ORTA QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Tell us who you are and where you worked during your educational career.

I am a graduate of Miami University (Oxford, OH) with a B. S. in Secondary Education (English), and I have a M.Ed. in School Counseling from Xavier University (OH).

I spent over 35 years as a High School English teacher and guidance counselor with the Cincinnati Public Schools. I have been an active member of my local union, the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers (CFT), including serving as Collective Bargaining Chair and serving on the Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT) Retirement Committee. Since retiring, I have been active in the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers Retirement Chapter (CFT-R), currently serving as president, and I am a member of the Ohio Retired Teacher Association. I am a member of Hamilton County Retired Teachers Association, and I am active in the Cincinnati Educational Justice Coalition and the Cincinnati AFL-CIO Labor Council.

2.Tell us why you are running for the STRS Board and what skill set you will bring to this position.

I am running for the STRS board because the Board needs a new voice, a new vision, and a new commitment to making sure STRS makes every effort to increase returns and commit that retirees will receive a COLA. The Board needs a person who understands what retirees are feeling and has led from the front lines to mobilize retirees and active members on retirement issues.

I will work to ensure that charter schools pay into STRS from pay deductions the same way that traditional public schools do.

I would encourage STRS to advocate at the Federal level to have Medicare start at age 50 or 55 to reduce STRS health care for those who retire before age 65. Reducing STRS healthcare costs could free up healthcare funds that STRS could bring back to the defined benefit plan.

3.Tell us your background with STRS issues. How well informed are you?

As President of the CFT-R, I worked with CFT's actives to host a meeting for STRS staff to meet with our members and other SW Ohio OEA locals to hear about what actions STRS might consider about the fund, the COLA and changing the discount rate before they made changes. I have followed the STRS board meeting since 2006 as a member of the OFT Retirement Committee.

I just participated in the National Conference on Public Employee Retirement Systems Fall Conference (Feb. 2-3, 2021) thanks to the American Federation of Teachers' support for Pension Board members.

1. Feel free to offer any additional thoughts you have with regards to your candidacy?

Groups can tighten their amortization period by adjusting the period in years or using a fixed (or closed) method that pays all liabilities in a fixed time frame. The amortization period could be increased from 30 years to 35 years to reflect the number of years of service teachers will work.

According to the NCPERS, 2020 Retirement Study, funds with members who are not eligible for Social Security tend to offer higher COLAs (2.1 percent) than those with members who are eligible for Social Security (1.5 percent). Large funds have an average COLA 0.4 percentage points lower than small and medium-sized funds. We in Ohio must push STRS to do all it can to increase its return rate to restore the COLA.