TEAM PROGRAM
TRS Enterprise Application Modernization

Employer Advisory Group
Meeting Agenda & Minutes

Date: 03/27/18
Start Time: 9:30 a.m.
End Time: 11:00 a.m.
Location: E562

Type of meeting:	Periodic
Meeting called by:	Sue Richards (Provaliant)
Minutes by:	Ashley Conrad
Invitees:	Melody Austin, Mark Chi, Ashley Conrad, 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) – Mary Davis joined in lieu of Aaron LeMay

Greta Graham (Uplift Education)

✓ Pamela McDonald (UT Austin)

Invitees not present:	*Mark Chi, Jennifer Dujka, Chet Henry, Frances Torres*
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 / topics submitted by Reporting Entities

1. Can TRS retirement date be added to the View Employee Information screen?

   Yes – this is on the enhancements list and is targeted to be available at the end of April 2018.

2. When submitting RP reports, we are running into a "HOLD" status, which causes further delays of finalizing our reports. The HOLD statuses have been due to prior fiscal year adjustments that need further documentation/explanation. We would like to request these types of situations result in a reporting error that can be resolved prior to submission of reports.

   The "Hold" status happens because prior to September 2017, no detail was reported for employer contributions. Therefore, the only way to resolve is to send documentation needed for TRS to confirm that the adjustments are warranted.

   Suggestion: it could be helpful to submit the adjustments on a separate adjustment report only.

   Pam, from UT Austin, noted that it would help them to see the error prior to submission. They did see it as a warning, but weren't focusing on those because of so many errors. If that could be an error and not a warning it would help. It would help to be aware of the error up front so information for the hold release could be gathered while working on other errors.

3. Is there an update on whether the functionality of having access to search our employees' reported information is possible and when we might hope to have that available.

   This has been added to the enhancement list, however the focus now is on stabilizing the system. This was requested to be done soon after stabilization, if possible.

4. If you are looking at errors on the Totals page, there is no name showing, only their social security number, but this is where the error code is. If you look at the errors from the Edit page, the error code is not listed. Can we get the error code on both reports & the name on both reports? I worked with another school district recently & they are having trouble with this one as well.

   This is a great idea and has been heard in RE Portal sessions as well. It's been added to the future enhancements list.

5. Anything in the programming that could allow us to toggle between 2 windows or allow us to have 2 windows open at once? When you have to go back & forth between RP's & ED's, you loose your place. There is no way to mark the errors, sort them or even bookmark where you were at. (dropping into Excel helps, but you can't clear errors from the spreadsheet)

   This is a pain point for internal as well as external users. One option which seems to work well is to use two different browsers (e.g. Chrome, Internet Explorer, Firefox, etc.). You'll be able to log in from both at the same time.

6. Error code

RP20	482	The reported Hours Worked is "0" and Hours Scheduled is "0". The Zero Days Reason code is invalid.

   I get that error on all subs....many errors. I know they can be over-ridden, but I don't have a way to mark which ones I can skip for this when going through the errors. Current Defects page shows a fix in March?

   Error 482 was fixed as part of the March 25th maintenance cycle.

7. Error code 573 is common due to hours being reported in arrears. With reports due at the beginning of the month, these hours will likely always be short until the RP25 catches up. Any suggestions to help alleviate these errors?

   Knowing that there could be months in which the hours might not meet eligibility, the system was designed to kick a warning for two months before kicking an error on the 3rd month.

   The following suggestion appeared in the June 2016 edition of the Update:

   o *if the actual hours worked by an employee in a calendar month is not available at the time the report is due, the RE should report the expected hours of work for that employee for that month in the new Reporting Entity Portal and then submit an adjustment when actual hours are available and reported; and*

   o *TRS has found the most common situation for this error is when an employee is exactly half-time and does not receive paid holidays. Since there are days without hours and they are exactly half-time, their hours appear to be not TRS eligible. TRS can do an override if this is the situation and the RE sends an email stating this is the case. This information will be added to material that's available to REs.*

   > ⊗ **ERROR** Please verify TRS membership eligibility for this employee. Based on prior reporting, the hours reported are less than half of the full-time equivalent. If you feel the reported information related to this error is correct, please contact TRS.

   Tonyafrom Round Rock said that her practice is to track all error messages in a spreadsheet and document what needs an override. Then she shares it with her coach when she's ready for override. Notes are added to the spreadsheet as errors are corrected or communicated to TRS.

   Lori from Eanes has over 400 hourly people, so it is not feasible to estimate hours for the entire month. Software cannot create the correct RP25. She has to track hours manually because she can't pull in data for hours with the software. She has to create the RP, export to excel, input hours and then export to text file again.

   Moving the report due date possibly to the 15th would alleviate a lot of these issues.
   Barbie noted that changing the date would have to be a statutory change by the Legislature.

8. Our people are still experiencing delays in receiving refunds, particularly those who have waited several months to request their TRS refund and are working with us as adjuncts.
   Some never actually termed employment, only changing from an TRS eligible position to part-time ineligible position. We have explained to them that they must actually terminate employment to receive the refund. When they talk directly with TRS, they are not given this information but are told that it is an issue with the school not certifying the refund.

   o *Barbie mentioned that she has listened to calls and some were just saying the reports weren't here; she also noticed sometimes the member misinterprets what is said and thinks that TRS is blaming the entity, which is not the case.*

   o *We have updated the Counselors talking points and they should be following those.*

   o *Tonya from Round Rock has certifications from November and December waiting because she does not want errors.   Barbie instructed her to complete those certifications.*

- o *Betty from Dallas County Community College said she has employees that were full-time who became adjunct, so they cannot refund. She wants TRS to make sure counselors have that talking point. Barbie agreed and told her the counselors do know that unless they are a sub they cannot refund. But will make sure they are reminded.*

9. *One RE said that their web master should receive all of the notices – like incomplete reports, etc. Right now they are not.*
    - o *TRS explained that notices for report status are currently sent to the Payroll Contact and Reporting Official. If the Web Administrator is also one of these contact types, they should receive the notices. At some point in the future, the Web Administrator can be added to the list of contact types to receive report status notifications.*
    - o *TRS said that some REs' Web Admins are IT folks and do not want to receive emails for report status.*
    - o *TRS asked what the group think about this? Would you prefer to add the web admin as a contact type to receive report status emails?*
        - Lori from Eanes said their web admin does want status emails.
        - As a future enhancement, TRS will see about adding a flag so web admin can opt in or out for emails.
    - o Melody reminded everyone: All contacts should be added; Payroll Contact, Reporting Official and Head of Institution are required.

- Information from TRS

    - Reporting Independent Contractors/Volunteers during the first 12 months after retirement; discuss options
        - o *Effective September 2017, Independent Contractors and Volunteers must be reported for the first 12 months after retirement for Employment After Retirement. Currently, REs should be reporting those retirees with the "Paid Through Third Party Entity" flag as "Yes". Participants were asked for suggestions for the best "permanent" solution.*

            - *Separate flag for each?*

            - *New Employment Type for each?*

            - *Any other suggestions?*

                - *Tanya from Round Rock does not allow volunteers. Asked that TRS clarify what each role means for TRS. If going through agency, they will not allow currently. They pay through Accounts Payable, so they pay the agency not the retiree.*

                - *Cathey from Mason stated sometimes they have volunteers they do not know about.*

                - *Lori from Eanes suggested that for Accounts Payable people that they could have a question on the form for employment "are you a TRS retiree".*

                - *It would be helpful to add more information to the Employment After Retirement (EAR) brochure about volunteers. Entities refer it all the time, but does not have enough info.*

                - *Add more EAR education.*

- *Volunteer/Independent Contractor within the first 12 months after retirement is not included as the 12 month break. Jesse asked if they need to report the first 12 months and then after that they begin their true 12 month break in service. Barbie responded "yes". If they are working in a job that an employee at the RE performs, almost all of the specific positions have an employee that has worked in that position at some point or another. Barbie – you can send the contract to TRS and we can review if there is any question.*

- *Pam (UT Austin) asked if retirees working as an independent contractor in first 12 months after retirement are subject to surcharges.*
  Answer: Yes if they exceed ½ time and are performing duties under that contract that an employee at the entity currently performs.

- Update on Refunds

  - *Processing refunds for those that have a December final report month and prior on a case by case basis.*
  - *Hoping by April to have partial refunds automatically issued if over 60 days after final report month.*
  - *All September refunds and majority of October have been issued.*
  - *Tonya from Round Rock asked why the certification request is gone when they don't complete – do they drop off?*
    Answer: only if you complete the refund certification OR if an ED90 was sent. The ED90 takes the place of the refund certification.

- Penalty Interest

  - *TRS is considering waiving penalty interest for FY 2018 as long as TEXNET deposits were sent on time. Tonya from Round Rock stated they had money in similar accounts and were not able to transfer because there was not a negative balance. Barbie – TRS will waive any penalty interest caused by that defect, just send your Coach a letter asking for a waiver. Lori from Eanes stated she cannot tell when she owed money. Cathy from Mason says her penalty interest shows an amount owed, it has not increased and is not sure what it is for. Ashley will follow up.*

- Defects that were fixed since last meeting

  - *Pending Complete status – all record are valid and should post during nightly run.*

  - *System now accepts reported Employment Start Dates*

  - *Lori from Eanes submitted signature and then got new errors the next day. Why?*
    Answer: this can happen if ED files are sent after the report said "complete" and before the overnight posting. The ED records are posted throughout the day, so data is changed before the RP overnight posting. Not sending any ED records for employees until the next business day was recommended

- Preview of future software changes
  - *Add Retirement Date to View Employee Information screen*

- *New Member issue should be resolved*

- *Refund Certification issue for substitutes should be resolved*

- *Sorting of errors/warnings by SSN, record type, error/warning code*

  o RE sessions at ESCs

    o *Training sessions are going on at all Region Service Centers. We are almost half way done. We're offering two separate classes:*

      1. Laws and rules
      2. RE Portal

Ashley mentioned that one of her REs shared that she has been doing reporting for over 20 years and found the Introduction to Reporting enlightening. She stated she learned something new.

Lori from Eanes said she can tell TRS is doing so much, but it still a really hard process that consumes so much time. She has even gone to other districts to help assist. Districts are working very hard, many unpaid hours. TRS reporting has become a full-time job. One EAG member stated they got approval from their board to hire more help for TRS reporting.

- Additional Discussion

  o Lori from Eanes asked for an update on completed reports as of 3/26.

    September 9 still outstanding
    October 1,237 complete
    November 1,145 complete
    December 1,075 complete
    January 951 complete
    February 785 complete
    March 138 complete

- Lori from Eanes & Tonya from Round Rock both agree that things are getting better and they can see TRS making progress. Also recognize that there are issues on the software side as well.

- Jesse from Judson inquired about semester dates. Barbie - not working yet, but important to set them. Send coach copy of school calendar.

- Jose from Judson was here when TRAQS was implemented, and liked that the implementation was done in waves and would suggest if TRS has another major change that they do it in waves. Barbie agreed; hindsight is 20/20.

ACTIONS, DECISIONS, ISSUES from the Meeting

Action, Decision, Issue	Description	Assignee	Targeted Completion Date