

# the BCRSP NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2023



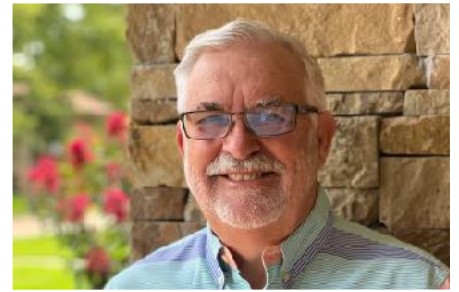
- 01 - Sharyn Galvan
- 02- Margaret Boothe
- 04 - GERALYN DeLUKE, Dianne Rister, Harold Turbyfill
- 05 - Sarah DeLUKE, Ray Sanders
- 07 - Claire Lillie
- 08 - Elaine Mies, Kerry Thompson,
- 09 - Rebecca Kubin, Carol Wagner, Helen Washington
- 10 - Lena Koestler
- 16 - Emma Aycox, Barbara Parsley, Bobby James
- 18 - Janeth Ellis, Sandy Johnson, James Warner
- 20 - Mary Jane Petty, Carolyn Taylor
- 22 - Shirley DuBose, Kathy Durst, Carol Tatum, Lou Turner
- 24 - Patricia Jackson
- 25 Beverly Walker
- 27 - Eileene McDonald, Mickey Ohlendorf, Cindy Dyer
- 28 - Marilyn Sullivan

## Welcome!

Hello Friends!

After a historic hot summer, I was sure we would find relief in September. But the heat continued and broke all records in September. And now we are looking at the same for October. Surely relief is soon to come!

But as the weather changes, we want to keep up the heat up as we educate fellow Texans for the dire need to pass Proposition 9 in the November 7 election. People will support our COLA if they know we haven't received a cost-of-living increase in 19 years. An item that cost \$100 in 2004, the year of our COLA, now costs \$163.00! Social security has an annual COLA, but not TRS.



The money is sitting in the state coffers; the legislature has passed the legislation; there is no new tax money required. The sole reason that voters must approve the COLA is the total amount of the COLA exceeds the constitutional limit.

We cannot assume we will win this battle. EVERY member of TRTA and BCRSP must continue to get the word out. Sure, non-members will benefit from our work, but that's ok. We speak for all retired educators.

I really look forward to seeing you at our next meeting!

Danny

# Membership Report



Brazos County Retired School Personnel  
October 25, 2023  
11:30 a.m.  
First Baptist Church

“Better Together”

## AGENDA

- Welcome!  
Danny Stribling
- Invocation and Pledges  
Betty Munion
- Recognition of Officers and Committee Chairs

•••••Lunch•••••

Program: Guest Speaker

Mr. Blake Jennings, President  
OnRamp Bryan/College Station

Proposition 9 Campaign: “Finish The Race  
James Warner  
New Business/Committee Reports

- Announcements
- Door Prizes - Lynn Blinka
- Happy Dollars
- Joke of the Day

Join Us for Next Month’s Program  
Wednesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>  
Texas Retired Teacher’s Foundation  
Carla Meuth  
Vice-President and TRTF Trustee

BCRSP stands at a whopping 343 members strong!!! We have 302 state and local members with 41 state only members. Included in this amazing membership count are 21 brand new members and 12 At-Large/Transfer members.

Let’s give a big shoutout welcoming our newest members.

Now, cheer “Hip! Hip! Hooray!!!” for our amazing “recruiters”. Keep up with your recruiting efforts and endeavors so TRTA and BCRSP continue to make a huge impact with issues that affect all TRS retirees.





## *TX Retired Teachers Foundation*



**November is Foundation Month.**

BCRSP will be collecting donations at the October and November meetings for the Texas Retired Teachers Foundation. All funds donated benefit current and retired teachers through grants for classrooms and help for those with drastic needs. There will be jars on each table for the collections of cash and checks. Please make all checks payable to TRTF so you can receive credit for the tax-deductible donation. BCRSP will forward all funds to the Foundation at the end of November.

### **Meeting Reservations Information**

**Cost: \$15.00**

**For Reservations:**

**Email Suzanne Phelps: [snphelps1946@gmail.com](mailto:snphelps1946@gmail.com)  
no later than 3:00 on the Friday before the monthly  
meeting. An email will be sent each month to help you  
remember!**



*Please bring the correct change or a check made out to BCRSP if at all possible. We will have \$5 bills to make change, but not dollars. Consider donating your change to our scholarship fund!*





# *BCSP General Meeting Minutes*

**BCRSP Monthly Meeting  
Sept. 27, 2023**

President Danny Stribling called the meeting to order and welcomed guests and members. Betty Munion offered the opening prayer and led members in the United States and Texas pledges. President Stribling introduced the 2023-24 officers and committee chairs.

## **Officers**

1. **President- Danny Stribling**
2. **Immediate Past President- Sheila Fields**
3. **1st VP- Membership- Frances Maloney**
4. **2nd VP- Communications Sharon Ogden**
5. **Treasurer - Suzanne Phelps**
6. **Secretary - Betty Rabe**
7. **Parliamentarian - Claire Lillie**
8. **Historian - Kitty Biehn**
9. **Chaplain - Betty Munion**

## **Committee Chairs**

1. **Legislative - Dr. James Warner**
2. **Communications/Email - Sharon Ogden**
3. **Membership/Volunteer Services - Frances Maloney/Patsy Bolch**
4. **Members Name Tags - Patsy Bolch**
5. **Retirement Education TBD**
6. **Member Benefits - Carolyn Taylor**
7. **TRTF Representative - Jan Batson**
8. **Greeters - Carolyn Taylor**
9. **Reservations - Suzanne Phelps**
10. **Email Connections - Sharon Ogden**
11. **Scholarships - Betty Munion**
12. **Door Prizes - Lynne Blinka**

**Legislative-** Dr. James Warner recognized State Representatives Kyle Kacal and John Raney for their continuing support of public education and retired school personnel. The Raise Your Hand Texas organization has also recognized both representatives for their work in public education. Dr. Warner encouraged members to spread the word regarding Proposition 9 on the November ballot to pass a COLA for retired teachers.

**Program-** State Representative Kyle Kacal, representing District 12 for the past 10 years, gave a very informative presentation on various concerns on state issues. He encouraged passage of all of the propositions on the November ballot. The Legislature will be called back into session by the governor in mid October to discuss private school vouchers and teacher pay raises.

**Recognitions-** President Stribling recognized the following members for their dedication to BCRS with a delicious Bundt cake.

1. Marion King - she has signed up 19 new members
2. Dale Schafer- he and his wife have made recycled bags and cards for many years to benefit TRTF. Also for his setting up our list server.
3. Sharon Ogden for her countless hours and dedicated service for our website, newsletter, yearbook and transferring member information to a new computer program.
4. Sandra Petty read a short poem celebrating life and teachers. She encouraged support for TRTF, the Children's Book Project and the Scholarship Fund.

**Membership-** 1st Vice President Frances Maloney reported 288 state and local and 39 state only members. 4 members joined today making a total of 331 members.

**Member Benefits-** AMBA representative Sandy Hazelwood gave a brief presentation on the many benefits offered for retirees.

**Door Prizes-** Lynne Blinka drew tickets for the seasonal door prizes.

**Other Business-**

1. The October meeting will be on October 25th. Blake Jennings with the OnRamp organization will make a presentation.

**Submitted by,**  
**Betty Rabe**  
**Secretary**

# TRS 2023 Fall Update to Retirees

**TRS Pension Trust Fund:** At a funding period of 28 years the fund is actuarially sound as of the Feb. 28, 2023 actuarial valuation. There is \$184 billion in the fund as of now.

**88th Regular Legislative Session:** TRS received over \$12 billion in state revenue for the pension trust fund, health care programs and benefit enhancements. This includes a one-time appropriation of \$5 billion for the stipends and COLAS provided by SB 10(88R) and HJR 2 (88 R).

## **SB 10 and HJT 2 Benefit Enhancements:**

- Stipends: One-time stipends will be paid to eligible annuitants in Sept. 2023.
- COLA : One time COLA's will be paid to eligible annuitants in Jan. 2024 if HJR 2 is approved by TX voters in November.

**Senate Bill 1854: Optional Vision and Dental Coverage:** Optional benefit for TRS retirees who are eligible for TRS-Care; although they do not have to be currently enrolled in TRS-Care coverage. There will be an open enrollment for retirees to elect coverage. No special enrollment event for retirees to return to TRS-Care medical and pharmacy coverage if they previously terminated that coverage. Enrollment to begin in fall of 2024 with coverage starting on Jan. 12, 2025.

**TRS Medicare Advantage:** Premiums and benefits will not change. TRS-Care Medicare Advantage provides health coverage for participants with Medicare.

**Pharmacy Benefit Transition to Express Scripts:** ESI will become the new pharmacy benefit manager of the TRS-Care Program on Jan. 1, 2024 and you will receive a new pharmacy drug card in Dec. 2023. This applies to both TRS-Care Standard and TRS-Care Medicare Advantage.

**Pharmacies:** Most participants will not need to switch pharmacies. Before the date of the coming plan year, ESI will send a notification to the limited number of participants who will need to find new pharmacies. People using mail order pharmacies, including specialty pharmacies, will need to transition to ESI's pharmacies.

**Specialty Drugs:** Your specialty drug benefits will not change. If you take a specialty medication, you'll be able to transition to another copay assistance program with \$0 copays for formulary drugs. You can fill long-term supplies of maintenance medications (up to a 90-day supply) at certain pharmacies or through ESI's mail order service.

**Coverage:** The list of covered drugs will be similar to the previous pharmacy benefits manager. For a limited number of participants, if the new formulary does not include your current drug, your doctor will need to either transition you to an ESI-covered drug or seek ESI authorization to continue your current drug. However, if ESI does not cover your drug, they can work with you and your physician to identify an alternative therapeutic equivalent.

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



## Ready to vote??

Early Voting Begins - **October 23rd**  
General Election Day - **November 7th**

## Prop 9 Talking Points

- No TX public school retiree since 9/1/2002 has ever received a COLA. That is 70% of TRS retirees!
- Most retired teachers are not eligible to receive Social Security; therefore, a TRS pension is their primary source of income.
- The average monthly TRS annuity is just \$2,174.
- Many TRS retirees are struggling to pay their bills and are making difficult choices about food and medicine.
- A pension increase for TRS retirees is needed and is overdue.
- Prop 9 won't create a tax increase! The TX Legislature has already set aside the funds to make this happen with voter approval.
- Prop 9 has unanimous legislative support. Every single one of the members of the Senate and House voted to support this much needed retirement boost!
- All TRS retirees need and deserve an increase in their pensions!
- Prop 9 is a key step in paving the way for future benefit enhancements.

# BCRSP October Program

## Have you heard of OnRamp?

If you haven't, don't worry. You join the majority of our fellow community members who are clueless as to its existence! At our October meeting, you will get the opportunity to meet and listen to Blake Jennings, Founder and President of OnRamp, and learn about this incredible organization.



OnRamp works with advocates from local charitable, government, and religious organizations to identify people in need who are already taking significant steps towards self-sufficiency, but who need a vehicle to continue that journey. OnRamp finds reliable vehicles through purchase or donation and gifts these to their clients so they can get back on the road. They service donated vehicles free of charge for the first year. During that time they connect clients with a wealth of resources available through partnering organizations. It's not an organization of hand-outs; it's an organization of hand-ups!

**Our monthly Treasurer's report will be attached to the newsletter email that is sent to you each month from BCRSP.**



**Rep. Kyle Kacal, our Sept. guest speaker.**



**Danny Stribling thanking Dale Schafer for his years of service on the BCRSP executive board.**

**Danny Stribling thanking Marion King for bringing in a record number of new members for BCRSP!**

