

Intro message from MEA-Retired President about ARI

I am asking you for your willingness over the next year to fully engage in and embrace the **Association Review Initiative (ARI)**. This initiative was born from an activity that four of our members, Bob Jean, Susan Grondin, Debbie Killam and I undertook October 2024, titled *Six Weeks to Power*. We set out to learn more about organizing in the hope that we could enrich our association by making community connections. A effort to build a network with like-minded folks who also work to improve the lives of retired public employees and educators, to improve and protect public education. The team learned many things from our training, gaining tools for our organizing work. Following the completion of (ARI) in the next year there is a plan to access *Six Weeks to Power* grant money and coaching support to develop a campaign of outreach making community connections. **The major determination from our work was... before we can reach out to work with others, we need to take some time look inward.**

The vision is to improve the lives of all retired educators, both current and future by enhancing opportunities and by promoting positive outcomes in the areas of communication; economic well-being; physical, psychological and emotional health. With the goal of strengthening the Maine Education Association of Retired Educators, the team undertook the task to create and initiate a plan, developing a process to revitalize the organization and to increase member engagement consistent with its stated mission. The (ARI) team sees this as an organic process. The journey and member engagement in this process will lead us and thereby determine its outcomes. The Board of Directors has approved ad hoc committee status. A chair will be named at the June 2nd Board of Directors Meeting, and the original team members have agreed to remain as committee members with the addition of at least 2 other committee members. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please contact President Smith.

A Member Survey was developed and has been completed by our Executive Council and the Board of Directors. Solicited suggestions of improvement have been incorporated. After a period of information and promotion the survey will be distributed to ALL members to gain their input. Expect this to be coming your way most likely in September. In the meantime, the Association Initiative Review Committee, once up and running this summer will be drafting a timeline, developing specified topics, activities, methods of engagement, and establish funding. This plan will be communicated with affiliates and individual members through the Clarion, our website, presentations with affiliates upon request, and ongoing scheduled association meetings.

We need all of you to share your voices, perspectives, insights and ideas to make this initiative a success. Over the coming year there will be numerous opportunities to engaged in focused conversations as well as less structured occasions to review the Association's Mission, structure, governance, and all issues relevant to retired and future retired educators to insure a resilient and responsive organization.

Molly A. Smith

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If you would like to contact Molly, please use the [contact form](#) on the bottom of the Home page.