

Section 5

Chapter Events, Activities & Goals, and Timeline



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Quick Start to Websites and Newsletters

Today's potential members are likely to check out your chapter by visiting your chapter website. If your newsletters are linked, those will be checked out, too. What kind of first impression will you make? While the personal invitation is always most effective, new retirees are most likely internet savvy, having used it for many years at school and at home. If you don't have an internet presence, you may lose out on some great potential members.

Your chapter by-laws probably state that the chapter establish regular contact with members via publication of a newsletter or other forms of written communication. Websites, Facebook postings, and a written newsletters are all ways to fulfill this requirement.

NEWSLETTERS

Determine your purpose. What do you want to communicate to your members – and potential members? Google "newsletter formats" for links to some easy-to-use formats. Use *Word* to create your own framework. It's important that it have some style. Seek consistency in layout from issue to issue so it feels friendly and familiar to the readers. Encourage committees to submit reports to cut down on meeting handouts. The info will then be available to everyone, not just those who attend the meetings. This is the voice of your chapter.

Some basics should probably always to be present:

PASR and Chapter Identity	Contact information	Chapter activity, photos
Officers, committee chairs	Meeting dates, location, time	Website address
Message from the president	Treasurer's report	PASR mission statement

Now expand the basics:

Luncheon ordering information	Upcoming program information	Addresses for Cards of Cheer
Recent minutes	Highlights of chapter activity	Recent bereavements
Committee reports	Member focus	Updates on current issues
Region information	RECRO	Newsletter archive

But what about an online presence? A few chapters maintain a Facebook page and post upcoming information. That's great, but it's hard to provide more in-depth member resources just with Facebook.

A chapter website will take some initial effort to set up but it's not hard to maintain. First a website host is needed. There are several good ones out there but some are aimed more toward commercial needs. PASR recommends wix.com. Contact Samantha (samantha@pasr.org) for help. She can send a link to have access to a website that has a template. She can also change who has access to it if your local webmaster is no longer able to continue.

Every chapter that has a website can have it linked to the PASR.org on the *Find a Chapter* map. Click on the region which then links to each region chapter, with further links to chapter websites. Take a look at what others are doing to get some ideas for yours.

Important design elements:

1. Plain, sans serif fonts are easiest to read. Verdana, size 15, is an example. Avoid tiny fonts as a way of fitting in more text. Better to redesign the content and placement of the text and keep it easier to read.
2. Plain white or pastel backgrounds for text are least distracting and easiest to read. Avoid busy patterns. Avoid light text on a dark background, which some find harder to read.
3. It must be friendly to both mobile devices and computers.
4. Too many photos or large files can make it slow to load on mobile. Use the “hide feature” on mobile view editor to reduce amount for mobile devices. Sites like <https://compressjpeg.com/> make it easy to reduce file size of images.
5. Put important information up front on the homepage without the need to search interior pages for basic information. Update often!
6. Feature special recognitions.
7. Create hyperlinks to state website information rather than reprinting text on your site.
8. The website may be the first look by perspective members; show a positive, modern impression.
9. The website must be of use to chapter members with ample resources such as By-Laws.
10. Keep it simple rather than flashy; remember senior citizen eyes!

What to include:

Begin by looking at other websites, perhaps starting with other PASR chapters. Information is organized differently on a website than in a newsletter. A website homepage menu will have perhaps 5 or 6 main items on a menu. Clicking on a menu bar tab will open an inside page. There can be further inside pages or links that can open special information. The website builder will let you choose a format that you like.

Give consideration to your website address. Free addresses tend to be longer and more complicated. It can be worth it to pay a fee for a domain that yields an easy to use and remember address. Look into it. Google has domain purchase options.

Sites such as *wix.com* that give you the format to produce a website have help topics and training videos. Watch them and take notes. Allow yourself the time to learn the tools and how to operate in that world.

Pictures can be organized in galleries or used to illustrate text. Create archives of past issues of your chapter newsletters. Create a respectful page of links to obits for deceased members. Create a page of links to PASR information. There is no limit. Remember that you don't have to do it all at once. Get basic information in place. Try it out.

Remember that no one can see your website until you are ready for others to see it. This is called publishing the site or having it go “live”. When you work with it in edit mode, no one can see how you manipulate the site, until you are ready and publish again.

Building Strong Chapters

Event Frequency + Variety = Success!

Frequency...

In 1964, when PASR began officially recognizing local chapter organizations with the granting of charters, applicants were required to certify that they would hold at least two general membership meetings per year. Today, chapters that continue to meet but twice a year will experience great difficulty attracting many new, younger members. They will find it extremely difficult to identify individuals willing to assume leadership positions. Activities, benefits, and services provided by the chapter will increasingly diminish, further limiting the chapters' prospects of attracting new members. Ultimately, chapters that meet but twice a year will fail.

In its survey of all chapters in 2005, the Chapter Leaders Commission found a direct correlation between frequency of chapter "membership events" and the overall strength of the chapter organization. By "membership event" we mean any activity of the chapter to which all members are invited and in which they are encouraged to participate.

Very simply, the more often a chapter provides opportunities for its members to assemble, the stronger that chapter will be in terms of membership growth and membership engagement. Think about it. How much enthusiasm can members possibly have for their organization if they are given but two opportunities per year to interact with one another? Can members really get to know one another by meeting just a couple hours every six months?

Retirees today have greater social and economic opportunities than those available in the past. Retiring from school service at younger ages, they often remain in the workforce and pursue second careers. There are much greater opportunities to travel and more groups in existence today seeking volunteers. With improved longevity, retirees often spend as much time or more taking care of aging parents as they do visiting their grandchildren. Family obligations have increased.

All this and more means today's retirees are very busy. They will not likely be able to attend every chapter event. If there are but two annual opportunities for a member to attend, and he/she can not make one or both events because of some other obligation on the dates and times selected by the chapter, the individual may discontinue membership.

The Chapter Leaders Commission found that most chapters need to provide more options for their members to participate in chapter events. Ideally, there should be an event occurring every month to which

all members are invited to participate. At the very least, chapters should try to organize and conduct five membership events per year, three of which should include a “business meeting.” By business meeting we mean a segment of the agenda devoted to formal reports from the various committee chairmen explaining what their committees are doing. Such reports are essential to convey a sense of all the organization does to serve the varied needs and interests of its members.

Variety...

If the only activities your chapter provides its members are general membership luncheons, your membership is going to be limited. Not all members and certainly not all of the potential members for your chapter value the typical PASR chapter general membership luncheon.

It is important to understand, first, that many retirees do not wish to drive great distances to attend county-wide meetings of our group, particularly when the group consists of retirees from multiple districts. Also, many retirees are simply not able to meet for 2-3 hours during the middle of the day for a luncheon, because of employment, family obligations, and volunteer activities.

Chapter general membership luncheons are certainly important and should not be discontinued. They do, in fact, serve the needs and interests of a great number of members. It is just that there are a greater number today that may feel otherwise, that the standard PASR luncheon format does not serve their needs or appeal to their interests.

To reach those who have not been attending your general membership luncheons, you should consider scheduling additional events at locations and times different from those of your general membership luncheons. And, you should vary what occurs at these events in order to appeal to the varied needs and interests of your members.

We all worked in the public schools, but we do not all have the same needs and interests. Some join PASR for social reasons. Some join to acquire economic benefits. Some join to receive the information we provide. Some join to support all of the association’s altruistic activities. Successful chapters, the Chapter Leaders Commission found, are those that provide multiple opportunities for members to assemble and different types of events.

So, besides general membership luncheons, what other types of events do PASR chapters sponsor or conduct? There are several, including these:

After School Breakfast Network These are relatively small, local gatherings of school retirees. Typically they are scheduled to occur at a local restaurant on a certain day every month, often over

breakfast. They are primarily social in nature, with just a brief report from a “PASR host” telling the group what the PASR State Association is doing that month.

Chapters are increasingly forming such groups as a means of reaching and serving members who are less willing/able to drive great distances or who can not meet during the noon hours. Also, more chapters are coming to realize that if they do not start these groups, retirees will form them on their own initiative and the chapter will ultimately lose contact with them. Today, there are far more retirees meeting in small, informal groups that are not affiliated with PASR or any other organization, than there are retirees attending PASR chapter luncheons.

Anyone who is interested in starting a small local breakfast gathering, or who wants to receive the *After School Breakfast Network* to take to a local group of school retirees that you know meet in your area every month, should contact PASR Headquarters. Call (717) 697-7077, or send an email to pasr@pasr.org

RECREO Events

These include short trips, cultural tours, and/or extended vacation opportunities for members. Organized by chapter RECREO volunteers, they are offered to members who might wish to travel together in a group. Programs vary significantly across the state and are often tailored to address the varied interests, physical abilities, and financial means chapter members.

In some chapters the RECREO program consists solely of announced dates and times for interested members to meet at a local museum or cultural event. In other chapters RECREO events include bus trips for varying lengths of time and travel overseas.

The Chapter Leaders Commission strongly recommends that all chapters establish a local RECREO program. The Commission found that chapters having a RECREO program secure much greater member participation in all activities of the chapter than chapters not having RECREO programs. Also, chapters with RECREO programs tend to be much stronger financially, as RECREO events often generate additional revenue for the chapter organizations.

The State RECREO Planning Committee has just recently published a “how to” guide for chapters interested in either starting or improving their chapter RECREO programs. To obtain a copy, again, please contact PASR Headquarters.

Meet Your Legislator Events

These are special breakfasts or luncheons to which all legislators and members are invited to attend. The purpose is for members to have an opportunity to meet their legislators, for PASR to express its

appreciation to those legislators who meet regularly with our legislative volunteers, and for legislators to communicate directly with their school retiree constituents in a relaxed environment.

The events are organized and directed by chapter Legislative-Political Education Committee (L-PEC) volunteers. If held as an event separate from the regular chapter general membership luncheons, or if held by a chapter that regularly conducts at least five general membership luncheons per year, the State L-PEC Committee will reimburse chapters for the costs of the legislators' meals.

Meet Your Legislator Events have strong appeal to individuals interested in securing pension/health insurance benefit increases. The State L-PEC has also produced a "how to" guide for chapters wanting to organize local Meet Your Legislator/Legislative Appreciation Events. Simply contact PASR Headquarters to request a copy.

Picnics/Holiday Dinners

Many PASR chapters organize picnics for their members. They are often very popular events for those members whose interests are primarily social and who are less interested in attending the often lengthy business meetings that occur at regular general membership luncheons.

A particularly successful type of picnic held by some chapters is the one billed as a "We do not have to go back to school picnic!" Again, entirely social with no business meetings, these events are scheduled to coincide with the start of the school year. Chapters having these kinds of picnics have attracted media attention and found them to be a very good event to attract first-year retirees.

Several chapters also organize special holiday dinners, such as during the month of December. They are mostly social affairs, all fun and very little, if any, business. Some chapters, though, successfully incorporate community service initiatives with the holiday events, such as canned food drives and mitten trees.

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Member Benefits and Services Seminars

All chapter events provide opportunities for members to renew and make new acquaintances and to socialize with one another. It would be a mistake, though, to assume that all members simply want to socialize. Many are looking for information on a wide variety of topics to help them live happier, healthier, financially secure, and productive lives in retirement.

PASR's endorsed membership benefits and service providers are all committed to attend and present information to members. The information presented by the providers is heavily weighted toward

providing education as opposed to promoting the purchase of specific products. The endorsed long-term care provider, for example, will present a program explaining what long-term care insurance is all about and who should and should not purchase it. They will not promote a particular company policy at a seminar your chapter might sponsor.

To obtain contact information about PASR's endorsed member benefit and services providers, please contact PASR Headquarters.

Success...

Often chapters that institute a new type of event make the mistake of judging it a failure when the number who attended was smaller than the number who attend regular general membership luncheons. There is also a tendency by chapter leaders to try to add more things to the agenda at regularly scheduled general membership luncheons rather than schedule additional events. The thinking is often that you must have high attendance at every event in order to be successful.

The more appropriate measure of success for a new event is not how many members in total attended, but how many members attended who do not normally attend regular general membership luncheons. Did the event succeed in attracting new members or engage existing members who were not attending the chapter's other events? This is a far more important question to evaluate.

The goal is to engage more members in activities of their association. Providing your members more frequent opportunities to meet with one another and varying the types of experiences members gain from each event will enable your chapter to accomplish the goal and achieve success!

2023 PASR Timeline for Regions and Chapters

<u>Deadline (approx)</u>	<u>Individuals Responsible</u>	<u>Action Requested</u>
January 1, 2023	State Committee Chairs	Review Chapter Goals and Activities throughout year for potential changes
January 17, 2023	Chapter Presidents & Region Directors	Board Commendation Recommendations due to HQ (https://www.pasr.org/bod-citation-nomination/)
February 3, 2023	PASR Office Staff	Send 2023 Chapter Goals and Activities to Chapter Presidents
April 18, 2023	Chapter Presidents & Region Directors	Board Commendation Recommendations due to HQ (https://www.pasr.org/bod-citation-nomination/)
July 1, 2023	PASR Office Staff	Send Community Service Outstanding Volunteer Reporting Form to Community Service Chapter Chairs
July 1, 2023	PASR Office Staff	Send SSMHF Receipts/Expenditures forms to Chapter SSMHF Chair, Treasurers, and Presidents
July 1, 2023	PASR Office Staff	Send John Dillon Award nomination forms to Chapter Presidents.
July 15, 2023	Chapter Presidents	Send John Dillon nominations received from chapters to PASR headquarters
July 18, 2023	Chapter Presidents & Region Directors	Board Commendation Recommendations due to HQ (https://www.pasr.org/bod-citation-nomination/)
July 31, 2023	Chapter Community Service Chairs	Send completed Outstanding Volunteer nominations to Region Community Service Chair
July 31, 2023	Chapter Treasurers	Send Completed SSMHF Receipts/Expenditures form to PASR headquarters
August 15, 2023	Region Community Service Chairs	Send Outstanding Volunteer nominations received from chapters to PASR headquarters (samantha@pasr.org)
September 1, 2023	PASR Office Staff	Send region election certification forms to region secretaries (odd-numbered regions).
October 1, 2023	Region Educational Support Chairs	Send requests for educational support grant allocation to PASR headquarters (kristenh@pasr.org).
October 2, 2023	Chapter Presidents & Region Directors	Board Commendation Recommendations due to HQ (https://www.pasr.org/bod-citation-nomination/)
October 15 - 17, 2023	Delegates to the Meeting of the House of Delegates	Meeting of the House of Delegates at the Double Tree in Cranberry, PA
November 1, 2023	Chapter Recreo Chairs	Send information for 2024 Chapter trips and RECREO events to headquarters (submissions@pasr.org) for PASR Newsletter and website.
December 1, 2023	State Committee Chairs	Send 2024 Chapter Goals and Activities Changes to Mark Krempa (mkrempa@pasr.org)
December 1, 2023	Chapter Presidents	Deadline for Chapter Events/Calendar to submissions@pasr.org for inclusion on PASR website calendar.
December 3, 2023	Region Secretaries	Send completed region election certification to PASR headquarters (kristenh@pasr.org).

PASR 2026

Chapter Goals and Activities

GOAL 1: Expand/Improve Services to Others

Activity #1 — Develop/Participate In/ Expand a Project or Activity Serving Youth

The Community Service Committee is encouraging chapters to develop/participate in/ expand a chapter activity which benefits youth of any age in their areas.

Activity #2 — Increase Educational Support Grant(s)

The Educational Support Committee is encouraging chapters to award one or more Educational Support Grant(s) or to increase the amount of existing grants to active school personnel, support personnel, and/or other entity that serves the needs of public school children in their areas.

Activity #3— Increase Social Services Memorial Honor Fund Services

The Social Service Memorial Honor Fund Committee is encouraging chapters to increase services to temporarily “confined” (hospital, homebound, assisted living and nursing homes) members.

Activity #4— Initiate or Expand a Project or Activity Alleviating Hunger

The Community Service Committee is encouraging chapters to either initiate or expand a special project or activity to alleviate hunger in their areas.

Activity #5— Promote Individual Giving to Memorial Honor Fund

The Social Service Memorial Honor Fund Committee is encouraging the giving of individual and chapter donations to the Memorial Honor Fund that are given in honor or in memory of individuals.

GOAL 2: Expand/Improve Social Opportunities for Members

Activity #1 — Conduct and Publicize Chapter Recreo Events

The Recreo Committee is encouraging chapters to conduct and publicize a chapter Recreo event in the December-*PASR Newsletter*, as well as online on the PASR Recreo calendar.

Activity #2 — Promote Participation in the State Recreo Event

The Recreo Committee is encouraging chapters to include an article in their local newsletters and put it on their website/social media site, and/or invite a Boscov's representative to their local chapter meetings, to promote participation in the annual statewide Recreo event.

Activity #3 — Develop and Submit a Plan for Chapter Activities

The Board of Directors is encouraging chapters to develop a plan for chapter activities for the year, including multiple social events. List all planned activities and not simply a schedule of meetings.

Activity #4 — Conduct New Retiree Welcome Event

The Retirement Planning Committee is encouraging chapters to conduct a special event (such as picnics, breakfasts, etc.) just for former school employees (nonmembers) who retired during the past five years and not simply invite the retirees to attend a regular chapter event.

GOAL 3: Expand/Improve Information to Members/Nonmembers

Activity #1 — Distribute PASR Materials at PSERS Foundation for Your Future Seminars

The Retirement Planning Committee is recommending that chapters plan to be present and distribute PASR materials for PSERS Foundations for Your Future seminars that occur in their area. PSERS website should be consulted about times and locations.

Activity #2 — Establish and Maintain a Chapter Website/Social Media Site

The Board of Directors is encouraging chapters to establish a chapter website with links to social media sites, and/or a social media site, and maintain it with the names of current officers and scheduled dates for upcoming events.

Activity #3 — Conduct Both a Pre-Retirement and/or a Post-Retirement Event

The Retirement Planning Committee is encouraging chapters, using the references found on the PASR website to plan and conduct pre- and/or post-retirement events where quality, relevant information is shared. Retirement Fairs and Expos are good events to help sponsor and/or participate in as a vendor.

Activity #4 — Present Laretta Woodson Awards

The Educational Support Committee is encouraging chapters to present Laretta Woodson Awards to both an educator and a school support professional in their areas during the year at a school function, i.e., school assembly, in-service day, or school board meeting. A copy of the press release or news article is to be submitted to headquarters. Chapters are encouraged to send the recipient copies of their chapter newsletters.

Activity #5 — Develop and Submit an Legislative Issues Activity Plan

The Legislation/Political Education Committee is encouraging chapters to develop and submit an activity plan to headquarters on how the chapter will engage and educate local members on the PASR legislative issues.

Activity #6 — Plan and Conduct a Meet Your Legislators Event

The Legislation/Political Education Committee is encouraging chapters to plan and conduct a Meet Your Legislator(s) event or an appreciation event for the area legislator(s).

Activity #7 — Promote an Understanding of Legislative Issues

The Legislative/Political Education Committee is encouraging each chapter to help promote an understanding of legislative issues to contact team members and the local membership and to assist in that endeavor by having chapter representation at Regional Legislative Council meetings.

Activity #8 — Expand/Improve Information to Members/Nonmembers

The Public Relations Committee urges chapters to improve relationships (contacts) with all types of media for better promotion of PASR and to utilize the Public Relations Media Award.

GOAL 4: Expand/Improve Economic Benefits for Members

Activity #1 — Publish State MB&S Articles in Chapter Newsletters

The Member Benefits and Services Committee is recommending that chapters publish state MB&S benefit articles twice each year in the chapter newsletter.

Activity #2 — Utilize a Speaker from One of the State Endorsed Benefits

The Member Benefits and Services Committee is encouraging chapters to have a speaker from any of the state endorsed benefit vendors make a presentation at a chapter function.

Activity #3 — Publish MB&S Testimonials

The Member Benefits and Services Committee is encouraging each chapter to solicit and publish testimonial articles regarding the use of endorsed services available to retirees and the money saved on the use of these services.

Activity #4 — Increase Number of Members Logging PASR Website

The Public Relations Committee is encouraging each chapter to increase the total number of PASR members, from their area, registered on the PASR website, so that the association can engage more members directly in efforts to protect our pension system and promote improvements in our benefits.

GOAL 5: Grow and Strengthen Your Association

Activity # 1 — Recruit New State and Chapter Members

The Membership Committee continues to encourage chapters to increase the number of state members from their area by conducting a membership campaign.

Activity #2— Nominate a Volunteer of the Year

The Community Service Committee is encouraging chapters to select an Outstanding Volunteer or Volunteers from their chapter each year. The method of canvassing the membership and gathering the data for the selection is at the discretion of the chapter's Community Service Committee. The name(s) and address(es) of the Outstanding Volunteer or Volunteers will be reported to the region chair and/or HQ.

Activity #3 — Elect a Chapter President-Elect

The Board of Directors is encouraging chapters to elect a person to serve as president-elect for their chapter and to report the name and contact information for this person to PASR Headquarters in November or sooner, if that position has been filled. Chapter and region updated directories are to be submitted to headquarters in January.

Activity #4— Help Maintain Membership Records

The Membership Committee is encouraging chapters to maintain up-to-date records in the unified database on a regular and ongoing basis including: any new retiree names and addresses obtained by local volunteers; change of addresses, phone numbers or email addresses for members and prospective members; and deceased school retirees.

PASR 2023 Out-of-State Chapter Goals

Activity #1 — Increase the Number of State Members Credited to Your Chapter

The Board of Directors is encouraging chapters to increase the number of state members credited to their chapters.

Activity #2 — Appoint a Chairman and at Least One Additional Member to Serve on the Chapter Community Service, Legislative, L/PEC, MB&S, Membership, and SSMHF Committees

The Board of Directors is encouraging chapters to appoint a chairman and at least one member to all of the committees listed above.

Activity #3 — Conduct at Least Four (4) Meetings/ Special Events Open to All Members During the Year

The Board of Directors is encouraging chapters to conduct at least four events open to all members during the year.

Activity #4 — Develop and Submit a Plan for Chapter Activities

The Board of Directors is encouraging chapters to develop a plan for chapter activities for the year, including multiple social events. List all planned activities and not simply a schedule of meetings.

Activity #5 — Conduct and Publicize a Chapter Recreo Event

The Recreo Committee is encouraging chapters to conduct and publicize a chapter Recreo event in the December *PASR Newsletter*, as well as online on the PASR Recreo calendar.

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