

**NORTH DAKOTA TEACHERS' FUND FOR RETIREMENT
MINUTES OF THE
JULY 10, 2025, BOARD RETREAT**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Rob Lech, President
Mike Burton, Vice President
Kirsten Baesler, State Supt. DPI
Thomas Beadle, State Treasurer
Scott Evanoff, Trustee
Cody Mickelson, Trustee
Alexis Rasset, Trustee

STAFF PRESENT: Missy Kopp, Exec. Assistant
Sarah Mudder, Communications/Outreach Dir.
Chad Roberts, DED/CRO
Sara Seiler, Internal Audit Supvr.
Jodi Smith, Interim Exec. Director
Denise Weeks, Retirement Program Mngr.

OTHERS PRESENT: Nick Archuleta, ND United
Mary Carlson, RTA
Aimee Copas, NDCEL
Mary Kae Kelsch, Attorney General's Office

CALL TO ORDER:

Dr. Lech, President of the Teachers' Fund for Retirement (TFFR) Board of Trustees, started the retreat at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, July 10, 2025. The retreat was held in the Pioneer Room in the ND State Capitol, 600 E. Boulevard Ave., Bismarck, ND.

TFFR Member Education and Plan Survey:

Mr. Roberts provided a demo of MyTFFR, the new pension administration system that was launched in February. He explained the history of the project and described the help features available to members and employers as they learn how to use the new system. Members have been very receptive to the help features and willing to learn how to use the new system. Employers have been much less receptive to using the help features so they can submit their reports and payment through the system. Mr. Roberts demonstrated some of the system's capabilities. Board members, staff, and stakeholders discussed some of the challenges staff have encountered so far and the best ways to communicate with employers to ensure that they are learning how to use the system so they can submit required reports and payments on time.

Stakeholder Needs:

Board members, staff, and stakeholder group representatives were put into small groups to discuss questions about TFFR member education. Each group shared their takeaways from the conversation with the group for further discussion. The takeaways included:

- A step-up approach to member education, starting with students who are considering teaching as a career and moving up through the life cycle
- Communicating to the members that the retirement plan is part of the overall compensation package for members

- Engage in the Business Manager certification process
- Ask Super Users to aid in outreach to the Business Managers
- Targeted communication for retirees about the advantages to using the MyTFFR system
- Create videos with retirees explaining how the plan has worked for them along their life cycle

The group discussed the takeaways and what should be prioritized and ways to achieve these goals.

The Board recessed at 12:00 p.m. and reconvened at 12:50 p.m.

Ms. Kelsch joined the retreat at 12:50 p.m.

Proposed Board Policy Discussion:

Mr. Roberts provided an update on the actions staff have taken to respond to employers who are late with their reports and payments. The system is set up to automatically assess a \$250 fine when an employer is late with their report or payment. This authority is clearly laid out in statute. In the past, when an employer continued to be late with reports and payments, staff have stated in a letter that TFFR will withhold foundation aid payments if they do not become compliant. There is no authority for TFFR to withhold foundation aid funds, only the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) can do that. RIO staff, Board members, and Ms. Kelsch discussed the options for addressing the problem of noncompliant employers and whether it was best addressed through a board policy, administrative rules, or a statute change.

ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business to come before the Board, Dr. Lech adjourned the retreat at 1:53 p.m.

Prepared by,

Missy Kopp, Assistant to the Board