Employer Advisory Group Meeting Agenda & Minutes

Date: 02/20/18
Start Time: 10:30 a.m.
End Time: 11:30 a.m.
Location: E562

Type of meeting: Periodic
Meeting called by: Sue Richards (Provaliant)
Minutes by: Sue Richards
Invitees: Melody Austin, Mark Chi, David Cook, Jennifer Dujka, Chet Henry, Barbie Pearson, Frances Torres, Michael Ressel

- ✓ Christine Okanla (ACC)
- ✓ Betty Butler (Dallas County Comm College)
- Wes Simmons (Dallas County Schools)
- ✓ Lori Johnson (Eanes ISD)
- ✓ Dawn Cummings (ESC 3)
- ✓ Tammy Cunningham (ESC 8)
- ✓ Jesse Cortinas, Jose Elizondo, Jr. (Judson ISD)
- Cathy Felts (Mason ISD)
- ✓ Nancy Wiggins (Maypearl ISD)
- Bonnie Barnhill (Midland Academy Charter)
- ✓ David Rastellini (absent), Lori Gampi (Northside ISD)
- ✓ Tonya Davis (Round Rock ISD)
- ✓ Christine Porter (Spring Branch ISD)
- ✓ Becky Bunte (TASBO)
- Diana Salami (Texas State)
- ✓ Aaron LeMay (Univ of No Texas)
- Greta Graham (Uplift Education)
- ✓ Pamela McDonald (UT Austin)

Invitees not present: *Barbie Pearson, David Cook, Chet Henry*
Other attendees:
Handouts:
Conference Bridge: 877-746-4263
Participant Code: 2219128
Host Code: 2265442

Purpose of Meeting: Respond to questions, address concerns, and share information with members of the EAG
Expected Outcome: Questions and concerns expressed by members of the EAG will be addressed

AGENDA

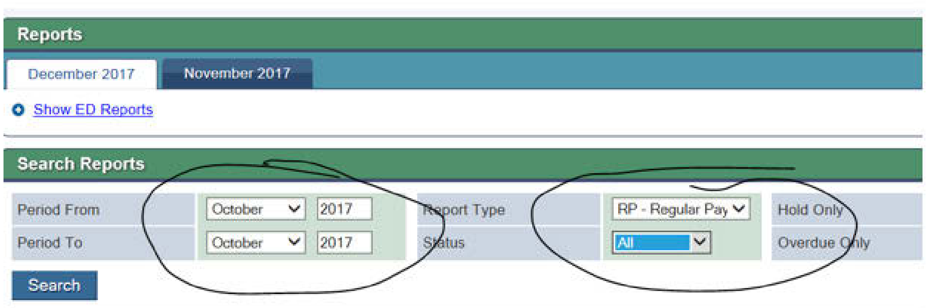
- Introductions and roll call

- Questions from EAG members

1. Reporting work hours for non-exempt (part-time) employees and substitutes
   - *For non-TRS retirees who are working as substitutes, hours worked aren't needed – only days. An error occurs due to an issue in the system if a substitute is reported without hours however TRS will override the error as needed. This will be corrected toward the end of March. Overrides can typically be done within a day of when the request is made. Requests that are received late in the day may not be done until the following morning. TRS suggests cleaning up all errors except those that need to be overridden and then all of those errors will be overridden at once. If another version of the report is uploaded through the file upload method, any overrides that were done previously will need to be re-done.*
   - *If errors are corrected online and a new version of that report is uploaded, any corrections that were made online will need to be redone, unless the reported data had been fixed in the file.*
   - *Hours are required in order to properly determine and verify membership eligibility (GASB 67-68). State Auditor requires the hours as well when confirming eligibility.*
2. Penalty/interest
   - How are they generated and calculated?
     - *Penalty interest is related to the deposit (TEXNET). Penalty interest is generated when deposit is late. 10% of late deposits.*
     - *Penalty fees related to late reports were passed during the last legislative sessions and enacted in January. These will apply to late reports, however no penalty fees will be charged during this fiscal year.*
     - *TRS is having internal discussions regarding waiving penalty interest*
   - Impact of prior month adjustments (e.g., we have a teacher whose funding is changing after we received the rest of the story on our NOGA). We can book it back to rearrange her funding so that she will be paid more from the federal fund, but then I am assuming we will be penalized for the shortfall on the TRS Federal Funds that were reported back in September, if we go back that far, and for the rest of the months. Is that true? If so, how can we avoid those penalties?
     - *There will be penalty interest applied to prior monthly adjustments based on the adjustment. 10% of compounded amount.*
     - *REs may need to estimate the amount that will be due if prior month reports haven't been completed. If the estimated amount is short, it might be possible to waive the penalty interest. TRS will look at those on a case by case basis.*
     - *Some REs were charged penalties and went ahead and paid them. They wondered if that amount could be waived. The penalties were due because they didn't realize some of their employees were members until trying to report them.*
     - *As with TRAQS, when someone is reported who had been previously unreported when they should have been, penalties will be charged. With the new system, REs will be aware sooner, if an employee is a member who wasn't reported as such.*

3. With many districts working in arrears, it is difficult to know which month someone may have been reported. Is there a single place we can review an employee's ED40 or RP20 records without searching each month?
   - *No, however all records submitted in the RE Portal can be downloaded in a CSV file. These includes records created through the manual entry method.*
   - *A suggestion was made to make it possible for REs to see all records for a person. The suggestion is going to be discussed with the technical team.*
4. Is it necessary to have dates for substitutes?
   - *Question applies to non-retirees.*
   - *Dates are needed because substitutes need to be reported in a way that's similar to other employee types. Dates are also needed because substitutes who work at least 90 days are eligible to purchase service. For a substitute, REs can submit one ED40 for the entire school year using the most appropriate position code for a substitute even if they serve in multiple positions.*
5. What can we do about filling this info out after searching for just one person? It sends you all the way to the beginning on certain screens, instead of leaving you where you were.

This must be filled out for each search:



Good news! By the end of February, Report Type and Status will both be defaulted to All and REs will only need to fill in the Period From date. Period To can be left blank.

In addition to that, search results will be saved when the search is executed from the Search screen. That won't be done from the Edit screen yet but the need for it has been noted.

6. Multiple universities are having problems with ORP reporting. Is there any consideration on how to best handle the ORP reporting, maybe even hold off on that part until a later period? This could allow institutions to work through the reconciling issues faster. Or, is there a way to delay or exempt institutions from penalties that are actively working through the reporting issues?
   - *There are still some issues related to ORP. Instructions from October still apply. If an RE encounters issues when reporting an ORP employee, the employee can be removed from the report. Adjustments will not need to be done for those employees in the future. TRS28's should still be sent for new employees who elected ORP.*

- *New ORP employees shouldn't be problematic. If issues are noted when reporting someone in a full time position who is non-TRS eligible, it's possible that the TRS28 hasn't been entered into the system.*

- Information from TRS

1. Status of defects that were due to be fixed by end of January, particularly those related to ORP
    - *Updates were made in January including View RE Ledger and some of the issues noted on a day to day basis*
2. Preview of future software changes
    - *Defect list appears on the TRS website with estimated times when problem will be fixed.*
    - *TRS asked if it would be helpful to see issues that have been fixed and general response was "yes".*
    - *REs were urged to look at resources on the website and provide feedback*
    - *REs asked to be notified when materials are updated (e.g., web messages that appear in the Portal)*
    - *Search screen will be more user friendly with the defaulted fields and being able to return to search results.*
3. Spring training sessions
    - *The first part of training is related to the Payroll Manual and the second part is related to RE Portal.*
    - *First part of the day is related to laws and rules and explains TRS's expectations in regard to reporting the information (i.e., what should be reported)*
    - *Second part of the day discusses specific issues and what to do if errors are noted so the cause of the error can be detected more quickly. Tips and tricks are also provided that may make reporting easier. Attendees are asked to provide input regarding what enhancements they would like to see in the system. Session is intended to be productive for everyone and help move things forward.*
    - *Lori (Eanes ISD) invited TRS to come to her site so they can watch the reporting process first-hand.*
4. *Additional questions*
    - *Can a field be added for Stat Min gross so REs won't have to create separate position record to report salary that isn't subject to Stat Min. (Jose E.)*

      Answer: Mark pointed out that the position that isn't subject to stat min is wholly separate and should be reported that way. Can RE's software be automated in a way to avoid the need for manually adjusting the 02 position? Eanes is doing this manually as well. Spring Branch said that their software provider brings it in based on the job code. Jose said that they've discussed with their software provider and the user group but they haven't found a good solution yet.

      Changes to the file format won't be easy for anyone (every RE and/or software provider would have to modify their software).

- *Has new member contribution problem been fixed? (Jeff – Judson)*

  Answer: No, not yet. TRS still needs to override.

5. *Closing*

   - *Next meeting will be in March (to be scheduled soon). REs will be able to submit questions they wish to have addressed.*

ACTIONS, DECISIONS, ISSUES from the Meeting

Action, Decision, Issue	Description	Assignee	Targeted Completion Date