

Legislative News Cover-5

Immediate Past President
Message 6

2022 Convention News 7

Candidates for State Office 8

Low Vision Awareness 9

Proposed TRTA Bylaws 10-14

TEXAS RETIRED TEACHERS FOUNDATION

Thank You! Foundation Month
a Huge Success! 15TRTF to Host Silent Auction at
2022 TRTA Convention 16

The VOICE

THE OFFICIAL NEWS BULLETIN OF THE TEXAS RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

THE ROAD TO 2023

By Tim Lee
Executive Director

Primary Election season was in full swing between January and early March 2022. The dedicated members of the Texas Retired Teachers Association (TRTA) made it a priority to show up at the polls and cast their votes!

TRTA members know we must fight for a meaningful cost-of-living increase for Texas public education retirees when the 88th Texas Legislature begins in 2023; **but the road to influencing future policy outcomes starts NOW.**

Your vote in the Primary Election was important. Why? Because most elections in Texas are decided during the primary election cycle. According to the Texas Tribune, only 25% of registered voters cast a ballot in the 2020 primaries. But you should know that every election and every single vote matters. Voters are the ones who have the power!

Right now, we are at a pivotal moment when TRTA can build its policy power by increasing our voting power. Even if you did not vote in March, please understand that voting numbers become exponentially more important when runoff elections occur in May!

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

If TRS retirees and pre-retirees (active school employees) have an insurmountable voting track record and remain active throughout the election cycle, our issues remain high priority in any session—no matter what party has the majority.

The more involved you are in the election process, the more you matter. You simply have a better chance of getting more when you are more involved.

Many retirees are struggling financially. Retirees received a supplemental payment in January 2022 thanks to TRTA's strong push during the special sessions in 2021; but a true COLA is what our public education retirees need to keep up with the ever-increasing daily costs of living.

Want to make a difference and ensure retirees' issues are heard? Then read on!

Get Involved Now!

One out of every 20 Texans is a member of TRS and the number of public education retirees in Texas continues to rise. However, only 25% of TRS retirees are a member of TRTA. The political power of TRTA relies on membership, not financial contributions or political action committees.

When retired educators become involved in the election process, it tells Texas office holders that TRTA is a force to be reckoned with. It demonstrates to elected officials, state agencies, the media, those seeking elected office, "think tanks," your fellow retirees, and future retirees that TRTA IS THE LEADING VOICE AND RECOGNIZED LEADER ON ALL TRS MATTERS!

We at TRTA LOVE engaging with all TRS retirees through social media. It is such a useful tool and one on which we are proud to have such a strong presence. That said, we ask that you help remind your social network friends that to truly accomplish big tasks in the Legislature or in Congress, we need to be an organized, active, and coordinated community.

Channeling the power of social media for advocacy happens when our

STEPS TO GET INVOLVED NOW

1. Please renew your TRTA membership. The larger TRTA grows, the louder and more powerful we become!
 - Visit www.trta.org/renew to pay your dues.
2. Ask a friend to join TRTA, or better yet, give a TRTA membership to a friend as a gift! The larger TRTA grows, the louder and more powerful we become!
 - Send them to www.trta.org/join to get started.
3. Share TRTA's legislative priorities with candidates and ask them for their support.
 - See TRTA's 2022 priorities on page 4.
 - You can also share this great resource created by the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) that provides information about the financial advantages the defined benefit plan and retirees add back to the Texas economy. www.trta.org/greatvalue
4. Attend a local TRTA meeting in your area. With 250 units across the state, one is meeting near you and inviting political candidates to speak at their meetings.
 - Visit www.trta.org/districts-and-local-units to learn more.
5. Research and meet the candidates running in your state House or Senate districts.
 - Find your candidates online: https://ballotpedia.org/Sample_Ballot_Lookup
 - Help promote a culture of voting in all Texas schools and get valuable non-partisan voter information about education issues from Texas Educators Vote at www.texaseducatorsvote.com.
 - Compare information about candidates running for office and where they stand on public education issues from Teach the Vote at www.teachthevote.org.
6. Verify that you are registered to vote.
 - Visit www.votetexas.gov to learn more.
7. Vote in the May Runoff Election.
 - There is not a runoff for a State Senate or State Representative seat in every district. If this is the case for you, please know there may still be runoff elections occurring for statewide offices.
 - As long as you are a registered Texas voter, you may still vote in the May runoff election for the party of your choice even if you did not vote in the March Primary Election.
 - However, if you voted in the Republican primary earlier this year, you may only vote in the Republican primary runoff (but not a Democratic runoff). Likewise, if you voted in the Democratic primary, you may only vote in the Democratic primary runoff.

members come together with other education associations to deliver results. Advocacy is stronger for all groups focused on education when we use these connections and are directly involved. At TRTA, we are focused on results.

Our influence as a cohesive group representing the interests of ALL retirees—whether they are members or not—is our political strength. Our strength, however, grows as our organization grows! If every single retiree in TRS was a member of TRTA,

we would have one of the most powerful voting blocks in Texas.

The first thing you can do to help TRTA win on issues that matter to Texas public education retirees is ask your fellow retirees and soon-to-be retirees to join with us. You can encourage them to join us by making a phone call, forwarding your *Inside Line* email newsletter, or sharing TRTA's posts on Facebook and Twitter.

Now is the time to utilize our influence. Now is when the next members of the Texas Legislature are most receptive to us. They want our vote in the General Election and they need to know what our priorities are for the 88th Legislative Session.

Today is the best opportunity for you as an individual TRTA member to become friends with candidates and educate them on retiree issues. In turn, you should assess their qualifications and determine which candidate may best represent the interests of education retirees.

How can you accomplish this? Consider attending candidate meet-and-greet events, campaign rallies, and fundraising events. A TRTA local unit in your area may host a candidate at a monthly meeting, which is the perfect time to ask them where they stand on issues impacting TRS retirees.

Have you found a candidate who you feel best represents you and retiree interests? Consider block walking or phone banking for them. You could offer to host a candidate meet and greet in your home.

Most importantly, be sure to VOTE and do it early! Start by making a voting plan. Next, encourage your friends and family members to vote in the Primary Election Runoffs and the November General Election, too.

Talking to Candidates: Questions to Ask

The best way to defend and improve retirement benefits for Texas educators is to elect state officials who support the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) defined benefit plan and access to quality, affordable health care! Talk to candidates in your area TODAY and ask them these important questions.

Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) Pension Fund

Some organizations and individuals have been pushing to change the TRS defined benefit plan to a defined contribution plan. However, 95% of school employees in Texas do not pay into Social Security, meaning their TRS annuity is their only source of retirement income. Additionally, many TRS retirees have NEVER received a permanent cost-of-living increase (COLA), going for more than 20 years without one!

- If elected, will you support keeping the defined benefit plan for all current and future school retirees?
- If elected, what will you do to ensure the fund becomes actuarially sound so that a permanent COLA can be provided for TRS retirees?
- If elected, would you be willing not only to support but also to introduce legislation to improve benefits for retired educators?

TRS-Care Retiree Health Insurance Program

In previous legislative sessions, the TRS-Care health insurance program has faced large budget shortfalls. TRS-Care funding is based on aggregate teacher payroll and does not match up with growing health care costs and trends. This funding mechanism is broken, but it has not received a permanent fix and has resulted in dramatically increased out-of-pocket costs for retirees living on fixed incomes.

- If elected, what will you do to fix the funding mechanism for TRS-Care?
- If elected, will you work to increase the program's permanent base funding? If so, how much additional base funding would you suggest for stabilizing the TRS-Care plan?
- If elected, will you work to permanently increase funding TRS-Care so that retired school employees have access to affordable, quality healthcare?

Bonus question for congressional office seekers: There are many seats open for Texas congressional members as well. Be sure to ask those seeking a role in Congress if they will support TRTA in our efforts to repeal the unfair and discriminatory Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO)! Ask your candidates if retirees will be able to count on them to meet with us and work for TRTA members while they serve in Congress! 🗳️

88TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION
GREAT VICTORIES
GREAT FUTURE

TRTA POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRS TEXAS



TRTA Purpose and Mission: The Texas Retired Teachers Association (TRTA) works closely with the Texas Legislature and U.S. Congress to preserve and maintain the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) pension fund and TRS-Care insurance plan for all Texas educators. Together, we protect, promote, and defend the interests of TRS members.

TRTA STATE ISSUES

Preserve TRS Texas Traditional Defined Benefit Retirement Plan: TRTA's primary public policy objective is the preservation of the TRS traditional defined benefit plan for all public-school retirees and pre-retirees. TRS proves that when these plans are managed and funded appropriately, they provide cost-efficient retirement security for plan participants and taxpayers alike. Please note that 95% of public-school employees do not participate in Social Security. This saves Texas taxpayers billions of dollars, but also raises the stakes when ensuring the TRS traditional defined benefit plan remains strong and viable for all future retirees.

Fund TRS Pension Trust: In 2019, TRTA championed the "TRS Actuarial Soundness—Raise the Base!" plan (Senate Bill 12). This plan is a multi-session increased funding initiative that will ensure the long-term solvency of TRS. TRTA members urge the 88th Texas Legislature to continue the plan by introducing and adopting a state budget that funds contribution rates of 8.25% for the state and active educators and 1.9% for school districts by 2024.

Support a COLA for TRS Retirees: *TRTA is aware of the sincere interest expressed by the Legislature over the past several years to take steps regarding the loss of income retirees are experiencing. TRTA welcomes the open expression of support from legislators to address this issue during the 88th Texas Legislative Session. TRTA urges the enactment of a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for TRS retirees as an emergency item in the coming session.*

Protect TRS-Care: TRTA appreciates the work of the Legislature to address increasing health care costs for TRS retirees over the past several years. However, it is our belief that the best solution for this issue is to design and implement a long-term plan that continuously reviews health care costs and associated state funding and compares them to the actual costs of health care. This solution would take the place of the current arbitrary formula that was established 35 years ago when TRS-Care was created.



The Voice For All Public Education Retirees

Texas Retired Teachers Association
313 E. 12th Street, Suite 200 | Austin, TX 78701
1.800.880.1650 | www.trta.org

TRTA FEDERAL ISSUES

Arbitrary WEP Out, Fairness Now! The Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) is an arbitrary formula from the 1980's and it is neither fair or needed. Congress knows that there is a better way. TRTA calls on Congress to pass WEP reform now and end the arbitrary and unfair WEP!

Stop the GPO pain! The Government Pension Offset unfairly penalizes public servants, including Texas retired school employees. The worst part is GPO typically hurts seniors after the loss of a spouse who was a Social Security recipient. The GPO is bad public policy that needs to be reformed immediately.

One-and-Done on GPO! While TRTA pushes an aggressive repeal/reform of the current Government Pension Offset (GPO), we believe Congress could and should implement a policy we refer to as "One-and-Done." Texas has many TRS retirees that have been hit with the GPO, but the impact of this unfair provision did not completely offset their spousal/auxiliary benefit. Whenever TRTA secures a benefit increase for retirees on their state pension benefits, the federal government then reduces the retiree's remaining spousal/auxiliary benefit. This is punitive and impractical and should come to an end! TRTA says if the federal GPO already has been applied to a retiree's spousal/auxiliary benefit and it was not eliminated completely, then no further reduction in their Social Security income should occur ever again when there is an increase in their state pension benefits.



The TRTA Board of Directors and District Presidents visited the Texas Capitol in July 2021.

Protect the Texas TRS Defined Benefit Plan. Some leaders in Washington, D.C. have touted the idea that Texas public employees who are not paying into Social Security should be forced to do so. This concept is known as Mandatory Social Security. While there may be some advantages to having all Texas public workers pay into the federal Social Security program, the strategy to implement the concept often leaves our state defined benefit retirement systems without the assurance that it will be protected and remain fully funded.

★ IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT MESSAGE

Patricia R. Macias, TRTA Immediate Past President



Greetings friends and fellow TRTA members! What a great and amazing eight years I have had serving TRTA as part of your leadership team. I want to thank each of you for the amazing job you do to keep TRTA strong and for giving me the honor to work alongside you as your President, and currently, as your Immediate Past President.

Together with my fellow elected officers and members, we have accomplished so much. Yet, there is still much more that needs to be done. The time has come for me to step off the TRTA Express in July. It has been an amazing ride and I treasure all the connections I have made throughout Texas. Serving you as President of TRTA was one of the greatest privileges of my life!

I am so proud to have worked with my fellow TRTA officers and wish them the same great experience I have had. TRTA currently has more than 94,000 members. More and more retirees are seeing the tremendous value in TRTA's work and soon we will get our membership to exceed 100,000!

I may be leaving the state leadership team, but I will always remain a dedicated and involved member. I will continue to challenge and encourage each of you to take a more active role at the local, district, and state levels and help shape the future of TRTA. The strength and accomplishments of our organization depend on our membership, leadership, staff, and Executive Director, Tim Lee.

I want to thank Tim Lee for his leadership and our wonderful staff for all they do to ensure we are successful in serving not only our membership, but all TRS annuitants. Our work benefits them, too, as we have worked with the Legislature to make the TRS fund actuarially sound and provided two supplemental checks in the past four years. We will continue to work to get our much-needed COLA!

TRTA will host its 68th Convention this April. Members will elect a new slate of officers who need a strong 100,000+ membership behind them as they lobby the Legislature for a COLA! Let's work together to support our incoming officers and make a positive difference in the lives of all TRS annuitants.

Again, I thank you for the honor and privilege of serving you and I look forward to seeing many of you at the state convention.

With warmest regard and love,

Patricia R. Macias
TRTA Immediate Past President

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT FOR TRTA MEMBERS

Dear TRTA Member,

We want to explain a bit about a notation we provided in the Fourth Quarter, 2021 (out January, 2022) edition of *The VOICE*.

We said then, and it remains the case today, that under the federal court's December 9 order, AMBA remains TRTA's exclusive agent of record and third party administrator for your group dental and vision plans.

We believe that status will likely be in effect for the foreseeable future.

Accordingly, we want you to know that AMBA agents will be contacting you about those plans, and you are free to contact AMBA about those plans.

Thank you for being a TRTA member.

Tim Lee
TRTA Executive Director

All Aboard the TRTA Express to Convention 2022!

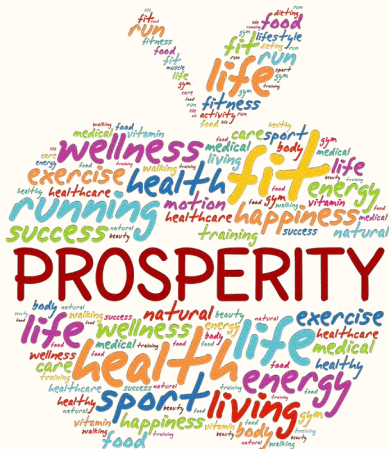
The convention will be held April 11-13, 2022 at the Hilton Anatole on 2201 North Stemmons Freeway. This year's theme is All Aboard the TRTA Express. We know members of the Texas Retired Teachers Association (TRTA) are thrilled to hop on the train and enjoy fellowship with one another as we reunite for the first time since 2019.

The group rate is \$189 per night (excluding tax). Parking is offered at a discounted rate of \$5 per night for hotel guests only.

To book your hotel reservation or register for the convention, please visit www.trta.org/2022convention.

Please be advised when booking that the hotel will offer you the option to add the resort fee of \$25 per night to your reservation. This fee includes amenities such as spa services and is not necessary for most convention attendees. You may either skip or opt out of the resort fee to avoid being charged. The hotel booking policy is that a first-night deposit is required upon booking and cancellations made within 72 hours of arrival will forfeit one night's room and tax fees.

Join us for a complimentary
Informational Fair on
Monday, April 11, 2022, from
2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in
the Atrium Lobby.



This year, TRTA will host its first ever Informational Fair focused on a happier, healthier, better life! This come-and-go event will be available from 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. on Monday, April 11 and features local providers who will share information about health, fitness, and overall well-being for retirees. Members can also receive valuable information about programs offered through the Texas Retired Teachers Foundation (TRTF).

TRTA has released a tentative schedule of events to help you plan your travel. Registration times have changed and will now open on Monday, April 11 from 12:00 – 5:00 p.m. The Informational Fair commences at 2:00 p.m. in the Atrium lobby and is free for all attendees. Be sure and stop by after you pick up your registration materials! At 5:30 p.m., TRTA will host a complimentary celebration event for all attendees to come together and mingle. Stop by and meet the state officers and see friends, old and new. Dinner for the evening will be on your own.

Day two (April 12) begins with the Opening Ceremonies at 9:00 a.m. District caucus meetings follow, with an awards luncheon at Noon. The menu includes a Caesar salad, herbed oven roasted breast of chicken, natural jus, green beans, and roasted potatoes with a passion cremieux taft dessert. The afternoon continues with three 45 minute informational and training sessions. TRTF will host a silent auction at 5:30 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom. Dinner for the evening will be on your own.

Day three (April 13) includes the House of Delegates, as well as a legislative luncheon. The luncheon menu includes a mixed green salad, smoked brisket, roasted vegetables, southwestern corn, and black beans, with French macarons for dessert. House of Delegates continues in the afternoon and the convention concludes once all association business has been completed.



Be sure to register for convention soon! The deadline is March 1. Register online today by visiting www.trta.org/2022convention. If you plan to attend the free evening socials on April 11, please RSVP so that TRTA may collect an accurate headcount.

We hope you will join us in Dallas in April for convention! ★

Candidates for State Office 2022-2024

The following members have filed and are eligible candidates running for 2022-2024 TRTA State Office. The nominees will be elected by the TRTA House of Delegates during the upcoming TRTA Convention in Dallas on April 13, 2022.



MARCY CANN



ELLA GAUTHIER



FRANA PATTERSON



TERRI NAVRKAL

Marcy Cann for President

Houston Association of Retired Teachers (HART), District 4

Currently serving as the 2020-2022 State First Vice-President and State Membership Committee Chair. Served as the State Second Vice-President and State Public Relations Committee Chair (2018-2020), State Secretary/Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair (2016-2018), District 4 Immediate Past President (2016-2018), District Presidents Council Chair (2014-2016), and State Legislative Committee member (2009-2016). Served as the District 4 President (2012-2016) and District 4 Legislative Committee member (2007-2014).

Ella Gauthier for First Vice-President

Pasadena Area Retired School Employees (PARSE), District 4

Currently serving as 2020-2022 State Second Vice-President and Public Relations Committee Chair. Served as State Secretary/Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair (2018-2020), District 4 Immediate Past President (2018-2020), District Presidents Council Vice-Chair (2016-2018) and District 4 President (2016-2018). Served as District 4 Parliamentarian (2013-2016), District 4 Treasurer (2011-2013), and Pasadena Area Retired School Employees President (2009-2011).

Frana Patterson for Second Vice-President

Palo Pinto County Retired Teachers Association (PPCRTA), District 11

Currently serving as 2020-2022 State Secretary/Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair. Served as the District Presidents Council Chair 2018-2020. Served as the District 11 President (2018-2020), Healthy Living Committee State Chair (2016-2018), and Palo Pinto County Retired Teachers Association President (2014-2018).

Terri Navrkal for Secretary/Treasurer

Lubbock South Plains Retired Teachers Association (LSPRTA), District 17

Currently serving as District Presidents Council Chair (2020-present), District 17 President (2018-present), and Lubbock South Plains RTA President (2020-present, 2017-19, and 2013-15). Served as the First Vice-President Lubbock South Plains RTA (2015-2017) and State Public Relations Committee (2014-2018). Currently serving as the TRTF Tutor Program Senior Tutor Recruitment and Partnership Advisor (Fall 2020-present).

**DISTRICT
SPRING
LEADERSHIP
DEVELOPMENT
CONFERENCES**

TRTA's 20 District Spring Leadership Development Conferences
will begin in April 2022 and continue through June.

For a complete schedule of these events, please visit

[WWW.TRTA.ORG/SPRINGCONFERENCES.](http://WWW.TRTA.ORG/SPRINGCONFERENCES)

Please be aware that information may change, such as dates, times, or locations.
Visit the link for any updates or contact your District President.

LOW VISION AWARENESS MONTH

February is Low Vision Awareness Month, which promotes education on the importance of eye health at all ages to prevent future vision loss. According to a report by the Aging Texas Well Advisory Committee, approximately 261,000 Texans 65 and older experience vision difficulties. Fortunately, routine checkups, early detection and treatment of common eye diseases can help preserve eye health.

There are a variety of programs available to help older adults at risk of or who have vision loss. The Texas Health and Human Services Commission's Blindness Education, Screening and Treatment program partners with Prevent Blindness Texas to provide free vision screenings to assess risk for vision loss and eye diseases. BEST also provides financial assistance to eligible Texas residents with medically urgent vision needs and a referral from their ophthalmologist. To learn more, email BESTprogram@hhsc.state.tx.us.

Prevent Blindness Texas helps educate on types of vision loss, including Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD), treatment options, low vision services and more.

"The best way to save vision from AMD and other forms of eye disease is to get an annual eye exam from an eye health professional," said Heather Patrick, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness Texas. "Early detection and adhering to treatment can actually save your sight for years to come."

Prevent Blindness also offers "Living Well with Low Vision," a free online library of tools to help people maintain their independence and quality of life. For more information, visit texas.preventblindness.org.

For older adults whose vision is no longer correctable to 20/20, low vision rehabilitation services are vital for helping them live independently. Services and supports can include rehabilitation training through vocational or independent living services specialists and assistive technology, such as magnifiers and audio books.

Organizations can also help by making their spaces and materials more accessible by controlling lighting glare, increasing the color contrast in rooms and meeting spaces, and enhancing font size and color contrast on print materials.

"Continuing to read, performing household chores, walking safely and participating in recreational activities involving visual tasks are imperative to one's independence, productivity and fulfillment in life," said Neva Fairchild, national aging and vision loss specialist with the American Foundation for the Blind. "A visit to a low vision specialist can enable a person to use their remaining vision to its maximum potential."

To learn more about resources available for people with low vision, visit visionaware.org and hadley.edu. To find independent living services near you, visit timetobebold.org.

In addition to the programs and services mentioned, your local Aging and Disability Resource Center can help connect you to services available in your community. To find your ADRC, call 855-937-2372.

Written by: Olivia Burns, Aging Texas Well Coordinator

1 <https://hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/laws-regulations/reports-presentations/2018/sb-1693-aging-texas-well-committee-report-nov-2018.pdf>



Age Well Live Well

BE HEALTHY.

"Regular exercise and a healthy diet helps ensure I can do the things I enjoy."

Learn how to stay healthy and active at www.AgeWellLiveWell.org

 TEXAS Health and Human Services

Article I. Name

The name of the corporation shall be the Texas Retired Teachers Association, hereinafter referred to as TRTA.

Article II. Purpose

The corporation is organized for the purpose of promoting the economic, intellectual, and social well-being of retired school personnel and other public-school employees through the district and local chapters.

Article III. Affiliation

TRTA is an autonomous organization which consists of the state organization supported by districts and local chapters all of which function to promote the purpose of TRTA. Districts and local chapters operate under the TRTA bylaws and policies.

Article IV. State Members

Section 1. Membership Eligibility

The following are eligible for membership upon payment of state dues:

1. An annuitant or a beneficiary receiving an annuity from a teacher retirement system; and
2. Any person interested in public education and willing to work to achieve the objectives of TRTA.

Section 2. State Dues

Membership state dues are based on interims of twelve months at a rate established by the Board of Directors and approved by the House of Delegates.

Section 3. Calendar

The fiscal year shall be July 1 through June 30.

Article V. State Officers and Elections

Section 1. Officers

The officers shall be a President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer, and Immediate Past President.

Section 2. Nominations and Elections

The House of Delegates will be presented with the names of all nominees meeting the qualifications of the office for which the nominee has filed. The officers shall be elected by the House of Delegates. If circumstances prevent an in-person House of Delegates, election by delegates may be conducted electronically.

Section 3. Eligibility

Members are eligible for office if they receive an annuity from the Teacher Retirement System of Texas, have been in a local chapter for at least three (3) years, have served as an elected officer of a district or local chapter, but need not have served as a statewide officer.

Section 4. Terms

Officers are elected for two-year terms, coinciding with the fiscal year, with no subsequent consecutive term.

Section 5. Vacancies

If there is a vacancy in the office of President, the First Vice-President will become the President. If the First Vice-President is unable to assume the office of President in such a case, the Second Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer, in that order, shall do so. When any officer assumes the office of President, the resulting vacancy shall be filled by appointment. The President, with the approval of the Board of Directors, shall appoint a qualified member to fill a vacancy occurring in any elected office and in any appointed position.

Section 6. Removal from Office

Officers can be removed from office only for cause by a two-thirds vote of those present at a regular meeting of the Board of Directors, with a quorum present, where previous written notice has been given.

Article VI. State Board of Directors

Section 1. Board of Directors

The voting members of the Board of Directors shall be a President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer, Immediate Past President, District Presidents Council Chair, District Presidents Council Vice-Chair, District Presidents Council Recorder, and Legislative Coordinator.

Section 2. Terms

All board members shall serve two-year terms in their respective positions, except for the legislative coordinator, who shall be eligible for reappointment and serve no more than 8 years. The legislative coordinator is required to be a member of a local chapter and be receiving an annuity from the Teacher Retirement System of Texas.

Section 3. Responsibilities

The Board of Directors shall:

1. Conduct business between the meeting of the House of Delegates, subject to the instructions of the House of Delegates;
2. Maintain a blanket fidelity bond covering the officers and all employees;
3. Employ an Executive Director and determine compensation and period of contract;
4. At its discretion, appoint an Executive Director Emeritus; and
5. Conduct such other duties as outlined elsewhere in these bylaws.

Section 4. Meetings

The Board of Directors shall meet at least four (4) times a year, at an agreed upon time and place. Special meetings may be called by the President, the Executive Director, or four (4) directors. The Board of Directors may meet via electronic communications media as directed by the President and the Executive Director so long as all members can simultaneously hear each other and participate during the meeting.

Section 5. Quorum

A majority of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum at a meeting of the board.

Section 6. Liability

A member of the Board of Directors shall not be liable to the membership for monetary damages for an act taken or an omission in their official capacity as a board member, except that this provision does not eliminate or limit the liability of a board member for:

1. A breach of a board member's duty of loyalty to TRTA or its members;
2. An act or omission not in good faith or that involves intentional misconduct or knowing violation of law;
3. A transaction from which a board member receives an improper benefit, whether or not the benefit results from an action taken within the scope of the board member's office;
4. An act or omission for which the liability of a board member is expressly provided by statute; or
5. An act related to an unlawful stock repurchase or payment of a dividend.

Section 7. Removal from Legislator Coordinator

The Legislative Coordinator, a position filled by appointment of the President, may be removed from the Board of Directors for the inability to perform duties or for non-performance of duties as prescribed in policies, by a two-thirds vote of those present at a regular meeting of the Board of Directors, with a quorum present, where previous written notice has been given.

Article VII. State Executive Committee

Section 1. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall be the President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer, and the Immediate Past President.

Section 2. Responsibilities

The Executive Committee shall, in the interim between meetings of the Board of Directors, exercise all powers of the Board of Directors, provided that nothing shall be done contrary to the policies adopted by the Board of Directors or to any action of the Board of Directors. The Executive Committee will confirm the President's appointments of the Legislative Coordinator, and the Standing Committee Chairs and members except for the Chairs of the Communications, Finance, and Membership/Volunteer Services Committees.

Section 3. Meetings

Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be at the call of the President or shall be at the request of three (3) members of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee may meet via electronic communications media as directed by the President and the Executive Director so long as all members can simultaneously hear each other and participate during the meeting.

Section 4. Quorum

Three (3) members shall constitute a quorum at a meeting of the Executive Committee.

Article VIII. State Committees

Section 1. Standing Committees

The following standing committees shall be held by the organization: Communications, Member Benefits, Finance, Legislative, Membership/Volunteer Services, Organizational Affairs, Retirement Education, and Historian. Committee chairs are required to be a member of a local chapter and be receiving an annuity from the Teacher Retirement System of Texas. The First Vice-President shall be the Membership/Volunteer Services Committee Chair, the Second Vice-President shall be the Communications Committee Chair, and the Secretary/Treasurer shall be the Finance Committee Chair.

Section 2. Members

Except for the Legislative Committee, all standing committees shall be composed of a maximum of five (5) members including the Chair and may serve a maximum of four (4) years. The Legislative Committee shall be composed of a minimum of twenty (20) members and may serve a maximum term of eight (8) years.

Section 3. Special Committees

The President may appoint special committees, with approval of the Board of Directors, as needed.

Section 4. Meetings

Committees shall meet as directed by the President or by the Committee Chair. Committees may meet in person, via teleconference or through other electronic communications media so long as all the members can simultaneously hear each other and participate during the meeting.

Article IX. District Presidents Council

Section 1. District Presidents Council

The District Presidents Council shall consist of the twenty (20) District Presidents.

Section 2. Responsibilities

The District Presidents Council shall elect three (3) officers that will serve on the Board of Directors. The District Presidents Council officers shall be a Chair, Vice-Chair, and Recorder.

Section 3. Terms and Vacancies

The District Presidents Council officers are elected for two-year terms, coinciding with the fiscal year, with no subsequent consecutive terms. District Presidents Council officer vacancies shall be filled by current District Presidents.

Section 4. Removal from Office

District Presidents Council officers can be removed from office only for cause by a two-thirds vote of those present at a regular meeting of the Board of Directors, with a quorum present, where previous written notice has been given.

Article X. Districts

The districts, as established by TRTA, shall follow and implement TRTA standing rules. Each district shall provide leadership to and communication with the local chapters. Elected district officers and committee chairs are required to be members of a local chapter within that district and receive an annuity from the Teacher Retirement System of Texas.

Section 1. District Officers

The districts shall have a minimum of five (5) officers: President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. If circumstances prevent an in-person meeting, election of officers may be conducted electronically.

Section 2. District Committees

The districts shall have a minimum of six (6) committees: Communications, Member Benefits, Legislative, Membership/Volunteer Services, Retirement Education, and Historian. The First Vice-President shall be the Membership/Volunteer Services Committee Chair and the Second Vice-President shall be the Communications Committee Chair.

Section 3. Conferences

The districts may conduct two (2) conferences per year for the purpose of offering resources to elected local chapter officers and appointed committee chairs. Districts may meet via electronic communications media so long as all members can simultaneously hear each other and participate during the meeting.

Article XI. Local Chapters

Each local chapter meeting the following requirements established by the Board of Directors shall be issued a TRTA certificate of affiliation:

1. Adoption of standing rules not in conflict with the bylaws or policies of TRTA;
2. A minimum of five (5) regular meetings per year; and
3. All elected officers and committee chairs must be members of the local chapter and of TRTA.

Section 1. Local Chapter Officers

The local chapters shall have a minimum of five (5) officers: President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. If circumstances prevent an in-person meeting, election of officers may be conducted electronically.

Section 2. Local Chapter Committees

The local chapters shall have a minimum of five (5) committees: Communications, Member Benefits, Legislative, Membership/Volunteer Services, and Retirement Education. The First Vice-President shall be the Membership/Volunteer Services Committee Chair and the Second Vice-President shall be the Communications Committee Chair.

Section 3. Meetings

The local chapters shall conduct a minimum of five (5) regular meetings per year. Local chapters may meet via electronic communications media so long as all members can simultaneously hear each other and participate during the meeting.

Article XII. Executive Director

The Executive Director shall serve as the chief administrative officer of TRTA, transacting all necessary business affairs of the organization and performing such duties as required by the Board of Directors.

Article XIII. State Events

The Board of Directors shall determine the time and place of the meeting of the House of Delegates, Convention, and Day at the Capitol, and any other events as needed. In situations which make in-person meetings impossible or impractical, TRTA may help arrange virtual visits by electronic communication media.

Article XIV. House of Delegates

The House of Delegates shall meet in even-numbered years for the purpose of electing officers and amending bylaws.

Section 1. State Delegates

The delegates shall consist of the Board of Directors, Standing Committees Chairs, and Past Presidents.

Section 2. District Delegates

The delegates shall consist of the Presidents, First Vice-Presidents, Second Vice-Presidents, Secretaries, and Treasurers. Alternates may be appointed by the District Presidents when the elected officers cannot attend. Delegates must be receiving an annuity from the Teacher Retirement System of Texas.

Section 3. Local Chapter Delegates

The delegates shall be determined by:

1. Two (2) delegates for the first 100 members in a local chapter or fraction thereof;
2. One (1) delegate for each additional 100 members in a local chapter or fraction thereof; and
3. Delegates must be receiving an annuity from the Teacher Retirement System of Texas.

Article XV: Parliamentary Authority

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern meetings when not in conflict with the organization's bylaws and policies. The Board of Directors shall engage a parliamentarian to assist the Board and the House of Delegates.

Article XVI. Amendments

The House of Delegates may amend the bylaws in even-numbered years by a two-thirds vote, provided that the members have been given notice of the proposed amendment through communications at least 30 days prior to the House of Delegates or a three-fourths vote if members have not been given such notice. All amendments shall become effective July 1 following the House of Delegates unless otherwise stated as a proviso with the proposed amendment.

Section 1. Submittal Process

Proposed bylaws amendments to be considered by the House of Delegates shall be submitted to the TRTA office by a date specified by the Board of Directors. Proposed bylaws amendments may originate from a district, local chapter, the Board of Directors, or the Organizational Affairs Committee when authorized by the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors shall submit all proposed bylaws amendments to the House of Delegates. The proposals will include the Board of Directors and the Organizational Affairs Committee recommendations and rationales.

Section 2. Organizational Affairs Committee Proposals

The Organizational Affairs Committee shall study each submitted proposal and determine its potential impact on the operation of TRTA and other articles in the bylaws. The Organizational Affairs Committee will also:

1. Edit and format the proposal with the approval of the author of the proposed amendment;
2. Recommend approval, disapproval, or continued study; and
3. Forward the proposal and recommendations to the Board of Directors by January 1.

Last amended April 13, 2022

TRTA Organizational Affairs Committee Rationale for the Proposed Revision of the TRTA Bylaws

Recent widespread events impacting societal functions have caused the cancellation of the 2020 TRTA State Convention, as well as district and local conferences and meetings. The effects of these events have made it evident that TRTA must modernize its Bylaws to meet the ever-changing conditions of an emerging society and have the flexibility to adjust to unforeseen circumstances. The use of electronic voting, social media, virtual meetings and the need to find an alternative way to affect the transition of power between TRTA's state officers are four examples of changes that are needed.

The Organizational Affairs Committee agree that the current Bylaws do not meet the organization's needs. The TRTA Board initiated a revision of the Bylaws, and the OAC met and reviewed the revision.

- 1) The proposed revision provides local and district chapters more flexibility in how they organize and conduct meetings and conferences, giving each the opportunity to meet the unique needs of their members. This includes the use of technology for meetings, elections, and conferences.
- 2) The proposed revision is organized in a more logical and concise order which allows for a better understanding.
- 3) Many provisions in the current Bylaws are inflexible, detailed policies which should be removed and placed in a more appropriate document.
- 4) Bylaws should be a concise, clear generalization for the governance of an organization. Even the most casual readers soon discover the current bylaws document is repetitive, poorly organized, and filled with antiquated statements that are no longer relevant to the organization or the way it wishes to operate.
- 5) TRTA's Bylaws must better reflect the legal and technological needs of our organization across the state. If we continue the archaic rules of the past, we will limit our ability to meet the needs of our organization at all levels.
- 6) TRTA is a dynamic and changing organization and revisions to its overall governance structure are now necessary to simplify, modernize, and provide the necessary legal protections for TRTA.

The OAC recommends approval of the proposed revision of the TRTA Bylaws.

The Board of Directors recommends approval and agrees with the rationale of the OAC.

OUTLOOK



LEADING POSITIVE CHANGE FOR TEXAS EDUCATION

SILENT AUCTION AT CONVENTION

Inaugural event is TRTF's annual fundraiser
15-16

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Foundation Month a Huge Success
15

DONATE TODAY!

Donation card on the back of *The VOICE*
16

TRTF TO HOST SILENT AUCTION AT 2022 TRTA CONVENTION

The Texas Retired Teachers Foundation (TRTF) Board of Trustees appreciates the support and dedication shown to the organization and its programs, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Members of the Texas Retired Teachers Association (TRTA) have demonstrated their support through monetary donations and by spreading the word about our varied charitable programs, including "A Helping Hand," the Disaster Relief Fund, and scholarship and grant programs for active teachers.

As TRTF looks forward to the 2022 TRTA Convention, the Board of Trustees has determined that in lieu of a costly meal event, a silent auction will be held and serve as TRTF's annual fundraiser.

Districts and local units may participate in the event by collecting items for auction, such as crocheted blankets, jewelry, bath sets, gift baskets, gift cards, and more! Items should be new, unused, and able to be transported easily. These items can be donated by a local vendor. Contact Sarah Richardson for more information, including a letter template that may be used to ask for donations from vendors.

Once items have been collected, districts and local units should send a photo of the item, along with a description and who donated the item, to Sarah Richardson (sarah@trta.org) and TRTF Fundraising Committee Chair Carla Meuth (dkgmeuthcarla@gmail.com). The deadline to collect items and report them to TRTF is March 20, 2022. Items should be brought to the convention by a delegate and turned in at the Foundation table in the registration area between 12:00 and 5:00 p.m. on Monday, April 11.

If you would like a member of the Fundraising Committee to speak at your district or local unit meeting about the silent auction to provide more details, please reach out to Carla Meuth at (832) 278-7663.

Continued on back

THANK YOU! FOUNDATION MONTH A HUGE SUCCESS!

November 2021 was Foundation Month, a time designated by the Texas Retired Teachers Association (TRTA) Board of Directors to honor the Foundation through local unit programs and an annual appeal.

Thanks to the overwhelming generosity of TRTA members, TRTF raised more than \$105,000 in donations! These donations provide funds for causes that have genuine, tangible impacts on the lives of retirees as well as beginning and current educators.

In addition, your donations will assist public school children access low to zero-cost tutoring with a retired Texas teacher, through the TRTF Tutor Program.



The VOICE

Send address changes to:
Texas Retired Teachers Association
313 E. 12th Street, Suite 200 | Austin, TX 78701-1957
1.800.880.1650 | www.trta.org

TRTF TO HOST SILENT AUCTION AT 2022 TRTA CONVENTION

Convention attendees will be able to bid on the auction items using a notebook at the TRTF registration table on Monday, April 11 beginning at 12:00 p.m. through 5:00 p.m. On Tuesday, April 12 beginning at 5:30 p.m., the auction continues in the Grand Ballroom, where final bids will be taken until 6:30 p.m.

Winners will be announced on the evening of April 12 at 6:45 p.m. and winners will be able to collect their items immediately. Please note, the Foundation is unable to ship items. Bidders should be present to win. If the bidder is not present, the next highest bidder will be chosen to take the item.

For districts, local units, and individuals who normally bring a donation to the convention to honor or memorialize a loved one, friend, or colleague, we are asking that you please consider making your donation online no later than March 31 at www.trtf.org/donate. After making your donation, please send an email to info@trta.org with the subject line Convention Donation indicating the amount of your donation, who the donation is from (district, local, or individual), who the donation is in honor or in memory of, and for what fund the donation is being designated to if any. All those who wish to donate in this fashion will be recognized in a PowerPoint presentation that plays during the silent auction.

TRTF AT CONVENTION 2022!

Sarah Richardson will also provide a training session for District Foundation Liaisons and Local Unit Representatives on April 12 at 2:00 p.m. More information will be made available about the session on the TRTF website (www.trtf.org) in early April.



TEXAS RETIRED TEACHERS FOUNDATION

OUTLOOK

LEADING POSITIVE CHANGE FOR TEXAS EDUCATION

TEXAS RETIRED TEACHERS FOUNDATION

**I WANT TO
HELP!**

**DONATION
CARD**
DONATIONS ARE
TAX DEDUCTIBLE

PLEASE ACCEPT MY DONATION OF:

☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$ _____

IN MEMORY OF:

IN HONOR OF:

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

PHONE

SAVE TRTF A STAMP AND EMAIL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO:

Donations are tax deductible. Enclose a check, completed donation card and send to:
Texas Retired Teachers Foundation • 313 E. 12th St., Ste. 220 • Austin, TX 78701-1957