APRIL 2020 VOLUME 39 | NUMBER 4

TEACHER RETIREMENT SYSTEM of TEXAS

UPDATE

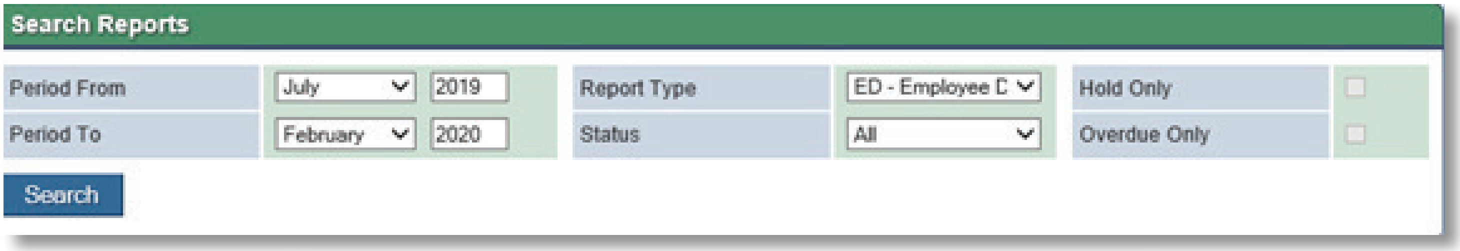
HOW TO DOWNLOAD AND SORT THROUGH REPORTS IN THE TRS DATABASE

TRS has recently enhanced Reporting Employers' (REs) ability to view information they have submitted to the TRS Database. This enhanced functionality will work for Employee Demographic (ED) reports, Regular Payroll (RP) Adjustment reports and Employment After Retirement reports (ER reports). This functionality is not available on the normal RP and ER report types.

For these report types, you may search up to 12 months at a time for download. To do so, please follow the steps below.

In the Search Reports function in the RE Portal, enter the time period you wish to search. Keep in mind that you can only search up to 12 consecutive month-increments. Select the Report Type and choose Status (All)*. Then click Search.

Note: When searching ED reports it is very important to make sure that **all is selected in the status. ED reports may post partial files, so even if the report is not in a "Complete" status, there may be records that are posted that you may need.*



The display will show the list of all reports. Scroll to the bottom of the list and click the download button.

If you are asked to choose the type of program to open the file, please choose Microsoft Excel (CSV).

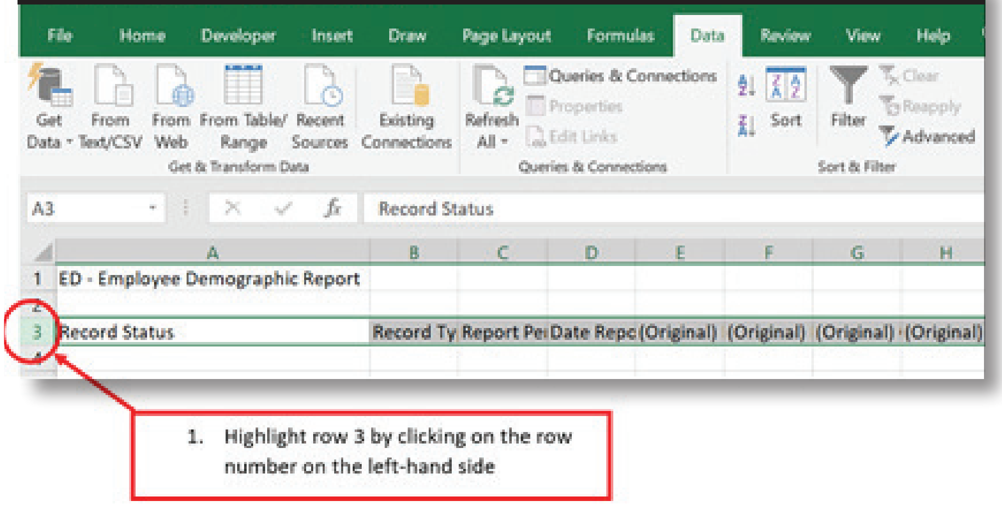
continued on page 2 >

continued from page 1

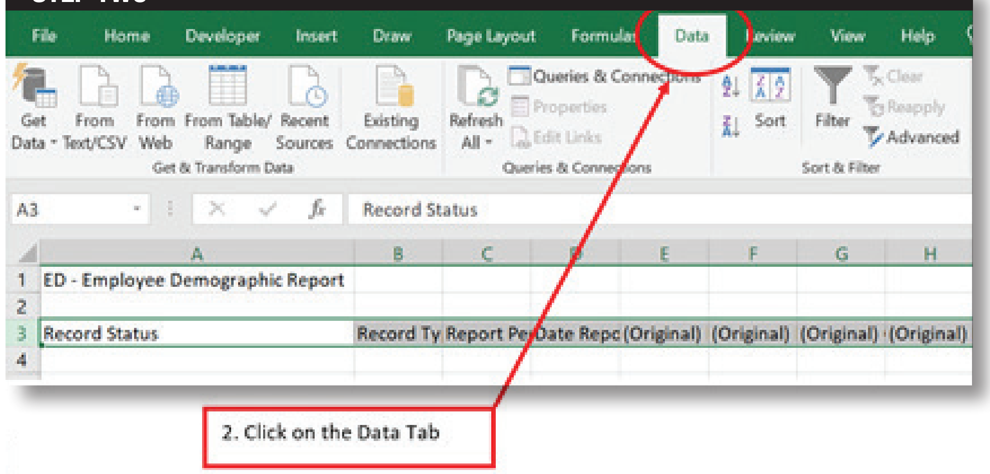
HOW TO DOWNLOAD AND SORT THROUGH REPORTS IN THE TRS DATABASE continued

Once the report downloads and opens in Excel, you will now need to add filters to your data. To do this, follow the steps shown in the pictures:

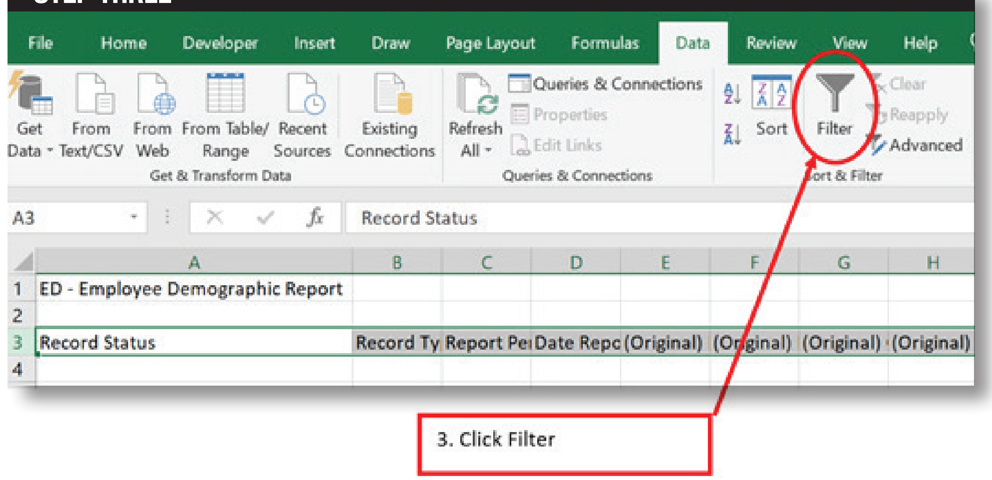
STEP ONE



STEP TWO



STEP THREE

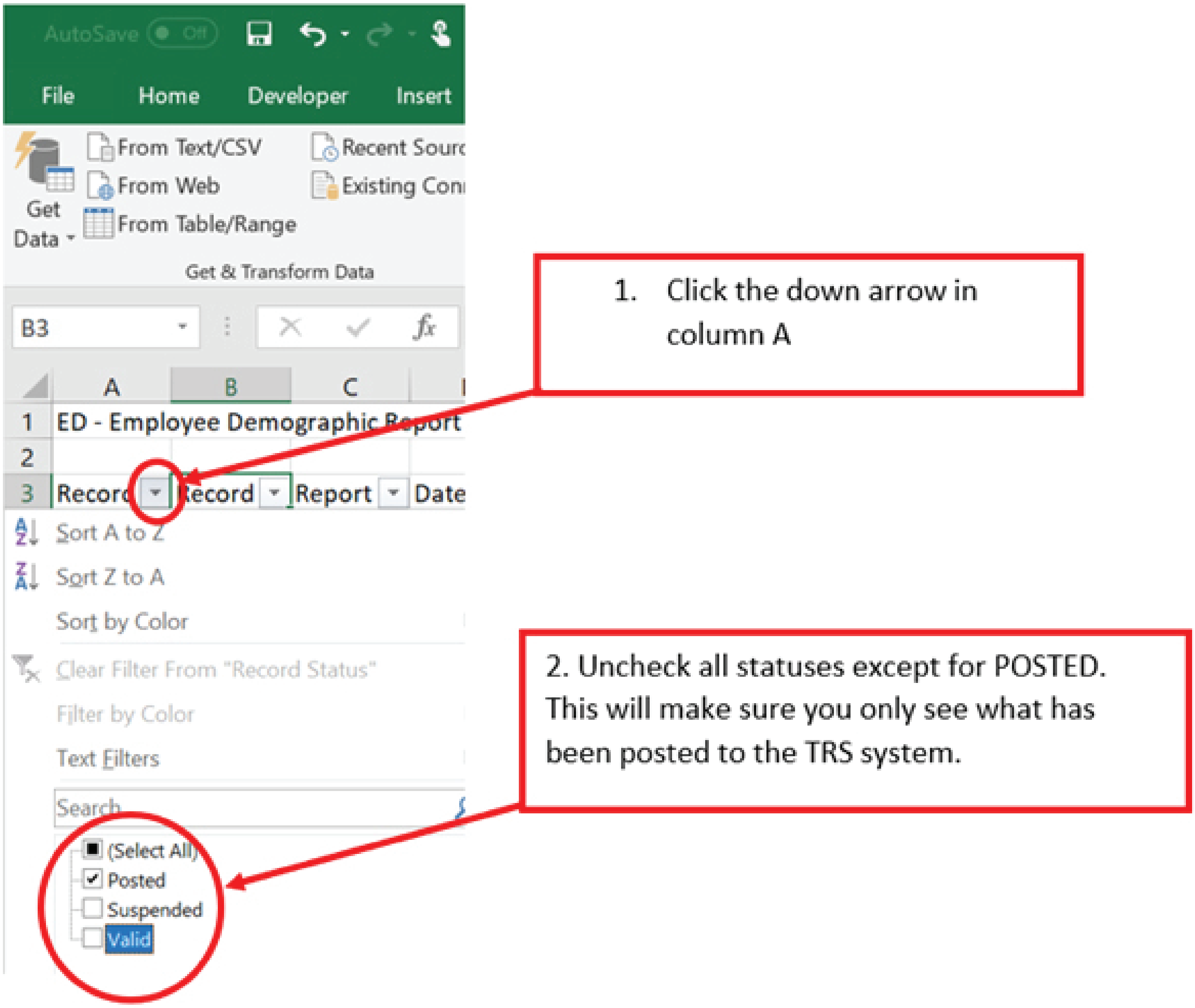


continued on page 3 >

continued from page 2

HOW TO DOWNLOAD AND SORT THROUGH REPORTS IN THE TRS DATABASE continued

Now that the data has filters, you will need to remove all records that are not in a POSTED status. Follow the steps below:



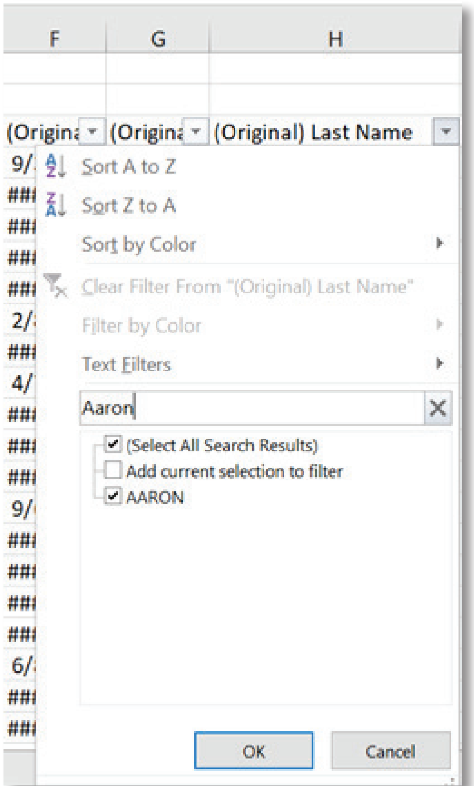
This will allow you to see all the posted records for all of your files.

continued on page 4 >

continued from page 3

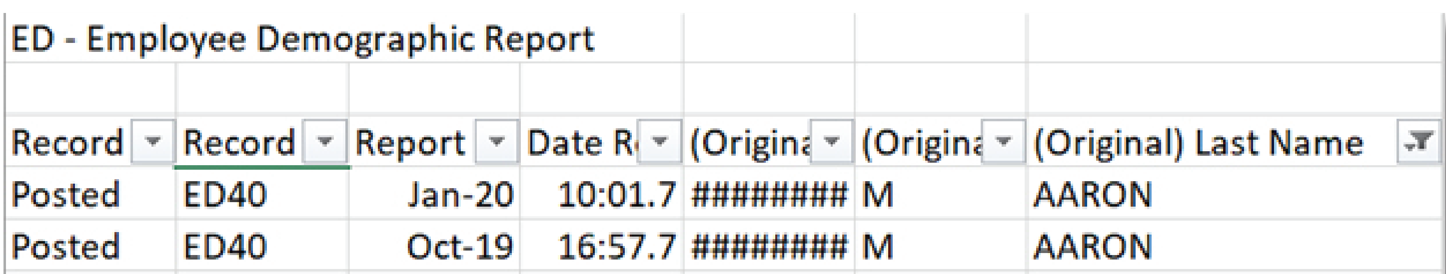
HOW TO DOWNLOAD AND SORT THROUGH REPORTS IN THE TRS DATABASE continued

To search through your posted records, click the down arrow in Column H [(Original) Last Name]. You can then type in the person's name and then click OK. This will display all the records that have been posted for this person.



Once you click OK, the display will show the records.

As you can see, Aaron had a record posted in October 2019 and January 2020.



ED - Employee Demographic Report

Record	Record	Report	Date R	(Origina	(Origina	(Original) Last Name
Posted	ED40	Jan-20	10:01.7	########	M	AARON
Posted	ED40	Oct-19	16:57.7	########	M	AARON

You can expand the columns further to see all of the fields displayed. This can help you with creating adjustment records if needed or knowing why an error is occurring on your most recent month's file.

continued on page 5 >

continued from page 4

FOLLOW UP TO THE RECORDS DELETED IN ERROR REPORTS

In the December issue of the Update Newsletter, TRS advised Reporting Employers (REs) of The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) requirements for TRS to ensure that REs are reporting complete and accurate data. As part of this initiative, TRS has been contacting all employers once the RP and ER reports reach a "Complete" status to confirm whether any records were deleted.

Thankfully, many of the explanations TRS has received have verified that records were deleted for valid reasons.

Common reasons for deleting records are follows:

- RP20 records were deleted because they were for retirees, so they were re-entered as ER20s on the ER report.
- RP20 records were combined because they were not wholly separate and were combined with another RP20.
- Records were deleted because they had a 0 in both the time and pay categories.

When a record is deleted for a valid reason, REs should take appropriate corrective action to prevent your software system from resending the invalid records in a future report month.

Examples of possible corrective actions to take following the aforementioned reasons:

- Update all TRS retirees in your software system so records will be sent as ER20s going forward.
- Check with your software provider to determine if a system setting will automatically combine payroll records that are not wholly separate.
- Ensure that you have terminated employees in your system after a separation from service has occurred.
- Consider using the Zero Day Reason Code of C (employee on less than 12-month pay scheduled) when reporting irregular employees who have not terminated but did not work or receive any pay in the report month.

Going forward, TRS would like for REs to minimize recurrences of such record deletions. This will in turn minimize the number of contacts TRS has to pursue to ensure our controls are in place. Taking appropriate corrective actions to prevent future exception reports will lessen the burden of these reports on you and your coach.

Please respond to the email from your coach any time it is necessary to delete a record for any reason. Even if you have discussed deleting a record with your coach, an exception email will be sent to you after the report has reached "Complete" status. Documentation of your explanation is retained for audit purposes.

As a reminder, REs may not remove records from the report for the sole purpose of bringing the report to "Complete" status, unless directed to do so by their coach. The main reason a coach might direct an RE to remove a record is due to a defect in the RE Portal that does not allow a record to process at that time.

Section 821.101(b) of the Texas Government Code states that, "A person commits an offense if the person knowingly or intentionally makes or permits the making of a false record or statement to the retirement system in an attempt to defraud the retirement system." Therefore, when an RE contact certifies the report is correct by signing the report, but records have been removed from that report in order to bring the report to "Complete" status to avoid penalties, that RE contact is engaging in fraudulent reporting.

continued on page 6 >

continued from page 5

NEW VALIDATIONS ADDED TO THE RE PORTAL

With the April 2020 Maintenance and Enhancements, TRS has added two validations to prevent eligible employees from missing RP transactions. The validations are number 801 and 802.

Validation 801 – *"The contract start date for this position is prior to the current report month and RP transactions for the prior months do not exist."* This validation will prevent REs from missing RP transactions for TRS-eligible employees. As a reminder, TRS requires an RP20 record be submitted every month that an employee has an open **eligible** position with the employer.

If an eligible employee works and/or receives compensation, an RP20 must be submitted to report the time worked in the report month and/or compensation received. If an eligible employee does not work or receive compensation in a report month, an RP 20 with the appropriate Zero-Day Reason Code and no compensation must be submitted.

Here is an example to illustrate the validation:

Posted contract/position record: 09/01/2019-05/29/2020.

Posted RP transactions: September 2019, October 2019, December 2019, January 2020 and February 2020

On the March 2020 RP report, the warning for validation 801 will populate on the RP report since the eligible employee is missing a November 2019 RP transaction. An RP 25 will be needed to add an RP transaction for November 2019.

For the remainder of Fiscal Year 2020, validation 801 will be a **warning**. However, beginning with the September 2020 RP report, the validation will become an **error**.

Validation 802 – *"Must report days worked for the first month of employment in a TRS eligible position. The TRS Eligible Contract start date for this position is <<Employment Start Date>>."* This validation will prevent an RP20 or RP25 record from being submitted in the first report month without time worked on the record.

As an example, if an employee began work in March 2020 and an RP 20 record is added to the March report without time worked, error 802 will populate on the report.

TRS has found many eligible employees who did not have time worked reported in the first month worked in the position and it prevented the member from earning a year of service. We have also found members who had unreported months that reduced their eligible salary for the year. These validations will help TRS ensure all data has been reported for our members.

TRS-ACTIVECARE BENEFITS ADMINISTRATOR TRAININGS TO BE CONDUCTED VIA WEBINAR MAY 5–14

With another annual enrollment period for the 2020-21 TRS-ActiveCare plan year coming up, this is the time of year we begin planning our Benefits Administrator (BA) trainings. However, due to COVID-19, TRS will be holding the meetings virtually to ensure the safety of all attendees.

From May 5–14, TRS and Blue Cross Blue Shield Texas (BCBSTX) and CVS Caremark will host BA Virtual Trainings. There will be seven webinars with each one targeting different Education Service Center regions. These will be extremely important this year due to the transition of our health plan administrator from Aetna to BCBSTX.

We highly encourage you to attend a training, as your employees will likely have more questions during this enrollment period, which we'll announce the dates for soon. **Due to the vendor change to BCBSTX, we will need your help to encourage your employees to review their options for the upcoming year and choose a plan that best meets their needs and enhances their health.**

continued on page 7 >

continued from page 6

TRS-ACTIVECARE BENEFITS ADMINISTRATOR TRAININGS TO BE CONDUCTED VIA WEBINAR MAY 5–14 continued

We plan to announce annual enrollment dates very soon and will share TRS-ActiveCare rates and benefits immediately following the TRS Board of Trustees meeting on April 17, 2020. During the webinars, you will learn about the new BCBSTX plans, receive quick presentations from CVS Caremark and bswift, and have plenty of time for Q&A. If you're in an eligible region, health maintenance organization (HMO) representatives will also be available to answer questions. Also, bswift will administer webinars later this summer for technical trainings.

The webinar schedule for the different regions is as follows. Click the hyperlinked dates to register:

Regions 10 and 11: Tuesday, May 5

Regions 6, 12 and 13: Wednesday, May 6

Regions 1, 2, 19 and 20: Thursday, May 7

Regions 16, 17 and 18: Monday, May 11

Regions 9, 14 and 15: Tuesday, May 12

Regions 3, 4 and 5: Wednesday, May 13

Regions 7 and 8: Thursday, May 14

Thank you, and we look forward to connecting with you in May.

HELPING RETIRING EMPLOYEES TRANSITION FROM TRS-ACTIVECARE TO TRS-CARE

It's the end of the school year, which means retirement season for TRS. If a TRS-ActiveCare participant retires and is eligible for retiree coverage, they enroll in TRS-Care. Please note that retirees who qualify can defer coverage, but they risk a lapse in coverage if they do so.

Here's what you need to know about employees who retire at the end of the school year:

Retiring Before the End of the Instructional Year
Employees retiring on or before the end of the school year may enroll in TRS-Care immediately to avoid a lapse of coverage. For example, if the last day of the school year is May 24, and the employee ends employment on May 22, they would need to have their TRS-Care coverage take effect June 1. Eligible retiring TRS members fill out an initial enrollment application – TRS 700A (for those not eligible for Medicare) or TRS 700M (for those eligible for Medicare) – at the time of retirement to indicate their coverage start date. Retiring employees with Medicare-eligible spouses or dependents will need the 700M, even if they are not eligible for Medicare yet.

Retiring After the End of the Instructional Year
If an employee resigns after the last day of the school year, they're entitled to keep TRS-ActiveCare through June, July and August. For example, if the last day of the school year is May 24 and the employee submits their resignation to be effective on May 25, they would be eligible to keep their TRS-ActiveCare coverage through August 31, or enroll in TRS-Care with a June 1, July 1, Aug. 1 or Sept. 1 effective date. Retiring employees can defer TRS-Care for up to 90 days. In this scenario, school districts are required to pay minimum contributions for the employee's premiums but must coordinate their TRS-ActiveCare end dates and TRS-Care start dates to avoid a lapse in coverage.

Do Lump Sum Payouts Affect TRS-Care?
Some employees will receive a lump sum payout at the end of their contract, while others choose to spread out their payment through the summer. Neither choice affects TRS health care coverage. If an employee would like to stay enrolled in TRS-ActiveCare through the summer, they will need to make a payment arrangement with their district to continue paying their share of the premiums.

What if my district doesn't participate in TRS-ActiveCare?
Departing employees may be eligible to continue coverage through their district. The same eligibility rules apply to them per Texas Education Code Section 22.004.