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## Legislation Passed that Impacts Members on Military Leave

Legislation was passed to bring PSERS up to date with the requirements of the HEART Act, USERRA, and IRC §414(u). The HEART Act impacts active members who go on a military leave on or after July 1, 2013. This legislation does not affect any members already on a military leave or any members extending a current military leave as this is considered a part of the original military leave.

The legislation primarily changes the rules regarding service credit and eligibility points earned during the military leave, purchasing this service upon return to school employment, what occurs in the event of a member's death or disability while on a new military leave, and the employer's role in the aforementioned activities. Specific details will be supplied to all members directly impacted by the changes. Additional information is available on the PSERS website.

## Attending Exit Counseling Meetings

Planning for retirement is one of the most exciting and complicated decisions you will make. Allow PSERS to make this process just a bit less stressful by attending a PSERS *Exit Counseling* session. *Exit Counseling* is offered as a service to anyone retiring in the current school year. Attending an *Exit Counseling* session will help ensure you understand your options and avoid delays with the processing of your retirement benefit due to errors from incorrectly completing the necessary form.

PSERS strongly suggests for all members who are planning on retirement to complete the following steps:

- Attend a *Foundations for Your Future* (FFYF) seminar. More information on FFYF seminars is found on page 4 of this newsletter. A copy of the presentation can also be found on the PSERS website under Regional Offices, Retirement Overview (FFYF).
- Request a staff-prepared retirement estimate by completing a *Request for Retirement Estimate* (PSRS-151). The form is found on the PSERS website under Forms, or by contacting the PSERS Member Service Center at 888.773.7748.
- After receiving your retirement estimate, call the PSERS regional office listed in your estimate to schedule your *Exit Counseling* session.

Don't wait until the last minute to schedule a session or pass up your chance to attend. It may prevent you from making a mistake that will forever negatively affect your retirement benefit. There is one last important step; enjoy your retirement!

The Public School Employees' Retirement System (PSERS) provides this document for educational and informational purposes. Information in this document is general in nature, does not cover all factual circumstances, and is not a complete statement of the law or administrative rules. The statements in this document are not binding. In any conflict between the statements in this document and applicable law or administrative rules, the law and administrative rules will prevail. This document is designed solely to provide an overview of benefits available to PSERS members and is not intended to be a substitute for retirement counseling. The contents of this newsletter may not be used for any commercial purpose without PSERS' prior written permission.

**PSERS**  
5 N 5th Street  
Harrisburg PA 17101-1905

Toll-Free 1.888.773.7748  
Local Calls 717.787.8540  
FAX 717.772.3860

**Phone Hours**  
**Weekdays**  
**(except holidays):**  
**8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.**

**Website Address:**  
[www.psers.state.pa.us](http://www.psers.state.pa.us)  
**Email Address:**  
[contactPSERS@pa.gov](mailto:contactPSERS@pa.gov)

## PSERS Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule

**August 8, 2013**  
**October 4, 2013**  
**December 6, 2013**

PSERS Board meetings are held in Harrisburg at PSERS, located at 5 N 5th Street. In addition to these Board meetings, Committee meetings are held throughout the year. All PSERS Board meetings are open to the public.

For exact meeting times or if you would like to attend and require an accommodation to participate, please call Barbara Book, PSERS Executive Office at 1.888.773.7748, extension 4617.

## Return to Service Exceptions It's Your Pension in Jeopardy

As a PSERS retiree, you are not permitted to work for a Pennsylvania public school employer without risking the loss of your monthly retirement pension *unless* you qualify for specific exceptions. For more information about these exceptions, please refer to the PSERS publication, *PSERS Return to Service Guidelines* (PSRS-9682) found on the PSERS website or by calling PSERS.

It is very important that you familiarize yourself with this publication if you plan to work after retirement, particularly with a Pennsylvania public school employer. If PSERS finds that you do not qualify for any of the return to service exceptions, **your monthly payment will be suspended** and, you will again become an active contributing member of PSERS. You will also be required to pay back the benefit you received while you were a PSERS retiree and working for a Pennsylvania public school employer. This result may not be beneficial to you because your future pension payments may likely be reduced.

Let's take for example Bob Smith. Bob is an administrator working for Pennsylvania School District. In the middle of his four-year contract, Bob decides to retire immediately but agrees to continue to work the remainder of his contract as an emergency annuitant. The school district agrees to the

deal because Bob's sudden retirement has caused a personnel shortage. Bob's particular scenario may seem like a legitimate return to service exception but, in actuality, it is not. You cannot create the personnel shortage by your own retirement. Also, even if the school district approves your employment, you should consult with PSERS. Remember it is your benefit in jeopardy, not the employers. Bob decides to stop working and will again have to go through the retirement process. He now has a debt consisting of the monthly pension checks he received while retired and working, the contributions he should have made to his PSERS account while working, and interest on these monies.

Keep in mind the many other employment opportunities for PSERS retirees such as private industry, parochial schools, or third party contractors that will not jeopardize your PSERS pension. Suspension of your monthly benefits is not anyone's desired outcome.

**Please refer to the PSERS publication, *PSERS Return to Service Guidelines* (PSRS-9682) found on the PSERS website.**

## Premium Assistance & Non-Taxed Premium Payments

Premium Assistance cannot be used to reimburse retirees for pre-tax premium payments. While pre-tax premium payments are not generally available to retirees, it can happen if the retiree is covered as a spouse/dependent of an active employee and that employee has his or her salary “reduced” to pay premiums. When this happens, PSERS cannot pay Premium Assistance to a retiree whose health insurance premium is paid using non-taxed dollars. There are two primary reasons why this is the case:

1. Premium Assistance is a reimbursement of an eligible retiree’s out-of-pocket expense for health insurance. If a retiree is a dependent (spouse) of an active employee and the premium is paid through a pre-tax, salary deduction from the active employee, the premium payment is viewed by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as an employer payment. Thus, the retiree does not have an out-of-pocket expense.
2. Premium Assistance is a non-taxable reimbursement. The IRS does not permit a non-taxable reimbursement for a non-taxable insurance premium payment. The IRS only allows “one bite of the tax-free apple.”

It is understandable that a retiree may feel unduly “penalized” by these tax rules. In many cases, the \$100 Premium Assistance benefit is of greater value than the tax savings produced by paying health insurance premiums through a salary reduction plan. PSERS cannot pay Premium Assistance as taxable income to the retiree without jeopardizing the tax status of the entire program. A school employer or other employer cannot mingle pre-tax and post-tax premiums for family coverage without an elaborate administrative mechanism and multiple plans.

The best advice for retirees eligible for Premium Assistance is to weigh the financial consequences of participating in a health insurance plan as a dependent of an active employee and participating in HOP as a retiree.

In cases where a retiree has been receiving Premium Assistance during a period of time premiums were paid through an active employee’s salary reduction plan, PSERS must collect these overpayments.

## Updating Your Address

It is important to make sure that you always keep your address up to date with PSERS. Throughout the year, PSERS mails our newsletters and other important and timely information.

If you are currently working in a Pennsylvania public school, **report any change of address to your employer. Your employer will submit the information to PSERS.**

If you left employment and have deferred receiving your retirement benefit until later, submit your address change to PSERS in writing. Mail your information to:

PSERS  
5 N 5th Street  
Harrisburg PA 17101-1905

**You must include your signature** and at least the last four digits of your social security number in the letter to assure proper identification of your account.

**PSERS is proud to be an equal opportunity employer supporting workforce diversity.**

## Foundations for Your Future (FFYF)

As a part of its educational outreach, PSERS provides *Foundations for Your Future* seminars for active members. PSERS regional representatives present these seminars throughout the school year to provide all active members with general information about PSERS benefits and services. Attendance at a *Foundations for Your Future* seminar will help you begin to plan for your retirement early in your career. During these seminars, PSERS examines topics such as benefit options, withdrawal of contributions, rollovers, taxes, and legislative actions affecting PSERS. A copy of the presentation can be found on the PSERS website at [www.psers.state.pa.us](http://www.psers.state.pa.us), under Regional Offices, Retirement Overview (FFYF).

Listed below are seminars scheduled from September 2013 through December 2013 (not inclusive, more dates may be added in some areas). A complete list of seminars is found on the PSERS website under Regional Offices, Retirement Overview (FFYF), and Schedule.

If you need directions to any of the locations, please contact your regional office, the PSERS Member Service Center at 1.888.773.7748, or access the PSERS website. If there is a demand for additional seminars during the year, PSERS may add seminars and post them to the PSERS website. **Please Note:** Advance registration is not required to attend any of these seminars. If you require an accommodation to participate, please contact your PSERS regional office.

**As this printed schedule is subject to change due to weather or other unforeseen conditions, we highly suggest that prior to leaving for a meeting, you verify the dates and times listed through the schedule posted on the PSERS website.**

**If a school location experiences an emergency/weather closing, the meeting will be canceled.**

### Southwest Region, Toll-Free 1.888.773.7748, extension 5775 Counties Served: Allegheny, Fayette, Greene, & Washington

County	City	Address	Date	Time
Allegheny	Homestead	Allegheny I.U., McGuffey and Sullivan Rooms, 475 E Waterfront Dr	September 12, 2013	4:30 pm
			November 14, 2013	4:30 pm
Allegheny	Pittsburgh/ Green Tree	Clarion Hotel and Conference Center (formerly Ramada Inn), Ambassador Ballroom, 401 Holiday Dr	October 9, 2013	4:30 pm
Washington	Charleroi	Mon Valley Career and Technology Center, Classrooms 1 and 2, 1 Guttman Blvd	October 10, 2013	4:30 pm
			December 19, 2013	4:30 pm
Fayette	Uniontown	Holiday Inn Uniontown, Appalachian Ridge Room, 700 W Main St	November 12, 2013	4:30 pm
Washington	Washington	Trinity Middle School, Auditorium, 50 Scenic Dr	September 10, 2013	4:30 pm
			October 17, 2013	4:30 pm
Allegheny	Pittsburgh	Community College of Allegheny County, North Campus, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor Conference Room (Room 3002), 8701 Perry Hwy	October 16, 2013	4:30 pm

<b>Southeast Region, Toll-Free 1.888.773.7748, extension 5575</b> <b>Counties Served: Bucks, Delaware, Montgomery, &amp; Philadelphia</b>				
County	City	Address	Date	Time
Bucks	Bensalem	Bensalem High School, North Wing Audion, 4319 Hulmeville Rd	October 7, 2013	4:30 pm
			November 13, 2013	4:30 pm
Bucks	Quakertown	Quakertown Community High School, 600 Park Ave	October 15, 2013	4:30 pm
Delaware	Morton	Delaware County I.U., Education Service Center, Rooms 171 & 172, 200 Yale Ave	October 9, 2013	4:30 pm
			November 7, 2013	4:30 pm
Montgomery	Kulpsville	Holiday Inn Lansdale (Inn at Towamencin), 1750 Sumneytown Pk	October 8, 2013	4:30 pm
			November 14, 2013	4:30 pm
Montgomery	Pottstown	Pottstown Senior High, N. Washington St	October 10, 2013	4:30 p.m.
Philadelphia	Philadelphia	Ramada Philadelphia NE, 11580 Roosevelt Blvd	October 3, 2013	4:30 pm
			November 6, 2013	4:30 pm
Philadelphia	Philadelphia	Philadelphia School District Education Center, Auditorium, 440 N Broad St	October 8, 2013	4:30 pm
			November 12, 2013	4:30 pm

<b>Southcentral Region, Toll-Free 1.888.773.7748, extension 5675</b> <b>Counties Served: Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Mifflin, Perry, &amp; York</b>				
County	City	Address	Date	Time
Adams	New Oxford	Lincoln I.U., 65 Billerbeck St	October 1, 2013	4:30 pm
Cumberland	Mechanicsburg	Cumberland Valley High School, Auditorium, 6746 Carlisle Pk	September 19, 2013	4:30 pm
Cumberland	Summerdale	Capital Area I.U. 55 Miller St	October 9, 2013	4:30 pm
Dauphin	Middletown	Middletown High School, Auditorium 1155 N Union St	November 13, 2013	4:30 pm
Franklin	Chambersburg	Chambersburg Area Middle School, Auditorium, 1151 E McKinley St	November 6, 2013	4:30 pm
Lancaster	Lancaster	Lancaster Lebanon I.U., 1020 New Holland Ave	September 16, 2013	4:30 pm
			November 18, 2013	4:30 pm
Lancaster	Quarryville	Solanco High School 585 Solanco Rd	October 15, 2013	4:30 pm
Perry	Millerstown	Greenwood High School, Auditorium, 405 E Sunbury St	October 17, 2013	4:30 pm
York	York	York Suburban High School, Auditorium 1800 Hollywood Dr	September 25, 2013	4:30 pm
			November 19, 2013	4:30 pm

**Northeast Region, Toll-Free 1.888.773.7748, extension 5375**  
**Counties Served: Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Northampton, Pike, Susquehanna, Wayne, & Wyoming**

County	City	Address	Date	Time
Lackawanna	Archbald	Valley View Jr./Sr. High School, Auditorium, 1 Columbus Dr	November 4, 2013	4:30 pm
Luzerne	Nanticoke	Luzerne County Community College, Educational Conference Center, Auditorium 132, 1333 S Prospect St	October 29, 2013	4:30 pm
Monroe	Bartonsville	Howard Johnson Banquet Room, 63 Route 611	October 10, 2013	4:30 pm
Northampton	Easton	The Eastonian Banquet and Convention Center at the Holiday Inn Express, 90 Kunkle Dr	October 17, 2013 December 17, 2013	4:30 pm 4:30 pm
Pike	Milford	Delaware Valley High School – Media Center, Route 6 & 209	November 6, 2013	4:30 pm
Susquehanna	Montrose	American Legion Gardner-Warner Post 154, 14515 State Route 3001	November 21, 2013	4:30 pm
Wayne	Hawley	Wallenpaupack High School, Library, 2552 Route 6	October 8, 2013	4:30 pm

**Centraleast Region, Toll-Free 1.888.773.7748, extension 5475**  
**Counties Served: Berks, Carbon, Chester, & Lehigh**

County	City	Address	Date	Time
Berks	Reading	Reading-Muhlenberg Career & Technology Center, 2615 Warren Rd Reading, PA 19604	September 24, 2013 December 12, 2013	4:30 pm 4:30 pm
Berks	Reading	Wilson School District Administration Building, 2601 Grandview Blvd Reading, PA 19609	September 11, 2013	10:30 am
Carbon	Jim Thorpe	Jim Thorpe Area High School, 1 Olympian Way	September 17, 2013	4:30 pm
Chester	Downingtown	Chester County Intermediate Unit 455 Boot Rd, Downingtown	September 19, 2013 December 17, 2013	4:30 pm 4:30 pm
Lehigh	Schnecksville	Carbon-Lehigh Intermediate Unit 4210 Independence Dr Schnecksville, PA	September 25, 2013 December 19, 2013	4:30 pm 4:30 pm

**Centralwest Region, Toll-Free 1.888.773.7748, extension 5875**  
**Counties Served: Armstrong, Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Indiana, Somerset, & Westmoreland**

County	City	Address	Date	Time
Armstrong	Ford City	Lenape Heights Country Club, 950 Golf Course Rd	October 2, 2013	4:30 pm
Blair	Altoona	Ramada Inn-Altoona, I-99 Exit 31 Plank Rd, Rt. 220 and Plank Rd exit	November 13, 2013	4:30 pm
Cambria	Ebensburg	Admiral Peary AVTS, Room 204, 948 Ben Franklin Hwy	October 17, 2013	4:30 pm
Indiana	Indiana	IUP Kovalchick Convention and Athletic Complex 711 Pratt Dr	November 7, 2013	4:30 pm
Westmoreland	Youngwood	Westmoreland County Community College, Commissioners Hall, 145 Pavilion Ln	November 6, 2013	4:30 pm

**Northwest Region, Toll-Free 1.888.773.7748, extension 5175**  
**Counties Served: Beaver, Butler, Clarion, Clearfield (DuBois Area School District only),**  
**Crawford, Erie, Forest, Jefferson, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, & Warren**

County	City	Address	Date	Time
Beaver	Monaca	Community College of Beaver County, Health Sciences Building – Auditorium, One Campus Dr	October 30, 2013	4:30 pm
Butler	Butler	Butler Area SD Intermediate School, 551 Fairground Hill Rd	November 7, 2013	4:30 pm
Clarion	Clarion	Riverview I.U. 6, 270 Mayfield Rd	November 14, 2013	4:30 pm
Crawford	Saegertown	Penncrest SD Saegertown High School, Auditorium, Mook Rd	November 5, 2013	4:30 pm
Erie	Edinboro	Northwest Tri-County I.U. #5, 252 Waterford St	October 1, 2013	4:30 pm
Lawrence	New Castle	Lawrence County Career Tech Center, 750 Phelps Way	October 17, 2013	4:30 pm
Mercer	Grove City	Mid-West I.U. #4, 453 Maple St	October 15, 2013	4:30 pm

**Northcentral Region, Toll-Free 1.888.773.7748, extension 5275**  
**Counties Served: Bradford, Cameron, Centre, Clearfield (all districts except DuBois Area),**  
**Clinton, Columbia, Elk, Lycoming, McKean, Montour, Northumberland, Potter,**  
**Schuylkill, Snyder, Sullivan, Tioga, & Union**

County	City	Address	Date	Time
Centre	State College	State College Area High School South, Auditorium, 650 Westerly Pkwy	October 1, 2013	4:30 pm
Clearfield	Clearfield	Clearfield Area Middle School, Auditorium, 602 Mill Rd	September 12, 2013	4:30 pm
Columbia	Berwick	Berwick Area Senior High School, Auditorium, 1100 Fowler Ave	October 17, 2013	4:30 pm
Lycoming	Williamsport	Holiday Inn Williamsport, 100 Pine St	October 29, 2013	4:30 pm
McKean	Smethport	Smethport Area Jr./Sr. High School, Auditorium, 412 S. Mechanic St.	September 10, 2013	4:30 pm
Northumberland	Montandon	Central Susquehanna I.U., Main Building, Lawton Ln	September 4, 2013	4:30 pm
Schuylkill	Mar Lin	Schuylkill I.U., Education Center for Exceptional Children Gymnasium, 17 Maple Ave, Pottsville-Minersville Hwy	September 24, 2013	4:30 pm
Tioga	Mansfield	Mansfield Jr./Sr. High School, Auditorium, 73 W Wellsboro St	October 8, 2013	4:30 pm

**Advance registration is not required to attend any of these seminars.**

**PSERS  
5 N 5th Street  
Harrisburg PA 17101-1905**

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**Don't let a simple mistake  
Contact your PSERS Regional Office for assistance!  
As retirement season approaches, don't forget...  
PSERS offers Exit Counseling for our members!  
Public School Employees' Retirement System  
Important Information from the  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**