

WSR 24-07-069
PROPOSED RULES
DEPARTMENT OF
RETIREMENT SYSTEMS

[Filed March 15, 2024, 3:37 p.m.]

Original Notice.

Preproposal statement of inquiry was filed as WSR 24-03-117.

Title of Rule and Other Identifying Information: Purchasing service credit; substitute teachers and school employees.

Hearing Location(s): On April 30, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. The hearing will be conducted through [Microsoft] Teams. See <https://www.drs.wa.gov/sitemap/rules/#proposed-rule-hearings> for details. On-line via [Microsoft] Teams, link is available on <https://www.drs.wa.gov/sitemap/rules/#proposed-rule-hearings>, Meeting ID 291 133 395 897, Passcode qu8w7A; or phone 833-322-1218, Code 226 621 347#.

Date of Intended Adoption: May 6, 2024.

Submit Written Comments to: Bianca Stoner, Department of Retirement Systems (DRS), P.O. Box 48380, Olympia, WA 98504-8380, email drs.rules@drs.wa.gov, by April 26, 2024.

Assistance for Persons with Disabilities: Contact Bianca Stoner, phone 360-664-7291, TTY 711, email drs.rules@drs.wa.gov, by April 26, 2024.

Purpose of the Proposal and Its Anticipated Effects, Including Any Changes in Existing Rules: Making necessary changes so that Plan 3 members of the teachers' retirement system and school employees' retirement system who are substitute teachers or school employees can submit requests to purchase service credit by phone or email.

Statutory Authority for Adoption: RCW 41.50.050.

Rule is not necessitated by federal law, federal or state court decision.

Name of Proponent: DRS, governmental.

Name of Agency Personnel Responsible for Implementation: Seth Miller, DRS, P.O. Box 48380, Olympia, WA 98504-8380, 360-664-7304.

A school district fiscal impact statement is not required under RCW 28A.305.135.

A cost-benefit analysis is not required under RCW 34.05.328. RCW 34.05.328 (5)(a)(i) does not apply to this proposed rule and DRS is not voluntarily making it applicable to the agency.

This rule proposal, or portions of the proposal, is exempt from requirements of the Regulatory Fairness Act because the proposal:

Is exempt under RCW 19.85.025(4).

Explanation of exemptions: Rules from DRS only affect members and beneficiaries of the state retirement systems and participating public employers. As a result, the rules do not affect small businesses.

Scope of exemption for rule proposal:

Is fully exempt.

March 15, 2024
Bianca Stoner
Rules Coordinator

OTS-5160.1

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 22-13-091, filed 6/13/22, effective 7/14/22)

WAC 415-110-685 Am I eligible for membership and service credit as a classified substitute employee? You may be eligible to apply for membership and receive service credit for time worked as a classified substitute employee that occurred on or after July 27, 2003.

(1) If you have never been a member of the school employees' retirement system (SERS), you may establish membership in Plan 2 or Plan 3 if you worked as a classified employee for 70 or more hours per month during at least five months within a single school year period of September 1st through August 31st. Your membership will begin when your first optional bill to purchase substitute teaching service credit is paid in full.

(2) If you have already established membership in SERS Plan 3, or if you have established membership in SERS Plan 2 and have not withdrawn your contributions, you may apply to the department for service credit as described in subsection (4) of this section, for any compensated employment as a classified substitute employee that occurs after your first month of established service credit. You may apply for service credit for compensated employment as a classified substitute employee that occurred prior to your first month of established service credit if it meets the requirements for membership as described in subsection (1) of this section.

(3) If you previously established membership in SERS Plan 2 and withdrew your contributions, you may reestablish your membership by purchasing service credit if you worked as a classified substitute employee for 70 or more hours per month during at least five months within a single school year period of September 1st through August 31st.

(4) To apply, you must submit a classified substitute's application for service credit.

(a) Applications must be submitted no earlier than September 1st following the end of the school year in which you worked.

(b) If you are establishing membership in SERS for the first time, you must also submit a member information form to indicate your selection of Plan 2 or Plan 3.

(c) If you are an established Plan 3 member, you (~~must~~) may also submit a member information form to indicate your contribution rate and investment options. If you request a bill for your time as a substitute without completing a form, your contribution rate and investment option will be made at the default rate and investment option.

(d) If you are purchasing service credit for the 2003-04 school year, you must also submit quarterly reports to DRS along with your application for service credit. Quarterly reports must show the exact hours worked and compensation earned each month, and must be signed by the employer.

(5) To receive classified substitute employee's service credit, you must pay the appropriate member contributions.

(a) Upon receipt of your application materials, the department will determine the amount of service credit you are eligible to purchase and will provide an optional bill for the amount due. Your service credit will be applied when the bill is paid in full.

(b) You have six months following the end of the school year in which you worked to pay the member contributions interest-free. Interest will begin to accrue on the first day of the seventh month follow-

ing the end of the school year. The school year ends on August 31st for Plans 2 and 3.

(i) SERS Plan 2. If payment is received after the six month interest-free period, the amount due will include interest on both the member and employer contributions.

(ii) SERS Plan 3. If payment is received after the six month interest-free period, the amount due will include interest on the Plan 3 employer contributions.

(6) Defined terms used. Definitions for the following terms used in this section may be found in the sections listed.

(a) "Classified employee" - RCW 41.35.010.

(b) "Member" - RCW 41.35.010.

(c) "Service" - RCW 41.35.010.

(d) "Substitute employee" - RCW 41.35.010.

OTS-5161.1

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 17-02-032, filed 12/28/16, effective 1/28/17)

WAC 415-112-140 Am I eligible for membership and service credit as a substitute teacher?

(1) If you have never been a member of the teachers' retirement system (TRS), you may establish membership in Plan 2 or Plan 3 if you worked as a teacher for seventy or more hours per month during at least five months within a single school year period of September 1st through August 31st, during the 1991-92 school year or later. You may apply for membership for work prior to the 1991-92 school year if it meets the membership requirements in effect when the work was performed. Your membership will begin when your first optional bill to purchase substitute teaching service credit is paid in full.

(2) If you have already established membership and have not withdrawn your contributions, you may be eligible to purchase service credit for working as a substitute teacher.

(a) TRS Plan 1. If you are a Plan 1 member, you may apply to the department for service credit as a substitute teacher for any school year during which you worked a minimum of twenty full-time days between July 1st and June 30th.

(b) TRS Plan 2 or Plan 3. If you are a Plan 2 or Plan 3 member, you may apply to the department for service credit as described in subsection (4) of this section, for any compensated employment as a substitute teacher that occurs after your first month of established service credit. You may apply for service credit for compensated employment as a substitute teacher that occurred prior to your first month of established service credit if it meets the requirements for membership as described in subsection (1) of this section.

(3) If you previously established membership and withdrew your contributions, you may purchase service credit as a substitute teacher if you meet the criteria in this subsection.

(a) TRS Plan 1. You may reestablish membership in TRS Plan 1 if you worked as a substitute teacher for the equivalent of ninety full-time days within a single school year period of July 1st through June 30th.

(b) TRS Plan 2. You may reestablish membership in TRS Plan 2 if you worked as a substitute teacher as described in subsection (1) of this section.

(c) TRS Plan 3. If you are a Plan 3 member and withdrew your contributions, you may apply to the department for service credit for any compensated employment as a substitute teacher that occurred after your first month of established service credit. You may apply for service credit for compensated employment as a substitute teacher that occurred prior to your first month of established service credit if it meets the requirements for membership as described in subsection (1) of this section.

(4) To apply, you must submit a substitute teacher's application for service credit.

(a) Applications must be submitted no earlier than the end of your plan's school year in which you worked. The school year ends on June 30th for Plan 1, and August 31st for Plans 2 and 3.

(b) If you are establishing membership in TRS for the first time, you must also submit a member information form to indicate your selection of Plan 2 or Plan 3.

(c) If you are an established Plan 3 member, you (~~must~~) may also submit a member information form to indicate your contribution rate and investment options. If you request a bill for your time as a substitute without completing a form, your contribution rate and investment option will be made at the default rate and investment option.

(d) If you are purchasing service credit for a period prior to the 2004-05 school year, or for work performed for a higher education employer or for the Washington state center for childhood deafness and hearing loss or the school for the blind, you must also submit quarterly reports to DRS along with your application for service credit. Quarterly reports must show the exact hours worked and compensation earned each month, and must be signed by the employer.

(5) To receive substitute teacher's service credit, you must pay the appropriate member contributions.

(a) Upon receipt of your application materials, the department will determine the amount of service credit you are eligible to purchase and will provide an optional bill for the amount due. Your service credit will be applied when the bill is paid in full.

(b) You have six months following the end of the school year in which you worked to pay the member contributions interest-free. Interest will begin to accrue on the first day of the seventh month following the end of the school year. The school year ends on June 30th for Plan 1, and August 31st for Plans 2 and 3.

(i) TRS Plan 1 or Plan 2. If payment is received after the six month interest-free period, the amount due will include interest on both the Plan 1 or Plan 2 member and employer contributions.

(ii) TRS Plan 3. If payment is received after the six month interest-free period, the amount due will include interest on the Plan 3 employer contributions.

(6) Defined terms used. Definitions for the following terms used in this section may be found in the sections listed.

(a) "Member" - RCW 41.32.010(25).

(b) "Service" - RCW 41.32.010(43).

(c) "Substitute teacher" - RCW 41.32.010(48).