

Update

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TEACHER RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF TEXAS

Jan. 20 deadline approaches to file 2015 board election nominations with TRS

Active public school district, charter school and regional education service center employees who are TRS members may now request petitions to nominate candidates to a position on the TRS Board of Trustees.

In spring 2015, an election will be held to field nominees who are eligible for appointment to fill one of the two public education positions on the board of trustees. The position will be for a six-year term beginning as early as Sept. 1, 2015. All TRS members whose most recent credited service is or was performed for a public school district, charter school or regional education service center are eligible to vote in this election. Members of the system who are currently employed in a TRS-eligible position by a public school district, charter school or regional education service center may have their names listed on the official ballot as candidates by filing an official petition.

Petitions must be signed by 250 members of TRS whose most recent credited service is or was performed for a public school district, charter school or regional education service center. In addition, when members sign the petition, they must include their printed or typed names, the first five digits of their current residential zip code, and the last four digits of their social security number. All valid nominating petitions **filed with TRS by Jan. 20, 2015** will be accepted.

By March 15, 2015, TRS will mail ballots and an edition of *TRS News* containing candidate information to all TRS participants who are eligible to vote in the elections. TRS must receive completed ballots on or before May 5, 2015. Then, TRS will certify the names of the three candidates who received the highest number of votes to the governor. The governor will then appoint one of those candidates to serve on the board.

To obtain a petition form, you may:

- Print the petition form from the TRS website at www.trs.texas.gov/about/documents/trustee_election_petition.pdf
- Write TRS at 1000 Red River; Austin, TX 78701-2698;
 - Call 1-800-223-8778, ext. 2702; or
 - Fax a request to 1-512-542-6585.

Nominating instructions are included on the form.

Important reminders on employment after retirement and surcharges

Each month, employers are required to submit information about TRS retirees who have returned to employment in public education. It is critical that the information be submitted in a timely manner as it could affect a TRS retiree's annuity payment, employer surcharges and possibly the 12 full, consecutive calendar month break in service.

Additionally, when reporting TRS retirees, employers must use TRS' definition of substitute, one-half time or full time, which can be found in the *TRAQS Payroll Reporting Manual*. Refer to the TRAQS payroll reporting manual at www.trs.state.tx.us under the Employers tab for the most current up-to-date information.

Employer Surcharges (Pension and TRS-Care) apply when a retiree who retired after Sept. 1, 2005 works or receives paid leave for more than the equivalent of four clock hours for every work day in that calendar month. Additionally, employers are required to pay surcharges if a retiree combines work under the one-half time exception and substitute work in the same calendar month and works more than one half the number of workdays in that calendar month.

As a reminder, if a retiree is employed concurrently in more than one position, the surcharge is owed if the combined employment is for more than the equivalent of four clock hours for every workday in the calendar month. If the employment is with more than one employer, the surcharge is owed by each employer. Health care surcharges are split equally among all employers.

Frequently asked questions about certifying terminations

Since June 2012, TRS has been using electronic communications with reporting entities, which gives TRS reporting officials the ability to certify employment terminations for their employees online via the TRAQS applications. As a result, the required data being sent to TRS electronically continues to expedite the member's refund application process and save the reporting entities time and paperwork.

The following are some common questions about the Certification of Termination process from reporting entities:

When does TRS request Certifications of Termination?

TRS will send an email (*and via TRAQS*) notification requesting certification of termination of employees who were employed by a TRS-covered employer during the previous six months.

What to do after receiving the notification request?

The reporting official needs to login to the TRAQS system. The reporting official will then be prompted to complete any outstanding termination records. For each employee termination record to be certified, the reporting official will see the employee's identifying information and, once the termination information is entered, the reporting official should select "submit." The data will be returned to TRS electronically.

What termination information is needed by TRS?

The following information is requested in the TRAQS certification:

Has the employee terminated employment? Yes No

- Indicate "YES", then provide the following:
 - ♦ **Date of Termination**
 - ♦ **Final Report Month** - containing the final TRS contribution of the member
 - ♦ **Select "Submit"**
 - ♦ Certification is complete and TRS will continue with processing the refund.
- Indicate "NO",
 - ♦ If the member never ceased employment, has been re-employed, or changed from full-time employment to part-time employment
 - ♦ **Select "Submit"**
 - ♦ Certification is complete and the refund is canceled.

What if an employee is now only a substitute? What should be entered?

For TRS reporting purposes, a substitute is a unique, temporary employment arrangement and the person working as a substitute in the place of a current employee is not eligible for membership in TRS. If the member is serving as a substitute then the reporting official should answer "YES" and enter the date that the member ceased to be a regular TRS-covered employee as the Date of Termination and enter the Final Report Month. Substitute service is the **ONLY** exception that would allow a member to refund their TRS contributions. If the person is not a substitute, but is working in any other capacity, including working in a position that is not TRS eligible, then they have not terminated their employment and are not eligible for a refund. The reporting official should answer "NO" and submit the report.

How soon should I respond to certification requests?

As soon as possible.

Why do I keep receiving follow-up certification requests each week?

Once each week (Friday night), you will receive a reminder email if you have any outstanding terminations awaiting certification.

Do I need to wait to submit the Certification of Termination until processing the monthly report?

The reporting official should submit the Certification of Termination as soon as the request is received. It is not necessary to wait to submit this information for the final report month.

Why do I receive a notification from TRS stating that the incorrect last deposit date was submitted?

This notification is sent to reporting officials when the final report month previously submitted for the member

does not match with TRS data. For example, the reporting entity submits a final report month for October, and TRS records show that the member has a November deposit posted.

I am having problems submitting information on TRAQS regarding the certification of termination. What should I do?

If you are having technical difficulties certifying a member's information, please contact your TRAQS coach so that we may resolve the issue.

TRS offices closed on Jan. 19

TRS offices will be closed on Jan. 19, 2015 in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

TRAQS - Tip of the Month

When submitting Certifications of Terminations through TRAQS or MD90 termination records through Member Data or sending in a TRS 7 (*Notification of Final Deposit Before Retirement*), the "Final Report Month" is the month the employee will be reported to TRS for the last time. It is extremely important that the "Final Report Month" be accurate, as TRS processes could be delayed due to inaccurate reporting.