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MPSERS Benefit Estimate now more customer-friendly

Thanks to the efforts of many, public school customers are now seeing a redesigned benefit estimate that is easier to understand, includes more relevant information, and is more visually appealing. The new Clarety-generated estimate also streamlines and simplifies processing for staff.

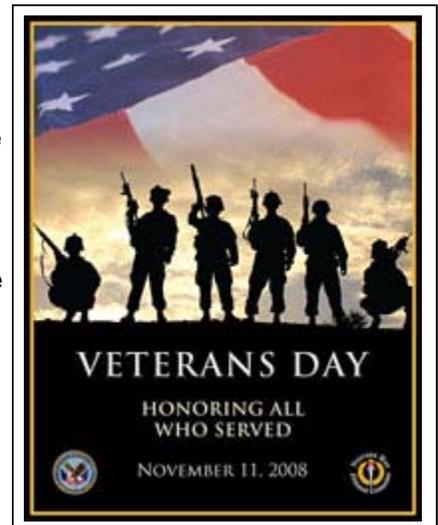
Previously, members would have to wade through a number of tables that might have little or no value to them. Some staff even manually removed unnecessary tables, requiring additional time and effort. Now, members get a letter-style document with the information most important to them right up front – namely, how much they could receive upon retirement. The document also includes the mailing address, eliminating the manual processing of these GBEs.

You can [view a sample of the new MPSERS GBE](#) and see additional features built into it. Data automatically populated from Clarety is shown in red, and text or tables that only appear if needed have ** in front of the text.

For example, if the request is for a straight-life option estimate, the new GBE will skip everything related to survivor estimates and only display the straight life information, from the estimate through the cost of living increase (MIP members only) and the Equated Plan estimate if that was requested. If the request includes survivor options, then all survivor-related information would show.

Other variable information includes either the highest three years or five years of final average compensation wages. If the member is eligible only for an Early Reduced plan, the letter indicates all options based on that reduction factor. If you select messages from the messages tab, a note at the beginning of the letter points out that there is important information at the end of the estimate.

The changes made to the MPSERS GBE are not designed for retirement application (RAP) setups. Until we can incorporate changes to the benefit summary letter, we



Don't just see Veterans Day as an extra day off. Take time to honor the people for which Veterans Day is celebrated. Scroll down to read the article What do Veterans mean to you?

Calendar

November

Veteran's day	11
Voices for Action 2008 Poverty Summit	13
Thanksgiving Holiday	27-28

December

Public School Employees Board Meeting	11
State Employees Board Meeting	18
Christmas Holiday	24-25
New Year's Eve	31

Quick Links

- [ORS Member Website](#)
- [ORS Employer Website](#)
- [Knowledge Library](#)

will operate using two different templates.

New templates for SERS and SPRS benefit estimates are in the works and should be available early next year.

This massive undertaking could not have been accomplished without the assistance of many who provided initial input, reviewed drafts, and offered valuable suggestions: **Ray Fleming, Laurie Mitchell, Mary Lowry, Jon Seeger, Chuck Simpson** (now retired), and **Anne Watros Rosemary Baker** created the template and all of the complex rules and logic behind the GBE. **Deepthi Chigurupati, Vivek Menon, and Venkat Vaidyanathan**, our technical support team from Saber, wrote all of the coding and ensured logic functioned correctly. **Pat VerPlanck** extensively tested every possible scenario and caught situations that were missed. **Angie Schrauben** coordinated our efforts to make sure we had everything we needed, and on time, for our release schedule.

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
CSC	Customer Service Center
DB	Defined Benefit
DC	Defined Contribution
DIT	Department of Information Technology
DMB	Department of Management and Budget
EPC	Executive Process Council (<i>Phil, Laurie, Tim, 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
T&T	Tools and Technology
UAT	User Acceptance Testing



New 401(k)/457 investment options

Effective December 1, 2008, the following changes will be made to the investment funds:



- Western Asset Core Bond Fund Instl will be replaced with PIMCO Total Return Fund I.
- Oakmark Equity and Income Fund, a balanced fund, will be added.
- Legg Mason Large Cap Growth Fund Y will be replaced with Rainier Large Cap Growth Equity Fund, a collective trust fund.

If you have an existing balance or investment election in either Western Asset Core Bond Fund or Legg Mason Large Cap Growth Fund, it will automatically be changed to PIMCO Total Return Fund I and Rainier Large Cap Growth Equity Fund, respectively.

If none of your current balances or investment elections are in Western Asset Core Bond Fund or Legg Mason Large Cap Growth Fund, no changes will be made to your account. You may choose to invest in one of the new funds if you wish.

All plan participants were mailed a full explanation of these changes in October. If you do not want this automatic transfer to take place, you can change balances or investment elections prior to 2:00 pm on November 28 by contacting ING at <http://stateofmi.ingplans.com> or by calling the toll-free Plan Information Line at 800-748-6128. More information about these changes and the new investment options is available on the website.

An additional question for ING after the Fall All-Staff meeting
 Q - In view of current crisis would you advise staying the course with investments or making what type of changes?
 A - The best answer is found in the Quarterly 401(k) & 457 Plans Newsletter for the 3rd quarter 2008. Click on the following link and navigate to the article "[A Word about Recent Market Events.](#)"



November 2008 Retirement Times Delivered

The most recent issue of the school employer newsletter, *Retirement Times*, is now available online



[Click here to view the latest Balanced Scorecard.](#)



at www.michigan.gov/psru. *Retirement Times* is issued quarterly and provides news, tips, and updates to school payroll, benefit, and human resource staff.

2009 Insurance Rates for public school retirees

Thanks to the BPD's proactive planning, the 2009 insurance rates were approved at the MPSERS board meeting in October. The insurance rates are available for [viewing on the member website](#). The rates will accompany the retirement packets created in Clarety, beginning December 22.

Poverty in Michigan

Few states have been hit harder by the national economic crisis than Michigan. The loss of thousands of manufacturing jobs and continuing declines in the automobile industry have been compounded by the instability of financial markets worldwide. As we look for answers to our economic problems, keep in mind that although we may be hurting, there are those who are suffering much more.

In an effort to help our neediest citizens, several Michigan advocacy groups established the [Voices for Action Network](#) to formulate realistic and effective state and community-based actions to eliminate poverty.

The Voices for Action Network is sponsoring the 2008 Poverty Summit to spotlight best practices that are maximizing economic opportunities for low-income Michigan citizens and creating regional collaboration to spread these practices across the state. Inspired by the goal set by the Center for American Progress to reduce poverty in our nation by half over the next 10 years, the Voices for Action Network is determined to see similar results in Michigan.

You can do your part too. Below are national and world organizations mobilizing to combat poverty in the nation and in our world. You can be part of a global effort.

- Half in Ten: From Poverty to Prosperity.
- Catholic Campaign for Human Development.
- Coalition on Human Needs.

Explore the Voices for Action website to learn more about poverty in Michigan, and how you can help.



Harvest Gathering totals

The 2008 Harvest Gathering competition was a huge success, raising 850 pounds of food.

The chili team (Team 1) donated 164 items of chili and 45 non-chili items. Their donations earned them first place and a total of 119 points. The beef stew team (Team 2), donated 43 cans of beef stew and 218 non-beef stew items. The beef stew team, although great contributors, placed second with a score of -175 points. Congratulations to both teams for their contributions in this year's Harvest Gathering. The Harvest Gathering casual day button sale was also a success raising \$690.00.

A special thanks to everyone who participated in this year's Harvest Gathering events. You truly made this year's campaign a huge success!

What do veterans mean to you?

According to Dictionary.com, a veteran is: - a person who has served in a military force, especially one who has fought in a war, of who has had service or experience in warfare.

Fought in a war. Experience in warfare. Can you truly imagine the bravery or convictions of either? Veterans Day allows us to set aside a day to thank and honor all of those who served honorably in the military - in wartime or peacetime. It gives everyone a day to thank veterans for their service, to acknowledge that their contributions to our national security are appreciated, and to emphasize the fact that all those who served, not only those who died, have sacrificed and done their duty.

In an effort to keep our freedoms, thousands of soldiers make sacrifices, including time with their families. They fight to protect us while missing their child's birthdays and giving up family gatherings at holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas. Think about the daily events that occur in your life that you take for granted, and then think of how much our veterans have given us and how thankful we need to be for their sacrifices.

Take time on November 11 to truly honor all that have served in our military forces. You can learn about the [history of Veteran's Day](#), a holiday that came to life after the end of World War I, and much more by visiting the [United States Department of Veterans Affairs website](#).

Take part in a local Veterans Tribute

The Michigan Historical Museum will host the [Veterans Tribute](#), a free annual presentation located at 702 W. Kalamazoo Street in Lansing. The event features: a guest speaker, a massing of the colors ceremony, and a reception with refreshments. The program begins at 2:00 p.m on Sunday, November 9. and features historian Tom Wiener of the American Folk Life Center at the Library of Congress, and the Jackson Northwest High School Choir as the special musical guest.



ORS Reunion



ORS staff joined some of our retired colleagues on October 29 at Tony M's restaurant. [View more photos now.](#)



AST welcomed **Clarissa Cram** on October 20. Clarissa is in her second year at Lansing Community College and hopes to attend Central Michigan University to pursue nutritional education. She worked at Meijer prior to accepting this position.

Shanna Hoss has returned to ORS and joined ER on October 29. Shanna will be assisting while an employee is out on medical leave. She previously worked in CSC.



Clarissa Cram



Shanna Hoss

AST bid farewell to **Venkat Vaidyanathan** and **Dave Gabler**. Venkat has left for work with Saber/HP/EDS in Baltimore and Dave has accepted another position within DIT.

Staff on the move

Baskar Rajamani will be AST's Acting Development Team Manager.

Jimmy Isaac will temporarily take over the Application Architect position while Baskar is in the Acting Manager role.

Anitha Japa will temporarily take over the Functional Analyst position.

Halloween photos

DMB Mission:
Partners in achieving
excellence

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

The *LookOut* is
published by the
Office of Retirement
Services,
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and Budget, State of
Michigan

Director:
Phil Stoddard
Edited by Customer
Education



[View more Halloween photos now.](#)

EMPAC would like to hear your feedback on this year's Halloween festivities. Please take the time to fill out the [2008 Halloween survey](#).



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.