

TEXAS PENSION PLANS

On the Agenda: Housing Permit Backlogs, Police and Fire Pension Fixes in Dallas

February 2, 2021, By Bill Hethcock

Mayor Eric Johnson has formed a study group to make recommendations on ways to put the Dallas Police and Fire Pension System on a better path to solvency.

The mayor has asked Bill Quinn and Rob Walters to put together a group of financial and pension professionals to study alternative solutions for improving the funding status of the pension fund.

“A shaky pension fund hurts our taxpayers and our public safety efforts. We need to be able to attract and retain the best of the best in our police and fire departments,” Johnson said in prepared remarks. “While the law says we could wait another few years to tackle this problem, we cannot afford to cross our fingers and hope for the best.”

[Dallas Business Journal](#)

Kohlberg Closes Latest Private Equity Fund at \$3.4 Billion

February 2, 2021, By Arleen Jacobius

Kohlberg & Co., a middle-market private equity firm, closed its latest fund, Kohlberg Investors IX, at \$3.4 billion.

Investors include the C\$70.3 billion (\$54.9 billion) Investment Management Corp. of Ontario, Toronto; \$21.1 billion Louisiana Teachers' Retirement System, Baton Rouge; \$15 billion Ohio School Employees Retirement System, Columbus; and \$1.5 billion El Paso (Texas) Firemen & Policemen Pension Fund.

[Pensions & Investments](#)

TEXAS ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Texas Rises to World's Ninth Largest Economy

February 1, 2021, By Strategic Partnerships Inc.

Texas entered 2021 as the world's ninth-largest economy, according to the Texas Economic Development Corporation, a nonprofit organization in partnership with the Governor's Office of Economic Development and Tourism.

Since 2015, Texas has been recognized as the world's 10th largest economy — ahead of Canada and South Korea and behind Brazil.

[Corridor News](#)

There Aren't Enough Substitute Teachers to Step in When Coronavirus Keeps Texas Teachers Out of the Classroom

February 2, 2021, By Aliyya Swaby

Texas school districts, like those across the country, are having trouble keeping their classrooms staffed as teachers stay home for COVID-related quarantine or isolation and the well of substitute teachers is drier than in past years. Like many other industries requiring in-person work during the pandemic, schools are being disrupted by the persistent employee absences and the inability to easily find replacements. School leaders are coming up with solutions on the fly: tagging in paraprofessionals and administrators to take over for teachers, combining multiple classes in a room and even reverting to virtual school for days at a time.

Texas is now requiring all school districts to offer in-person instruction with few exceptions. But school leaders and teachers know that, even with more students back in classrooms, normalcy is close to impossible until the pandemic is fully under control.

[Texas Tribune](#)

Texas is Tops in the U.S. for Commercial Development Impact

February 4, 2021, By Steve Brown

Even with the pandemic, commercial real estate development contributed more than \$65 billion to the Texas economy in 2020.

The commercial property sector's contribution to the state economy last year was up from the estimated \$54 billion in 2019, despite the economic drag of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many commercial property projects were delayed or canceled statewide because of the coronavirus outbreak.

[The Dallas Morning News](#)

NATIONAL PENSION, INVESTMENTS & LEGAL

Why the GameStop Frenzy May Hurt Retirees Along with Hedge Funds

February 1, 2021, By Greg Iacurci

Some hedge funds have sustained big losses as a result of bets against GameStop stock. Melvin Capital, for example, lost more than 50% in January.

But pension plans — which invest assets on behalf of workers like teachers and police officers — may hold big positions in hedge funds. That means a financial hit for hedge funds could spill over to workers' retirement assets.

Roughly 7% of the \$4.5 trillion in state and local pension plans are allocated to hedge funds, according to data published by the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College and the Center for State and Local Government Excellence. These plans (which don't include plans in the private sector) support 14.7 million workers and 11.2 million retirees.

[CNBC](#)

Massachusetts State Pension Fund Sees Record-Breaking Returns, Reaches All-Time High of \$86.9 Billion

February 2, 2021, By Colin A. Young

Following market volatility and uncertainty at play through much of the first half of 2020, a strong second-half performance for the Massachusetts state pension fund -- the largest six-month return in its 37-year history -- helped drive the fund up to an all-time high of \$86.9 billion by the end of 2020.

The Pension Reserves Investment Trust (PRIT) Fund saw a return of 16.4 percent from July 1 through Dec. 31, outperforming its benchmark for that period of 12.5 percent. That topped the record for a half-year return of 15.7 percent that had stood since June 1986, officials said Tuesday.

[Mass Live](#)

Ohio retired teacher group wants \$78.4 billion pension system audited

February 4, 2021, By Laura A. Bischoff

A coalition of retired teachers raised \$75,000 to hire an outside auditor to comb through the books of the State Teachers Retirement System of Ohio. The Ohio Association of Retired Teachers will hire Edward Siedle, a former Securities and Exchange Commission attorney, to conduct a forensic audit of STRS.

STRS spokesman Nick Treneff said state law requires each pension system undergo a fiduciary audit every 10 years, which STRS will begin this year. This audit will give a critical review of the system's business practices, structure and organization. Separately, STRS will undergo an actuarial audit this year.

[Journal-News](#)

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