



STATE OF WISCONSIN  
**Legislative Audit Bureau**  
NONPARTISAN • INDEPENDENT • ACCURATE

Report 21-15  
September 2021

# Wisconsin Retirement System Reporting for Participating Employers

## Calendar Year 2020



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# **Wisconsin Retirement System Reporting for Participating Employers**

Calendar Year 2020



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Reports are submitted to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee and made available to other committees of the Legislature and to the public. The Audit Committee may arrange public hearings on the issues identified in a report and may introduce legislation in response to the audit recommendations. However, the findings, conclusions, and recommendations in the report are those of the Legislative Audit Bureau.

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## Opinions Published Separately

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The schedules and our opinions on them are available on the Department of Employee Trust Funds' website.





STATE OF WISCONSIN

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# Legislative Audit Bureau

Joe Chrisman  
State Auditor

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[AskLAB@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:AskLAB@legis.wisconsin.gov)

September 30, 2021

Senator Robert Cowles and  
Representative Samantha Kerkman, Co-chairpersons  
Joint Legislative Audit Committee  
State Capitol  
Madison, Wisconsin 53702

Dear Senator Cowles and Representative Kerkman:

As requested by the Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF), we have completed an audit of the Schedule of Employer Allocations of the Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS), the Schedule of Collective Pension Amounts of the WRS, and the related notes to these schedules as of and for the year ended December 31, 2020. These schedules, and our unmodified opinions on them, may be found on ETF's website.

We also audited the financial statements and related notes of the WRS as of and for the year ended December 31, 2020, and provided our unmodified opinion on them, as detailed in report 21-14, which we also published today. The WRS fiduciary net position, which represents resources available to pay pension benefits, increased from \$112.1 billion as of December 31, 2019, to \$125.0 billion as of December 31, 2020, or by 11.5 percent.

Accounting standards for pension plans, issued by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB), require the calculation of a net pension liability or net pension asset, which is represented by the difference between the fiduciary net position reported in the financial statements and the total pension liability calculated by the actuary. ETF calculated a net pension asset for the WRS of \$6.2 billion, as of December 31, 2020. This is a \$3.0 billion change from the \$3.2 billion net pension asset calculated as of December 31, 2019.

Each of the 1,537 participating employers in the WRS is required to report its proportionate share of this net pension asset on its financial statements if prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. As of December 31, 2020, the proportionate share of the net pension asset for all State of Wisconsin agencies was \$1,757.5 million, or 28.2 percent of the total net pension asset. Of this amount, \$831.6 million related to the University of Wisconsin System. The net pension asset for the state agencies will be reported in the State's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for the year ended June 30, 2021. Additional information related to the accounting standards for pensions is included in report 21-14.

The Independent Auditor's Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting and on Compliance and Other Matters, which is required by *Government Auditing Standards*, begins on page 5. We did not identify any control or compliance concerns that were required to be reported under these standards.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Chrisman  
State Auditor

JC/BG/ss







# Auditor's Report







STATE OF WISCONSIN  
**Legislative Audit Bureau**

**Report 21-15**

Joe Chrisman  
State Auditor

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## **Independent Auditor's Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting and on Compliance and Other Matters**

Senator Robert Cowles and  
Representative Samantha Kerkman, Co-Chairpersons  
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

Members of the Employee Trust Funds Board and  
Mr. A. John Voelker, Secretary  
Department of Employee Trust Funds

We have audited the Schedule of Employer Allocations of the Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) as of and for the year ended December 31, 2020, and the related notes. We have also audited the totals for the columns titled Net Pension Liability (Asset), Total Deferred Outflows of Resources Excluding Employer Specific Amounts, Total Deferred Inflows of Resources Excluding Employer Specific Amounts, and Plan Pension Expense (Revenue) included in the Schedule of Collective Pension Amounts of the WRS as of and for the year ended December 31, 2020, and the related notes. We have issued our report dated September 28, 2021, on these schedules. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, which is issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. The schedules and related auditor's opinions have been included in the Wisconsin Department of Employee Trust Funds' (ETF's) 2020 Employer Schedules for the Wisconsin Retirement System.

### **Internal Control over Financial Reporting**

Management of ETF is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal control over financial reporting (internal control). In planning and performing our audit of the WRS schedules, we considered ETF's internal control to determine the audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances for the purpose of expressing our opinions on the schedules, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of ETF's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of ETF's internal control.

A *deficiency in internal control* exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent misstatements, or to detect and correct misstatements on a timely basis. A *material weakness* is a deficiency or a combination of deficiencies in internal control such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the schedules will not be prevented, or that a material misstatement will not be detected and corrected on a timely basis. A *significant deficiency* is a deficiency or a combination of deficiencies in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose described in the first paragraph of this section and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies. Given these limitations, during our audit we did not identify

any deficiencies in internal control that we consider to be material weaknesses. However, material weaknesses may exist that have not been identified.

### **Compliance and Other Matters**

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the WRS schedules are free from material misstatement, we performed tests of compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, and contracts, noncompliance with which could have a material effect on the determination of schedule amounts. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit and, accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*.

We have also audited the financial statements and related notes of the WRS as of and for the year ended December 31, 2020, in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*. We expressed an unmodified opinion, dated September 28, 2021, on those financial statements. In addition, we issued the Independent Auditor's Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting and on Compliance and Other Matters, dated September 28, 2021, and included in report 21-14, related to the audit of the financial statements.

### **Purpose of This Report**

This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* and should be used when considering ETF's internal control and compliance. The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control and compliance and the result of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of ETF's internal control or on compliance. Accordingly, this report is not suitable for any other purpose.

LEGISLATIVE AUDIT BUREAU

Joe Chrisman  
State Auditor

September 28, 2021