

# ***Making the ARTA Connection***

**2022-2023**



Annual Report of the  
Arkansas Retired  
Teachers Association

# Connecting with Elected Officials

## **ARTA is a non-partisan organization.**

We DO NOT endorse or support candidates for elected office.

We DO actively support legislation that is favorable to public education and public education personnel, active and retired.

We DO inform our members of issues and encourage them to advocate for legislation and policies that are in their best interests.

We DO encourage local units to invite candidates and elected officials to local meetings where members can engage directly with those who aim to represent them.

- ▶ ARTA members participated in the 2022 election process as candidates, voters, election commissioners and poll worker.
- ▶ Prior to the 2023 General Assembly of the Arkansas Legislature, more than 8,000 prospective members were provided with a guide explaining ARTA's legislative advocacy efforts and a directory of members of the Joint Committee on Public Retirement and Social Security Programs.\*
- ▶ ARTA monitored the progress of legislation throughout the session, encouraging members to contact their elected officials to express support or opposition.

*\* The Joint Committee on Public Retirement and Social Security Programs is responsible for legislative oversight of the Arkansas Teacher Retirement System.*

# Connecting with Policy Makers

- ▶ ARTA members attended multiple meetings with representatives of the Employee Benefits Division\* to ask questions and express concerns about changes in the state health insurance plan for Medicare-eligible retirees.
- ▶ ARTA representatives attended/observed meetings of the organizations where health and retirement benefits are determined\* for the purpose of keeping members informed.



*\* The Employee Benefits Division administers the State Public and School Employee Health Insurance Program.*

*\* The State Board of Finance has oversight of the State Public and School Employee Health Insurance Program. The Arkansas Teacher Retirement System Board of Trustees is responsible for the fiscal management of the system.*

***ARTA leadership and staff also met with other organizations with similar interests, such as AARP/NRTA and the Association of State Retired Teacher Executives.***

## Connecting with Members

- ▶ ARTA staff and leadership attended 6 area meetings and multiple local meetings.
- ▶ Organized an annual convention for approximately 200 participants.
- ▶ Sent the INTERLINK quarterly newsletter in either print or electronic versions to all current members.
- ▶ Sent the Whispers biweekly email to approximately 5,000 subscribers.
- ▶ Distributed redesigned ARTA brochures to local units, school districts, ATRS, and prospective members by mail and in person.
- ▶ Maintained a dynamic Facebook page for the purpose of engaging current and prospective members.

ARTA booked 137 trips for members and their guests in 2022-2023.\*

\* For more information about ARTA's partnership with Collette Travel, please contact us at 501-375-2978 or [office\\_arta@att.net](mailto:office_arta@att.net)

ARTA Membership  
July 2022—11,766  
July 2023—11,719



## Connecting with Future Members

The ARTA Grants Program demonstrates our continued support for public education and public-school personnel.

The grant program is also an effective tool for introducing active personnel to ARTA.

Contributions from ARTA members help fund the grant program.

- ▶ The grant for classified employees who are working on obtaining a teaching license was permanently named the Mitchell-Fair Grant in 2023.
- ▶ Three Mitchell-Fair Grants were awarded in 2023.
- ▶ Grants for active educators who are working on an advanced degree will still be Parsons-Burnett Grants.
- ▶ Twelve Parsons-Burnett Grants were awarded in 2023.
- ▶ ARTA units and members contributed \$10,267 to the program in 2022-2023.



# Connecting with Communities

**Many ARTA members are also members of a local unit.**

Local units provide opportunities for members to meet and get involved with other public-education retirees in their own communities.

Local units hold regular meetings on an array of topics.

Local unit members participate in group outings to events and destinations.

Local units provide service to both their members and the community.

## Active Local Units\*

# 58

*\* If your community is not served by a local unit, please contact the ARTA office for information about starting an organization in your area.*

# \$40,675

## cash and goods donated by local unit members



Lawrence and Randolph Counties established a new local unit in 2022.



# Connecting with Communities

**158,954**

volunteer hours reported by local unit members\*

**\$5,054,737**

2023 dollar value of volunteer time reported by local unit members



\* Does not include time spent by the ARTA Board of Directors, Area Councils and Local Units on voluntary leadership and administration of ARTA.

\* Does NOT include the time spent by individual members contacting their elected officials, fellow members and other retirees to share informational messages.

# Connecting the Dots

ARTA connects people—active and retired public-education personnel, in communities, across the state, and around the world. It isn't written in our constitution, and it hasn't always been explicitly stated, but ARTA has a long history of making connections and using them for the benefit of our members.

We connect with elected officials and policymakers, making sure they know their constituents as real people who will be affected by legislation and rules.

We connect with each other, through multiple channels, in a variety of settings, whether it be at a local meeting,

our annual convention or an exciting trip abroad.

We connect with active public-education personnel, through grants and scholarships, through volunteer efforts, and through advocacy.

And we connect with communities, as volunteers, as supporters of public education, as a collective group and as individuals with varied interests, talents and expertise.

In 2022-23, we saw these connections reforming, strengthening and extending farther than ever, and we could not be more excited to continue making the ARTA connection.

## Arkansas Retired Teachers Association

1200 Commerce Suite 103 | Little Rock, AR 72202  
501-375-2958 | 888-929-0955 | [www.artanow.com](http://www.artanow.com)