

PSERS Employer Bulletin

Employer Bulletin - Volume 4 2018

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& More...



Public School Employees' Retirement System

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Toll-Free

866.353.1844

Local

717.787.1755

FAX

717.783.8760

Email

ContactESC@pa.gov

Important Notice: Voya, PSERS' Third Party Administrator (TPA) for the Defined Contribution component of Act 5, will be contacting software providers and then may be contacting school employers in September and October. Please keep contact email information current and look out for their correspondence as you may need to take action!

Fiscal Year 2018 Summary Reports

Reminder: Your August 2018 Work Report is due by September 20, 2018. Please remember to respond to your ESC representative after you have reviewed your Summary Report.

Summary reports are the first step in generating member annual *Statements of Account*. These reports allow you to check the accuracy of all salary and service information reported to PSERS for each member during the 2017-18 school year. To generate your Summary Report with a comprehensive review of the 2017-18 school year, your August 2018 Work Report must be uploaded and approved. ***It is important to have your August Work Report done by the September 20, 2018, due date or earlier if possible.***

PSERS will notify you when your district's August Work Report is posted and you can generate the Summary Report in the Employer Self-Service (ESS) Portal. Please be sure to review your report within 30 days.

In the past, PSERS has provided a copy of the Summary Report that will highlight any potential salary and/or service issues. The Summary Report that districts have the ability to generate does not have that feature. PSERS will provide districts with a template and directions on how to copy and paste their generated summary information into the template, so any obvious issues are highlighted. This template will be provided to each district upon the posting and release of the August work report.

Please make any necessary adjustments to member records in ESS to correct issues noted on your summary report within 30 days of being notified that the August work report for your district has been released. Once you review the report and make the necessary adjustments, **notify your ESC representative**. PSERS can then begin the process of creating the member *Statements of Account* for your school.

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Employer Service Center Staff

Crystal Houser
Regional Office Administrator
crhouser@pa.gov

Region 1 - Vacant

Temporary Contacts:
cbaez@pa.gov;
jmalmick@pa.gov;
michappius@pa.gov
Beaver, Butler, Cameron, Centre, Clarion, Clearfield, Clinton, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, Jefferson, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Potter, Venango, and Warren Counties

Region 2 - Vacant

Temporary Contact:
crhouser@pa.gov;
michappius@pa.gov
Bradford, Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Luzerne, Lycoming, Monroe, Montour, Northampton, Northumberland, Pike, Snyder, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, Union, Wayne, and Wyoming Counties

Region 3 - Jonathan Malnick

jmalmick@pa.gov
Allegheny, Armstrong, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Washington, and Westmoreland Counties

Region 4 - Carolina Baez

cbaez@pa.gov
Adams, Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntington, Juniata, Mifflin, Perry, Somerset, and York Counties

Region 5 - Michael Chappuis

michappius@pa.gov
Berks, Bucks, Lancaster, Lebanon, Montgomery, and Schuylkill Counties

Region 6 - Lynn Wadley

lwadley@pa.gov
Chester, Delaware, and Philadelphia Counties

(Fiscal Year 2018 Summary Reports...Continued)

If you do not confirm with your ESC representative that you reviewed the Summary Report and completed any necessary adjustments within the 30-day period, PSERS will delay generating the member *Statements of Account* until confirmation is received.

New Feature

As a new feature in ESS employers now have the ability to generate the Summary Report as often as they would like. This report should be used as a tool throughout the year to ensure that reporting for all employees is correct.

Utilizing the Summary Report in this way will ensure that the Member Statements are able to be generated for your district in a timely manner after the posting of the August work report.

If you have not submitted your August 2018 Work Report, however, you will not be able to review a comprehensive Summary Report for the year.

Meet Your Representative: Lynn Wadley



PSERS is pleased to introduce Lynn Wadley as the new Employer Service Center Representative for Region 6. Lynn graduated from Indiana University of Pennsylvania with a Bachelor of Science in Communications Media. Before coming to PSERS, she spent three years as a Retirement Technician for the Pennsylvania Municipal Retirement System (PMRS). Lynn is excited about her new position and looks forward to helping schools become more familiar with the new ESS browser system through training and on site workshops.

Lynn is a proud mother of two sons; Jordan, a graduate of Temple University, lives in Philadelphia and Nathan, a PENN STATE graduate, lives in Baltimore, MD. In her spare time, Lynn enjoys crafting, painting, gardening, and spending time with her family and new puppy.

Her advice to employers: "We understand change is often difficult. The Employer Service Center is here to help our schools learn and adjust to the changes. Please reach out to us if you need help. Remember PSERS has additional resources available on our website if you can't get through to one of us."

Coming Soon: 20-Minute Skype Training Webinars

In response to your requests, PSERS Employer Service Center (ESC) staff will be holding brief training webinars targeting specific topics that garner the most questions. Topics we will cover include Adjustments, the Accounts Tab in ESS, entering a new Member Demographic Record, uploading files, reporting coaches, and more!

The Manual Adjustment training schedule is below. Please click one of the links below for the training that most conveniently works with your schedule. Doing so will automatically add the invitation to your calendar:

Thursday, September 13th from 9-10 a.m.

Monday, September 17th from 2-3 p.m.

Tuesday, September 18th from 10-11 a.m.

Wednesday, September 26th from 1:30-2:30 p.m.

Have an idea for a topic you would like to see covered? Email crhouser@pa.gov with your idea!

Keep Your Security Administrator Designation Updated

It is crucial to keep your Security Administrator designation up to date. The Security Administrator sets up and maintains User accounts in the Employer Self-Service (ESS) Portal and has full access to the online system. *You must establish at least two Security Administrators. Otherwise, you will not have the ability to manage the information exchange on ESS.*

When the person who has been serving as your Security Administrator changes to another position or leaves your employ, you must remove this person's access to the system. This includes management companies. When you change management companies, please remember to remove the previous management company's access to your ESS account.

How to Remove or Add a Security Administrator

To remove the old Security Administrator, fill out the *PSERS Employer Security Administrator Authorization* (PSRS-1270) form and check the box marked "Delete Employer Security Administrator." In the rest of the form, enter information about the old Security Administrator who should be removed.

To establish the new Security Administrator, fill out the *PSERS Employer Security Administrator Authorization* (PSRS-1270) form and check the box marked "Create Employer Security Administrator." In the rest of the form, enter information about the new individual who will be serving as Security Administrator.

Submit BOTH forms to:

Employer Service Center
Public School Employees' Retirement System
5 N 5th Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101-1905
Or
Fax them to: 717.783.8760

If the Security Administrator replacement is urgent, contact PSERS' Employer Service Center by telephone at 1.866.353.1844

Note : If the only change to the Security Administrator's account is the email address, the Security Administrator may update it under the "Admin" tab. You are not required to follow the procedures for Changing Your Security Administrator to only change an email address.

Revised Return to Service Exceptions Handbook

The revised Return to Service Exceptions (PSRS-9682) handbook is available on the PSERS website under “Publications.” A copy of the Return to Service Flow Chart is available on the following page.

By law, a PSERS retiree may not be employed by a Pennsylvania public school without risking the loss of his or her monthly retirement pension unless he or she qualifies for specific exceptions. In the revised handbook, we have provided guidance on distinguishing the two emergency exceptions—an “emergency” creating an increase in the workload and a shortage of personnel—including what constitutes a shortage of personnel, explaining that a shortage may be triggered by a vacancy or an absence, and streamlined the approval process for each.

PSERS has developed two processes (i.e. the School Year Approval Process and the Specific Member Approval Process) to request an approval under one of the emergency exceptions to hire a PSERS retiree. The School Year Approval Process, which is an approval of the employer’s recruitment procedure rather than an approval of a specific retiree, may be used upon the occurrence of an absence, a vacancy with no advanced notice, or a vacancy stemming from a legal challenge. The Specific Member Approval Process, which is an approval to return a specific retiree, must be used for all other instances that do not qualify under the School Year Approval Process, including other vacancies, an emergency increase in workload, or the return of a retiree who retired within the last school year and who is filling a similar position from which the retiree retired. Complete details of the School Year Approval Process and the Specific Member Approval Process are on pages 5 and 6 on the handbook.

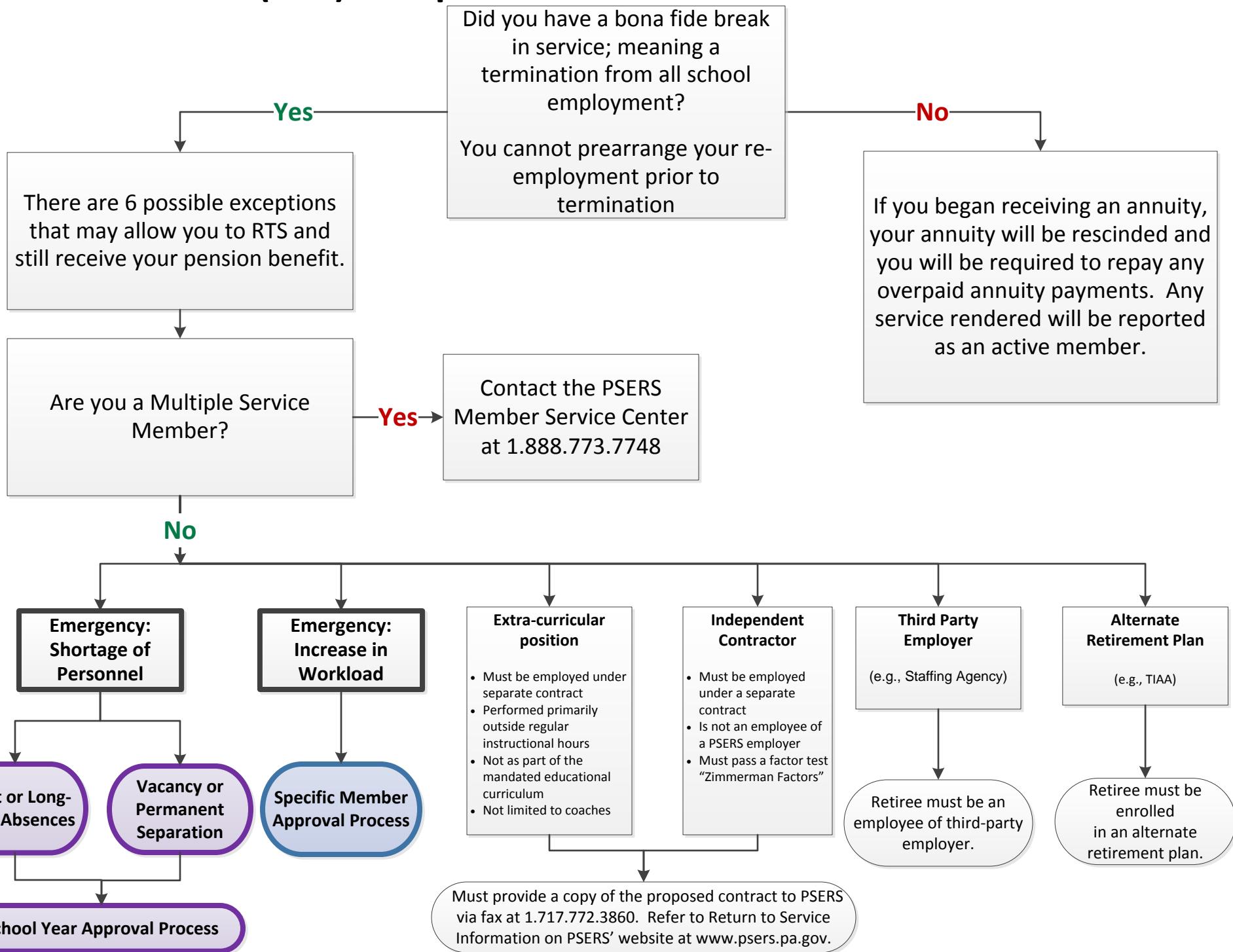
Need a School Year Approval?

PSERS provides a Short-Term Substitute Template Letter on our website under “Employers” and on the ESS Portal to assist you with completing the School Year Approval Process.

We have also clarified the terms of other exceptions when a retiree returns to service as an independent contractor, with a third-party employer, under an alternate retirement plan, or with a charter school.

If the employment qualifies as a legitimate return to service exception and as a result a PSERS retiree is hired, the employer should not withhold contributions for that member and should not report any wages and service to PSERS. Keep in mind, however, PSERS has the right to review the employment of any PSERS retiree for compliance with the intent of the Retirement Code. If PSERS determines that the employment does not meet the return to service exception provisions, the retiree’s monthly retirement benefit payments will be suspended. The retiree will also need to repay any retirement benefits received after the return to service date, regardless of the amount of time for which the retiree returned. If the retiree returned in a qualifying position, then the retiree will again become an active contributing member of PSERS.

Return to Service (RTS) Exception Guidance



Emergency: Shortage of Personnel – School Year Approval Process

A school employer may use the School Year Approval Process under the following circumstances:

- Absences, short-term and long-term
- Vacancy with no advanced notice of a permanent separation
- Vacancy when an employer is prevented from replacing a terminated employee because of a legal challenge

To apply for the School Year Approval Process to use PSERS retirees - The school employer must submit a letter to PSERS requesting a general approval and certifying the process used to hire all PSERS retirees under the Emergency Exceptions provisions throughout that school year. The letter submitted to PSERS should confirm that:

- The school employer will establish and maintain a current candidate list that distinguishes between those who are PSERS retirees and those who are not.
- If the candidate list is established directly by the employer and the need for a candidate arises, the employer will first notify and exhaust a candidate list of those who are not PSERS retirees before employing a PSERS retiree.
- If the employer uses a third party vendor to place candidates, then the employer confirms that: 1) the third party vendor employs the candidate directly, and 2) the employer will not employ a PSERS retiree until the third party vendor attempted, but was not able, to place a candidate.
- The school employer will make available to any PSERS retiree who will or could be employed by the employer, upon request by the retiree, a copy of the school employer's request to PSERS for the School Year Approval Process and PSERS' response to the school employer's request.
- The school employer will only use the School Year Approval Process for absences, short-term and long-term; a vacancy with no advanced notice of a permanent separation; and a vacancy, when an employer is prevented from replacing a terminated employee because of a legal challenge.
- If a school employer has a short-term absence that transitions to a long-term absence the employer will repeat the search for a candidate who is not a PSERS retiree before offering it to a PSERS retiree.
- In filling a vacancy with no advanced notice of a permanent separation, the school employer will immediately begin an *Adequate and Good Faith Search* for a permanent replacement.
- The school employer will use the Specific Member Approval Process when hiring a PSERS retiree who retired within the last school year and who is filling a vacancy or absence in the position that they recently retired from or a vacancy in a similar position.

Emergency: Shortage of Personnel – Specific Member Approval Process

A school employer must use the Specific Member Approval Process under the following circumstances:

- A vacancy because an existing employee is no longer employed in their position and is not expected to return
- An employer creates a position that did not previously exist
- An emergency increase in workload
- All other instances that do not qualify under the School Year Approval Process

To request approval to employ a PSERS retiree under this process, the employer must provide the following, as applicable:

- The name and social security number of the PSERS retiree.
- If the retiree retired within the last school year from the same employer, the employer must provide the following:
 - Copies of the formal notice of the termination/retirement, e.g., a resignation letter, internal memo, board minute documenting the notice, etc.
 - Copies and explanations of all relevant employment contracts and severance agreements (both oral and written).
 - If the retiree is filling the same position, provide an explanation of why the retiree could not have simply remained in his/her position instead of retiring.
- An explanation of how and when the position became vacant, including copies of any notice of termination/retirement/leave resulting in the vacancy/absence.
- An explanation of the *Adequate and Good Faith Search* taken by the employer to find someone who is not a PSERS retiree and the dates of each step in the process.
- For an *Emergency Creating an Increase in the Workload*, identify what created the emergency, when the emergency was created, how long the school employer expects the workload to be at the increased level, and why the increase in duties cannot be performed by existing staff.

If the employer does not provide sufficient information and/or documentation to satisfy an *Emergency* exception, the request will be denied and, if the retiree renders service, may result in the retiree being reenrolled in PSERS and the retiree's benefit being stopped retroactive to the date the retiree first began service.

Refer to the PSERS *Return to Service Exceptions* for more information.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is strictly meant to serve as a general aid to answering many of the typical circumstances or questions that may arise from a member considering a return to service. It is not intended to serve as the final answer. It is recognized that all circumstances are unique. When in doubt a member or employer should contact PSERS for additional clarification.