

# Education Support Professional (ESP) Get Retirement Equity

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## LEGISLATURE ENACTS EQUITY FOR ESP RETIREMENT

One of the bills passed by the Wisconsin Legislature and signed by Governor Doyle this past summer provides equal treatment of ESP under the Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS). This new law defines fulltime employment based on a school year (1,320 hours). The old law defined fulltime employment for teachers as 1,320 hours but defined fulltime employment for non-teachers as 1,904 hours for purposes of determining eligibility and for early retirement calculations. Any non-teacher working less than 1,904 hours was given credit for a partial year for each year worked.

To qualify for benefits under the WRS, participants must work or be expected to work one-third of fulltime. Prior to passage of this bill, this was defined as 440 hours per year for teachers and 600 hours per year for all non-teachers. Now non-teachers will qualify for WRS benefits if they work 440 hours per year. The new law also modifies how the actuarial reduction for early retirement is calculated for nonteaching participants who work less than a calendar year and retire on or after July 1, 2009 with less than 30 years of service and less than age 65. If a participant has less than a calendar year service in five of the last ten years prior to retirement, the service in each year in which the participant has a partial calendar year of nonteaching service is recalculated to the amount of service the participant would have earned that year if the participant had been a teacher for the purpose of calculating the actuarial reduction for early retirement.

WEAC supported this legislation in order to bring equity to our ESP members' retirement benefits. ESP

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