

**Employee Trust Funds Board  
Teachers Retirement Board  
Wisconsin Retirement Board**

**Board Member Responsibilities and Expectations**

Individuals who serve on the Employee Trust Funds (ETF), Wisconsin Retirement (WR), and Teachers Retirement (TR) Boards play important roles in the governance of the Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS). They establish policy, provide oversight to ensure policy implementation, and balance the needs and interests of all WRS participants, current and future. All board members are fiduciaries. Board members must discharge their duties solely in the interest of WRS participants and beneficiaries for the exclusive purpose of providing benefits to these individuals. Board members are responsible for protecting the Public Employee Trust Fund to help assure stable and adequate funding for future retirement benefits of WRS participants.

Board members also serve as key sources of information for both the Department of Employee Trust Funds and WRS participants. Board members have the opportunity to voice participant concerns, identify ways to improve service to participants and employers, and help in prioritizing available resources to meet the administrative needs of the programs administered by the Department.

**Board meetings**

Board members attend four meetings per year (March, June, September, and December) in Madison. Meetings are held over the course of one or two days, depending on the board. All retirement board members (TR, WR, and ETF) attend the Joint Informational (JI) meeting, which usually begins at 9:30 a.m. on the first day. This joint meeting serves to provide pertinent information about the WRS to all of the retirement boards. The TR and WR meetings are held in the afternoon, after the JI meeting. Only the ETF Board meets the next day, concluding its business by mid-afternoon.

Board members are reimbursed for travel expenses incidental to their attendance at meetings, in accordance with state purchasing guidelines. However, Board members

must make their own arrangements with their employers regarding leave to attend meetings.

Lodging is provided at the meeting site. The meeting site for 2006 and 2007 is the Sheraton Madison Hotel.

#### Meeting materials, education and training

Board members receive a packet of meeting materials from the Department approximately two weeks in advance of each meeting. The packets contain an agenda, draft minutes and items that will be discussed at the upcoming meeting, such as informational memos, and legislative and statistical reports. The packet may also include proposed administrative rules, educational items, and other business matters requiring board consideration.

In addition, the Department conducts orientation training for new board members prior to their first meeting. These orientation sessions are usually held at the Department's offices in Madison.

Educational sessions at each meeting provide information on issues and trends related to retirement benefits. When possible, the Department sponsors local and national experts to enhance board member training and education.

Board members also receive current information on proposed legislation affecting the WRS, enabling them to share this information with WRS members and related organizations.

#### ETF Board

The thirteen-member ETF Board has general oversight responsibility for the Department. Each member is a trustee of the Trust Fund. Membership is set by state law and includes:

- Four representatives of the TR Board
- Four representatives of the WR Board
- Two governor's appointees

- One elected annuitant representative
- One elected educational support personnel employee from either a technical college district or public school district
- The Director of the Office of State Employment Relations

All ETF Board members serve a four-year term. The powers and duties of the members of the ETF Board are found in Chapter 40 of the Wisconsin Statutes, and include the following:

1. Authorizing the payment and termination of benefit payments.
2. Ensuring the WRS complies with the Internal Revenue Code.
3. Approving actuarial tables used to compute benefits.
4. Appointing the Secretary of the Department.
5. Selecting necessary legal, medical and other independent contractors.
6. Selecting and retaining an actuary or actuarial firm.
7. Approving employer and employee contribution rates and actuarial assumptions as determined by the actuary.
8. Compelling witnesses to attend meetings and testify on any matter concerning the Fund.
9. Accepting gifts, grants or bequests of property to the Trust Fund.
10. Contracting for life and disability insurance plans through the Group Insurance Board.
11. Accepting and hearing timely appeals of determinations of the Department.
12. Requiring employers to distribute materials necessary for the administration of the Fund.
13. Delegating powers as desirable or necessary.
14. Approving administrative rules proposed by the Department Secretary.
15. Allowing separate retirement plans to send funds to the Department for investment in the Core or Variable Retirement Trust Funds.
16. Transferring funds to provide group insurance.

**Advisory Boards (TR Board and WR Board)**

The TR Board and the WR Board primarily play advisory roles in the administration of WRS benefits. In several areas, however, these boards can have a significant effect on

important retirement and benefit issues affecting members. TR and WR board members serve a five-year term.

**The TR Board has 13 members:**

- Six public school teachers
- One teacher from a technical college district
- One public school administrator
- Two university teachers
- One school board member
- One teacher annuitant
- One teacher from the Milwaukee Public School District

**The WR Board has nine members**, eight of whom are appointed by the governor. Membership includes representatives from Wisconsin municipalities, including the following:

- City executive
- Finance officer
- City employee
- Member of a town or county government
- County clerk
- County employee

The governor also appoints a state employee and a public member to the WR Board. The Commissioner of Insurance or his or her designee occupies the ninth position.

**Responsibilities of the TR Board and the WR Board are:**

1. Appointing four members to the ETF Board.
2. Studying and recommending alternate administrative policies and rules that will enhance achievement of objectives of the benefit plans.
3. Appointing one teacher and one non-teacher member of the State of Wisconsin Investment Board.
4. Approving all administrative rules that relate to teachers (TR Board) or non-teacher members (WR Board) of the WRS.

5. Authorizing and terminating disability benefits to teachers (TR Board) or non-teachers (WR Board).
6. Hearing appeals of disability determinations made by the Department for teachers (TR Board) or non-teachers (WR Board).

For more information about the boards, the election process, or board member responsibilities and expectations, write to the Department of Employee Trust Funds, Board Liaison, P.O. Box 7931, Madison, Wis., 53707-7931. You may also send an e-mail through the “contact ETF” page on the Department’s Internet site, <http://etf.wi.gov>, or call Linda Esser at (608) 261-0736.