

TOP ARTICLES: Upcoming TRS Trainings • How To Calculate A TRS Year Of Service • We Want Your Feedback! 2025 Reporting Employer Satisfaction Survey (RESS)

## Legend

Articles are marked by topic!

Find icons as they relate to:



Reporting and  
Training for REs



Health Benefits



Information Security



General  
Communications



**Nomination Deadline Nears For Public School District Employee Position On Board**

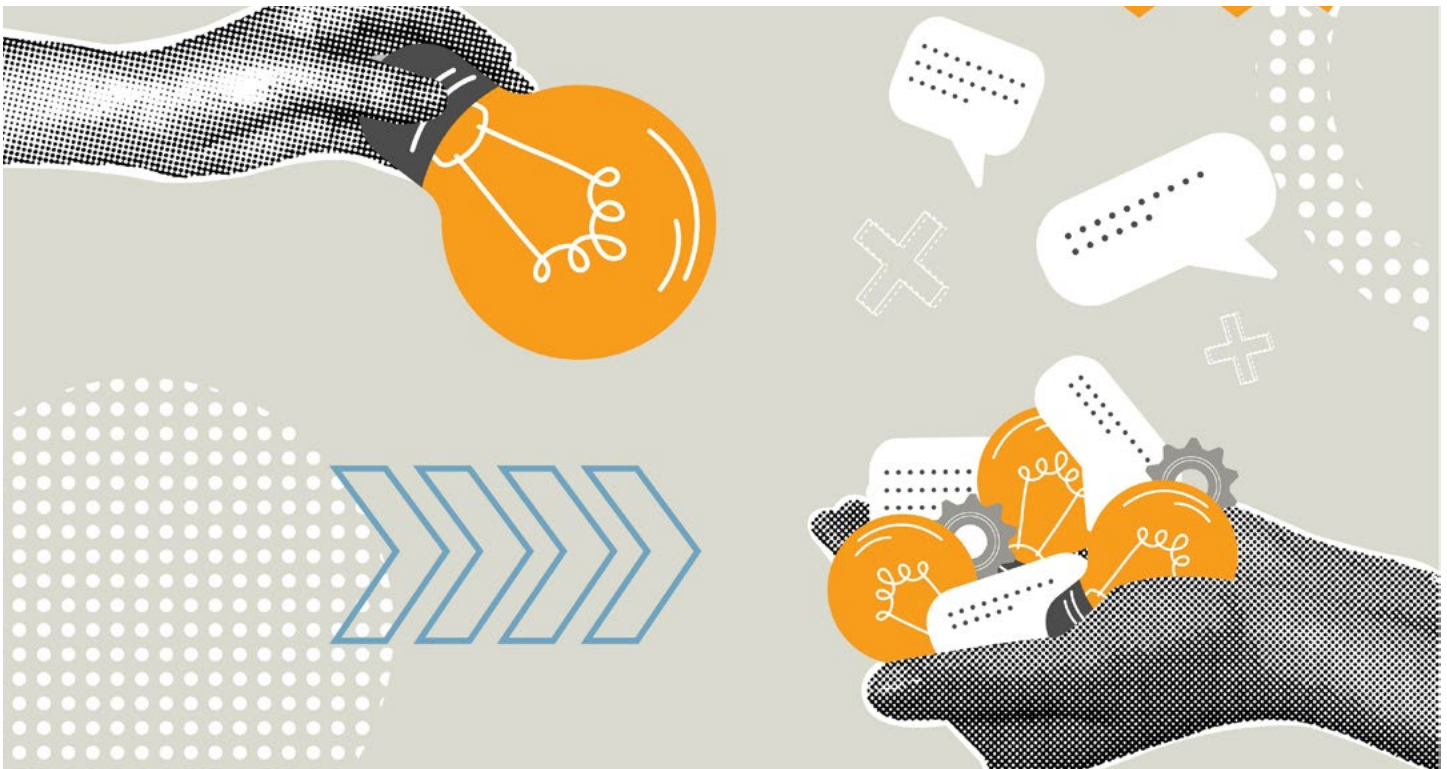


## *Nominate today for* **TRS BOARD OF TRUSTEES** PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEE POSITION

TRS is accepting nominations for eligible members to qualify as candidates for the election of the Public School District Employee position on the TRS Board of Trustees. To qualify, 250 signatures from eligible members must be collected and turned in by the **deadline, Jan. 27, 2025**.

Nominate yourself or someone you think would be a great fit representing you in this position which will be for a six-year term beginning no earlier than Sept. 1, 2025 and ending Aug. 31, 2031, [here](#).





TRS has partnered with Elite Research to conduct the annual Reporting Employer Satisfaction Survey. The survey provides TRS with valuable feedback so we can continue to improve the services we provide.

## What You Need to Know:

- The survey will be sent to all Reporting Employer (RE) contacts and if you do not submit the reporting, please respond “No” to the first question in the survey.
- The survey should be completed by the individual who submits reports to TRS. As such, all RE Contacts should expect to receive an email from TRS Satisfaction Surveys with the survey invitation in February.
- If you think you should receive a survey invitation but do not receive one by mid-February, please contact [SatisfactionSurveys@trs.texas.gov](mailto:SatisfactionSurveys@trs.texas.gov) so we can ensure you receive the invitation. You may also want to check your email spam folders.
- Survey responses are confidential and will only be used to help improve the information, resources, training, and services TRS provides to Reporting Employers.

## We put your input to work! Below are improvements TRS implemented based on your feedback from the previous survey:

- Maintained RE Coach response time of one business day
- Published an updated and enhanced TRS Payroll Manual
- Created a separate Higher Education RE skill in the interactive voice response (IVR) to ensure calls from Higher Education employers are routed to a senior RE Coach
- Continue to develop enhanced, modular, topic-based trainings

Thank you for providing your candid and honest feedback. We look forward to working to improve our customer service.



### Spring 2025 Virtual Sessions

TRS is offering the following virtual training sessions. Each attendee must register individually on the [RE Portal Virtual Training page](#). This will ensure that you receive the link to access the web session as well as a copy of the materials being covered. All training session times are scheduled to start based on CST.

#### 2025 Virtual Training Schedule

Jan. 28	TRS Membership Eligibility: Non-Higher Education	10 - 11:30 a.m.
Feb. 11	Completing the TRS28 and Reporting ORP	10 - 11:30 a.m.
Feb. 18	TRS Reporting Requirements	10 - 11:30 a.m.
Feb. 25	Verify Membership Eligibility	10 - 11:30 a.m.
March 25	Substitute Employment	10 - 11:30 a.m.
March 27	Creditable Compensation	10 - 11:30 a.m.
April 15	Employer Contributions: Non-Higher Education	10 - 11:30 a.m.
April 17	Employer Contributions: Higher Education	10 - 11:30 a.m.
April 22	Statutory Minimum Contribution	10 - 11:30 a.m.
April 24	Employment After Retirement: Non-Higher Education	10 - 11:30 a.m.
April 29	Employment After Retirement: Higher Education	10 - 11:30 a.m.
May 13	RE Certifications	10 - 11:30 a.m.
May 15	RE Ledger	10 - 11:30 a.m.
May 20	Reconciling RE Ledger: Penalty Interest & Fees	10 - 11:30 a.m.
May 22	Retirement Certification	10 - 11:30 a.m.

### RE Portal Contact – Signature Authority And TRS Forms



TRS only accepts TRS forms signed by individuals listed as RE Contacts in the RE Portal with Signature Authority. When reviewing and assigning RE Portal access, please make sure those authorized to sign documents on behalf of your RE, are given Signature Authority within the RE Portal.

Signature Authority also allows the RE Contact to create, edit, delete reports, accept or reject report signatures, and make RE Ledger transfers.





## How To Calculate A Year Of TRS Service



When an employee questions their years of service with TRS, employers should remember that all TRS members earn service credit based on a standardized school year that begins Sept. 1 and ends Aug. 31. The standardized school year may differ from some employees' instructional, contract or work agreement year.

### ***Earning a year of service***

Standard Work Week (Monday-Friday): Employees must work in a TRS-eligible position or receive paid leave from a TRS-eligible position at least 90 days during the school year.

Non-Standard Work Week: Members who are regularly scheduled to work ***less than*** five days per week may earn a year of service credit by working four and one-half months; however, the member must serve ***at least four full calendar months*** – working or receiving paid leave for at least eight days each month, and the member must also work or receive paid leave for an additional five days that cannot be included in the four full calendar months.

See example in [July 2021 Update Newsletter](#).

December Retirees: A TRS member may not receive a year of service credit before Dec. 31, ***except*** in the final year of retirement. At retirement, a member may earn a year of service credit by working or receiving paid leave for each day of the ***full fall semester***, even if that semester is less than 90 days. When completing the refund certification, please make sure to indicate if the employee has worked the full fall semester with no unpaid days.

If you have an employee that is questioning their years of service with TRS, please reach out to your coach for assistance and we can review the information reported by their employer within the last five fiscal years, as corrections are limited past this time frame. If an employee is questioning their total years of service with TRS, please have them reach out to



## Coming 2025: New TRS Website



This spring, TRS is launching a newly redesigned, member-focused website. The platform is designed to enhance the experience of TRS members – you and your employees – by providing quick access to essential information and resources. Here are some highlights:

- User-friendly interface: Helps employers and members find information quickly.
- New interactive map: Identifies TRS-reporting employers by location.
- Centralized resources: Empower members to live healthy and plan for retirement.

The new TRS website is tailored to streamline communications, give members resources to plan for retirement, and enhance member satisfaction and retention. Explore the new website later this spring.



If there's one thing the movies have taught us, it's that great power in the wrong hands can be dangerous. Generative AI is no exception. While we've been figuring out how to use it to write better emails and organize our calendars, cybercriminals have been learning to use it for cybercrime. With the use of AI, cybercriminals can launch attacks that are both wider-reaching and more convincing than before. But don't panic -- understanding how AI is misused can help you stay safe.

They may be using fancy new tools, but cybercriminals still have a favorite trick - social engineering. Sometimes referred to as "human hacking," these attacks aim to manipulate a person into acting against their own best interest. You're likely familiar with arguably the most common type of social engineering attack -

phishing. Cybercriminals can use social media to gather information about you and craft messages specifically to trick you... and with AI writing these messages, they're getting more convincing. This makes it more important than ever to be careful what you post on your social media. If you haven't done so in a while, comb through old posts and remove anything that feels like an overshare.

Since cybercriminals are using AI to automate attacks, you can expect an uptick in phishing emails, texts, social media DMs, and phone calls. If you receive communication from someone you don't know, slow down and look for red flags before sharing any personal information, clicking a link or downloading an attachment. Watch for a sense of urgency, odd grammar choices or a sender email address that's slightly off from one you trust that can also alert you to something that isn't right.

Remember, if you ever get a suspicious message to a work account, be sure to report it to the security team so they can help keep others safe, too! Stay safe out there!

## TRS Is Looking For You: Early Career Feature Subject For Video



*Please share with your employees!* TRS is interested in featuring members early in their careers for a video series spotlighting how you can connect with your retirement system to maximize your benefits. As part of the video series, TRS will connect you with a TRS Benefits Counselor to receive an overview on helpful resources and information you can use to better understand your future retirement benefits.

We look forward to sharing this video as a helpful resource for other members -- just like you -- who are wondering how they can connect with their retirement system at this point in their careers. There's no better time to start planning than today.

Please share the word and share your interest by emailing [communications@trs.texas.gov](mailto:communications@trs.texas.gov). We look forward to hearing from you!



## RE Training: *Reporting Overview*



Many people find that a video explanation is the best way to learn! Take advantage of more than a dozen informative videos in the [TRS Video Library](#) to understand TRS processes and reports for reporting employers.



## Follow TRS on Social Media



Click [Here](#) to Rate This Issue of the *Update*

## Navigating Life Events With Ease



Career changes often necessitate updates to your account information and other essential actions. That's why the [TRS Life Event Resource Kit/Employer Toolkit](#) is so important – it's a comprehensive guide to help guide members during life and career transitions.

TRS members will find the "[Turning 65](#)" section of our Career Events Resource Toolkit holds valuable answers to common questions like:

- What steps do I take if I already retired and turn 65 soon?
- What TRS benefits am I eligible for if I retire after age 65?
- How are TRS-Care Medicare Advantage plans different from private marketplace plans?
- Am I eligible for Social Security benefits after I retire?

Explore the [Life Event Resource Kit](#) today! Whether starting a new job, transitioning, or planning for retirement, these events have a significant impact. We're here to help you make the most of your benefits – in all ways possible – with each step forward.

## Member Education Videos



Learn all about your TRS pension benefits by watching our [Member Education Videos](#)!

Help us spread the word about the series by downloading a [poster](#) from our website and displaying it at your school.

