

2023-24 Tennessee Teacher of the Year

Eligibility and Application Guidelines

The Tennessee Teacher of the Year (TOY) program recognizes and honors outstanding teachers in Tennessee. We applaud teachers who devote their professional lives to enriching the lives of Tennessee children. The goals of the program are to:

- Promote effective teaching practices by recognizing and rewarding outstanding teachers.
- Encourage participation by every school in the state so that all Tennessee teachers may be recognized and rewarded.
- Build a network of local and state corporate sponsors.
- Provide a network for teachers to share effective practices.
- Encourage a sense of professionalism in teaching.
- Encourage greater participation in building strong community-school partnerships.

Eligibility

A Tennessee Teacher of the Year candidate must:

- Be a full-time, certified, in good standing, pre-K–12 teacher in a state-accredited Tennessee public school at each stage of the recognition process (local, regional, grand division, state, and national levels).
- Spend the majority of the school day in direct instruction to students.
- Have a minimum of three years of experience as a teacher in Tennessee public schools.
- Have a track record of exceptional gains in student achievement.

Teachers of the Year at all levels must:

- Be a facilitator of learning, skilled in implementing research-based and creative teaching strategies.
- Show evidence of positive teacher effect over time related to student achievement through formal and informal documentation.
- Be able to explain, discuss, and defend a personal philosophy of teaching.
- Have a broad understanding and current trends and issues in education.
- Be poised, articulate, enthusiastic, and energetic.
- Be exceptionally dedicated to the teaching profession.
- Have a superior ability to instill in students a love of learning.
- Be recognized as leaders in the community as well as in the school.
- Show active involvement and leadership in professional development and extra-curricular activities.
- Have the respect and admiration of students, parents, and colleagues.

Part II Application Guidelines

Region-level finalists must complete the part II application to progress to the state-level selection process. Applicants should complete the online application form provided to all finalists via email by **11:59 p.m. CT on April 9, 2023**.

The online application:

- Part II of the application includes three additional written response questions, a professional resume, three letters of recommendation, a headshot, a professional biography, and a director of schools' signature page.

To save the application while completing it online:

1. Click the "Save and Resume Later" link at the bottom of the page.
2. Click "Save and get link" in the dialog box.
3. Follow the instructions to copy the link to your application. In addition, enter applicants should enter an email address in the space provided to have the link emailed. This link is needed to access the application once the browser has been exited.
4. Check your email to confirm receipt of the link before exiting the application.

*Note: This feature will save all information entered into the form **except uploaded attachments**; these will need to be uploaded just **prior to submission**. Additionally, the "Save and Resume Later" function will only save your work for **up to 60 days**.*

Below is a summary of the application components and guidelines for completing each section. Criteria used to score each section is also noted.

Basic Information

Complete this section in its entirety. Information denoted with an asterisk is **not required**. Please check for accuracy prior to submission. This section is not scored for content.*

***The Tennessee Teacher of the Year will be selected without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, or national origin, and will not be discriminated against on the basis of disability. This information will not be shared with the selection committee.**

Response Questions

Review the response questions listed at the end of the application and submit your responses in the spaces provided on the online form.

Spell check, word count, and other word processing features are not available in the online application. **Applicants are encouraged to use a word processing application to draft written responses, then copy and paste the text into the online application.** Please limit your answers to the number of words requested in each question. In order to provide all applicants with an equal opportunity, only the number of words requested will be considered.

This section will be scored based on the degree to which each response:

- adheres to standard grammar, spelling, and punctuation conventions;
- answers the question clearly and concisely; and

- provides a compelling narrative that speaks to the applicant's ability to serve as the Tennessee Teacher of the Year.

Supporting Documentation

Upload one single PDF file in the space provided on the online form.

Supporting documentation is permitted to provide additional evidence for references made in your extended responses. Some examples of supporting documentation include: student work, teacher effectiveness data, lesson plans, parent or community communications materials, etc. Please ensure all supporting documentation adheres to your school and/or district's privacy policies (i.e. media releases).

This section will be scored holistically, meaning that supporting documentation will not be given an individual score. Rather, supporting documentation will be considered when assigning an overall score for the application.

Supporting documentation is completely **optional** and choosing not to submit supporting documentation will **not** penalize the applicant in any way.

If you choose to submit supporting documentation, documentation is limited to **5 pages maximum**. Any documentation over this maximum will not be provided to reviewers.

Professional Resume

Please upload a PDF of your professional resume that includes evidence of the following components: Education, Licenses/Endorsement Areas, Professional Experience, Professional Leadership, Community Leadership and Involvement, and Awards and Recognition.

This section will be scored holistically, meaning that the professional resume will not be given an individual score. Rather, supporting documentation will be considered when assigning an overall score for the application.

Letters of Recommendation

Attach three (3) letters of recommendations that support your qualifications to be the 2022-23 Tennessee Teacher of the Year. At least one of these must be a recommendation from your principal and must cite relevant data on student achievement and gains. The remaining letters may be from a parent, colleague, administrator, or student. Each letter should not exceed one page in length. These letters must be submitted as PDF files.

This section will be scored holistically, meaning that the letters of recommendation will not be given an individual score. Rather, letters of recommendation will be considered when assigning an overall score for the application.

Professional Biography

Your professional biography should articulate your influences for entering the teaching profession and your greatest contributions and accomplishments as an educator. Please complete your professional biography in the 3rd person, as this will be used on the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) website and in other promotional materials. By completing this section, you agree that your biography can be used in TDOE materials. Please do not exceed 250 words.

This section will be scored holistically, meaning that the professional biography will not be given an individual score. Rather, the professional biography will be considered when assigning an overall score for the application.

Headshot

Attach a headshot (color, portrait orientation, 300 ppi, .jpg format).

The headshot will not be scored or provided to the scoring committee. However, applications that do not include a headshot will be deemed ineligible and will not be shared with the scoring committee. By completing this section, you agree that your headshot can be used in TDOE materials.

Signature Page

Complete and upload the [director of schools' signature page](#) to indicate the endorsement of the director of schools.

This section will be assessed for completion only. Applications lacking a signature page will be deemed ineligible and will not be shared with the scoring committee.

The online application submission deadline is 11:59 p.m. CT on April 9. Applications received after the deadline will be considered ineligible.

Tennessee Teacher of the Year 2023-24 Application – Part II

Basic Information

Applicant Information	
Applicant Name:	
Work Email Address:	Personal Email Address:

Applicant Information – <i>You are only required to complete this section again if any information in this section has changed since submitting the part I application.</i>		
*Age:	*Gender:	*Ethnicity:
Home Address:		
Mobile Phone:	TN Educator License Number:	
Active License Type:	Active License Expiration Date:	
Active Endorsement Area(s):		
Professional Association Memberships:		
Years of Experience in Present Position:		
Years of Total Teaching Experience:		
Years of Experience in TN Public Schools:		

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School Information			
School Name:	Principal:		
School Address:			
School Phone:			
Grade Level and Subject (currently teaching):			
School Profile (circle one):	Rural	Urban	Suburban
School Size (# of students):			

District Information	
District:	Director of Schools:
District Address:	
District Size (# of students):	
CORE Region:	

Response Questions

Respond to the questions below.

1. Describe a project or initiative you helped create which contributed to the improvement of overall school culture. What was your role, and what is the status of this project today? Please include evidence of student impact in your response. *Do not exceed 500 words.*
2. **LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE:** The Tennessee Teacher of the Year is a leader among their peers in and outside the classroom. This leadership is primarily realized through serving on the Commissioner's Teacher Advisory Council. The Teacher Advisory Council aims to empower members to act in the following roles:
 - a. **Leaders:** Advisory council members will be poised, engaging, and articulate advocates for the department's vision and strategic priorities.
 - b. **Ambassadors:** Advisory council members will represent Tennessee and the education profession by engaging with internal and external stakeholders.
 - c. **Advisors:** Advisory council members will use their expertise to provide feedback to inform the department's initiatives, resources, and policies.
 - d. **Champions:** Advisory council members will promote and uphold best practices in their schools, districts, communities, and regions.How have your previous experiences prepared you to engage and lead within these domains?
3. The Tennessee Teacher of the Year serves as a spokesperson and representative for teachers and students across the state. If you are selected as the Tennessee Teacher of the Year, what will be your primary message? What will you communicate to your colleagues and to the general public? *Do not exceed 750 words.*

Supporting Documentation

Supporting documentation is **optional**. You will **not** be penalized for choosing not to upload supporting documentation. If you choose to submit supporting documentation, documentation is limited to **5 pages maximum**. Any documentation over this maximum will not be provided to reviewers.

Please combine all supporting documentation into one single PDF file labeled with the following filename: LastName_TOY_SupportingDocs.pdf. You can find out more about how to combine PDF files [here](#).

Professional Resume

Please upload a PDF of your professional resume with the following components:

Education - List the educational institutions and degrees you have obtained beginning with the most recent, in a bulleted list, as follows:

- Year, Degree, Institution, City, State

Licenses & Endorsements - List your valid license and all valid endorsements (*based on the information listed in [TNCompass](#)*) in a bulleted list as follows:

- Month, Year, License
 - Endorsement code, endorsement name

Professional Experience - List your job responsibilities using bullet points using the format below. Please limit to no more than five for each position.

- Years, Position, Employer
 - Job duties
 - Job duties

Professional Leadership Positions - List any professional leadership positions you have held, in reverse chronological order, in a bulleted list as follows:

- Year(s), Position, Institution or Organization

Community Leadership/Involvement - List any leadership positions you have held or community organizations you have been involved with, in reverse chronological order, in a bulleted list as follows:

- Year(s), Position, Institution or Organization

Awards and Other Recognition - List any awards or recognition (i.e., district Teacher of the Year, published articles, presentations, etc. related to your teaching experience) you have received for your work as an educator, in reverse chronological order, in a bulleted list as follows. You are not required to attach hard copies of certificates or awards.

- Year, Award, Institution or Organization

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