Employer Advisory Group Meeting Agenda & Minutes

Date: 07/31/18
Start Time: 10:00 p.m.
End Time: 11:30 p.m.
Location: E563

Type of meeting: Periodic
Meeting called by: Sue Richards (Provaliant)
Minutes by: Sue Richards
Invitees: Melody Austin, Carol Casey, Mark Chi, ~~Ashley Conrad, David Cook, Jennifer Dujka, Jan Engler (opt), Chet Henry,~~ Anandhi Mani, Art Mata, ~~Jessica Palvino~~, Barbie Pearson, ~~Michael Ressel, Frances Torres, Katie Tucker,~~ Kevin Wakley

~~Christine Okanla (ACC~~)
Claudia Alba (Belton ISD)
Rebecca Davis (Conroe ISD)
~~Betty Butler (Dallas County Comm College)~~
~~Wes Simmons (Dallas County Schools)~~
Lori Johnson (Eanes ISD)
~~Dawn Cummings (ESC 3)~~
~~Tammy Cunningham (ESC 8)~~
~~Emily Youngblood (Flour Bluff ISD)~~
Jesse Cortinas, ~~Jose Elizondo, Jr~~. (Judson ISD)
Mickey Smith (Malakoff ISD)
Cathy Felts (Mason ISD)
~~Nancy Wiggins (Maypearl ISD)~~
~~Bonnie Barnhill (Midland Academy Charter)~~
Wesley Scott, ~~David Rastellini~~, Lori Ganci (Northside ISD)
Tonya Davis (Round Rock ISD)
~~Jenny Hale, (Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD)~~
~~Karina Garza (South Texas College)~~
~~Christine Porter (Spring Branch ISD)~~
~~Becky Bunte (TASBO)~~
~~Diana Salami (Texas State)~~
~~Aaron LeMay,~~ Mary Davis (Univ of No Texas)
~~Greta Graham (Uplift Education)~~
Pamela McDonald, Jeannie Farahnak (UT Austin)
Betty Su Williams (UT Health Science Center at Houston)

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. Members of this group represent REs from all over the State and all types of entities. They serve as the collective “voice” of all REs.

Expected Outcome: Questions and concerns expressed by members of the EAG will be addressed. EAG members are expected to share information with other entities in their region and bring questions and concerns from those entities to this group.

AGENDA

- Introductions and roll call
    - *Mark welcomed 5 new members: Belton ISD, Conroe ISD, Flour Bluff ISD, Malakoff ISD, UT Health Science Center at Houston*
    - *Looking for EAG members from regions 5, 9, 14, 16, 17, and 19; please contact TRS with any suggestions*
- Questions / topics for discussion
    - Can we request over-payment of Retirees Pension Surcharge and Retirees TRS Care Surcharge be applied to other accounts? If so, is there a restriction as to which accounts we can use that overage to compensate? (Cathy Felts)
      Yes, as long as pension money is only transferred to pension fund types and insurance money is only transferred to insurance fund types.

      If there's an overage in any "bucket", less money can be sent in the following month or funds can be transferred into another of the same fund type. Funds cannot be transferred in or out to a member contribution "buckets". Transfers can be made on the RE Portal as long as they're in the same fund type.

      Pam and Tonya– if there's an overage at the end of the fiscal, does it need to be transferred into the next fiscal year? Answer: It doesn't have to be but overages should be addressed as quickly as possible.

      Cathy – An adjustment was made in February but hasn't appeared on the district ledger balance. Mark said to work with their Coach, who can research.
    - Is there a possibility of using the ED90 and monthly TEAM reporting data to replace the TRS 6, 7, and 8 since forms include the same information submitted with the TEAM reporting? . (Becky Davis)
      This has been discussed but more discussion is needed because all of the needed information isn't captured on the ED90 and in other reporting data.

      Are there any enhancements planned for:

        a. Searching by an employee, such as search based on a range of months or multiple reports (ED, RP)?
           Per preliminary discussions, more information may be shown. Detailed requirements must be gathered before details are available.
        b. Adding error code to CSV file and to the report edit information display?
           We can see the benefit for this and will get it on the list.
        c. Adding the position code to the report display screen? (Becky Davis)
           We need to know which report display screen is being referred to. Becky said that they go to Totals and get a list of errors that they put into Excel and compare it to the CSV. When they compare the list from the Totals page to that to the CSV, they run into issues for employees who have more than one position.

Suggestions were gathered from all who attended the spring training sessions. Meetings are being held with the technical team at TRS to see what's feasible.

- Information sharing
  - Defects that were fixed and enhancements that will be released on August 5th
    - *Functionality to allow partial refunds will be implemented. If a final report month is submitted, TRS will refund deposits that were received through that date. If additional deposits are posted after that, the additional amount will be refunded. Barbie mentioned that the partial refund applies to general refunds; refunds that involve a legal order can't be partially refunded.*
    - *There will be a better way to use the ED45. Updated file formatting guide will be posted online. Now, if an employee changes positions, the system requires an ED45 to end an old position and a new ED40 for the new position going forward. Starting next week, a position can be ended and started with a single ED45. The old way will still work. A new adjustment reason code was added in regard to this.*
  - In the pipeline for future releases
    - Enhance
  - Preview of August Update articles
    - Definition of FTE
      For TRS purposes and usage on ED report, the FTE number needs to reflect the number of hours an employee needs to work in their position in order to be considered full time. In some cases that may be 40 but full time for a different position may be fewer hours. Full-time for TRS purposes can never be less than 30 hours. If FTE of 00 is reported, the system expects that there is no FTE for the position. If there is no FTE, the minimum number of hours required per week to be eligible for TRS membership is 15. If the FTE is 37.5 hours, should 37 or 38 be reported as the FTE? REs should round down, meaning that the FTE should be reported as 37.

      Tonya ran into errors when reporting 37 hours for late hires because they didn't appear to work at least half time. TRS will look at eligibility validations and explore options for addressing that scenario.

      She asked if it'll be helpful for REs to report their closed dates along with their semester dates. Barbie said that TRS will brainstorm with the technical team.

      Mark asked everyone when they set their school year calendar. Tonya gets approval for two years. Others do theirs annually (e.g., July for upcoming fiscal)

    - Deletion of TRS-eligible employees
      In the past, TRS said that REs have the option of removing ineligible employees from reports if they're preventing a report from completing and posting. It's possible that a Coach may have suggested deleting 1-2 eligible employees if there was a known defect that prevented posting. As a general rule, eligible employees should not be deleted.

      Mary from UNT – An employee was in an eligible position but contributions weren't *deducted and now they're no longer employed. What should she do? Mark said that the RE would not report the employee since contributions weren't deducted and no additional pay was owed to the employee (so employer pick up of contributions could not occur). If additional pay was owed to the employee and employer pick up of contributions could occur, an adjustment would need to be submitted.*

If an additional deposit needs to be submitted for a terminated member who received a refund, it needs to be refunded by the employer.

- *Penalty fees – fees weren't implemented during this first year of reporting. Beginning in FY18-19, penalties will be applied for reports but there will be a grace period. Reports that aren't complete within 2 months after their due date will be subject to penalties. The grace period may be eliminated for FY19-20. More information will be provided in the August issue of the Update.*

- RE Report Status (100% Sept, Oct, and Nov RP reports completed)

Report Month	***# Completed RP Reports***	***% Complete***	***# Incomplete RP Reports***
Dec	*1,319*	*99.92%*	*1*
Jan	*1,313*	*99.47%*	*7*
Feb	*1,298*	*98.26%*	*23*
Mar	*1,275*	*96.52%*	*46*
Apr	*1,237*	*93.57%*	*85*
May	*1,182*	*89.34%*	*141*
Jun	*1,020*	*77.10%*	*303*
Jul	*256*	*19.35%*	*1,067*

- Additional Discussion
  - *Lori – RP report now clears during the day; it's a huge help. It looks like some reports are error free (shows zero errors) but stays in a pending or incomplete status. Lori sent screenshot to Coach. Mark suspects that the issue was caused by a timing issue. The report now shows as rejected. TRS will look at the history.*

    She noted that the message that pops up to let the user know that they haven't saved the record is really inconvenient. TRS will see if that can be addressed.

    One of the messages that appears when RE logs in mentions clearing incomplete reports. Lori wants to help but she's afraid to delete files that are incomplete. If the report status is "Incomplete", do not delete the report. Delete the suspended records only and resubmit so that the report can reach "Complete" status. If the report status is "Loaded" or "Rejected", the report can be deleted.

    On substitutes, why do contact dates have to be reported? Mark said that the system requires dates for all employees.

- *Tonya is working on ED records for substitutes that start in July. She talked to her software provider*
- *Pam – UT Austin: They've noted problems with reports that stay at an incomplete status but don't have any errors. Records appear with a valid status. TRS is working with the vendor on conditions like this.*
- *Becky asked about the enhancement that'll let the ED45 end an old position and start a new position. Mark clarified that the current position would be noted in the "original" data fields and the new position information in the "new" data fields. The system will end the old position and create a new position using data in the "new" data fields.*

ACTIONS, DECISIONS, ISSUES from the Meeting

Action, Decision, Issue	Description	Assignee	Targeted Completion Date