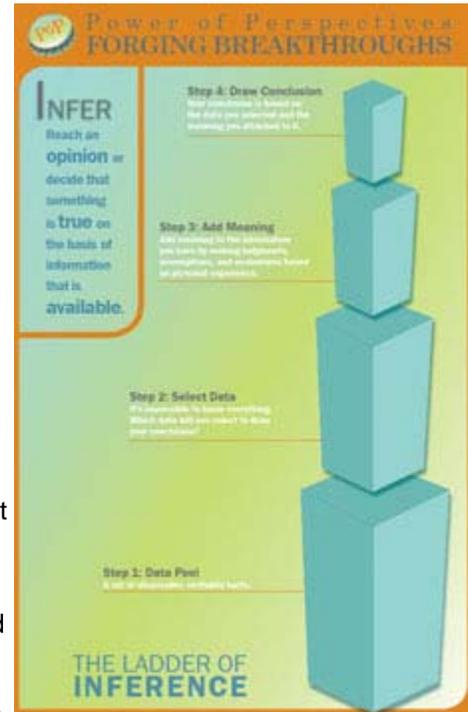
TM: And the more we do that, the stronger the habit becomes and the more successful we are at creating a work environment that showcases open-mindedness, respect, diversity, creativity, and innovation.

AE: The CE team proposed a marketing blitz for the start of the New Year to reinvigorate the PoP and FB momentum that we had going before the reforms.

TM: We deliberately focused the design of the materials on the Ladder of Inference and the high level advocacy and inquiry statements we learned about during the trainings. The more we're reminded of those tools, the more we're apt to use them, and the more habit-forming they become.

AE: This is just the start. Additional tools and resources will be rolled out in the coming weeks, and new staff will have opportunities to participate in the trainings. Those of us who are PoP/FB veterans can refresh our memories by visiting the PoP resources in the Knowledge Library and reviewing the [Forging Breakthroughs trainings online](#), which are available through March. Contact [Jennifer Carter](#) if you have trouble logging in.

Special thanks to **Ben Southwell**, **LuAnn Kern**, **Danielle Fowler**, and **Stormee Gallagher** for creating and distributing the materials.



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- **Innovate and Improve Customer Service**



Public school insurance rates mailed

On January 7, 2013, ORS mailed 155,000 letters with personalized insurance rate details to public school retirees who are enrolled in insurance coverage; the rates took effect January 1 and will be reflected in the January 25 pension payments. Pays Us enrollees received additional information regarding their cost and billing. More details and sample letters are available on the CS KL page under the Insurance tab.

- Best In Class Business Practices
- Instill Confidence in Staff Through Quality Communication
- Engage Top Talent to Realize Potential
- Continuously Renewed Business-Driven Technology
- Build Business Capacity Through Education and Development
- Proactive Policy Development and Legislative Strategy

Last EFT campaign letter goes to customers

The final letter in the effort to get all paper check recipients to convert to direct deposit has been sent to 601 members. Beginning with January payroll, benefit recipients without direct deposit will not receive their payments until they have submitted their direct deposit information to ORS.

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Coming

On December 17, ER welcomed **Katie Little** to the team as a student assistant. Katie worked as a temporary employee in ER for five months and is currently working on her bachelor's degree. Katie is from Grand Ledge and lives in Lansing where she enjoys cooking, arts, crafts, and the outdoors when not working or going to school full time.



On the move

Ryan Nevins began WOC as a supervisor in CS on December 4 Congratulations Ryan!

On January 7, **Lynn Stowell** ended her term as a WOC supervisor in CS and resumed her tech position. Welcome back, Lynn!

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It was heard by me through the grapevine

Let's take a minute to remember some of our favorite songs from the past few decades:

Cyndi Lauper – “Only Fun Is Wanted By Girls”

Whitney Houston – “You Will Always Be Loved By Me”

Eric Clapton – “The Sheriff Was Shot By Me But The Deputy Was Not Shot By Me”

Bon Jovi – “A Bad Name Was Given To Love By You”



If these sound familiar but wrong, there's a reason: passive voice. Passive voice is when the subject of your sentence (what you're talking about) is after the verb, or not there at all. It hides who (or what) did the action, is wordy and vague, and makes your readers work harder to understand what you're trying to say.

Here's an example of a passive sentence:

The form must be completed electronically.

In this sentence, it's unclear who should complete the form. The member? An attorney? A CPA? A better version of this sentence would be:



You should complete the form electronically.

It's clear, direct, and doesn't take much work to understand. To enlist Microsoft Word's help identifying passive voice, navigate to File > Options > Proofing, then click the Settings button next to Writing Style and select *passive sentences*. For more tips on how to punch up your writing, check out the Plain Language section of the [ORS Style Guide](#).

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ORS Purpose:
 We are an innovative retirement organization driven to empower our customers for a successful today and a secure tomorrow.

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Thanks for reading!!



Giving back on MLK Jr. Day of Service

The third Monday of every January marks the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service. It's the only federal holiday observed as "a day on, not a day off." Since the holiday was established in 1983, the Corporation for National and Community Service has been tasked with making it a national day of service. Here's how you can participate:

Volunteer on January 21st, or use your community leave on a different day.

Every fiscal year, state employees receive 8 hours of school and community leave to volunteer. You can find your balance in DCDS under the "SCHL" hours type; make sure to work with your supervisor to use them.

Find an event. The Corporation for National and Community Service has a website, MLKday.gov, to help you find a project near you. Just type in your ZIP code to search the available opportunities. Couldn't find one? Use the [CNCS guides](#) to start your own.

Just do it! The most important part of volunteering is showing up. As Martin Luther King Jr. put it, "Everyone can be great because anyone can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't even have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace."



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Note: Because some of the links in this newsletter point to network resources, some of the links may not work if you are reading this outside of the organization.