§ 900. Definitions. The following words and phrases as used in this article shall have the following meanings unless a different meaning is plainly required by the context:

a. "Retirement system" shall mean the New York state and local employees' retirement system and the New York state teachers' retirement system.

b. "State employer" shall mean the executive branch of the state, the senate, the assembly and joint legislative employers.

c. "Participating employer" shall mean an employer, other than a state employer, which participates in a retirement system.

d. "Eligible employee", subject to the limitations of section nine hundred two of this article, shall mean a member of a retirement system who is identified as eligible to receive the benefit enhancements provided for in this article upon election by a state employer pursuant to section nine hundred one of this article; "eligible employee" of a participating employer shall mean all employees, subject to the limitations of section nine hundred two of this article. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the benefits provided herein shall only apply to an eligible employee who is a member of a retirement system as defined by subdivision a of this section.

e. "Active service" shall mean (i) service while being paid on the payroll; (ii) a leave of absence with pay; (iii) other approved leave without pay; and (iv) any period of time between school terms and any time between September first, two thousand and October first, two thousand for a teacher or other employee employed on a school-year basis.

f. "Cessation date" shall mean the beginning date of an eligible employee's first payroll period commencing on or after October first, two thousand, or the effective date as of which such employee becomes eligible for the benefits contained in subdivision b of section nine hundred two of this article, or the date on which the eligible employee

attains ten years of membership or, if earlier, ten years of credited service, whichever is latest.