



El Paso Retired Teachers Association

GRAPEVINE

September 2025 - Volume 13 - Issue 1



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello EPRTA Members and welcome to a new year of membership in our organization.

The first luncheon this year is a Celebration Luncheon of the founding of EPRTA in 1945. We will be celebrating 80 years of service in the community and honoring our founder, Laura Yarnall Warren. The Luncheon will take place on Wednesday, September 17, 2025, at the Airport Wyndham Hotel beginning at 12:00 noon. The featured speaker will be Mr. Tim Lee, Executive Director of Texas Retired Teachers Association. The deadline to make a reservation is Monday, September 8, 2025, by 5:00 pm. Members, please call or email Ceci Carpio or Eileen Hovis. All Retired Educators are also invited, and you do not need to be a member of a chapter to attend. The cost is \$28.00 payable by cash or check at the luncheon. Please call me at 817-805-1983 for a reservation.

We have invited members of Ysleta Retired School Employees Association and Lower Valley Retired Teachers Association. Registration will begin at 10:30 am. so, please come early. Spend time at the display table, visit with friends and colleagues, and select your seat. We will not be able to save places as we are expecting a large group.

The focus of the September Luncheon will be the 80th Year Celebration, and we will not have the Book Table, Raffle, nor collect school supplies. Books and the Raffle will resume at our November Luncheon.

Be sure you are keeping track of all your volunteer hours. In addition to the time you spend helping others and are not paid, your driving time counts. Jackie Morgan-Tomko will need this information at the end of the year.

Registration for the TRS-Care Health Education Benefit Fair is open on the TRS website. Registration is free. The Fair takes place at the Radisson Hotel, 1770 Airway Blvd. on Thursday, September 25, 2025. There will be presentations from 8:30 am to 12:00 noon and exhibits from 9:00 am to noon.

I hope you have enjoyed a relaxing summer and look forward to seeing you at the September Luncheon.

Anna Marie Tolland

President



IMPORTANT DATES

Sept. 1	Labor Day, No School
Sept. 16	EPISD P/T Conferences Elementary only, Early Release
Sept. 17	EPISD P/T Conferences High School only, Early Release
Sept. 17**	EPRTA LUNCHEON @ Wyndham Hotel
Sept. 18	EPISD P/T Conferences Middle School, PK-8 only, Early Release
Sept. 25	TRS-Care Health Fair @ Radisson Hotel
Oct. 8 - 10	Fall Intersession
Oct. 13 - 17	EPISD Fall Break/ District Closed
Oct. 14**	TRTA District 19 Fall Conference @ Wyndham Hotel
Oct. 23*	EPRTA Board Meeting @ New Hope Church
Oct. 31	EPISD Early Release
Nov. 11	Veterans Day, No School
Nov. 19**	EPRTA Luncheon @ Wyndham Hotel
Nov. 21	EPISD Early Release
Nov. 24- 28	Thanksgiving Break, No School
Dec. 19	EPISD Early Release
Dec. 22 - Jan 2, 2026	Holiday Break, No School

*All Board Meetings are at the New Hope Church 4801 Sun Valley, 79924

**All luncheons are at the Wyndham Hotel

THINKING OF YOU

Hank Dunbar

Jackie Morgan-Tomko

Beverley Mueller

Donnette Vollmer

EPRTA LUNCHEON

When: September 17, 2025@ noon
Location: Airport Wyndham Hotel
Program: 80th Anniversary Celebration
Featuring Mr. Tim Lee
TRTA Executive Director

Cost: \$28.00, (cash or check only)
Meal: Waldorf salad, chicken marsala with mushrooms, garlic mashed potatoes, green beans, & key lime pie
Reservation Deadline: September 8th @ 5:00pm

Call or email your reservations to:

Ceci Carpio

Eileen Hovis

**Please include your full name in the email.*

Luncheon Reservations

The reservation deadline is listed above. Members are required to call or email Eileen Hovis or Ceci Carpio to make a reservation. If you make a reservation for the Luncheon, cannot attend, and cannot cancel by the deadline, you will be responsible for the cost of the meals reserved. Please pay the Treasurer, Carlos Matinez.

TRTA PHOTO DISCLAIMER

At public TRTA events (such as convention), including at the local, district, and state levels, photos may be taken by TRTA staff and/or volunteers. TRTA may use likenesses of its members in photographs, videos, or other digital or social media ("photo") in its publications, including web-based publications, without payment or other consideration. If a TRTA member wishes not to be photographed, recorded, or appear in TRTA promotional items, the member should avoid any cameras in the area.

EPRTA WEBSITE

<https://elpasorta.wixsite.com/elpasorta/>

The link from this [Grapevine](#) may not work and you may have to copy and paste the web address.

Lila Murphy Technology Chair

EPRTA LEADERSHIP

~~For the email version of the [Grapevine](#), if the name is in blue you may click on it to send them an email~~

President: [Anna Marie Tolland](#)
1st Vice President: Angela Boyd
2nd Vice President: Connie Gray
Treasurer: [Carlos Martinez](#)
Secretary: Beverly Mueller
Past President: [Debra King Weaver](#)
President Emeritus: [Lila Murphy](#)
Chaplain: Dr. Robert Hemphill
The following members serve as committee chairs.
Book Project: Jean Lamonica & [Jackie Morgan-Tomko](#)
Community Service: [Jackie Morgan-Tomko](#)
Communication: Gloria Banister
Courtesy: [Debra King Weaver](#)
Foundation: Hank Dunbar
[Grapevine](#): vacant
Healthy Living: Ruth Frith & Angela Boyd
Legislative: [Joe Barbe](#)
Member Benefits: Art Alva
Parliamentarian: [Jackie Morgan-Tomko](#)
Protective Services: Yoli Barbe
Reservations: [Ceci Carpio](#) & [Eileen Hovis](#)
Retirement Seminar: Ruth Frith
Technology: Lila Murphy

PHONE CONTACTS FOR EPRTA MEMBERS

TRTA (trta.org)
General Questions 1-800-880-1650
TRS (trs.texas.gov)
Member Services 1-800-223-8778
Hearing Impaired 1-800-735-2989
Ombudsman, Lori LaBrie 1-833-8732331
ombuds@trs.texas.gov
TRS-Care (trs.texas.gov)
General Questions 1-888-237-6762
Standard
(Blue Cross Blue Shield). 1-866-355-5999
Medicare Advantage
(United Healthcare)..... 1-866-347-9507
Prescription Drug Coverage
TRS Express Scripts 1-844-863-5324
Long Term Care Insurance
(Genworth) 1-866-659-1970
U.S. Social Security (ssa.gov)
Customer Service 1-800-772-1213

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



The 89th Session of the Texas Lege concluded in early June 2025 with a significant number of new laws set to go into effect when the Governor (the Guv) approves and signs the bills making the laws. Most new laws become effective on September 1, but in a few cases of special need and if the bills making the laws are so written, they may become effective earlier or later. I won't try to tell you about all the new laws in this short article, but I am including a link below which you can use to see for yourself a few of the over 1,300 which made it out of the approximately 10,000 bills which were introduced.

[New Texas Laws | 2025 Legislative Update | 89th Legislature](#)

This month we're taking a look at what's happening in the Texas Legislature (Lege) as we go to press. This means that we are going from the end of the regular legislative session in June into the special sessions (SS) of the Lege which began on July 21 and have been continuing through the publication date of this issue of The Grapevine. As of this writing, the first SS is now scheduled to end on August 15, but the Governor (Guv) has stated that he will continue calling special sessions as long as it takes to get the legislation he wants. At press time, we are unable to provide you with any truly definitive information due to the nature of the special sessions, the legal processes which have become part of the Lege, the court cases which are pending and the political turmoil which is now present in this state and nation.

Why is there a SS? Special sessions of the Texas Lege can be called at any time by the Guv to deal with any agenda item(s) which he or she feels is needed. This is a power granted by the Texas constitution to the Guv alone. Frequently, the Guv will call a SS to get done what didn't get done in regular session or even to add any new item of the Guv's choosing.

Let's review the original items named by the Guv as the ones he listed as the official agenda items for the first SS following the 89th Session of the Lege in 2025. Take a look at the SS set up links:

[Proclamation calling an extraordinary session of the 89th Legislature, to convene in the City of Austin, commencing at 12:00 p.m. on Monday, July 21, 2025](#)

[Texas special session: What's on the agenda, how it works and why Gov. Greg Abbott called one](#)

As of this writing, the reason the Guv's agenda for the SS has not moved forward is the addition of an item redrawing congressional district lines (redistricting). Usually this is done after a ten-year census report and population numbers are updated. The President (Prez) has openly stated that he wants redistricting in some states done now (mid-term) so that the new districts will reflect his political party during the 2026 congressional elections, and his party will have a stronger control in the U.S. Congress. Our Guv is apparently helping the Prez's cause by adding redistricting to the SS agenda and moving it to the top of the list. The party opposite the Guv in our state Lege is outnumbered, and the only option they have to attempt to stop the redistricting is to stop the legislative process by not attending and providing a quorum for the legislative process. This has led to a tumultuous situation with the Guv and his people against the other party, with threats and attempts at both legal and criminal actions taking place. This redistricting attempt, encouraged by the Prez, where Texas is the national guinea pig, may spread from Texas to some other states. What the outcome will be remains to be seen.

Joe Barbe, Legislative Chair

SPOTLIGHT ON EPRTA



The El Paso Retired Teachers Association is celebrating the 80th Anniversary of their founding in 1945. The El Paso Retired Teachers Association (EPRTA) has the distinction of being the very first organization of retired teachers in the State of Texas. It was formed two years before the founding of the National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA) and eight years before the formation of the Texas Retired Teachers Association (TRTA) in 1953, making the El Paso group the Charter member of the state association.

It was the personality of Laura Warren that led her to found the El Paso Retired Teachers association and her reaction to experiences while teaching in a rapidly growing El Paso School District from the 1920s to the early 1940s. The El Paso School District was struggling to build enough buildings to house the students and finding the money to pay the teachers. She worked through staff layoffs in the 1920s; salary reductions over a four-year period; weeks cut off the school year and finally near the end of her retirement in 1943 the battle over pensions for retirees. This last issue was triangular, pitting the State of Texas vs. the School Boards and Administration vs. the teachers and it was a struggle throughout the mid 1930s forward. At issue was who would take responsibility? The local districts claimed no money; the state claimed no more taxation and the teachers simply wanted a resolution. The other issue was how much pension was deserved. Should teachers be required to save for their own pension. A \$40 pension was suggested and turned down.

Laura Warren was not a quiet participant in these negotiations. She actively and strongly advocated for the teachers who by law had to retire at age 70. She is specifically quoted in the newspaper in discussions with school board members and superintendents. In one discussion in 1929, when the school board president insisted that funds be allocated for buildings rather than staff she said, "Education is not a building. Education is the teacher, and the pupil taught."

It was all the above combined that led to her founding and serving as the first president of the El Paso Retired Teachers Association from 1945-1947. Her experiences with the issues that the El Paso School District was struggling through, the position of the State of Texas toward retirees and the bleak outlook she saw, her successful leadership and skills putting her into organizing and presiding in various organizations, and her public persona through her active participation in the community, all these led her to take action when she did. She faced mandatory retirement in 1944 and created EPRTA the following year.

Laura Yarnall Warren died a widow on April 5, 1960, at the age of 85. Her legacy is she created a voice for retired educators in El Paso and by extension for the State of Texas and the nation. The National Retired Teachers Association recognized her accomplishment in 1959 and of this she stated that this was the work of which she was most proud.



PROTECTIVE SERVICES

JURY SCAMS ON WEBSITES

Here's what to know:

Scammers are **still** pretending to be the police, calling to say you've missed jury duty and need to pay. But in a new twist, some scammers are now telling you to visit a website to enter your personal information — all so they can steal it and your money.

It starts with a call that sounds like it's from an officer in your local police department. (It's not.) They claim you missed jury duty (you probably didn't) and will be arrested unless you visit a website to pay a fine (still no).

They send you to a site that looks legitimate, with an official-sounding URL and government-looking seals (all fake). It'll ask you to enter your birthdate and Social Security number to "look up how much you owe." It might ask you to pay up to \$10,000 in fines on the site, or send you to a "government kiosk" (no such thing) to pay by cryptocurrency. But every bit of this is a scam.

- Real law enforcement officers won't call to say you'll be arrested or threaten to arrest you if you hang up. Even if the caller ID looks like it's coming from your local police department. (Scammers can fake it.)

- Only scammers say you can only pay with cash, gift cards, a payment app, cryptocurrency, or a wire transfer service like Western Union or MoneyGram.

If you get a call like this, hang up. Then tell the FTC at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov/report-fraud).

If you think the call could be real, don't go to the URL they give you. Instead, look up the court's real website for jury duty information or call the court directly at a number you know is correct.

*From Yoli Barbe, Protective and Informative Chair
With appreciation to the Federal Trade Commission*

HEALTHY LIVING

Keeping a Healthy Brain and Clear Mind

You can sharpen your focus and understanding with these simple daily routines that give your brain a boost. The brain is the control center of your body and influences everything from your thoughts and emotions to your memory and decision making. Like the rest of your body, your brain thrives on good consistent habits and daily care. The choices that you make every day- what you eat, the amount of exercise, how to handle daily issues, can have an impact on your brain's health and longevity.

2 ingredients that make up brain health:

- genetics- we can't alter our genes.
- lifestyle - we can alter our lifestyle.

Key Habits that can keep your brain sharp:

- sleep - it is through sleep that you rid your brain of unnecessary information and sleep is crucial to have energy.

diet - you should eat 3 balanced meals a day with the right nutrients- protein, healthy fats, and a small amount of carbs.

avoid risky behaviors- limit alcohol, avoid smoking, and wear a helmet in sports.

exercise - get your blood pumping in order for oxygen to be delivered to your brain.

stress- stress is the enemy of brain health and even though everyone experiences stress in daily life, you have to find a way to manage it, for example, with exercise.

socializing- regularly spend time with family and friends to experience connection, community, and human touch.

If you are concerned with your brain health, talk to your primary care physician.

Reference: Jeffrey Tramonte, MD, neurologist, Baylor Scott & White Clinic, Killeen. Texas.

Health Committee

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El Paso, TX 79997-3164

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EL PASO RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

July 1, 2025- June 30, 2026

Name _____ Date _____

Address_ City/State/Zip (9-digits) _____

E-mail _____ Tel. _____

Newsletters are emailed. Do you prefer your newsletter to be mailed though the US Postal Service? Yes ____ No ____
Make your check payable to EPRTA (Your check may include your payment to TRTA.)

_____ \$35.00 (TRTA) _____ \$10.00 (Local Association) = \$45. Additional Donation _____

Total enclosed: \$ _____ CASH _____ CHECK # _____

*I am a new member _____ This is a Renewal _____

**Referred by _____



Mail form to:

**El Paso Retired Teachers
PO BOX 973164**

Due to issues caused by the corona virus and budget restraints, the yearbook is no longer published.

Do you wish to allow EPRTA officers to release your phone number or email address if requested by other EPRTA members? Yes _____ No _____