

Summary of January Session of the Federal Task Force on the Missouri 218 Agreement

The Federal Section 218 Task Force for Missouri School Districts held its second meeting on January 12-14. Participants at this session included the Regional Commissioner for SSA, the General Counsel for Public School Retirement Systems (PSRS) and for the Public Education Employees Retirement System (PEERS), the IRS Regional Manager and an IRS Auditor, the Missouri Social Security Administrator and Assistant Director from the Missouri Office of Administration (OA), along with representatives of the SSA policy staff from the Kansas City Regional Office and Headquarters.

In this session, the Regional Commissioner provided Mr. Al Thompson (PSRS) with a summary of the fact finding session that took place in December and the concomitant issues that must be resolved. With the input of Mr. Thompson and the new Missouri SS Administrator, Mark Kaiser, the participants achieved a mutual understanding of what has transpired to date and what must be done prior to beginning the prospective collection of Social Security taxes. In contrast to his belief prior to the meeting, Mr. Thompson acknowledged that SSA has not changed its interpretation of the Missouri 218 Agreement or its view regarding the Social Security coverage of the affected positions. This understanding was a pivotal achievement for the Task Force, allowing it to move forward and deliberate cooperatively on the complex issues associated with the application of federal and state statutes and the identification of the school district positions covered by the Section 218 Agreement.

The Task Force also met with STI, a company which manages two-thirds of the school districts' payroll systems in Missouri. An STI representative provided valuable information regarding the changes that may need to be made in the school districts' payroll systems. The Task Force also will obtain information from other vendors in order to determine the impact on the payroll systems of other districts.

On February 5th, the Regional Commissioner for SSA, the Regional Chief Counsel for SSA, and the Regional Manager for IRS will meet with representatives of Associations of teachers and school administrators interested in the Missouri 218 agreement issues. This meeting is an opportunity for SSA to explain the background on making Social Security coverage determinations, to ask for any additional information that the representatives may have, and allow the representatives to ask questions concerning the social security coverage of school district positions. This will complete the final leg of the Task Force's fact finding process. PSRS and OA will also attend this session.