Employer Advisory Group Meeting Agenda & Minutes

Date: 11/20/19
Start Time: 10:00 a.m.
End Time: 11:30 p.m.
Location: E562

Type of meeting: Periodic
Meeting called by: Sue Richards (Provaliant)
Minutes by: Sue Richards
Invitees: Melody Austin, ~~Carol Casey~~, Mark Chi, Ashley Conrad, ~~Chris Cutler~~, Jennifer Dujka, Nicholas Gonzalez, Molly Grosskopf, ~~Andrea Morales, Jessica Palvino~~, ~~Barbie Pearson~~, Frances Torres, Katie Tucker, Sarah Valenti, ~~Kevin Wakley~~
Sunset Advisory Committee Representative: Ashley Thomas

~~Jackie Thomas (Amarillo ISD)~~
Claudia Alba (Belton ISD)
Theresa Zlotopolski (Clint ISD)
~~Jenny Hale (Comal ISD)~~
Becky Davis (Conroe ISD)
Lori Johnson (Eanes ISD)
Dawn Cummings (ESC #3)
Tammy Cunningham (ESC #8)
~~Emily Youngblood (Flour Bluff ISD)~~
Nicole Dean, Leesa Roberts (Judson ISD)
~~Mickey Smith (Malakoff ISD)~~
~~Cathy Felts (Mason ISD)~~
Nancy Wiggins (Maypearl ISD)
~~Bonnie Barnhill (Midland Academy Charter School)~~
~~R. L. Richards (Muleshoe ISD)~~
Jeffrey Coats, ~~Ginger Gab~~le (North East ISD)
~~David Rastellini~~, Lori Ganci (Northside ISD)
Lana Walls (Ranger ISD)
Tonya Davis, (Round Rock ISD)
Tera Harris, ~~Christine Porter~~ (Springbranch ISD)
Becky Bunte (TASBO)
~~Greta Graham (Uplift Education)~~

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.

Please…

- ✓ *Mute your speaker to avoid sharing background noise*
- ✓ *Do not put this call on hold*

AGENDA

- Introductions and roll call
- Information from TRS
  - *Region # associated with each EAG member was added to EAG web page to assist other employers identify their representative if necessary*
- Questions / topics from EAG members

From Mickey Smith, Malakoff ISD

1. Concern with the address. Was at a TRS meeting where they said that employee address had not been updated or changes made since Aug 2017. The employees would need to submit address change form, but if TRS had a good address no changes would be made, even if we submitted it on the ED25.
   A few months after the new Portal went live, we discovered that bad addresses were being submitted and not validated. Because of that, a decision was made not to update addresses from the ED25 and the decision was communicated to all employees. This is still on the issues and defects list. Information for new employees can be submitted on the ED20 and if an existing employee doesn't have an address on file, it can be submitted on an ED25. TRS358 form needs to be submitted to update an existing address.

   Lori asked if the address update will work in the future. Mark said that the validations will need to be in place first.

   Tonya asked if errors that she's getting errors on the ED25 regarding punctuation. Are those errors related to the address? Yes as only hyphens, apostrophes, and spaces are acceptable for certain fields.

   The December edition of the Update will include a reminder article about this.

   Mark said that TRS's Benefit Counseling department will be engaged to share information with members about the need to submit the TRS 358.

From Tammy Cunningham, Region 8 ESC

1. I wanted to print the information on the View Ledger Balances screens and there is not a PRINT button option, I know I can print a page, but I wanted to print several pages that reflects some history of the Ledger Balance info. Just thought I'd see if anyone else had this issue or if it was a suggestion/enhancement.
   Best way at the moment is to copy and paste information into Excel. In the future, it's hoped that a Download CSV option will be added that can be used to download results of the search. This request has been previously logged.
2. I received an email from TRS stating I had a Ledger Balance issue. I never received an email like that before and have never checked my Ledger Balance in the past because ALL my reports come to a Completed Status with no issues. I'm also seeing a Penalty Interest amount that I had no clue about. I'm researching the issue and it seems like it goes back several months; I'm still trying to figure what happened. I think it looks like I posted 2 amounts to the wrong account in my TexNet possibly that caused this, still looking though.

But, the Oct 2019 UPDATE explains the Ledger Balance screen and how to read it.

It says your TEXNET Deposit is shown as a Credit, but in the RED BOX below, it says TEXNET and the amount is a Debit (to me), then the amount under that box is a RED Credit amount for Member Contribution (to me that is the RP Detail amount). Then the instructions go on to say:

> which works like a checkbook. When your TEXNET deposit comes in to TRS, there will be a credit shown in your ledger in black. When your report clears, there will be a debit shown in red. Ideally, your ledger balance in the far right column should be zero each month. It is important
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> *continued from page 2*

MANAGING LEDGER BALANCES FOR REPORTING EMPLOYERS continued

When looking at this ledger, it is important to notice how it is displayed. Please note that the RE Ledger balances are using a cash-basis display, rather than a double entry bookkeeping display. Your TEXNET deposits are shown as CREDITS and your report clearing shows as DEBITS, which works like a checkbook. When your TEXNET deposit comes in to TRS, there will be a credit shown in your ledger in black. When your report clears, there will be a debit shown in red. Ideally, your ledger balance in the far right column should be zero each month. It is important to reconcile your RE Ledger balances periodically, ensuring that you do not have a large balance or shortage with TRS.

Contribution Type	MC - Member Contribution	Starting Posted Date	09/01/2018
Current Contribution Type Balance	$0.00	Ending Posted Date	10/10/2019
Current Total RE Ledger Balance		○ Reporting Period Range	
		Starting Reporting Period	
		Ending Reporting Period	

Search

RE Ledger Details

First Previous 1 Next Last — Results Per Page 30

Posted Date	Type	Transaction Description	Posted Amount	Reporting Period	Deposit Date/Receivable Date	Updated By	RE Ledger Balance
09/26/2019	MC	TexNet - Member Retirement Contribution - Regular PR	$13,518.29	09/2019	09/26/2019	BPPS	$0.00
09/25/2019	MC	Member Contribution	-$13,518.29	09/2019	09/25/2019	BPPS	-$13,518.29
08/16/2019	MC	TexNet - Member Retirement Contribution - Regular PR	$12,151.39	08/2019	08/16/2019	BPPS	$0.00
08/15/2019	MC	Member Contribution	-$12,151.39	08/2019	08/15/2019	BPPS	-$12,151.39
07/23/2019	MC	TexNet - Member Retirement Contribution - Regular PR	$12,154.81	07/2019	07/23/2019	BPPS	$0.00

This is just most confusing to me above, then it says your Ledger Balance in the far right column should be zero each month….when I look at the info above, the column shows both a Zero and an amount -$13,518.29. Is the Member Contribution above the TEXNET Deposit or the Detail file info?
It may be helpful to read this like you'd read your checking account. Debits are negative (comes out of your account) and credits are positive (add to your account). If there's a positive balance, the next month's deposit can be less that the amount due for that month. Conversely, if there's a negative balance, additional deposits should be made to cover that negative amount.

Jennifer added to what Mark said by explaining the middle column and the far right column. The middle column (Posted Amount) reflects transactions and the far right column (RE Ledger Balance) is the running balance with the most recent balance at the top.

Tonya asked if anything was in the works to make the ledger easier to understand. Jennifer asked for details – what are the specific struggles? The August edition of the Update included information that may be helpful.

Mark and Jennifer said that suggestions are welcome.

From Lori Johnson, Eanes ISD

1. Can TRS delay the email that reports the districts overage or shortage until AFTER that months reports are due? If the money is due by the 6th & the reports are due later in the month, there is typically going to be a time lag. While these emails are beneficial, the timing of them are causing undue alarm.
   The emails related to overages and shortages were temporarily put on hold while issues are being addressed here.

   Reminder: We're currently giving you a grace period on reports even though money is due by the 6th.

   When issue is fixed, when would you like to receive the email? Initial trigger was that the email would be sent after the due date and after report was complete.

   Lori said that she was expecting it to be sent at the end of the month or whenever the majority of reports clear. Reports will never be cleared when Texnet deposit is made. Mark said that some REs finish their reports before the 6th.

   Mark understands why end of the month would be helpful and, for some employers, would make more sense from a timing standpoint. If the email is sent on the last business day of the month, information will be based on the last allocation date of that month. Timing will be changed in addition to correcting the defect that caused multiple emails to be sent.

   Reminder Penalty interest will be incurred on deposits that are made after the 6th.

- Defects fixed since the last EAG meeting (10/16/19)
  - *Wording of some validations was updated to make the error more clear.*
    a. *Validations 612 and 613:*
       Previous Message: A position record already exists for this retiree. A retiree can only have one ER record per report period.

       NEW Message: Information does not match reported data from a prior report period. Please verify if Position Code, Employment Type or Employment Dates changed.

       Message was changed because it was being interpreted incorrectly, resulting in some employers deleting the record.
    b. *Validations 469 and 644*
       New verbiage:
       469 – The same position code is being reported on more than one record for the same participant and report period. Please verify whether the information on this record needs to be combined with the other record. (related to RP report) Original message stated

something about duplicate record.
644 – More than one ED40 or ED45 record exists with the same position code for the same participant. Please verify whether the position code needs to be corrected. This was changed for a similar reason as 469.

c. *Validation 792 (unposted ED records will cause overlapping positions – to resolve deadlock) was updated to display either ED or ER based on the report type. Previously, it mentioned ED as the record type even when validating an ER report.*

- *Validation 792 (just mentioned) was corrected to look only at unposted records and to allow for multiple correction records with the same data on the same report. We were mostly seeing this on the ER report and correction records had to be sent on separate reports. This is now corrected.*
- *RP20 and RP25 weren't associating to correct contract/position. We corrected most scenarios where the system was trying to attach RP records to ANY TR eligible position. REs were seeing errors that TRS salary and contributions must be reported when the participant wasn't in an eligible position. There were a few scenarios that weren't fixed but are currently being addressed.*
- *New Member period was calculated incorrectly for at least one person and code was corrected. Now, both the New Member validations and View Employee Information will be correct. The problem impacted only a small number of members.*
- *Net days/hours for surcharges weren't being checked. In some cases, the system was not taking into account concurrent employment when determining if surcharges were due. This was mostly happening with ER correction records. The code was fixed so the system will now look at the net hours/days for all employments to determine if surcharges are due.*
- *Some REs were trying to report performance pay as an adjustment and the member did not work in the report month but the system was requiring hours. The new code will take into account any zero days reason code.*
- *RER: Transfer Funds screen not pulling balance for "Transfer From". Balance will now be shown. If transfers were attempted but couldn't be made in the past, it might now be possible.*

Defects and issues list will be updated to reflect the above.

- Next set of enhancements/fixes (subject to change)
  - *Issues with changes to eligibility during a single report month will be addressed (related to position association)*
  - *RE Ledger amount issues related to penalties will be addressed on the RE Ledger screen.*
  - *Provide option to download CSV containing records from all ED reports submitted for the report month. This was a popular request from employers.*
  - *New validation related to temporary employment that will prevent position dates longer than 4½ months from being reported, taking into account overall employment for the fiscal year in case there are multiple temporary positions.*
  - *Validation 790 will be changed so it can be overridden under certain circumstances; addresses some service credit issues that have been seen*
  - *New validation to prevent more than 24 hours being reported for each day*

- RE Report Status

Report Month	*# Completed RP Reports*	*% Complete*	*# Incomplete RP Reports*
September	*1,313*	*98.43%*	*21*
October	*1,037*	*77.74%*	*297*

- Additional Discussion
  - *Becky asked if there been any consideration on adding a position code for Substitute. Going from a Substitute to Permanent employee mid-month is a common occurrence and the volume makes it a big problem for them.*

    Mark said that it hasn't been looked at in detail due to the complexity and number of validations that would be impacted. Substitute is seen as an Employment Type.

    Becky explained that her software considers it a position code and then derives the employment type from the position.

    Mark asked how her software handles someone going from part time to full time within the same position. She said that it's not pretty and has to be done manually.

    Mark offered to meet with her software provider to discuss options.
  - *Becky asked a question about the TRS 7. She struggles with the fact that they provide it and due to a recent change, she's not completely sure what they're supposed to do with the PID.*

    Mark said that TRS the PID as identification of the member in lieu of using the Social Security number. The employer doesn't have to fill out the PID.

    Regarding the information on the TRS 7 – there isn't a way to pull information from the system at the moment. That will change when the next phase of the modernization effort goes live.

    Becky said that they're typing all of the forms and they have a lot. Frances mentioned that the form can be submitted with handwritten information – they don't have to be typed.
  - *Nancy received an email from a fellow district who expressed concern about the time it took to fix an error on her ED. It took so long because of the time required for communication and the need for that communication to be secure. There was a delay of two days in hearing from her Coach. Ultimately, the error was fixed but the amount of time caused a lot of frustration. It would have helped if Coach had notified her employers about their time out of the office.*

    Mark said that everyone who supports employers are always trying to improve. There are statewide trainings in process at the moment that result in some coaches being away, but he agreed that better communication was needed. He'll be happy to talk to the frustrated district. Also, fall travel is done now.

Frances added that there are open positions for Coaches at the moment and TRS is trying to fill those as soon as possible.

ACTIONS, DECISIONS, ISSUES from the Meeting

Action, Decision, Issue	Description	Assignee	Targeted Completion Date