

EDUCATIONAL RETIREMENT ACT
As of May 18, 2022

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**CHAPTER 22 – PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ARTICLE 11 – EDUCATIONAL RETIREMENT**

**Current through the Second Session
of the 55th Legislature (2022)**

22-11-1. Short title.

Chapter 22, Article 11 NMSA 1978 may be cited as the "Educational Retirement Act".

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-1, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 125; 1991, ch. 118, § 2.

22-11-2. Definitions.

As used in the Educational Retirement Act:

A. "member" means an employee, except for a participant or a retired member, coming within the provisions of the Educational Retirement Act;

B. "regular member" means:

(1) a person regularly employed by a state educational institution, except for:

(a) a participant; or

(b) all employees of a general hospital or outpatient clinics thereof operated by a state educational institution named in Article 12, Section 11 of the constitution of New Mexico;

(2) a person regularly employed by a junior college or community college created pursuant to Chapter 21, Article 13 NMSA 1978, except for a participant;

(3) a person regularly employed by a technical and vocational institute created pursuant to the Technical and Vocational Institute Act [Chapter 21, Article 16 NMSA 1978], except for a participant;

(4) a person regularly employed by the New Mexico boys' school, the girls' welfare home, the Los Lunas medical center or a school district or as a licensed school employee of a state institution or agency providing an educational program and holding a license issued by the department, except for a participant;

(5) a person regularly employed by the department holding a license issued by the department at the time of commencement of such employment;

(6) a member classified as a regular member in accordance with the rules of the board;

(7) a person regularly employed by the New Mexico activities association holding a license issued by the department at the time of commencement of such employment; or

(8) a person regularly employed by a regional education cooperative holding a license issued by the department at the time of commencement of such employment;

C. "provisional member" means a person described in Section 22-11-17 NMSA 1978;

D. "local administrative unit" means an employing agency however constituted that is directly responsible for the payment of compensation for the employment of members or participants;

E. "beneficiary" means a person having an insurable interest in the life of a member or a participant designated by written instrument duly executed by the member or participant and filed with the director to receive a benefit pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act that may be received by someone other than the member or participant;

F. "employment" means employment by a local administrative unit that qualifies a person to be a member or participant;

G. "service employment" means employment that qualifies a person to be a regular member;

H. "provisional service employment" means employment that qualifies a person to be a provisional member;

I. "prior employment" means employment performed prior to the effective date of the Educational Retirement Act that would be service employment or provisional service employment if performed thereafter;

J. "service credit" means that period of time with which a member is accredited for the purpose of determining the member's eligibility for and computation of retirement or disability benefits;

K. "earned service credit" means that period of time during which a member was engaged in employment or prior employment with which the member is accredited for the purpose of determining the member's eligibility for retirement or disability benefits;

L. "allowed service credit" means that period of time during which a member has performed certain nonservice employment with which the member may be accredited, as provided in the Educational Retirement Act, for the purpose of computing retirement or disability benefits;

M. "retirement benefit" means an annuity paid monthly to members whose employment has been terminated by reason of their age;

N. "disability benefit" means an annuity paid monthly to members whose employment has been terminated by reason of a disability;

O. "board" means the educational retirement board;

P. "fund" means the educational retirement fund;

Q. "director" means the educational retirement director;

R. "medical authority" means a medical doctor or medical review panel designated or employed by the board to examine medical records and report on the medical condition of applicants for or recipients of disability benefits;

S. "actuary" means a person trained and regularly engaged in the occupation of calculating present and projected monetary assets and liabilities under annuity or insurance programs;

T. "actuarial equivalent" means a sum paid as a current or deferred benefit that is equal in value to a regular benefit, computed upon the basis of interest rates and mortality tables;

U. "contributory employment" means employment for which contributions have been made by both a member and a local administrative unit pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act;

V. "qualifying state educational institution" means the university of New Mexico, New Mexico state university, New Mexico institute of mining and technology, New Mexico highlands university, eastern New Mexico university, western New Mexico university, central New Mexico community college, Clovis community college, Luna community college, Mesalands community college, New Mexico junior college, northern New Mexico state school, San Juan college and Santa Fe community college;

W. "participant" means:

(1) a person regularly employed as a faculty or professional employee of the university of New Mexico, New Mexico state university, New Mexico institute of mining and technology, New Mexico highlands university, eastern New Mexico university or western New Mexico university who first becomes employed with such an educational institution on or after July 1, 1991, or a person regularly employed as a faculty or professional employee of the central New Mexico community college, Clovis community college, Luna community college, Mesalands community college, New Mexico junior college, northern New Mexico state school, San Juan college or Santa Fe community college who is first employed by the institution on or after July 1, 1999 and who elects, pursuant to Section 22-11-47 NMSA 1978, to participate in the alternative retirement plan; and

(2) a person regularly employed who performs research or other services pursuant to a contract between a qualifying state educational institution and the United States government or any of its agencies who elects, pursuant to Section 22-11-47 NMSA 1978, to participate in the alternative retirement plan; provided that the research or other services are performed outside the state;

X. "salary" means the compensation or wages paid to a member or participant by any local administrative unit for services rendered. "Salary" includes payments made for annual or sick leave and payments for additional service provided to related activities, but does not include payments for sick leave not taken unless the payment for the unused sick leave is made through continuation of the member on the regular payroll for the period represented by that payment and

does not include allowances or reimbursements for travel, housing, food, equipment or similar items;

Y. "alternative retirement plan" means the retirement plan provided for in Sections 22-11-47 through 22-11-52 NMSA 1978; and

Z. "retired member" means a person whose employment has been terminated by reason of age and who is receiving or is eligible to receive retirement benefits.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-2, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 126; 1975, ch. 306, § 21; 1978, ch. 167, § 1; 1982, ch. 37, § 1; 1991, ch. 118, § 3; 1993, ch. 69, § 1; 1993, ch. 232, § 7; 1995, ch. 148, § 1; 1999, ch. 261, § 1; 2001, ch. 283, § 1; 2003, ch. 39, § 1; 2004, ch. 27, § 26; 2017, ch. 21, § 1.

22-11-3. Educational retirement board; members; terms; vacancies.

A. The "educational retirement board" is created.

B. The board shall be composed of seven members, consisting of the following:

(1) the secretary of public education, or a designee of the secretary who:

(a) is a resident of New Mexico;

(b) is a current employee of the public education department; and

(c) possesses experience relevant to the financial or fiduciary aspects of pension or investment fund management;

(2) the state treasurer, or a designee of the treasurer who:

(a) is a resident of New Mexico;

(b) is a current employee of the state treasurer's office; and

(c) possesses experience relevant to the financial or fiduciary aspects of pension or investment fund management;

(3) one member to be elected for a term of four years by members of the New Mexico association of educational retirees;

(4) one member to be elected for a term of four years by the members of the national education association of New Mexico;

(5) one member to be elected for a term of four years by the New Mexico members of the American association of university professors;

(6) two members to be appointed by the governor for terms of four years each. Each member appointed pursuant to this paragraph shall have a background in investments, finance or pension fund administration.

(7) one member to be elected for a term of four years by the members of the American federation of teachers New Mexico; and

(8) the secretary of higher education, or a designee of the secretary who:

(a) is a resident of New Mexico;

(b) is a current employee of the higher education department; and

(c) possesses experience relevant to the financial or fiduciary aspects of pension or investment fund management.

C. A designee of a board member shall have the same responsibilities, duties, liabilities and immunities as the board member, including the indemnification provided by Subsection H of Section 22-11-13 NMSA 1978. The appointment of a designee does not relieve the board member of the member's responsibilities, duties, liabilities and immunities as a board member, and the board member shall be fully responsible and liable for the actions of the designee while serving on the board.

D. In the initial composition of the board, the member elected by the members of the American association of university professors shall serve for a term of three years; one member appointed by the governor shall serve for a term of two years; and the other member appointed by the governor shall serve for a term of one year.

E. Vacancies occurring in the terms of office of those members appointed by the governor or elected by an association shall be filled either by the governor appointing or the association electing a new member to fill the unexpired term.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-3, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 127; 1977, ch. 246, § 65; 1988, ch. 64, § 40; 2011, ch. 160, § 1; 2021, ch. 78, § 1.

22-11-4. Board; regular and special meetings.

A. The board shall hold regular meetings four times each year and may provide for additional regular meetings. Prior to each regular meeting, written notice shall be given to each member of the board specifying the time and place of the regular meeting.

B. Special meetings of the board may be called by the chair or by any three members of the board. Written notice of the special meeting shall be sent to each member of the board at least three days in advance of the special meeting.

C. If not in violation of Subsection A or B of this section, the rules of the board or the Open Meetings Act [Chapter 10, Article 15 NMSA 1978], the chair or any of three members of the board may cancel or reschedule a meeting.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-4, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 128; 2003, ch. 39, § 2; 2017, ch. 21, § 2.

22-11-5. Board; record; quorum; compensation.

A. The board shall elect from its membership a chairman and a vice chairman.

B. A record shall be taken and preserved of all meetings of the board.

C. A quorum of the board shall be required for the transaction of any business. A majority of the members of the board constitute a quorum. Each member of the board shall have one vote and a proposal shall pass by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members present at the meeting.

D. While performing their duties, each member of the board shall be entitled to receive per diem and mileage as provided by the Per Diem and Mileage Act [10-8-1 through 10-8-8 NMSA 1978], and shall receive no other compensation, perquisite or allowance.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-5, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 129.

22-11-5.1. Restrictions on receipt of gifts.

Except for gifts of food or beverage given in a place of public accommodation, consumed at the time of receipt, not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00) for a single gift and the aggregate value of which gifts may not exceed one hundred fifty dollars (\$150) in a calendar year, neither a board member nor an employee of the board shall receive or accept anything of value directly or indirectly from a person who:

A. has a current contract with the board;

B. is a potential bidder, offeror or contractor for the provision of services or personal property to the board;

C. is authorized to invest public funds pursuant to state or federal law or is an employee or agent of such a person; or

D. is an organization, association or other entity having a membership that includes persons described in Subsections A through C of this section.

History: Laws 1999, ch. 153, § 2; 2017, ch. 21, § 3.

22-11-6. Board; powers; duties.

A. The board shall:

(1) properly and uniformly enforce the Educational Retirement Act;

(2) hire employees and delegate administrative authority to these employees;

(3) make an actuarial report on the financial operation of the Educational Retirement Act to the legislature at each regular session every odd-numbered year;

(4) accept donations, gifts or bequests to the fund; and

(5) adopt regulations pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act.

B. The board may:

(1) select and contract for the services of one or more custodial banks. For purposes of this subsection, "custodial bank" means a financial institution with the general fiduciary duties to manage, control and collect the assets of an investment fund, including receiving all deposits and paying all disbursements as directed by staff, safekeeping of assets, coordination of asset transfers, timely settlement of securities transactions and accurate and timely reporting by individual account and in total; and

(2) contract for legal services for litigation matters on a contingent fee basis, subject to the provisions of the Procurement Code [13-1-28 through 13-1-199 NMSA 1978]; provided that:

(a) the board shall submit each proposed contract to the attorney general for review of the contingency fee. The attorney general shall review a proposed contract within thirty days after receiving the contract. The review shall take into account the complexity of the factual and legal issues presented by the claims to be pursued under the contract. If the attorney general advises the board that the proposed contingency fee is not reasonable, the board may nevertheless approve the contract and the contingency fee if no fewer than four members vote for approval;

(b) each prospective contractor seeking to represent the board on a contingency fee basis shall file with the board the disclosure required by Section 13-1-191.1 NMSA 1978 disclosing all campaign contributions made to the governor, attorney general, state treasurer or any member of the board, or to a political committee that is intended to aid or promote the nomination or election of any candidate to a state office if the committee is: 1) established by any of the foregoing persons or their agents; 2) established in consultation with or at the request of any of the foregoing persons or their agents; or 3) controlled by one of the foregoing persons or their agents; and

(c) nothing in this paragraph shall prejudice or impair the rights of a qui tam plaintiff pursuant to the Fraud Against Taxpayers Act [44-9-1 through 44-9-14 NMSA 1978].

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-6, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 130; 2011, ch. 157, § 1; 2017, ch. 21, § 4.

22-11-7. Educational retirement director; bond.

A. The board shall employ an educational retirement director. The director shall be the administrative officer for the board in carrying out the provisions of the Educational Retirement Act and shall have those additional duties provided in the rules of the board.

B. Before assuming the duties of office, the director shall obtain an official bond payable to the fund and conditioned upon the faithful performance of the director's duties during the director's term of office. The bond shall be executed by a corporate surety company authorized to do business in this state. The amount of the bond shall be not less than twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000). The board may elect to obtain a schedule or blanket corporate surety bond covering the director and employees of the board for any period not exceeding four years. The cost of a bond obtained pursuant to this section shall be paid from the fund. Any bond obtained shall be approved by the board and filed with the secretary of state.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-7, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 131; 2017, ch. 21, § 5.

22-11-8. Medical authority; fees.

A. The board shall employ the services of a medical authority. The medical authority may examine, make reports of and certify the medical condition of applicants for and recipients of disability benefits pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act.

B. The board shall pay the medical authority a reasonable fee for professional services.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-8, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 132; 2017, ch. 21, § 6.

22-11-9. Actuary; fees.

A. The board shall employ the services of an actuary. The actuary shall prepare a table of actuarial equivalents for use of the board and the director in computing the value of advanced, deferred or optional payment of benefits pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act. The actuary shall also study the financial operations of the Educational Retirement Act and shall make written reports thereon to the board.

B. The board shall pay the actuary a reasonable fee for professional services.

C. Unless otherwise required by the governmental accounting standards board of the American institute of certified public accountants, an actuarial report shall be conducted at least once every three years.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-9, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 133; 2003, ch. 39, § 3; 2017, ch. 21, § 7.

22-11-10. Salaries; fees; expenditures.

A. The amount of salaries and fees to be paid by the board shall be fixed by the regulations of the board.

B. Salaries and fees paid, and all other necessary expenditures of the board, shall be paid out of the fund unless otherwise provided by law.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-10, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 134.

22-11-11. Educational retirement fund; suspense fund.

A. The "educational retirement fund" and the "educational retirement suspense fund" are created.

B. The state treasurer shall be the custodian of the funds, and the board shall be the trustee of the funds.

C. All membership fees, contributions from members and local administrative units, securities evidencing the investment of money from the fund, interest, gifts, grants or bequests shall be deposited in the educational retirement fund.

D. All amounts received in satisfaction of a claim brought by private attorneys on behalf of the board shall be deposited into the educational retirement suspense fund. The board shall disburse the compensation due the private attorneys, together with reimbursement for reasonable costs and expenses, in accordance with the terms of the contract with the attorneys. After the disbursements have been made, the balance of each deposit shall be distributed to the educational retirement fund.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-11, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 135; 2011, ch. 157, § 2.

22-11-12. Fund; suspense fund; disbursements.

The state treasurer shall make disbursements from the educational retirement fund or the educational retirement suspense fund only on warrants issued by the department of finance and administration or through any other process as approved by the department of finance and administration. Warrants for disbursements from the educational retirement fund or the educational retirement suspense fund shall be issued by the department of finance and administration only upon voucher of the director.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-12, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 136; 1993, ch. 69, § 2; 2011, ch. 157, § 3.

22-11-13. Board authority to invest the fund; prudent investor standard; indemnification of board.

A. The board is authorized to invest or reinvest the fund in accordance with the Uniform Prudent Investor Act [45-7-601 through 45-7-612 NMSA 1978].

B. The board shall provide quarterly performance reports to the legislative finance committee and the department of finance and administration. Annually, the board shall ratify and provide its written investment policy, including any amendments, to the legislative finance committee and the department of finance and administration.

C. The board or its designated agent may enter into contracts for the temporary exchange of securities for the use by broker-dealers, banks or other recognized institutional investors, for periods not to exceed one year, for a specified fee or consideration. Such a contract shall not be entered into unless the contract is fully secured by a collateralized, irrevocable letter of credit running to the board, cash or equivalent collateral of at least one hundred two percent of the market value of the securities plus accrued interest temporarily exchanged. This collateral shall be delivered to the fiscal agent of New Mexico or its designee contemporaneously with the transfer of funds or delivery of the securities. Such contract may authorize the board to invest cash collateral in instruments or securities that are authorized fund investments and may authorize payment of a fee from the fund or from income generated by the investment of cash collateral to the borrower of securities providing cash as collateral. The board may apportion income derived from the investment of cash collateral to pay its agent in securities lending transactions.

D. Commissions paid for the purchase or sale of any securities pursuant to the provisions of the Educational Retirement Act shall not exceed brokerage rates prescribed and approved by national stock exchanges or by industry practice.

E. Securities purchased for the fund shall be held in the custody of the state treasurer. At the direction of the board, the state treasurer shall deposit with a bank or trust company the securities for safekeeping or servicing.

F. The board may consult with the state investment council or the state investment officer; may request from the state investment council or the state investment officer any information, advice or recommendations with respect to investment of the fund; may utilize the services of the state investment council or the state investment officer; and may act upon any advice or recommendations of the state investment council or the state investment officer. The state investment council or the state investment officer shall render investment advisory services to the board upon request and without expense to the board. The board may also employ the investment management services and related management services of a trust company or national bank exercising trust powers or of an investment counseling firm or brokers for the purchase and sale of securities, commission recapture and transitioning services and may pay reasonable compensation for those services from funds administered by the board.

G. The board shall annually provide for its members no less than eight hours of training in pension fund investing, fiduciary obligations or ethics. A member elected or appointed to the board who fails to attend the training for two consecutive years shall be deemed to have resigned from the board.

H. Members of the board, including any designee authorized by Paragraph (1) or (2) of Subsection B of Section 22-11-3 NMSA 1978, jointly and individually, shall be indemnified from the fund by the state from all claims, demands, suits, actions, damages, judgments, costs, charges and expenses, including court costs and attorney fees, and against all liability, losses and damages of any nature whatsoever that members shall or may at any time sustain by reason of any decision made in the performance of their duties pursuant to this section.

History: 1953, Comp., § 77-9-13, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 137; 1969, ch. 203, § 1; 1970, ch. 81, § 3; 1975, ch. 211, § 5; 1987, ch. 71, § 1; 1989, ch. 22, § 1; 1993, ch. 69, § 3; 2001, ch. 190, § 1; 2005, ch. 240, § 6; 2009, ch. 288, § 13; 2011, ch. 160, § 2.

22-11-14. Fund; restrictions.

A. No member of the board or employee of the board shall have any interest, directly or indirectly, in the gains or profits of any investments made by the board, except for regular salaries and per diem and mileage allowances authorized pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act.

B. No member of the board or employee of the board shall, directly or indirectly for himself or as an agent or partner for others, borrow from the fund or deposits of the board, or in any manner use the fund or deposits except to make current and necessary disbursements authorized by the board.

C. No member of the board or employee of the board shall become an endorser or surety or become in any manner an obligor for moneys loaned or borrowed by the board.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-14, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 138.

22-11-15. Fund; refunds; payments.

A. After filing written demand with the director, a member is entitled to a refund of the total amount of the member's contributions plus interest at a rate set by the board, reduced by the sum of any disability benefits previously received by the member, if:

(1) the member terminates employment for reasons other than by retirement, disability or death;

(2) the member has exempted himself from the Educational Retirement Act; or

(3) the member was not reemployed following a period of disability during which he received disability benefits.

B. The director may, at the request of a member, make payment on behalf of the member for any or all of the refund to an individual retirement account or a qualified retirement plan that accepts rollovers.

C. If the amount of a deceased member's contribution or residual contribution does not exceed the sum of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) and no written claim is made to the board for it within one year from the date of the member's death, by his surviving beneficiary or the member's estate, payment thereof may be made to the named beneficiary or, if none is named, to the person the board determines to be entitled to the contribution under the laws of New Mexico. Any payment made by the board pursuant to this subsection shall be a bar to a claim by any other person.

D. The interest provided for in Subsection A of this section shall apply only to contributions paid to the fund after July 1, 1971 and on deposit in the fund for a period of at least one fiscal year; provided that no such interest shall be allowed on refunds of contributions that were paid into the fund prior to July 1, 1971.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-15, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 139; 1971, ch. 12, § 1; 1984, ch. 19, § 1; 1993, ch. 69, § 4; 2003, ch. 39, § 4.

22-11-16. Regular membership.

Except as otherwise provided in the Educational Retirement Act, being a regular member shall be a condition of employment and shall exclude membership and participation in any other state retirement program.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-16, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 140.

22-11-16.1. Regular membership continuation of certain transferred employees.

Notwithstanding Subparagraph (b) of Paragraph (1) of Subsection B of Section 22-11-2 NMSA 1978, a regular member who is an employee of a local administrative unit that is a state educational institution named in Article 12, Section 11 of the constitution of New Mexico and who transfers to a general hospital or outpatient clinics of that hospital operated by the local administrative unit will have the option to continue his regular membership rather than become a member of a retirement plan offered by the general hospital or outpatient clinics of that hospital. The option shall be exercised by filing a written election with both the educational retirement director and the designated officer of the local administrative unit. This election shall be made within sixty days after the effective date of the regular member's transfer and shall be irrevocable as long as the employee is employed by the general hospital or outpatient clinics of that hospital operated by the local administrative unit.

History: 1978 Comp., § 22-11-16.1, enacted by Laws 1999, ch. 290, § 1.

22-11-16.2. Substitutes; membership status.

An employee engaged on a day-to-day basis to replace another employee who is temporarily absent shall be considered a substitute and shall not be covered under the Educational Retirement Act. An employee engaged to fill a vacant position, including a position vacated by a leave of absence of at least ninety days, shall not be considered a substitute and is subject to the requirements of the Educational Retirement Act.

History: Added by L. 2019, ch. 258, § 7, eff. July 1, 2020. Repealed and reenacted by L. 2020, ch. 10, § 2, eff. May 20, 2020.

22-11-17. Provisional membership.

A provisional member is a person who is employed by the board, the department, the New Mexico school for the deaf, the northern New Mexico state school, the New Mexico school for the blind and visually impaired, the girls' welfare home, the New Mexico boys' school or the Los Lunas medical center and who has the option of qualifying for coverage under either the Educational Retirement Act or the public employees retirement association. This option shall be

exercised by filing a written election with both the director and the executive secretary of the public employees retirement association. This election shall be made within six months after employment and shall be irrevocable regardless of subsequent employment or reemployment in any administrative unit enumerated in this section. Until this election is made, the provisional member shall be covered and shall be required to make contributions under the Educational Retirement Act.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-17, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 141; 1971, ch. 268, § 1; 1973, ch. 382, § 1; 1983, ch. 101, § 1; 1987, ch. 208, § 1; 1989, ch. 30, § 1; 1993, ch. 69, § 5; 2003, ch. 227, § 1; 2017, ch. 21, § 8.

22-11-18. Repealed.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-17.1, enacted by Laws 1971, ch. 73, § 1; repealed by Laws 2017, ch. 21, § 20.

22-11-19. Regular or provisional membership; optional coverage.

A. Any person qualified to be a regular or provisional member covered by a retirement program established for federal civil service employees shall have six months after the commencement of employment to file a written notice with the director of his election not to be covered by the Educational Retirement Act. If the person so elects, he may withdraw any contributions made pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act.

B. Any person qualified to be a regular or provisional member and who was employed by a regional education cooperative on July 1, 1993 shall have the right to exempt himself from Educational Retirement Act coverage within thirty days and such exemption shall be irrevocable as long as the person is employed by a regional cooperative.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-18, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 142; 1993, ch. 232, § 8.

22-11-19.1. [Exemption of certain participants covered under Comprehensive Employment and Training Act.]

All participants covered under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (Public Law 95-524) are exempt from coverage under the Educational Retirement Act, effective July 1, 1979, except for those employees who have vested in the plan by that date.

History: Laws 1979, ch. 316, § 1.

22-11-19.2. Regular or provisional membership; regional education cooperatives.

Any person employed by a regional education cooperative and qualified to be a regular or provisional member shall have the right to acquire earned service credit for periods of employment with the regional education cooperative when the member was neither covered nor retired under the Educational Retirement Act, under the following conditions:

A. both the member and the administrative unit contributions, at the rates in effect during the periods of employment and applied to earnings of the member during such periods, are paid to

the fund, together with interest, at a rate equal to the board's actuarial earnings assumption rate at the time of purchase;

B. both member and administrative unit contributions, together with interest, are paid by the member; or

C. the member tenders payment of his contributions, together with interest and the local administrative unit by which he was employed may, but shall not be obligated to, pay the administrative unit contributions, together with interest.

History: 1978 Comp., § 22-11-19.2, enacted by Laws 1993, ch. 232, § 9.

22-11-20. Repealed.

22-11-21. Contributions; members; local administrative units.

A. Except as provided in Subsection D of this section, for a member whose annual salary is greater than twenty-four thousand dollars (\$24,000), the member shall make contributions to the fund at the rate of ten and seven-tenths percent of the member's annual salary.

B. For a member whose annual salary is twenty-four thousand dollars (\$24,000) or less, the member shall make contributions to the fund at the rate of seven and nine-tenths percent of the member's annual salary.

C. Except as provided in Subsection D of this section, each local administrative unit shall make an annual contribution to the fund according to the following schedule:

(1) from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022, at the rate of fifteen and fifteen-hundredths percent of the annual salary of each member employed by the local administrative unit;

(2) from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023, at the rate of seventeen and fifteen-hundredths percent of the annual salary of each member employed by the local administrative unit; and

(3) on and after July 1, 2023, at the rate of eighteen and fifteen-hundredths percent of the annual salary of each member employed by the local administrative unit.

D. If, in a calendar year, the salary of a member, initially employed by a local administrative unit on or after July 1, 1996, equals the annual compensation limit set pursuant to Section 401(a)(17) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, then:

(1) for the remainder of that calendar year, no additional member contributions or local administrative unit contributions for that member shall be made pursuant to this section; provided that no member shall be denied service credit solely because contributions are not made by the member or on behalf of the member pursuant to this subsection; and

(2) the amount of the annual compensation limit shall be divided into four equal portions, and, for purposes of attributing contributory employment and crediting service credit, each portion shall be attributable to one of the four quarters of the calendar year.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-20, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 144; 1974, ch. 5, § 1; 1981, ch. 293, § 1; 1984, ch. 19, § 2; 1991, ch. 140, § 1; 1992, ch. 117, § 1; 2005, ch. 273, § 1; 2008, ch. 68, § 1; 2009, ch. 127, § 11; 2010, ch. 67, § 1; 2011, ch. 178, § 13; 2013, ch. 61, § 1; 2019, ch. 237, § 18; 2019, ch. 258, § 1; 2021, ch. 44, § 1; 2022, ch. 29, § 1.

22-11-21.1. Member contributions; tax treatment.

Commencing on July 1, 1983, each local administrative unit shall, solely for the purpose of compliance with Section 414(h) of the Internal Revenue Code, pick up, for the purposes specified in that section, member contributions required by Subsection A of Section 22-11-21 NMSA 1978 for all annual salary earned by the member. Member contributions picked up under the provisions of this subsection shall be treated as local administrative unit contributions for purposes of determining income tax obligations under the Internal Revenue Code; however, such picked-up member contributions shall be included in the determination of the member's gross annual salary for all other purposes under federal and state laws. Members' contributions picked up under this section shall continue to be designated member contributions for all purposes of the Educational Retirement Act and shall be considered as part of the member's annual salary for purposes of determining the amount of the member's contribution. The provisions of this section are mandatory, and the member shall have no option concerning the pickup or to receive the contributed amounts directly instead of having them paid by the local administrative unit to the educational retirement system.

History: 1978 Comp., § 22-11-21.1, enacted by Laws 1983, ch. 91, § 1.

22-11-21.2. Salary calculation; limitations.

In establishing a member's average annual salary for determination of retirement benefits, salary in excess of limitations set forth in Section 401(a)(17) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, shall be disregarded. The limitation on compensation for eligible employees shall not be less than the amount allowed pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act in effect on July 1, 1993. For purposes of this section, "eligible employee" means an individual who was a member or participant of the educational retirement plan or alternative retirement plan prior to the first plan year beginning after December 31, 1995. For a member who first becomes a clinical faculty member of the university of New Mexico health sciences center on or after July 1, 1999, the limitation on compensation shall not be in excess of the member's base salary as specified in the member's annual faculty contract or the limitations set forth in Section 401(a)(17) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, whichever is less.

History: 1978 Comp., § 22-11-21.2, enacted by Laws 1995, ch. 148, § 2; 1999, ch. 274, § 2.

22-11-21.3. Pick up; rollover.

A. Commencing on July 1, 1998, each local administrative unit may, solely for the purpose of compliance with Section 414(h) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, pick up, for the purposes specified in that section, member contributions permitted by Section 22-11-17 NMSA 1978;

Subsection C of Section 22-11-33 NMSA 1978; or Paragraph (4) of Subsection A of Section 22-11-34 NMSA 1978. Member contributions picked up under the provisions of this subsection shall be treated as local administrative unit contributions for purposes of determining income tax obligations under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986; however, such picked-up member contributions shall be included in the determination of the member's gross annual salary for all other purposes under federal and state laws. Member contributions picked up under this section shall continue to be designated member contributions for all purposes of the Educational Retirement Act and shall be considered as part of the member's annual salary for purposes of determining the amount of the member's contribution. The provisions of this section are voluntary, and the member shall have no option concerning the pick up to receive the contributed amounts directly instead of having them paid by the local administrative unit to the fund. The contribution may be paid through the local administrative unit's payroll deduction.

B. Commencing July 1, 1998, the board may accept rollover contributions from other retirement funds solely for and subject to the restrictions set forth in Section 22-11-17 NMSA 1978 and Subsection B of Section 22-11-34 NMSA 1978 and the applicable restrictions set forth in the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 for pension plan qualification.

History: Laws 1998, ch. 38, § 1; 2003, ch. 227, § 2; 2017, ch. 21, § 9.

22-11-22. Payment; records; audits.

A. Contributions shall be deducted from the salaries of members by the local administrative units as the salaries are paid. These contributions shall be forwarded monthly to the director for deposit in the fund.

B. Contributions of local administrative units shall be derived from revenue available to the local administrative unit and shall be forwarded monthly to the director for deposit in the fund. The board may assess an interest charge and a penalty charge on any remittance not made by its due date.

C. Each local administrative unit shall record and certify quarterly to the director an itemized account of the contributions paid by each member and the local administrative unit. The director shall keep a record of these itemized accounts.

D. The director or the director's authorized representative may audit the financial affairs, books and records, and may interview employees, of any local administrative unit at any time to ensure compliance with the Educational Retirement Act and rules adopted by the board. The local administrative unit shall cooperate with the director or the authorized representative and shall provide access to records, information and employees during regular business hours. If, during the course of the audit, the director or the director's designee finds discrepancies or violations of the Educational Retirement Act or rules adopted by the board, or if the director or the director's designee finds that a local administrative unit does not have adequate financial controls or procedures in place to allow the local administrative unit to properly account for and pay required contributions to the board:

(1) the director shall order the local administrative unit to implement measures to remedy those matters, including payment to the fund of any contributions not properly calculated or paid, together with interest thereon at a rate to be established by the board. The local administrative unit shall promptly comply with that order; and

(2) the director shall submit a report describing the discrepancy, violation or failure to maintain adequate financial controls or procedures to the board, the state auditor and the public education department or the higher education department as may be appropriate.

E. If the director or the director's designee finds or has reason to suspect criminal activity with respect to contributions, payments or the management of the funds of a local administrative unit, the director shall notify the attorney general, the state auditor and the appropriate law enforcement agency.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-21, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 145; 1984, ch. 19, § 3; 1993, ch. 69, § 6; 2009, ch. 209, § 1.

22-11-23. Retirement eligibility; initial membership prior to July 1, 2010.

A. A member who was a member on June 30, 2010, or was a member at any time prior to that date and had not, on that date, been refunded all member contributions pursuant to Subsection A of Section 22-11-15 NMSA 1978, shall be eligible for retirement benefits when:

(1) the member is any age and has twenty-five or more years of earned and allowed service credit;

(2) the member is at least sixty-five years of age and has five or more years of earned service credit; or

(3) the sum of the member's age and years of earned service credit equals at least seventy-five; provided that a member who retires pursuant to this paragraph shall be subject to the benefit reductions provided in Subsection G of Section 22-11-30 NMSA 1978.

B. A member shall be subject to the provisions of Subsection A of this section as they existed at the beginning of the member's last cumulated four quarters of earned service credit, regardless of later amendment.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-22, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 146; 1971, ch. 12, § 2; 1974, ch. 5, § 2; reenacted by 1981, ch. 293, § 2; 1984, ch. 19, § 4; 1993, ch. 69, § 7; 2009, ch. 286, § 1; 2009, ch. 288, § 14; 2013, ch. 61, § 2.

22-11-23.1. Retirement eligibility; initial membership on or after July 1, 2010.

A. A member who initially became a member on or after July 1, 2010, or a member who was a member at any time prior to that date and had, before that date, been refunded all member contributions pursuant to Subsection A of Section 22-11-15 NMSA 1978, shall be eligible for retirement benefits pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act when:

(1) the member is any age and has thirty or more years of earned service credit;

(2) the member is at least sixty-seven years of age and has five or more years of earned service credit; or

(3) the sum of the member's age and years of earned service credit equals at least eighty; provided that a member who retires pursuant to this paragraph shall be subject to the benefit reductions provided in Subsection H of Section 22-11-30 NMSA 1978.

B. A member shall be subject to the provisions of this section as they existed at the beginning of the member's last cumulated four quarters of earned service credit, regardless of later amendment.

History: 1978 Comp., § 22-11-23.1, as enacted by Laws 2009, ch. 286, § 2; 2009, ch. 288, § 15; 2013, ch. 61, § 3.

22-11-23.2. Retirement eligibility membership on or after July 1, 2013.

A. A member who initially became a member on or after July 1, 2013 or a member who was a member at any time prior to July 1, 2013 and had, before that date, been refunded all member contributions pursuant to Subsection A of Section 22-11-15 NMSA 1978, and had not restored all refunded contributions and interest before July 1, 2013, shall be eligible for retirement benefits when:

(1) the member is any age and has thirty or more years of earned service credit; provided that the benefits of a member who retires pursuant to this paragraph prior to attaining the age of fifty-five years shall be reduced to an amount equal to the actuarial equivalent of the benefit the member would receive if the member had retired at the age of fifty-five years. The board shall recalculate the actuarial factors on which benefits are reduced no less frequently than every ten years beginning July 1, 2013. The benefits of a retired member that have been reduced at the time of retirement pursuant to this paragraph shall not be subject to further change based upon the board's recalculation of the actuarial factors;

(2) the member is at least sixty-seven years of age and has five or more years of earned service credit; or

(3) the sum of the member's age and years of earned service credit equals at least eighty; provided that a member who retires pursuant to this paragraph shall be subject to the benefit reductions provided in Subsection I of Section 22-11-30 NMSA 1978.

B. A member shall be subject to the provisions of this section as they existed at the beginning of the member's last cumulated four quarters of earned service credit, regardless of later amendment.

History: 1978 Comp., § 22-11-23.2, enacted by Laws 2013, ch. 61, § 4.

22-11-23.3. Retirement eligibility; initial membership on or after July 1, 2019.

A member who initially became a member on or after July 1, 2019 or a member who was a member before July 1, 2019 and had, before that date, been refunded all member contributions in accordance with Subsection A of Section 22-11-15 NMSA 1978 and had not restored all refunded contributions and interest before July 1, 2019, is eligible for retirement benefits when:

- A. the member is any age and has thirty or more years of earned service credit;
- B. the member is at least sixty-seven years of age and has five or more years of earned service credit; or
- C. the sum of the member's age and years of earned service credit equals at least eighty.

History: 1978 Comp., § 22-11-23.3, enacted by Laws 2019, ch. 258, § 2.

22-11-24. Retirement benefits; minimum contributory employment.

- A. A member must have acquired not less than five years of contributory employment to be eligible for retirement benefits pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act.
- B. A member desiring to retire before having completed five years of contributory employment shall be limited to the maximum benefit he would have been entitled to receive under any statute repealed by the Educational Retirement Act. A member may acquire five years or less of contributory employment by contributing to the fund, for each year of contributory employment desired, a sum equal to the prevailing combined contributions of the member and the local administrative unit in effect at the time the contributory employment is acquired. This contribution shall be computed on the member's average annual salary for the last five years of employment plus an additional sum as interest from the effective date of the Educational Retirement Act as fixed by the board, but not to exceed three percent a year.
- C. Years of contributory employment purchased pursuant to this section shall not be considered as an addition to service actually performed in computing the sum of the member's retirement benefit.
- D. The retirement benefits of members retired pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act prior to July 1, 1959 and who have acquired contributory employment years by purchase, shall be computed upon the basis of the amount paid therefor.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-23, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 147.

22-11-25. Retirement; reemployment.

- A. A member retired pursuant to the provisions of the Educational Retirement Act may be removed from retirement status by returning to employment. A reemployed member shall make regular contributions pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act. Upon termination of reemployment, the member shall be eligible for retirement benefits again based upon all service credit acquired. In no case shall the retirement benefits be less than the member was receiving prior to the member's reemployment.

B. At the time of retirement following a period of reemployment, the member's retirement benefits shall be paid in accordance with the terms of the option selected at the time of the first retirement.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-24, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 148; 2017, ch. 21, § 10.

22-11-25.1. Return to employment; benefits; contributions.

A. Except as otherwise provided in Subsections B, F, H and I of this section, until January 1, 2024, a retired member who begins employment with a local administrative unit at a level greater than one-quarter full-time employee, regardless of salary level, is required to suspend the member's retirement benefits until the end of that employment unless the member has not rendered service to a local administrative unit for at least twelve consecutive months after the date of retirement.

B. Until January 1, 2024, a retired member who retired on or before January 1, 2001, has not suspended or been required to suspend retirement benefits pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act and returns to employment with a local administrative unit is not required to suspend the member's retirement benefits.

C. A retired member who returns to employment with a local administrative unit in accordance with this section is entitled to receive retirement benefits during that employment but is not entitled to acquire or purchase service credit for that employment.

D. A retired member may return to employment with a local administrative unit only if the member submits an application to return to work, on a form prescribed by the board, the board approves the application and the applicant complies with other application rules promulgated by the board.

E. A retired member who returns to employment pursuant to Subsection A, B, F or I of this section shall make nonrefundable contributions to the fund as would be required by Section 22-11-21 NMSA 1978 if the retired member were a non-retired employee. The local administrative unit employing the retired member shall likewise make contributions as would be required by that section.

F. Until January 1, 2024, a retired member who retired on or before January 1, 2001, who suspended or was required to suspend retirement benefits under the Educational Retirement Act is not required to suspend the member's retirement benefits if the retired member has not rendered service to a local administrative unit for an additional twelve or more consecutive months, not including any part of a summer or other scheduled break or vacation period, after the initial date of retirement.

G. A retired member who returns to employment with a local administrative unit shall make contributions to the retiree health care fund during the period of that employment and in the amount specified in Section 10-7C-15 NMSA 1978. The local administrative unit employing the retired member shall likewise make contributions during the period of that employment and in the amount specified in that section.

H. A retired member may return to employment with a local administrative unit without a suspension of the member's retirement benefits; provided that:

- (1) the retired member has not rendered service to a local administrative unit for at least ninety days after the date of retirement;
- (2) prior to the date of retirement, or within ninety days after the date of retirement, the retired member did not enter into any formal or informal agreement with a local administrative unit or with any contractor providing services to a local administrative unit to return to employment; and
- (3) the retired member earns a salary of less than fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) per year.

I. A retired member may return to employment with a local administrative unit without a suspension of the member's retirement benefits; provided that:

- (1) the retired member has not rendered service to a local administrative unit for at least ninety days after the date of retirement; and
- (2) the retired member returns to employment for a period of no more than thirty-six consecutive or nonconsecutive months pursuant to this subsection.

J. As used in this section:

(1) "rendered service" includes employment, whether full or part time; substitute teaching; voluntarily performing duties that would otherwise be, or in the past have been, performed by a paid employee or independent contractor; and performing duties as an independent contractor or an employee of an independent contractor; and

(2) "local administrative unit" includes any entity incorporated, formed or otherwise organized by, or subject to the control of, a local administrative unit, regardless of whether the entity is created for profit or nonprofit purposes.

History: Laws 2001, ch. 283, § 2; 2003, ch. 80, § 1; 2003, ch. 145, § 1; 2009, ch. 288, § 16; 2011, ch. 6, § 1; 2019, ch. 258, § 3; 2020, ch. 10, § 1; 2021, ch. 44, § 2; 2022, ch. 20, § 1.

22-11-25.2. Persons receiving retirement benefits pursuant to the Public Employees Retirement Act.

A. An employee who is retired pursuant to the Public Employees Retirement Act and who has not suspended retirement benefits received pursuant to that act shall not make contributions to the fund as otherwise required by the Educational Retirement Act. A local administrative unit that employs such a retiree shall make contributions to the fund as required by that act.

B. An employee who receives retirement benefits pursuant to the Public Employees Retirement Act is not entitled to acquire or purchase service credit for the period of employment with a local administrative unit.

History: Laws 2003, ch. 248, § 1; 2019, ch. 258, § 4; 2020, ch. 10, § 3.

22-11-26. Death during reemployment.

If a member dies during a period of reemployment following retirement pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act, the benefits to be paid shall be determined according to the following:

A. if the member did not elect to exercise Option B or C pursuant to Subsection A of Section 22-11-29 NMSA 1978 at the time of first retirement, the member's beneficiary or estate shall receive an amount equal to the sum of the member's contributions, including contributions made by the member during the period of last reemployment, plus accumulated interest at the rate set by the board, less the total benefits received prior to the last reemployment; or

B. if a retirement benefit has been paid to the member pursuant to either Option B or Option C of Subsection A of Section 22-11-29 NMSA 1978 prior to reemployment, the reemployed member shall be considered as retiring on the day preceding the date of death, and the benefits due the surviving beneficiary, computed as of that date, shall be commenced effective on the date of death in accordance with the terms of the option elected.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-25, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 149; 1981, ch. 294, § 1; 1993, ch. 69, § 8; 1999, ch. 93, § 1; 2003, ch. 39, § 5.

22-11-27. Deferred retirement; restriction.

A. A member who is eligible for retirement may continue in employment and shall continue to pay contributions as provided by the Educational Retirement Act.

B. Provided that the contributions that the member has made are left in the fund, a member eligible for retirement benefits pursuant to the provisions of Section 22-11-23, 22-11-23.1 or 22-11-23.2 NMSA 1978 may terminate employment and retire at any time upon satisfying the applicable age and earned service requirements for retirement.

C. A member shall not be on a retirement status while engaged in employment unless the employment falls within an exception established by statute or rule of the board.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-26, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 150; 1971, ch. 12, § 3; 1974, ch. 5, § 3; 2003, ch. 39, § 6; 2013, ch. 61, § 5.

22-11-28. Applications for retirement; effective date.

A. Application for retirement shall be made by a member on forms provided by the board.

B. Retirement pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act shall become effective on July 1 following approval of the application for retirement by the board. With approval of the board and

the local administrative unit employing the member, retirement pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act may become effective on the first day of any month during the year.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-27, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 151; 1975, ch. 191, § 2.

22-11-29. Retirement benefit options.

A. Upon retirement pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act, a member may elect, and, except as provided in Subsection D or E of this section, such election shall be irrevocable, to receive the actuarial equivalent of the member's retirement benefit, as provided in Section 22-11-30 NMSA 1978, to be effective on the member's retirement in any one of the following optional forms:

(1) OPTION A. An unreduced retirement benefit pursuant to Section 22-11-30 NMSA 1978;

(2) OPTION B. A reduced annuity payable during the member's life with provision that upon the member's death the same annuity shall be continued during the life of and paid to the beneficiary designated by the member in writing at the time of electing this option; or

(3) OPTION C. A reduced annuity payable during the member's life with provision that upon the member's death one-half of this same annuity shall be continued during the life of and paid to the beneficiary designated by the member in writing at the time of electing this option.

B. In the case of Options B and C of Subsection A of this section, the actuarial equivalent of the member's retirement benefit shall be computed on the basis of the lives of both the member and the beneficiary.

C. In the event that the named beneficiary of a retired member who elected Option B or C of Subsection A of this section at the time of retirement predeceases the retired member, the annuity of the retired member shall be adjusted by adding an amount equal to the amount by which the annuity of the retired member was reduced at retirement as a result of the election of Option B or C. The adjustment authorized in this subsection shall be made as follows:

(1) beginning on the first month following the month in which the named beneficiary of a retiree dies applicable to an annuity received by a retiree who retires after June 30, 1987; or

(2) beginning on July 1, 1987 applicable to an annuity received by a retiree who retired prior to July 1, 1987 and otherwise qualifies for the adjustment; provided, however, no adjustment shall be made retroactively.

D. A retired member who is being paid an adjusted annuity pursuant to Subsection C of this section because of the death of the named beneficiary may exercise a one-time irrevocable option to designate another individual as the beneficiary and may select either Option B or Option C of Subsection A of this section; provided that:

(1) the amount of the annuity under the option selected shall be recalculated and have the same actuarial present value, computed on the effective date of the designation, as the annuity being paid to the retired member prior to the designation;

(2) the designation and the amount of the annuity shall be subject to a court order as provided for in Subsection B of Section 22-11-42 NMSA 1978; and

(3) the retired member shall pay one hundred dollars (\$100) to the board to defray the cost of determining the new annuity amount.

E. A retired member who is being paid an annuity under Option B or C of Subsection A of this section with a living designated beneficiary other than the retired member's spouse or former spouse may exercise a one-time irrevocable option to deselect the designated beneficiary and elect to:

(1) designate another beneficiary; provided that:

(a) the retired member shall not have an option to change from the current form of payment;

(b) the amount of the annuity under the form of payment shall be recalculated and shall have the same actuarial present value, computed as of the effective date of the designation, as the amount of annuity paid prior to the designation; and

(c) the retired member shall pay one hundred dollars (\$100) to the board to defray the cost of determining the new annuity amount; or

(2) have future annuity payments made without a reduction as a result of Option B or C.

F. In the event of the death of the member who has not retired and who has completed at least five years' earned service credit, the member shall be considered as retiring on the first day of the month following the date of death, and the benefits due the surviving beneficiary, computed as of that date, shall, except as provided in Subsection J of this section, be commenced effective on the first day of such month in accordance with the terms of Option B of Subsection A of this section. In lieu of the provisions of Option B, the surviving beneficiary may elect to receive payment of all the contributions made by the member, plus interest at the rate set by the board reduced by the sum of any disability benefits previously received by the member, or the surviving beneficiary may choose to defer receipt of the survivor's benefit to whatever age the beneficiary chooses up to the time the member would have attained age sixty. If the benefit is thus deferred, it shall be calculated as though the member had retired on the first day of the month in which the beneficiary elects to receive the benefit. In the event of the death of the beneficiary after the death of the member and prior to the date on which the beneficiary has elected to receive the beneficiary's benefit, the estate of the beneficiary shall be entitled to a refund of the member's contributions plus interest at the rate earned by the fund during the preceding fiscal year, reduced by the sum of any disability benefits previously received by the member.

G. In the event of the death of a member who has not retired and who has completed at least five years' earned service credit, but who has not designated a beneficiary in writing pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act, the eligible surviving spouse or surviving domestic partner shall be the surviving beneficiary eligible for benefits in accordance with the provisions of Subsection F of this section.

H. In the case of death of a retired member who did not elect either Option B or C of Subsection A of this section and before the benefits paid to the member have equaled the sum of the member's accumulated contributions to the fund plus accumulated interest at the rate set by the board, the balance shall be paid to the beneficiary designated in writing to the director by the member or, if no beneficiary was designated, to the eligible surviving spouse or surviving domestic partner of the member or, if there is no eligible surviving spouse or domestic partner of the member, to the estate of the member.

I. No benefit shall be paid pursuant to this section if the member's contributions have been refunded pursuant to Section 22-11-15 NMSA 1978.

J. In the case of death of a member with less than five years' earned service credit or death of a member who has filed with the director a notice rejecting the provisions of Subsection F of this section, which notice shall be revocable by the member at any time prior to retirement, the member's contributions to the fund plus interest at the rate set by the board shall be paid to the beneficiary designated in writing to the director by the member or, if no beneficiary was designated, to the eligible surviving spouse or surviving domestic partner of the member or, if there is no eligible surviving spouse or domestic partner of the member, to the estate of the member.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-28, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 152; 1977, ch. 314, § 1; 1981, ch. 294, § 2; 1984, ch. 19, § 5; 1987, ch. 86, § 1; 1999, ch. 93, § 2; 2003, ch. 39, § 7; 2011, ch. 122, § 2; 2017, ch. 21, § 11; 2019, ch. 173, § 1.

22-11-30. Retirement benefits; reductions.

A. Retirement benefits for a member retired pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act on or before June 30, 1967 shall be paid monthly and shall be one-twelfth of a sum equal to one and one-half percent of the first four thousand dollars (\$4,000) of the member's average annual salary and one percent of the remainder of the member's average annual salary multiplied by the number of years of the member's total service credit.

B. Retirement benefits for a member retired pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act on or after July 1, 1967 but on or before June 30, 1971 shall be paid monthly and shall be one-twelfth of a sum equal to one and one-half percent of the first six thousand six hundred dollars (\$6,600) of the member's average annual salary and one percent of the remainder of the member's average annual salary multiplied by the number of years of the member's total service credit.

C. Retirement benefits for a member retired pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act on or after July 1, 1971 but on or before June 30, 1974 shall be paid monthly and shall be one-twelfth

of a sum equal to one and one-half percent of the member's average annual salary multiplied by the number of years of the member's total service credit.

D. Retirement benefits for a member retired pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act on or before June 30, 1974 but returning to employment on or after July 1, 1974 for a cumulation of one or more years shall be computed pursuant to Subsection E of this section. Retirement benefits for a member retired pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act on or before June 30, 1974 but returning to employment on or after July 1, 1974 for a cumulation of less than one year shall be computed pursuant to Subsection A of this section if the member's date of last retirement was on or before June 30, 1967 or pursuant to Subsection B of this section if the member's date of last retirement was on or after July 1, 1967 but not later than June 30, 1971 or pursuant to Subsection C of this section if the member's date of last retirement was on or after July 1, 1971 but not later than June 30, 1974.

E. Retirement benefits for a member age sixty or over, retired pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act on or after July 1, 1974 but not later than June 30, 1987, shall be paid monthly and shall be one-twelfth of a sum equal to:

(1) one and one-half percent of the member's average annual salary multiplied by the number of years of service credit for:

(a) prior employment; and

(b) allowed service credit for service performed prior to July 1, 1957, except United States military service credit purchased pursuant to Paragraph (3) of Subsection A of Section 22-11-34 NMSA 1978; plus

(2) two percent of the member's average annual salary multiplied by the number of years of service credit for:

(a) contributory employment;

(b) allowed service credit for service performed after July 1, 1957; and

(c) United States military service credit for service performed prior to July 1, 1957 and purchased pursuant to Paragraph (3) of Subsection A of Section 22-11-34 NMSA 1978.

F. Retirement benefits for a member age sixty or over, retired pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act on or after July 1, 1987 but not later than June 30, 1991, shall be paid monthly and shall be one-twelfth of a sum equal to two and fifteen-hundredths percent of the member's average annual salary multiplied by the number of years of the member's total service credit; provided that this subsection shall not apply to any member who was retired in any of the four quarters ending on June 30, 1987 without having accumulated not less than 1.0 years earned service credit after June 30, 1987.

G. Retirement benefits for a member who retires pursuant to Section 22-11-23 NMSA 1978 on or after July 1, 1991 shall be paid monthly and shall be one-twelfth of a sum equal to two and thirty-five hundredths percent of the member's average annual salary multiplied by the number of years of the member's total service credit; provided that:

(1) the benefit for a member who retires pursuant to Paragraph (3) of Subsection A of Section 22-11-23 NMSA 1978 shall be reduced by:

(a) six-tenths percent for each one-fourth, or portion thereof, year that retirement occurs prior to the member attaining the age of sixty years but after the member attains the age of fifty-five years; and

(b) one and eight-tenths percent for each one-fourth, or portion thereof, year that retirement occurs prior to the member attaining the age of fifty-five years;

(2) the benefit formula provided in this subsection shall not apply to any member who was retired in any of the four consecutive quarters ending on June 30, 1991 without having accumulated at least one year of earned service credit beginning on or after July 1, 1991; and

(3) a member shall be subject to the provisions of Paragraph (1) of this subsection as they existed at the beginning of the member's last cumulated four quarters of earned service credit, regardless of later amendment.

H. Retirement benefits for a member who retires pursuant to Section 22-11-23.1 NMSA 1978 shall be paid monthly and shall be one-twelfth of a sum equal to two and thirty-five hundredths percent of the member's average annual salary multiplied by the number of years of the member's total service credit; provided that:

(1) the benefit for a member who retires pursuant to Paragraph (3) of Subsection A of Section 22-11-23.1 NMSA 1978 shall be reduced by:

(a) six-tenths percent for each one-fourth, or portion thereof, year that retirement occurs prior to the member attaining the age of sixty-five years but after the member attains the age of sixty years; and

(b) one and eight-tenths percent for each one-fourth, or portion thereof, year that retirement occurs prior to the member attaining the age of sixty years; and

(2) a member shall be subject to the provisions of Paragraph (1) of this subsection as they existed at the beginning of the member's last cumulated four quarters of earned service credit, regardless of later amendment.

I. Retirement benefits for a member who retires pursuant to Section 22-11-23.2 NMSA 1978 shall be paid monthly and shall be one-twelfth of a sum equal to two and thirty-five hundredths percent of the member's average annual salary multiplied by the number of years of the member's total service credit; provided that:

(1) the benefit for a member retiring pursuant to Paragraph (3) of Subsection A of Section 22-11-23.2 NMSA 1978 shall be reduced by:

(a) six-tenths percent for each one-fourth, or portion thereof, year that retirement occurs prior to the member attaining the age of sixty-five years but after the member attains the age of sixty years; and

(b) one and eight-tenths percent for each one-fourth, or portion thereof, year that retirement occurs prior to the member attaining the age of sixty years; and

(2) a member shall be subject to the provisions of Paragraph (1) of this subsection as they existed at the beginning of the member's last cumulated four quarters of earned service credit, regardless of later amendment.

J. Retirement benefits for a member who retires in accordance with Section 22-11-23.3 NMSA 1978 shall be paid monthly and:

(1) in an amount equal to one-twelfth of the sum of the following:

(a) for the first ten years of the member's service credit, one and thirty-five hundredths percent of the member's average annual salary multiplied by the member's years of service credit between one-fourth of a year and ten years;

(b) for that portion of the member's service credit earned after ten years of service credit and through twenty years of service credit, two and thirty-five hundredths percent of the member's average annual salary multiplied by the member's years of service credit between ten and twenty years;

(c) for that portion of the member's service credit earned after twenty years of service credit and through thirty years of service credit, three and thirty-five hundredths percent of the member's average annual salary multiplied by the member's years of service credit between twenty and thirty years; and

(d) for that portion of the member's service credit earned after thirty years of service credit, two and four-tenths percent of the member's average annual salary multiplied by the member's years of service credit over thirty years; or

(2) if the member retires in accordance with:

(a) Subsection A of Section 22-11-23.3 NMSA 1978 and is under fifty-eight years of age, in an amount equal to the result determined under Paragraph (1) of this subsection, but reduced to the actuarial equivalent, based on what is at the time of the member's retirement the most current set of actuarial factors determined by the board, of the benefit the member would receive if the member had retired at fifty-eight years of age;

(b) Subsection C of Section 22-11-23.3 NMSA 1978 and is sixty years of age or older and under sixty-five, in an amount equal to the result determined under Paragraph (1) of this subsection, but reduced by six-tenths percent for each one-fourth, or portion thereof, year before the member reaches age sixty-five; or

(c) Subsection C of Section 22-11-23.3 NMSA 1978 and is younger than sixty years of age, in an amount equal to one and eight-tenths percent for each one-fourth, or portion thereof, year before the member reaches sixty years of age.

K. In determining a member's average annual salary for purposes of this section:

(1) the data set shall consist of the annual salary of each of the last five years, or any consecutive five years, for which contribution was made by the member, whichever produces a higher result; and

(2) lump-sum payments made after July 1, 2010 of accrued sick leave or annual leave shall be excluded from the calculation.

L. On and after July 1, 2019, if the member's average annual salary is greater than sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000):

(1) the salary in a first twelve-month interval that occurs beginning July 1, 2019 or thereafter of the five-year period used to determine the average annual salary shall be adjusted to exclude any increase in salary in excess of thirty percent of the salary in the twelve consecutive months of service credit preceding the five-year period; and

(2) the salary in each of the four succeeding twelve-month intervals that occur beginning July 1, 2019 or thereafter of the five-year period, as adjusted to exclude any increase in salary in the twelve months preceding each such succeeding twelve-month interval that is in excess of the thirty-percent limitation provided in this subsection, shall be used to determine if the salary in that succeeding twelve-month interval exceeds the thirty-percent limitation and to adjust the salary to exclude any increase in excess of that limitation in determining the average annual salary.

M. On July 1, 2020 and on each July 1 thereafter, the salary threshold for applying the thirty-percent limitation provided for in Subsection L of this section shall be adjusted by applying an adjustment factor equal to the change in the consumer price index between the next preceding calendar year and the preceding calendar year if there is an increase in the consumer price index between the next preceding calendar year and the preceding calendar year.

N. Unless otherwise required by the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, a member shall begin receiving retirement benefits by age seventy years and six months, or upon termination of employment, whichever occurs later.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-29, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 153; 1971, ch. 12, § 4; 1974, ch. 5, § 4; 1985, ch. 170, § 1; 1987, ch. 86, § 2; 1991, ch. 140, § 2; 1993, ch. 69, § 9; 2003, ch. 39, § 8; 2009, ch. 286, § 3; 2009, ch. 288, § 17; 2013, ch. 61, § 6; 2019, ch. 258, § 5.

22-11-30.1. Educational retirement; qualified excess benefit.

The educational retirement board, by rule, may establish and maintain a qualified excess benefit arrangement under Section 415(m) of the United States Internal Revenue Code of 1986 for employees hired before July 1, 1999. The amount of annual benefit that would be payable but for the limitation imposed by Section 415 of the United States Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to an employee hired before July 1, 1999 shall be paid from a qualified excess benefit arrangement established and maintained pursuant to this section.

History: Laws 1999, ch. 274, § 1.

22-11-31. Cost-of-living adjustment; eligibility; based on funded ratio; additional contributions.

A. For the purposes of this section:

(1) "adjustment factor" means a multiplicative factor computed to provide an annuity adjustment pursuant to the provisions of Subsection B of this section;

(2) "annuity" means any benefit payable under the Educational Retirement Act or the Public Employees Retirement Reciprocity Act [Chapter 10, Article 13A NMSA 1978] as a retirement benefit, disability benefit or survivor benefit;

(3) "calendar year" means the full twelve months beginning January 1 and ending December 31;

(4) "consumer price index" means the average of the monthly consumer price indexes for a calendar year for the entire United States for all items as published by the United States department of labor;

(5) "funded ratio" means the ratio of the actuarial value of the assets of the fund to the actuarial accrued liability of the educational retirement system;

(6) "median adjusted annuity" means the median value of all annuities and retirement benefits paid pursuant to Section 22-11-29 or 22-11-30 NMSA 1978, as calculated each fiscal year; provided, however, that the benefits paid to a member pursuant to Section 22-11-38 NMSA 1978 shall not be included in the median adjusted annuity calculation;

(7) "next preceding calendar year" means the full calendar year immediately prior to the preceding calendar year; and

(8) "preceding calendar year" means the full calendar year preceding the July 1 on which a benefit is to be adjusted.

B. On or after July 1, 1984:

(1) the annuity of a member who retires pursuant to Subsection A of Section 22-11-23 NMSA 1978 or Subsection A of Section 22-11-23.1 NMSA 1978 shall be adjusted annually and cumulatively commencing on July 1 of the year in which a member attains the age of sixty-five years or on July 1 following the year a member retires, whichever is later; and

(2) the annuity of a member who retires pursuant to Subsection A of Section 22-11-23.2 NMSA 1978 shall be adjusted annually and cumulatively commencing on July 1 of the year in which the member attains the age of sixty-seven years or on July 1 following the year the member retires, whichever is later.

C. Beginning on July 1, 2013 and on each July 1 thereafter:

(1) if the funded ratio of the fund as reported by the board's actuary in the actuarial valuation report for the next preceding fiscal year is one hundred percent or greater, the annuity adjustments provided for under Subsection B of this section shall be adjusted by applying an adjustment factor based on the percentage increase of the consumer price index between the next preceding calendar year and the preceding calendar year. The adjustment factor shall be applied as follows:

(a) if the percentage increase of the consumer price index is less than two percent in absolute value, the adjustment factor shall be the same amount as the percentage increase of the consumer price index; and

(b) if the percentage increase of the consumer price index is two percent or greater in absolute value, the adjustment factor shall be one-half of the percentage increase; except that the adjustment shall not exceed four percent in absolute value nor be less than two percent in absolute value;

(2) if the funded ratio of the fund as reported by the board's actuary in the actuarial report for the next preceding fiscal year is greater than ninety percent but less than one hundred percent, except for a member who is on disability status in accordance with Section 22-11-35 NMSA 1978 and whose benefit is adjusted as provided in Subsection G of this section or a member who is retired pursuant to Section 22-11-38 NMSA 1978, the adjustment factor provided for in Subsection B of this section shall be applied as follows:

(a) if the percentage increase in the consumer price index is less than two percent in absolute value, for a member who has twenty-five or more years of service credit at retirement and whose annuity is less than or equal to the median adjusted annuity for the fiscal year next preceding the adjustment date, the adjustment factor shall be ninety-five percent of the adjustment factor determined pursuant to Subparagraph (a) of Paragraph (1) of this subsection;

(b) if the percentage increase in the consumer price index is less than two percent in absolute value, for a member who has less than twenty-five years of service credit at retirement and whose annuity is less than or equal to the median adjusted annuity for the fiscal

year next preceding the adjustment date, and for a member whose annuity is greater than the median adjusted annuity for the fiscal year next preceding the adjustment date, the adjustment factor shall be ninety percent of the adjustment factor determined pursuant to Subparagraph (a) of Paragraph (1) of this subsection;

(c) if the percentage increase in the consumer price index is greater than or equal to two percent in absolute value for a member who has twenty-five or more years of service credit at retirement and whose annuity is less than or equal to the median adjusted annuity for the fiscal year next preceding the adjustment date, the adjustment factor shall be ninety-five percent of the adjustment factor determined under Subparagraph (b) of Paragraph (1) of this subsection; and

(d) if the percentage increase in the consumer price index is greater than or equal to two percent in absolute value, for a member who has less than twenty-five years of service credit at retirement and whose annuity is less than or equal to the median adjusted annuity for the fiscal year next preceding the adjustment date, and for a member whose annuity is greater than the median adjusted annuity for the fiscal year next preceding the adjustment date, the adjustment factor shall be ninety percent of the adjustment factor determined under Subparagraph (b) of Paragraph (1) of this subsection;

(3) if the funded ratio of the fund as reported by the board's actuary in the actuarial valuation report for the next preceding fiscal year is ninety percent or less, except for a member who is on disability status in accordance with Section 22-11-35 NMSA 1978 and whose benefit is adjusted as provided in Subsection G of this section or a member who is retired pursuant to Section 22-11-38 NMSA 1978, the adjustment factor provided for in Subsection B of this section shall be applied as follows:

(a) if the percentage increase in the consumer price index is less than two percent in absolute value, for a member who has twenty-five or more years of service credit at retirement and whose annuity is less than or equal to the median adjusted annuity for the fiscal year next preceding the adjustment date, the adjustment factor shall be ninety percent of the adjustment factor determined pursuant to Subparagraph (a) of Paragraph (1) of this subsection;

(b) if the percentage increase in the consumer price index is less than two percent in absolute value, for a member who has less than twenty-five years of service credit at retirement and whose annuity is less than or equal to the median adjusted annuity for the fiscal year next preceding the adjustment date, and for a member whose annuity is greater than the median adjusted annuity for the fiscal year next preceding the adjustment date, the adjustment factor shall be eighty percent of the adjustment factor determined pursuant to Subparagraph (a) of Paragraph (1) of this subsection;

(c) if the percentage increase in the consumer price index is greater than or equal to two percent in absolute value for a member who has twenty-five or more years of service credit at retirement and whose annuity is less than or equal to the median adjusted annuity for the fiscal year next preceding the adjustment date, the adjustment factor shall be ninety percent of the adjustment factor determined under Subparagraph (b) of Paragraph (1) of this subsection; and

(d) if the percentage increase in the consumer price index is greater than or equal to two percent in absolute value, for a member who has less than twenty-five years of service credit at retirement and whose annuity is less than or equal to the median adjusted annuity for the fiscal year next preceding the adjustment date, and for a member whose annuity is greater than the median adjusted annuity for the fiscal year next preceding the adjustment date, the adjustment factor shall be eighty percent of the adjustment factor determined under Subparagraph (b) of Paragraph (1) of this subsection; and

(4) an annuity shall not be decreased if there is a decrease in the consumer price index between the next preceding calendar year and the preceding calendar year.

D. A retired member whose benefit is subject to adjustment under the provisions of the Educational Retirement Act in effect prior to July 1, 1984 shall have the member's annuity readjusted annually and cumulatively under the provisions of that act in effect prior to July 1, 1984 until July 1 of the year in which the member attains the age of sixty-five years, when the member shall have the annuity readjusted annually and cumulatively under the provisions of this section.

E. A member who:

(1) retires pursuant to Subsection A of Section 22-11-23 NMSA 1978 or Subsection A of Section 22-11-23.1 NMSA 1978 after attaining the age of sixty-five years shall have the member's annuity adjusted as provided in Subsections B and C of this section commencing on July 1 of the year following the member's retirement; or

(2) retires pursuant to Subsection A of Section 22-11-23.2 NMSA 1978 after attaining the age of sixty-seven years shall have the member's annuity adjusted as provided in Subsections B and C of this section commencing on July 1 of the year following the member's retirement.

F. A retired member who returns to work and suspends retirement shall be subject to the provisions of this section as they exist at the time of the member's latest retirement.

G. Benefits of a member who is on a disability status in accordance with Section 22-11-35 NMSA 1978 or a member who is certified by the board as disabled at regular retirement shall be adjusted in accordance with Subsections B and C of this section, except that the benefits shall be adjusted annually and cumulatively commencing on July 1 of the third full year following the year in which the member was approved by the board for disability or retirement.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-30, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 154; 1971, ch. 12, § 5; 1974, ch. 5, § 5; reenacted by Laws 1979, ch. 333, § 2; 1981, ch. 293, § 3; 1984, ch. 19, § 6; 1987, ch. 86, § 3; 1991, ch. 140, § 3; 1999, ch. 9, § 1; 2010, ch. 81, § 1; 2013, ch. 61, § 7; 2017, ch. 21, § 12.

22-11-32. Adjustment of benefits.

A. If retirement or disability benefits cause a decrease in the amount of monetary payments due to a member or beneficiary from any public agency, the retirement or disability benefits shall be reduced to result in the maximum total benefits to the member or beneficiary.

B. If there is a change in the effect of retirement or disability benefits on any monetary payments due to a member or beneficiary from any public agency, the retirement or disability benefits shall be adjusted to result in the maximum total benefits to the member or beneficiary. In no event shall the retirement or disability benefits be increased in an amount greater than that authorized by the Educational Retirement Act.

C. The provisions of this section are mandatory and are not subject to option or election by any member or beneficiary. Each member or beneficiary shall inform the director of all facts necessary for the director to carry out the provisions of this section.

D. If the director, in good faith, seeks to ascertain all facts necessary to comply with provisions of this section, but payment of retirement or disability benefits is made without making an adjustment as provided by this section, neither the board, the director or any public officer or employee shall be liable because of the payment.

E. As used in this section:

(1) "retirement or disability benefits" means retirement or disability benefits payable to a member or beneficiary pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act ;

(2) "public agency" includes the federal government, any department or agency of the federal government, any state and any department, agency and political subdivision of a state; and

(3) "total benefits" means retirement or disability benefits plus any other monetary payments due to the member or beneficiary from any public agency.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-31, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 155.

22-11-33. Earned service credit.

A. Upon a member filing an application for retirement or disability benefits, earned service credit for the time of contributory employment shall be certified by the director and subject to the review of the board.

B. A member shall be certified to have earned service credit for that period of time when the member was engaged in prior employment. Earned service credit shall not be certified for that period of employment for which the contributions have been withdrawn from the fund by the member.

C. Earned service credit shall be certified for periods of employment interrupted for some cause other than retirement or disability. This shall be done if a member withdrawing contributions from the fund for this period returns to the fund, for each year of earned service credit desired, a

sum equal to the member's contribution to the fund during this period and an additional sum as interest compounded annually from the date the contributions were withdrawn to the date of payment of the amount of returned contributions at the rate of interest set by the board.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-33, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 156; 2003, ch. 39, § 9; 2017, ch. 21, § 13.

22-11-34. Allowed service credit.

A. A member shall be certified to have acquired allowed service credit pursuant to the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 for those periods of time when the member was:

(1) employed prior to July 1, 1967 in a federal educational program within New Mexico, including United States Indian schools and civilian conservation corps camps. This service credit shall be allowed without contribution;

(2) engaged in military service that interrupted the member's employment in New Mexico if the member returned to employment within eighteen months following honorable discharge. This service credit shall be allowed without contribution;

(3) engaged in United States military service or the commissioned corps of the public health service from which the member was honorably discharged; provided that:

(a) the member shall have five years or more of contributory employment to be eligible to purchase allowed service credit pursuant to this paragraph;

(b) the member shall contribute to the fund, for each year of service credit the member elects to purchase, a sum equal to the member's average annual actual salary for the five years preceding the date of the contribution multiplied by the sum of the member contribution rate and the employer contribution rate in effect at the time of the member's written election to purchase, subject to the federal Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994;

(c) full payment shall be made in a single lump sum within sixty days of the date that the member is informed of the amount of the payment; and

(d) the portion of the purchase cost derived from the employer's contribution rate shall be credited to the fund and, in the event that a member requests a refund of contributions pursuant to Section 22-11-15 NMSA 1978, the member shall not be entitled to a refund of that portion of the purchase cost derived from the employer contribution rate; or

(4) employed:

(a) in a public school or public institution of higher learning in another state, territory or possession of the United States;

(b) in a United States military dependents' school operated by a branch of the armed forces of the United States;

(c) as provided in Paragraph (1) of this subsection after July 1, 1967; or

(d) in a private school or institution of higher learning in New Mexico whose education program is accredited or approved by the department at the time of employment.

B. Effective July 1, 2001, the member or employer under Paragraph (4) of Subsection A of this section shall contribute to the fund for each year of allowed service credit desired an amount equal to the actuarial value of the service purchased as defined by the board. No allowed service credit shall be purchased pursuant to Paragraph (4) of Subsection A of this section unless the member is currently employed by a local administrative unit.

C. No member shall be certified to have acquired allowed service credit:

(1) under any single paragraph or the combination of only Paragraphs (1) and (4) or only Paragraphs (2) and (3) of Subsection A of this section in excess of five years; or

(2) in excess of ten years for any other combination of Paragraphs (1) through (4) of Subsection A of this section.

D. A member receiving service credit under Paragraph (3) or (4) of Subsection A of this section who enrolls in the retiree health care authority shall make contributions pursuant to Subsection C of Section 10-7C-15 NMSA 1978.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-34, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 157; 1975, ch. 321, § 1; 1977, ch. 331, § 2; 1981, ch. 291, § 1; 1986, ch. 48, § 1; 1989, ch. 30, § 2; 1993, ch. 69, § 10; 1997, ch. 103, § 1; 1998, ch. 38, § 3; 2003, ch. 39, § 10; 2009, ch. 288, § 18; 2017, ch. 21, § 14.

22-11-34.1. Sick leave service credit.

A. Beginning on July 1, 2020, a member who has acquired the minimum number of years of contributory employment to be eligible for retirement benefits under the Educational Retirement Act may pay to have unused sick leave, earned from the member's contributory employment and for which the member has otherwise not received payment, converted to earned service credit, up to a maximum of:

(1) six days of unused sick leave per year of contributory employment; and

(2) four calendar quarters of earned service credit.

B. The following standards apply to the conversion of unused sick leave to earned service credit under this section:

(1) eight hours of sick leave equals one day of sick leave;

- (2) thirty-eight to eighty-two days of sick leave equals one quarter of earned service credit;
- (3) eighty-three to one hundred twenty-seven days of sick leave equals two quarters of earned service credit;
- (4) one hundred twenty-eight to one hundred seventy-two days of sick leave equals three quarters of earned service credit; and
- (5) one hundred seventy-three or more days of sick leave equals four quarters of service credit.

C. A member who elects to convert unused sick leave to earned service credit under this section shall, in accordance with rules that the board shall establish, submit to the board verification from local administrative units of the member's unused sick leave.

D. The cost to a member of converting unused sick leave to earned service credit is the actuarial present value, as determined by the board, of the benefit attributable to the conversion. The board shall establish rules pertaining to payments for converting unused sick leave to earned service credit.

History: Laws 2019, ch. 31, § 1.

22-11-35. Disability benefit; eligibility; medical examination.

A. A member shall be eligible for disability benefits if the member has acquired ten years or more of earned service credit and if the board certifies the member to be totally disabled to continue the member's employment and unable to obtain and retain other gainful employment commensurate with the member's background, education and experience.

B. Prior to any certification of disability by the board, the board shall require each applicant for disability benefits to submit medical records as required by the board in support of the applicant's disability claim.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-35, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 158; 2017, ch. 21, § 15.

22-11-36. Disability benefit; continued eligibility; re-examinations.

A. Unless designated by the board as being permanently disabled, to continue to receive disability benefits, a member shall, on the anniversary date in each year of the member's being placed on a disability status, present current medical records to the medical authority in support of the applicant's continuing disability claim. The medical authority shall recommend to the board that the member either be placed on continuing annual disability or permanent disability or removed from disability status due to a substantial betterment of the member's condition. In the event a substantial betterment of the disability is reported, the board shall determine whether the member is totally disabled for employment and unable to obtain and retain other gainful employment commensurate with the member's background, education and experience. If the

board determines that the member is no longer disabled, the payment of the disability benefits shall cease.

B. Payment of disability benefits to a member shall be suspended if the member fails to submit medical records to the medical authority within thirty days after the date upon which the member should have submitted the medical records and where the failure to submit the medical records was due to the unexcused failure or the refusal of the member to do so. Payment of disability benefits shall be resumed only after the member has submitted current medical records to the board and the board has determined that the member is totally disabled. A member shall have no right or claim for benefits withheld during a period of suspension.

C. The board may, in its discretion, require that the member obtain an independent medical examination; provided that the examination is performed at the board's expense.

D. Upon a determination by the board, a member's status may be changed from permanently disabled to temporarily disabled or no longer disabled.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-36, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 159; 2003, ch. 39, § 11; 2017, ch. 21, § 16.

22-11-37. Disability benefit.

A. The annual disability benefit shall be equal to two percent of the member's average annual salary multiplied by the number of years of the member's total service-credit if the result is greater than one-third of the member's average annual salary. If the result of that formula is less than one-third of the member's average annual salary, the annual disability benefit shall be equal to the lesser of the following amounts:

(1) two percent of the member's average annual salary multiplied by the sum of the member's total service-credit plus the number of years, calculated to the nearest completed quarter, from the effective date of the member's disability to the member's sixtieth birthday; or

(2) one-third of the member's average annual salary.

B. A member's average annual salary for the purpose of computing disability benefits shall be the average salary for the last five years of employment or for any other consecutive five-year period for which contribution was made by the member, whichever is higher.

C. The annual disability benefit shall be paid in equal monthly installments.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-37, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 160; 1973, ch. 350, § 1; 1991, ch. 140, § 4.

22-11-38. Disability retirement.

A member receiving disability benefits upon attaining the age of sixty years shall be considered as retiring pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act at the rate of benefits received for the disability.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-38, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 161.

22-11-39. Report of improved health; penalty.

A. A member receiving disability benefits shall report to the director in writing any substantial improvement in the member's disability within thirty days after the member has or reasonably should have knowledge of the improvement.

B. A member failing to report to the director as required by this section is guilty of a petty misdemeanor.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-39, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 162; 2017, ch. 21, § 17.

22-11-40. Restoration to fund.

If a member is obligated to restore any sum of money to the fund and fails or refuses to do so for a period of three months after written demand is made by the director, the member shall forfeit membership and receive no further benefits pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act. The director shall determine whether the former member's contributions to the fund exceed the total amount of disability or retirement benefits the member has received and shall withdraw from any such balance of contributions the amount of money the member is obligated to restore to the fund. Any balance of the contribution remaining in the fund shall be paid to the former member or the former member's beneficiary. In the event the money the former member is obligated to restore to the fund is not restored to the fund, the former member shall be subject to civil action by the board for its recovery.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-40, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 163; 2017, ch. 21, § 18.

22-11-41. Repealed.

22-11-42. Nonassignability; division of funds as community property; child support obligations.

A. Except as specifically provided in the Educational Retirement Act and the provisions of Subsections B and C of this section, contributions or benefits mentioned in the Educational Retirement Act shall not be assignable either in law or in equity or be subject to execution, levy, attachment, garnishment, guarantee fund or similar assessment or any other legal process.

B. A court of competent jurisdiction, solely for the purposes of effecting a division of community property, may provide by appropriate order for a determination and division of a community interest in the pensions or other benefits provided for in the Educational Retirement Act. In so doing, the court shall fix the manner in which the warrants shall be issued, may order direct payments by the board to a person with a community interest in the pensions or benefits and may restrain the refund of member or participant contributions. The court shall not alter the manner in which the amount of pensions or other benefits is calculated by the board or a carrier or contractor for the alternative retirement plan, nor shall the court cause any increase in the actuarial present value of the pensions or other benefits to be paid by the board or a carrier or contractor for the alternative retirement plan. A payment, ordered by a court pursuant to this

subsection, shall only be made when the member or participant terminates employment and requests a refund or when the member or participant retires or is otherwise entitled to receive benefits pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act. In no case shall a court order pursuant to this subsection result in more money being paid from the fund or from an alternative retirement plan, whether in a lump sum or in monthly benefits, than would otherwise be payable.

C. A court of competent jurisdiction, solely for the purposes of enforcing current or delinquent child support obligations, may provide by appropriate order for withholding amounts due in satisfaction of current or delinquent child support obligations from the pensions or other benefits provided for in the Educational Retirement Act and for payment of such amounts to third parties. The court shall not alter the manner in which the amount of pensions or other benefits is calculated by the board or a carrier or contractor for the alternative retirement plan. The court shall not cause any increase in the actuarial present value of the pensions or other benefits to be paid by the board or a carrier or contractor for the alternative retirement plan. Payments made pursuant to such orders shall only be made when the member or participant terminates employment and requests a refund of contributions or when the member or participant retires; in no case shall more money be paid out, either in a lump sum or in monthly benefits, of the fund or alternative retirement plan in enforcement of current or delinquent child support obligations than would otherwise be payable. In no case shall a court order pursuant to this subsection result in more money being paid from the fund or from an alternative retirement plan, whether in a lump sum or in monthly benefits, than would otherwise be payable.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-42, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 165; 1987, ch. 242, § 1; 1989, ch. 125, § 3; 1990, ch. 49, § 17; 1991, ch. 118, § 4; 2003, ch. 39, § 12.

22-11-43. Insurance or banking laws inapplicable.

In the absence of specific provisions to the contrary, no law of this state regulating insurance policies, insurance companies or banking institutions shall apply to the administration of the Educational Retirement Act.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-43, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 166.

22-11-44. Saving clause; retirement benefits; disability benefits.

A. Any person retired pursuant to the provisions of any laws repealed by the Educational Retirement Act shall be considered to have retired pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act and shall continue to receive retirement benefits in the same amount as received prior to the enactment of the Educational Retirement Act.

B. Any person receiving disability benefits pursuant to any laws repealed by the Educational Retirement Act shall continue to receive disability benefits in the same amount as received prior to the enactment of the Educational Retirement Act and shall be considered to have been granted disability benefits pursuant to and be subject to the provisions of the Educational Retirement Act.

C. Nothing in the Educational Retirement Act shall be construed to adversely affect any benefits being paid pursuant to any laws repealed by the Educational Retirement Act or any laws establishing the public employees retirement association.

D. No person who was covered under the provisions of any statute repealed by the Educational Retirement Act shall be retired at a monthly benefit that is less than the person would have received had the person's employment continued to be performed under such repealed provisions.

History: 1953 Comp., § 77-9-44, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 16, § 167; 2017, ch. 21, § 19.

22-11-44.1. Repealed.

22-11-45. Repealed.

22-11-46. Reserved.

22-11-47. Alternative retirement plan; election of coverage.

A. Beginning October 1, 1991, any employee of the university of New Mexico, New Mexico state university, New Mexico institute of mining and technology, New Mexico highlands university, eastern New Mexico university or western New Mexico university who is eligible to become a participant may make within ninety days of that date an election to participate in the alternative retirement plan. Beginning October 1, 1999, an employee of central New Mexico community college, Clovis community college, Luna community college, Mesalands community college, New Mexico junior college, northern New Mexico college, San Juan college or Santa Fe community college who is eligible to become a participant may make an election to participate in the alternative retirement plan within ninety days of the initial date. Thereafter, any employee who is eligible to become a participant may make within the first ninety days of employment with a qualifying state educational institution an election to participate in the alternative retirement plan. Any employee who makes the election shall become a participant the first day of the first pay period following the election. Any employee who fails to make the election within ninety days of October 1, 1991 or October 1, 1999, whichever is applicable, or within the first ninety days of employment with a qualifying state educational institution shall become or remain a regular member if that employee is eligible to be a regular member and shall not later be eligible to elect to be a participant, regardless of whether the employee subsequently is employed in another position that is eligible for participation in the alternative retirement plan. Except as provided in Subsection D of this section, an election to become a participant is irrevocable.

B. Until the time an employee who is eligible to become a participant elects to participate in the alternative retirement plan, that employee shall be a regular member.

C. When an employee elects to become a participant, any employer and employee contributions made as a regular member shall be withdrawn from the fund and applied instead toward the alternative retirement plan as if the participant had been participating in the alternative retirement plan from the commencement of employment with the qualifying state educational institution.

D. On July 1, 2009, any participant who has made contributions to the alternative retirement plan for a cumulative total of seven years or more shall have a one-time option of electing to become a regular member. Thereafter, once a participant has made contributions to the alternative retirement plan for a cumulative total of seven years, a participant shall have a one-time option of electing to become a regular member. Participants electing to become regular

members shall exercise that option within one hundred twenty days of the date of becoming eligible to elect to become a regular member. Any amounts on deposit in an employee's alternative retirement plan account when a participant becomes a regular member shall remain on deposit with the contractor or carrier subject to that plan's provisions, unless otherwise provided by law. An employee who elects to become a regular member under this subsection shall use the date on which the employee was first employed with a qualifying state educational institution for purposes of determining any retirement eligibility requirement, provided that the employee:

(1) may not purchase service credit for periods of employment during which the employee participated in the alternative retirement plan; and

(2) shall acquire not less than five years of contributory employment as a regular member as provided for in Section 22-11-24 NMSA 1978 to be eligible for retirement benefits pursuant to the Educational Retirement Act.

E. The board shall approve the positions at each qualifying state educational institution that are eligible for participation in the alternative retirement plan.

History: 1978 Comp., § 22-11-47, enacted by Laws 1991, ch. 118, § 5; 1999, ch. 261, § 2; 1999, ch. 274, § 3; 2008, ch. 68, § 2; 2009, ch. 9, § 1.

22-11-48. Alternative retirement plan; contributory employment.

A. Contributions made by a qualifying state educational institution on behalf of a participant together with any interest accrued on those contributions shall be credited to the benefit of the participant and shall be distributed or treated as agreed upon between the contractor or carrier providing the alternative retirement plan benefits and the board.

B. Contributions of a participant who terminates employment together with any applicable interest accrued on those contributions shall remain the property of the participant and the contributions, interest and any benefits based on them shall be treated as agreed upon between the contractor or carrier providing the alternative retirement plan benefits and the board.

History: 1978 Comp., § 22-11-48, enacted by Laws 1991, ch. 118, § 6.

22-11-49. Alternative retirement plan; contributions.

A. A participant shall contribute an amount equal to the percentage of the participant's salary that the participant would be required to contribute if the participant were, instead, a regular member. The contribution shall be made as provided by the board.

B. A qualifying state educational institution shall contribute on behalf of each participant an amount of the participant's salary equal to the contribution that would be required of the employer if the participant were, instead, a regular member. Of that contribution, a sum equal to the following percentage of the annual salary of each participant shall be paid to the fund, and the remainder of the contribution shall be paid to the alternative retirement plan as provided by the board:

- (1) from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022, four and one-fourth percent;
- (2) from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023, six and one-fourth percent; and
- (3) on and after July 1, 2023, seven and one-fourth percent; or
- (4) if, on July 1 following any report by the actuary to the board that concludes that less than that percentage is required to satisfy the unfunded actuarial liability attributable to the participation of the participants in the alternative retirement plan, then the percentage the actuary determines is the minimum required to satisfy that liability.

C. Contributions required by this section may be made by a reduction in salary or by a public employer pick-up as provided in the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended.

History: 1978 Comp., § 22-11-49, enacted by Laws 1991, ch. 118, § 7; 1999, ch. 261, § 3; 2019, ch. 258, § 6; 2021, ch. 44, § 3; 2022, ch. 29, § 2.

22-11-50. Alternative retirement plan; tax treatment.

The board shall have the authority to determine whether the alternative retirement plan shall be qualified under Section 401(a) or 403(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, and shall make that determination based upon which choice is most advantageous to the participants as a whole.

History: 1978 Comp., § 22-11-50, enacted by Laws 1991, ch. 118, § 8.

22-11-51. Alternative retirement plans; benefits; transfer upon unemployment.

A. No retirement, death or other benefit shall be paid by the board from the fund for services credited under the alternative retirement plan. Such benefits are payable to participants or their beneficiaries only by the appropriate alternative retirement plan contractor or carrier in accordance with the terms of the applicable contracts or certificates; provided, however, that retirement benefits shall, at the option of the participant, be paid in the form of a lifetime income, if held in an annuity contract; payments for a term of years; or a single-sum cash payment.

B. Upon termination of employment with a qualifying state educational institution, a participant may transfer or roll over the account balance to another eligible retirement plan or may withdraw the balance as permitted for a plan qualified under Section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

History: 1978 Comp., § 22-11-51, enacted by Laws 1991, ch. 118, § 9; 1999, ch. 261, § 4; 2009, ch. 9, § 2.

22-11-52. Alternative retirement plan; selection of contractor or carrier; administration.

A. The board shall solicit and review proposals for providing retirement, death and any other benefits deemed desirable by the board for participants in the alternative retirement plan. The board shall solicit proposals for providing the benefits through contracts or investments held in

trust or a custodial account that meets the requirements of Section 401(a) or 403(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, including, without limitation, annuity contracts or certificates that are fixed or variable in nature or some combination thereof.

B. The board, after consultation with the qualifying state educational institutions, shall select no less than two nor more than five contractors or carriers to provide the contracts or certificates. In making its selection, the board shall consider, among other things, the following criteria:

(1) the portability of the benefits offered, based upon the number of states and institutions of higher education in which the offeror provides similar benefits;

(2) the nature and extent of the rights and benefits that would be provided to the participants, including the right to maintain their accounts or to transfer the balance to another eligible retirement plan upon termination of employment with the qualifying educational institution, to the extent permitted for a plan qualified under Section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

(3) the relation of the rights and benefits to the contributions that would be made by the participants and the qualifying state educational institutions;

(4) the ability of the offeror to provide the rights and benefits;

(5) the suitability of the rights and benefits for recruitment and retention of employees by the qualifying state educational institutions; and

(6) compliance with the requirements of the Educational Retirement Act and Section 401(a) or 403(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

C. The board shall provide for the administration and maintenance of the alternative retirement plan and may adopt rules and regulations for that purpose.

History: 1978 Comp., § 22-11-52, enacted by Laws 1991, ch. 118, § 10; 2009, ch. 9, § 3.

22-11-53. Correction of errors and omissions; estoppel.

A. If an error or omission in an application for retirement or its supporting documents results in an overpayment to a member or the beneficiary of a member, the board shall correct the error or omission and adjust all future payments accordingly. The board shall recover all overpayments that are made.

B. A member or the beneficiary of a member who is paid more than the amount he is owed because he provided fraudulent information on his application for retirement shall be liable for the repayment of that amount to the fund, interest on that amount at the rate set by the board and costs of collection, including attorney fees. Recovery of overpayments shall extend back to the date of the first payment that was made based on fraudulent information.

C. The board shall not be estopped from acting in accordance with applicable statutes because of statements of fact or law made by the board or its employees.

History: Laws 1998, ch. 38, § 2.

22-11-54. Disclosure of third-party marketers; penalty.

A. The board shall not make any investment, other than investments in publicly traded equities or publicly traded fixed-income securities, unless the recipient of the investment discloses the identity of any third-party marketer who rendered services on behalf of the recipient in obtaining the investment and also discloses the amount of any fee, commission or retainer paid to the third-party marketer for the services rendered.

B. Information disclosed pursuant to Subsection A of this section shall be included in the quarterly performance reports of the board.

C. Any person who knowingly withholds information required by Subsection A of this section is guilty of a fourth degree felony and shall be punished by a fine of not more than twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) or by imprisonment for a definite term not to exceed eighteen months or both.

D. As used in this section, "third-party marketer" means a person who, on behalf of an investment fund manager or other person seeking an investment from the fund and under a written or implied agreement, receives a fee, commission or retainer for such services from the person seeking an investment from the fund.

History: Laws 2009, ch. 152, § 3.

22-11-55. Disclosure of member or retired member information; penalty.

A. Other than names of members and local administrative units by which a member was employed; dates of employment, retirement and reported death; service credit; reported salary; retirement and disability benefits; and amounts of contributions made by members and local administrative units, neither the board nor its employees or contractors shall allow public inspection or disclosure of any information regarding a member or retired member to anyone except:

(1) the member, retired member or the spouse or authorized representative of the member or retired member;

(2) other persons specifically identified in a prior release and consent, in the form prescribed by the board, executed by the member, retired member, spouse or authorized representative; or

(3) the attorney general, appropriate law enforcement agencies, the state auditor or the public education department or higher education department, if the information provided relates to contributions, payments or management of money received by, or the financial controls or procedures of, a local administrative unit.

B. No person receiving information disclosed by a violation of Subsection A of this section shall disclose that information to any other person unless authorized by an applicable confidentiality agreement, board rule or state law.

C. Whoever knowingly violates a provision of Subsection A or B of this section is guilty of a petty misdemeanor and shall be sentenced in accordance with Section 31-19-1 NMSA 1978.

History: Laws 2009, ch. 240, § 1; 2009, ch. 248, § 1; 2010, ch. 60, § 1.