



# News Release

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## TRS ANNOUNCES ART CONTEST WINNER

AUSTIN - Smiling for all the camera flashes with board members, her teachers and parents, Natalie Martinez of Clark Elementary in Laredo stood next to her winning artwork at the Nov. 20 board meeting of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas.

The third grader won first place for her drawing of her teacher, Mrs. Lisa Marie Garcia, as a pencil-wielding masked superhero painted with acrylics on poster board for the agency's "My Superhero Teacher" art contest.

This semester, TRS asked Texas school children in K-5<sup>th</sup> grades to submit artwork depicting their superhero teachers. The results were beyond the agency's wildest expectations.

"We thought we would receive a few dozen entries, possibly hundreds if we were really lucky," recalls Communications Manager Rhonda Price. "Instead, right before the deadline, we suddenly had mounds of mail."

Stacks of manila packages, boxes, poster tubes and envelopes arrived twice a day at the agency at the end of September.

"Whole schools sent us entries," said contest coordinator Amber Conrad. "My office is pretty small, but I found space to stack the crates of mail we received those last two days of the contest. And then there was email. I received a message every 30 seconds that, in all, delivered dozens of new entries as the contest deadline neared."

In all, TRS received more than 3,500 entries from 181 schools across the state. An internal committee narrowed the entries to the top 50 so as not to overwhelm Facebook voters.

The 50 selected entries were posted to Facebook. With 29,301 views to the contest page, Facebook users narrowed down the entries to the 10 most popular, which were then sent to TRS Executive Director Brian Guthrie for final placement.

"I was amazed at how good these drawings were," Guthrie said. "Honestly, every one of these entries could have won."

In addition to the first place winner, Guthrie selected Stephanie Garces of Roosevelt Elementary in San Antonio and Joi Speck of Live Oak Learning Center in Rockport as the contest's second and third place winners, respectively. Guthrie also recognized artwork submitted by Liliana Hale of Ramirez

Elementary in Lubbock as a special Honorable Mention. First place winner Martinez has her artwork on the cover of the 2015 *TRS Comprehensive Annual Financial Report*, which is now available for viewing on the TRS website. Second and third place winners also have their artwork featured in the document.

To see the contest winners and all entries, go to [www.trs.texas.gov](http://www.trs.texas.gov).

TRS delivers retirement and related benefits that have been authorized by the Texas Legislature, and manages an approximately \$127.9 billion trust fund established to finance member benefits. More than 1.4 million public education and higher education employees and retirees participate in the system.

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