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TRSnews

IT'S YOUR **OPPORTUNITY TO**

Make Your Vote Count!

IN THE UPCOMING TRS **BOARD ELECTION**

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Make Your Voice Heard

The public school district employee position on the TRS Board of Trustees is up for election from **March 17 to May 5**. [Visit the TRS website](#) to learn more about the candidates, the process, and how to vote online or by mail.

2025 TRS Board Public School District Employee Election Candidates



Dr. Ismael Gonzalez III

Assistant Superintendent for Business-Finance & Operations, Gregory-Portland ISD

Dr. Gonzalez has over a decade of experience in public education, primarily as a Chief Financial Officer. He has managed multimillion-dollar bond projects, optimized strategic budgeting to support student instruction, operational efficiency, and fiscal solvency, and led long-range district improvement planning.

A Registered Texas Business Administrator, he has received the Award of Excellence in Financial Management and the RISE Award from the Texas Association of School Business Officials. He has served in small, mid-size, and large Texas districts, overseeing finance, human resources, and operations. In 2021, he earned a Doctorate of Education from Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi.



Dr. Marty Lenard

Fine Arts Director, New Braunfels ISD

Marty, currently Fine Arts Director for New Braunfels ISD, has been in education for fifteen years, both in public schools and higher education. Born and raised in Kerrville, he was a band director and later served as a professor for Schreiner University serving on various committees such as Chair for Academic Affairs.

He served his community in different roles such as Board of Trustee for Kerrville ISD, Board Member for Kerr Central Appraisal District, and Commissioner for City of Kerrville Planning and Zoning Commission. He is married to his wife, Halya, of 15 years with 2 daughters. [Email: martinlenard@nbisd.org](mailto:martinlenard@nbisd.org)



Dr. Pete D. Pape

Chief Financial Officer, Leander ISD

Dr. Pete D. Pape has served 22 years as a Chief Financial Officer in regions 15, 6, 4, 10, 13 in 2A to 6A districts, and 2 years at ESC-12. Pete earned his BBA/MBA in Accounting from Angelo State University and earned his Doctorate in Educational Leadership at the University of Houston Clear Lake. He and his wife

Tina have been married for 29 years and have 3 children. He comes from a family of Texas educators and is a member of TASBO, a former school board member at Goose Creek CISD, and has a strong passion for public education.

Board of Trustees

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Queen City

JAMES “DICK” NANCE
Hallettsville

JOHN R. RUTHERFORD
Houston

ELVIS WILLIAMS
Fair Oaks Ranch

BRIAN K. GUTHRIE
Executive Director

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1-800-223-8778
www.trs.texas.gov

TRS is scheduled to move to a new Austin
headquarters location in summer 2025.
See page 5 for more information.

The Teacher Retirement System of Texas does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services. A copy of the complete TRS plan is available at the above address during normal business hours.



From the Desk of
Executive Director
Brian K. Guthrie



Dear Members:

Happy Spring! We are off to an amazing start of 2025, and I'm pleased to share some highlights from this issue with you.

An item we expect to make its debut later this spring is our new and improved website at www.trs.texas.gov. It's member-centric and designed to better serve members and retirees. From satisfaction surveys to counseling calls, we explored various avenues to get your feedback on ways to improve website functionality and navigation.

Another plan taking shape is one of our larger projects – your Member Center at our new headquarters campus. This facility was uniquely designed with you in mind. It's set to open in late May 2025. We believe it will further enrich your customer service experience and our interactions with you as we provide the same important services we do now. We are making every effort to provide a space where you will feel most welcome when visiting us.

We're also in the midst of the TRS board election for the active member seat this spring. This is your opportunity to help shape the future of TRS. So, participate by casting your vote by May 5, if you have not already done so.

It's an exciting time at TRS. We are working in a dynamic way to meet your needs.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter containing some of the topics mentioned and even more.

Happy reading,

Brian

Meet Your New Trustee



Laronda Graf, of Queen City, comes from a family of educators and possesses 22 years of public education employment experience. She's currently the director of human resources for Atlanta ISD. Ms. Graf earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting from Texas A&M University-Texarkana. She also holds school business and human resources certifications from the Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO) and American Association of School Personnel Administrators (AASPA).

Trustee Graf is appointed by the governor from three candidates nominated by TRS retirees and members to the at-large trustee position. Her term is set to expire on Aug. 31, 2029.

See the [TRS news release](#) for more information.



2025 Upcoming TRS Board of Trustees Meeting Dates

[Tune in online](#) to watch board and committee meetings live:



Upcoming

April 10 – 11

July 17 – 18

Sept. 18 – 19

Dec. 4 – 5

Past

Feb. 27

View [TRS Board of Trustees Meeting Dates](#) for the latest.



Watch Previous Meetings on Demand

Find references, website links and webcast archives with more information on board decisions at https://www.trs.texas.gov/Pages/board_meeting_webcasts.aspx.

For key discussion highlights, check out our board summaries, available after each meeting, at https://www.trs.texas.gov/Pages/board_meeting_summary.aspx.

Members and Retirees Will Soon Experience a New TRS Headquarters



Pictured Above: TRS Member Center, located in Austin's Mueller Community, coming soon.

It's almost ready – your TRS Member Center! **Later this May, we expect to welcome the first visitors** for counseling appointments at your TRS Member Center at the new TRS headquarters in Austin's Mueller Community. The Member Center will further enhance customer service for members and the efficiency of pension fund operations. You'll find the facility optimized for both efficiency and comfort as you receive the same important services we provide today.

As fellow TRS members, we look forward to sharing this journey with you and can't wait to welcome you! Until the move is complete, in-person counseling services will continue at the present headquarters located at the 1000 Red River St. Campus.

Learn more about your [new headquarters](#) by visiting the TRS website or by scanning the QR code with your smartphone.



Celebrate the Past, Present and Future with TRS



TRS is excited to announce the installation of a **time capsule** which is set to be installed later this year at TRS' Member Center at the new headquarters, where you will receive the same important services you receive today.

[Follow along](#) for more details and to join the countdown to the closing of the time capsule. Be a part of TRS history!

We Want to Hear from You!

Do you have an [artifact](#) to propose or a [memorable experience](#) in Texas education you would like to share? Submit your responses for a chance to be preserved in the time capsule.

Stay Connected

Join the countdown to closing the time capsule! [Subscribe to our TRS Time Capsule Countdown email list.](#)

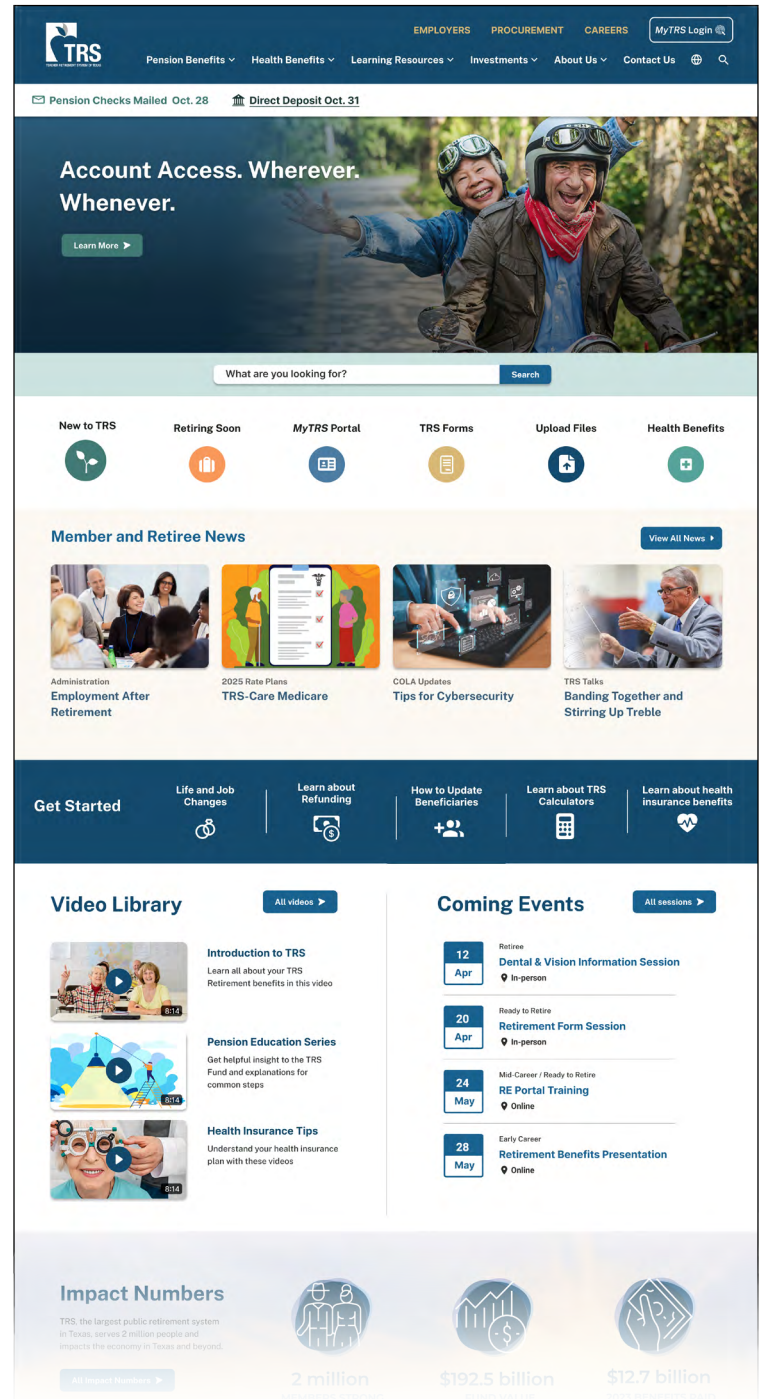
TRS Members Shape New Digital Experience: Your Voice, Your Website

Stay tuned. The new website is slated to launch late this spring. Visit the website, www.trs.texas.gov, for the latest announcements.

Thanks to the invaluable feedback and ideas from our dedicated members, TRS is transforming how you connect with your pension and health benefits through a completely reimagined website. Your insights have guided every aspect of this new digital experience, from enhanced navigation to powerful new features designed to serve you better.

What You Will Find on the New Website:

- The centerpiece of the new website is a **suite of interactive tools** that make finding and managing your retirement information easier than ever.
- A new **geographic search feature** helps you discover TRS employers in your area.
- A **comprehensive events calendar** showcases all TRS happenings including fairs, seminars, counseling sessions, and board meetings together in one convenient location.
- An **extensive library of educational videos**, carefully crafted to give you the tools you need to plan for retirement, helps you better understand how your pension works and how to make the most of all of your pension and health care benefits.
- **Advanced search capabilities** quickly connect you to the resources you need – when you need them.
- A **clean new structure** helps you navigate the site easily, with content organized by topics such as life events and commonly asked questions.
- **Robust accessibility features** give you quick access to the information you need.
- The new website experience can be **viewed on all devices** – from tablet to laptop to your smart phone.



This redesign represents more than just a website update – it's a reflection of our commitment to serving you better. Every feature, every enhancement, and every improvement stems from your feedback, creating a more personalized and efficient experience for navigating your retirement with TRS.

Planning for Retirement Resources



Considering retirement?

Here are five helpful resources to help you plan your future!



Planning for Retirement Timeline

Dive into the [Planning for Retirement timeline](#)! Create an action plan and mark important deadlines on your calendar. Follow the steps to ensure a smooth transition to retirement.



Explore TRS-Care Health Plans

[TRS-Care health plans](#) are plans for eligible retirees and their eligible dependents. Be sure to look into TRS-Care Standard (non-Medicare eligible retirees) or TRS-Care Medicare Advantage (Medicare-eligible retirees) when making the important decision about health care in your retirement.



MyTRS Benefit Calculator

Use the [MyTRS Benefit Calculator](#) (under the Planning Tools tab in MyTRS) to estimate your potential retirement benefits in minutes! It pulls data from your TRS records and lets you explore different scenarios. Set up your MyTRS account today to access this tool.



Retirement Sessions and One-on-One Counseling Opportunities

Whether you want to learn more about your benefits or need help with the retirement process, we have a [retirement session](#) for you! Or you may wish to [meet one-on-one with a TRS Counselor](#) to get specific questions answered. In-person and virtual appointments are available.



Pillars of a Secure Retirement

Experts say you will need 80 – 90% of your preretirement income to maintain your current standard of living. Learn about the [pillars of a secure retirement](#) and how they work to balance your retirement piggy bank.

RSVP
for a Retirement
Forms Session
Today!

In the middle of applying for retirement? Join our virtual [Retirement Forms Sessions](#) to get expert help completing your paperwork!

TRS staff will guide you through all the required forms, explain how to complete them and answer any questions you have. **Make sure you have your retirement forms handy before attending.**

[Check the schedule](#) to see which session works best for you. Then, RSVP today in [MyTRS](#) or by calling the [TRS Telephone Counseling Center](#).

Be Ready for TRS-ActiveCare Enrollment This Summer



If your school district participates in TRS-ActiveCare, you'll have an enrollment period this summer (dates are determined by your district).

Make sure you're ready to evaluate your health plan options by doing these things now:

- Subscribe to [The Pulse](#)
- Know common health care terms with our [Learn the Terms: Health Care Edition video](#)
- Follow TRS social channels: [Facebook](#), [X](#), and [Instagram](#)
- Review your benefits on the [Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas TRS-ActiveCare site](#)
- Save the number for [Personal Health Guides](#) in your phone: 1-866-355-5999

Reviewing your health plan options annually ensures you choose a plan that meets your current medical and wellness needs. Stay tuned for more communication about annual enrollment in the coming months!

Saving Money on Health Care is Easy With...

Member Rewards! If you're enrolled in TRS-ActiveCare, check out this ["how-to" video](#) about using Member Rewards to help you save money while accessing quality care.

Stay Informed with *The Pulse*!

If you're in TRS-ActiveCare and haven't subscribed to *The Pulse*, now's the time! This monthly newsletter offers helpful health tips and insights on how your benefits can support your wellness journey. [SUBSCRIBE TODAY](#)

5 Reasons to Use Virtual Health Care

When you're a busy public education employee, stepping out for the doctor may feel like a luxury you don't have time for. If you're enrolled in TRS-ActiveCare, virtual health options make accessing care easy and convenient. Here's why you should consider virtual health:

- 1. Convenience:** Consult with health care providers from the comfort of your home or classroom.
- 2. Accessibility:** Gain access to medical expertise that might otherwise be out of reach.
- 3. Cost-Effective:** Virtual visits can be more affordable than in-person appointments. In fact, TRS-ActiveCare Primary or Primary+ plans, offer no-cost virtual visits through RediMD.
- 4. Reduced Exposure to Illness:** Minimize the risk of exposure to contagious illnesses, especially during widespread outbreaks.
- 5. Comprehensive Care:** Virtual health care isn't limited to just consultations. TRS-ActiveCare virtual platforms offer a range of services, including mental health support, chronic disease management and follow-up care. You can even request to see the same doctor each time.

To learn more about using TRS-ActiveCare virtual health benefits, visit BCBSTX's [TRS Virtual Health webpage](#).

Protect Your Pension Account: The Importance of Opening Your Mail

One of your strongest defenses against fraud and identity theft is your mailbox. Opening and reviewing mail, both email and snail mail, is crucial. Here's why:

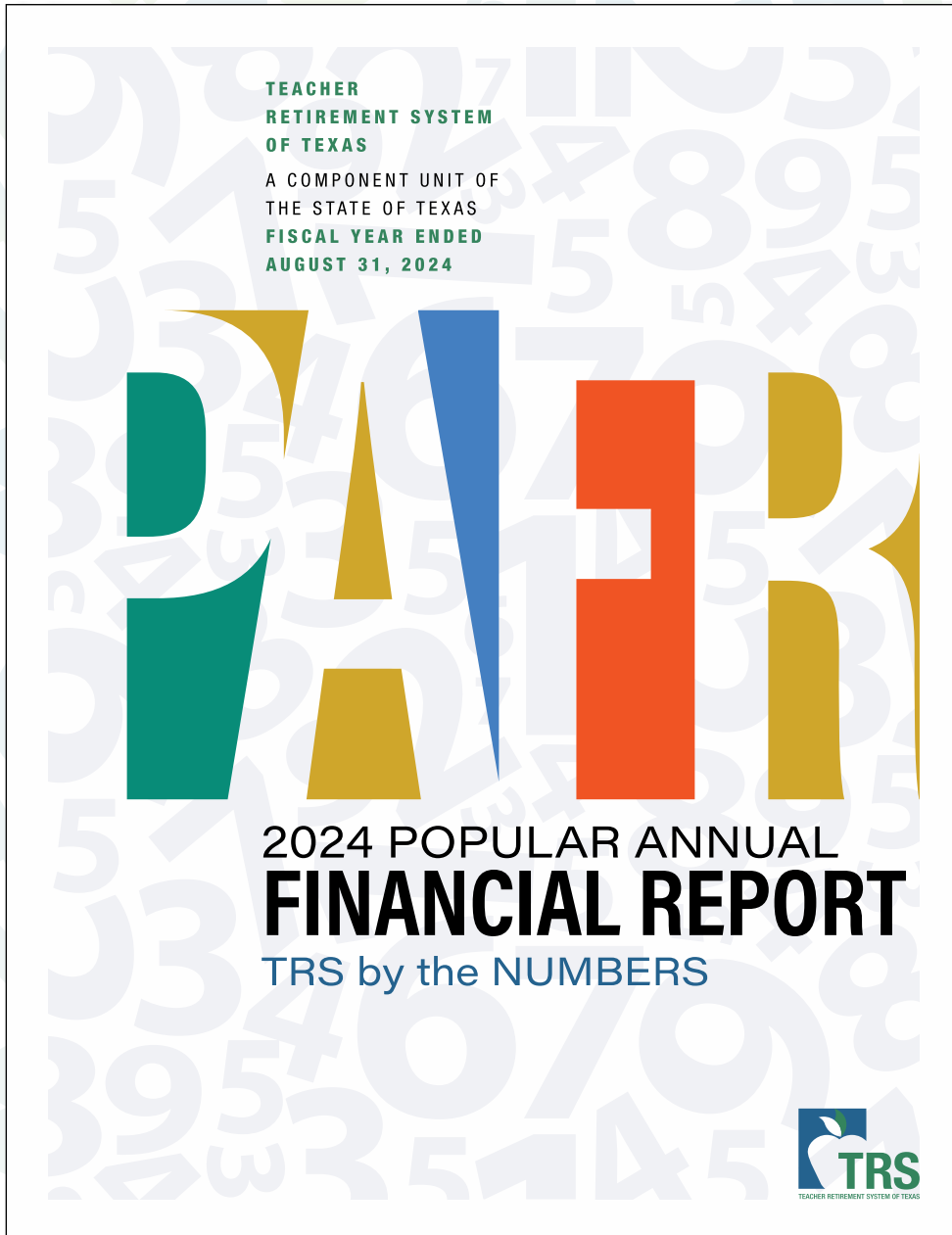
- **Notifications:** TRS sends notifications for any changes to your account, like address or banking information updates to your mailing address and your email address, if one is on file. Opening and reading mail from TRS can alert you to unauthorized changes. This may also apply to other accounts you have.
- **Banking and Credit Statements:** Timely review these statements for unfamiliar charges. Report suspicious charges immediately, no matter how small.
- **Fraudulent Mail:** Fraudulent mail can come in many forms, including phishing attempts, fake invoices and deceptive offers. Key indicators include poor grammar, spelling errors, urgent language, and threats. Scammers often use these tactics to pressure you into acting quickly without thinking. Another red flag is mail requesting sensitive personal information. Legitimate organizations rarely ask for sensitive information like social security numbers or bank details via mail. If you receive such a request, verify its authenticity by contacting the organization directly using a trusted method.

By regularly reviewing your mail you can protect yourself from fraud including identify theft.



Check Out The 2024 *Popular Annual Financial Report* (PAFR)

Annually, TRS publishes an easy-to-read summary of the TRS pension fund and health care programs with easy-to-read charts and graphs. To view the summary, based off of the 2024 *Annual Comprehensive Financial Report*, [visit this link today!](#)



Membership Numbers

**Percent Growth from
Last Fiscal Year**

2.44%
Total Current Members

3.83%
Total Retirement Recipients

2.78%
Total Membership



TRS Word Scramble

Unscramble the letters to reveal a hidden message.

VTISI HET SRT ETBSIEW ERAIT IHTS
GPNIRS OT ESE HET WNE ESRDEIGN
– LLA ORF YUO, TSR ESMMBER!

Answer located at the bottom of this page.



*After solving
the puzzle, visit
www.trs.texas.gov.*

Follow TRS



Click [Here](#) to Rate This Issue of *TRS News*!

Watch: Twirl, Dance, Love



There's not enough time in the day for TRS retiree **Josie Viel**. After a rewarding teaching career, she now dedicates her time to belly dancing, baton twirling and helping animals in need. She credits her secure TRS pension for the lifestyle she enjoys today. [Watch this TRS Talks video](#), where we capture Josie's heartwarming story in El Paso.



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