

Joint Statement to the Iowa Legislature on IPERS

The following groups urge legislators and the IPERS board to move cautiously as they seek solutions to the long-term viability of the public retirement fund:

Area Education Agencies
Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities
Iowa Association of School Boards
Iowa Rural Water Association
Iowa State Education Association
School Administrators of Iowa
Urban Education Network

As you go forward and deliberate potential changes to the IPERS system, we ask you to keep these three points in mind:

- IPERS is an important tool for attracting and retaining workers in the public sector. Many of the sectors represented by the listed organizations already face challenges in attracting qualified workers to fill openings. To maintain our competitiveness with the private sector, a strong retirement benefit is necessary.
- Immediate changes to retirement benefits, such as lengthening the required years of age and service to qualify for full benefits, could cause a large exodus of experience and qualified personnel. This will particularly negatively impact education, as many of the most experienced teachers in shortage areas such as math and science may decide to retire rather than risk losing benefits. Municipal utilities share the same concern, as they deal with an aging workforce and difficulties in attracting qualified personnel to replace retirees.
- The long-term viability of the fund needs to be addressed. IPERS is an important benefit for public employees at all levels. This will require more than minor fixes or simply altering the age at which full benefits accrue. Short-term solutions are not the answer.

We recognize that long-term changes will be necessary to ensure the viability of the IPERS fund. The goal of any changes to the IPERS retirement benefit should be to minimize the negative impact on employers and employees while ensuring the long-term sustainability of the fund.