



Department of
Education

Tennessee Supervisor of the Year: Guidebook for Applicants

Tennessee Department of Education | December 2023



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Introduction

Congratulations on your nomination for Tennessee Supervisor of the Year!

Each year, an outstanding public school supervisor earns distinction as the Tennessee Department of Education Supervisor of the Year (SOY). This honor is reserved for leaders who demonstrate superior abilities in:

- managing and motivating students and faculties;
- evoking high standards;
- demonstrating a commitment to excellence;
- implementing innovative programs; and
- having a track record of exceptional gains in student learning.

In order to be considered for the state-level award, a Supervisor of the Year candidate must:

- have a minimum of five (5) years of professional experience in public schools.;
- have a minimum of one (1) year of experience as an administrator; and
- at all levels of recognition, must be employed as a supervisor in a Tennessee public school system.

This guidebook is provided to help you complete each component of the application process.

With any questions, please contact the Tennessee Supervisor of the Year Coordinator, Sarah Brown, at Sarah.Brown@tn.gov.

Sample Timeline

This timeline has been constructed based on the typical dates for the Supervisor of the Year process. To view the timeline for the current selection cycle, please visit the [Tennessee Supervisor of the Year website](#).

Date	Action
Dec. 17	Supervisor of the Year nominees are submitted by Directors of Schools and designees.
Jan. 5	Supervisor of the Year nominees receive notification email from state Supervisor of the Year coordinator.
Jan. 15	Weekly Office Hours Begin
Jan. 30	Webinar #1: Overview of the Principal and Supervisor of the Year Process
Feb. 6	Webinar #2: Approaching the Part I Principal and Supervisor of the Year Application
March 4	District-level Supervisor of the Year nominees submit the part I application.
April 12	27 region-level Supervisor of the Year semi-finalists are announced, and semi-finalists receive part II of the application.
April 23	Webinar #3: Approaching the Part II Principal and Supervisor of the Year Application
June 2	Region-level Supervisor of the Year semi-finalists complete and submit the part II application.
June	9 region-level Supervisor of the Year finalists are announced, and finalists receive instructions for completing the interview.
July	Finalist interviews are held.
November/December	Three Grand Division Supervisors of the Year and Tennessee Supervisor of the Year are announced at the annual Tennessee Principal and Supervisor of the Year Banquet.

Benefits of Participating in the Tennessee Supervisor of the Year Selection Process

By participating in the Tennessee Supervisor of the Year program, district leaders have the opportunity to:

- be celebrated and honored for making exceptional district-wide gains with students,
- expand knowledge of education policy and participate in local, state, and national policy discussions,
- serve as spokesperson and advocate for the education profession, and
- become inducted into an amazing network of statewide awardees, and become connected to an impactful, ongoing body of work that engages you as a professional long after an awardee's service year.

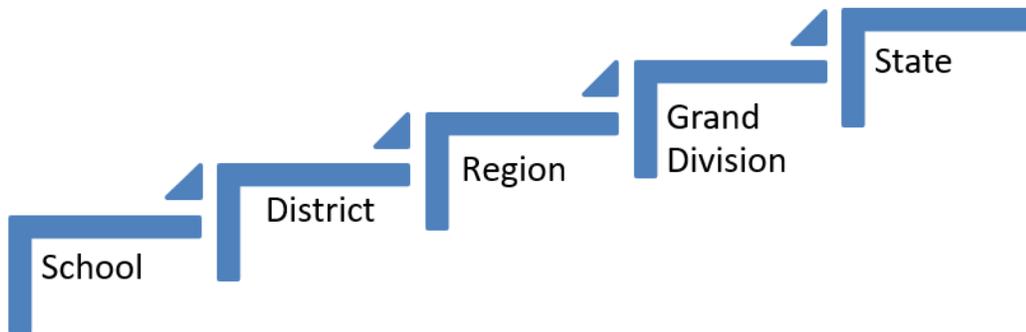
What are the benefits to districts?

By participating in the Tennessee Supervisor of the Year program, districts have the opportunity to:

- attract local, state, and national attention,
- allow the district's honorees to serve as a voice for the education profession, thus elevating the district and attracting educators and leaders to the district, and
- celebrate excellence in education by honoring hard working, successful district leaders.

Overview of the Tennessee Supervisor of the Year Selection Process

Supervisors of the Year are selected competitively through five cycles: district, region, grand division, and state.



District-Level Selection

To participate in the Tennessee Supervisor of the Year process, you will first need to be selected as your district Supervisor of the Year representative. Each district selects their Supervisor of the Year representatives through a unique process – if you are interested in learning more about your local process, please contact your district office.

Each district is eligible to nominate one supervisor to participate in the region-level selection process, and nominations are due in December each year.

Region-Level Selection

After you have been nominated at the district-level, you must complete the Part I application to continue to the region-level selection process.

You can find the Part I application on the Tennessee Supervisor of the Year [website](#), as well as in the direct email sent to you by the Tennessee Supervisor of the Year coordinator.

The Part I application contains four sections:

- basic information about you and your district,

- two written response questions,
- one video response question, and
- an optional opportunity to submit up to 5 pages of supporting documentation.

After all applications are submitted, regional scoring committees will identify three region-level semi-finalists in each of the nine regions. All region-level applicants will be notified of their application decision following the completion of scoring.

Grand Division-Level Selection

If you are selected as a region-level semi-finalist, the Tennessee Supervisor of the Year coordinator will provide the Part II application to you via email following region-level selection. To move forward in selection, you must complete the Part II application.

The Part II application contains:

- two new written response questions,
- one new video response question,
- an opportunity to submit additional supporting documentation,
- a professional resume,
- two letters of recommendation,
- a professional biography, and
- a professional headshot.

The Part II application will be scored by a statewide scoring committee who will identify one finalist in each region of the state for a total of nine region-level finalists. All applicants will be notified of their application decision following the completion of scoring.

State-Level Selection

The nine region-level finalists will then complete an interview, which may be held in-person or virtually. During the interview, finalists will be asked several questions regarding their leadership, educational philosophy, and key education issues.

A statewide scoring committee will utilize both the application and interview components to identify one school leader to represent each of the East, Middle, and West Grand Divisions as well as one school leader to represent the entire state as the Tennessee Supervisor of the Year.

Written Response Guidance

The written responses account for roughly half of the points available in application scoring, and as such, it is critical that the written responses represent your best qualities as an exceptional leader. This section provides several useful strategies to ensure your writing best captures your story in addition to exemplars from previous application cycles. It is important to note, however, that the tips and suggestions included in this guidance are not to be considered “magic,” and the exemplars do not represent the sole way to address the written response prompts. There is not a formula and there aren’t right or wrong answers. Using these suggestions does not guarantee a specific outcome in the selection process. However, this guidance can help you to reflect on the application and encourage fruitful conversations about the essays.

The Application Extended Response Prompts

- How do you strategically engage with community stakeholders to support your district’s mission, vision, and goals? *Do not exceed 750 words.*
- How do you define diversity within your district and community? In this context, what does it mean to have a commitment to diversity as a district leader? How have you applied this commitment in your district and community? *Do not exceed 750 words.*
- Describe a project or initiative you have been involved in which contributed to the improvement of your district. What was your role, how did you collaborate with others, and what is the status of this project today? Include evidence of impact in your response. *Do not exceed 500 words.*
- Effective leaders continually reflect on their performance and seek feedback to improve their practice. As a leader in your district, describe how you reflect on your performance and seek feedback to improve your practice. What is an area of opportunity that you have identified for your professional growth, and how do you plan to improve within this area? *Do not exceed 500 words.*

Criteria Used to Evaluate the Prompts

Overall, each response question will be assessed according to the degree to which the 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 Supervisor of the Year.

Additionally, the application will be evaluated holistically to assess the degree to which the applicant demonstrates superior abilities in:

- managing and motivating students and faculties;
- evoking high standards;
- demonstrating a commitment to excellence;
- implementing innovative programs; and
- having a track record of exceptional gains in student learning.

Though a strong response may look different for each extended response prompt, these guiding criteria can help you ensure that the components of your application complement one another and give the most comprehensive view of your excellence as a leader.

Questions to Address Common Missteps

- Are you answering the question?
 - Take the time to unpack the question and think about what it is asking.
 - Ask someone else to read your response and ask if they can determine the question being addressed.
- Are you answering **all parts** of the question?
 - Use the unpacking strategy below to ensure that you plan for and address all parts of the prompt with sufficient detail.
- Are you giving a comprehensive picture of yourself as a leader throughout all responses?
 - Try to avoid using the same example or idea in your response to each question. Your goal is to give a complete picture.
- Are you writing to show what leadership and learning looks like in your school?
 - Write to **show not tell**. Use examples and tell stories of things that students, parents, or colleagues have said or done.
 - Show how your work influenced the learning and growth of others through examples and evidence. Highlight your accomplishments rather than being humble about them.
 - Write “through” the word count in your draft. Often, it takes writers some time to get to the best part of their responses, so begin by writing more than you need to and then strategically edit to meet the word count.

Unpacking the Application Prompts

Unpacking is a useful writing preparation strategy that can ensure you successfully plan for and address all aspects of a writing prompt with sufficient detail. Often, it can be easy to allocate a significant portion of your allotted word count to one aspect of the prompt, leaving the other aspects unanswered and ultimately sabotaging your success. A sample “unpacking” for each

application prompt is provided below. Again, it is important to note that using this strategy and these samples will not guarantee a particular outcome in selection. Instead, this strategy should serve as a solid foundation to ensure that the personal experiences and instructional practices you describe in each response are represented in a way that allows reviewers to focus on evaluating your innovation and excellence as an educator.

Question 1

How do you strategically engage with community stakeholders to support your district's mission, vision, and goals? Do not exceed 750 words.

[How do you strategically engage with community stakeholders..] What actions do I take to engage with the community around my district? I should describe any community engagement activities or strategies I employ. [...to support your district's mission, vision, and goals?] I should articulate my district's mission, vision, and goals. I should clearly connect the community engagement I described to the mission, vision, and goals. Where possible, I should include stories, anecdotes, data, and other types of evidence to show the impact of community engagement on my district.

Question 2

How do you define diversity within your district and community? In this context, what does it mean to have a commitment to diversity as a district leader? How have you applied this commitment in your district and community? *Do not exceed 750 words.*

[How do you define diversity within your district and community?] I should clearly articulate what diversity is in my district and community context, particularly for students and teachers. Is my district or community diverse in race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, or disability? [In this context, what does it mean to have a commitment to diversity as a district leader?] In my role, what does it look like to serve the population I described in the first part of the question? In addition to diversity, I should also address the themes of equity and inclusion, as well as why these themes are important to my context and education. [How have you applied this commitment in your district and community?] I should describe and provide evidence of specific actions I have taken as a result of

my commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. What stories, anecdotes, data, or other evidence can I provide to show the impact of my commitment on my district and community?

Question 3

Describe a project or initiative you have been involved in which contributed to the improvement of your district. What was your role, how did you collaborate with others, and what is the status of this project today? Include evidence of impact in your response. *Do not exceed 500 words.*

[Describe a project or initiative you have been involved in which contributed to the improvement of your district.] What have I done to improve my district within my role? When I describe the project or initiative, I want to focus on sharing the ways this project or initiative contributed to our district's success. [What was your role, how did you collaborate with others, and what is the status of this project today?] Here, I want to specifically define my role and tasks I completed as part of the project or initiative. I need to be clear about how I collaborated with others and the value of this collaboration—for my practice, the project, and/or the district overall. I need to be explicit about the result of the project or initiative, how it is being carried forward and/or improved, and my current role in the project. [Please include evidence in your response.] Here – or earlier when I'm describing the project – I need to make the connection between the project, my role, and ultimately the impact on my district. How do I know the project was successful? Put differently, how did students, teachers, or community members explicitly benefit from this project or initiative? What stories, anecdotes, or data can I share that shows this success?

Question 4

Effective leaders continually reflect on their performance and seek feedback to improve their practice. As a leader in your district, describe how you reflect on your performance and seek feedback to improve your practice. What is an area of opportunity that you have identified for your professional growth, and how do you plan to improve within this area? *Do not exceed 500 words.*

[As a leader in your district, describe how you reflect on your performance...] How do I assess and reflect on my own performance? I should describe specific strategies and tools I use to measure my own success as it relates to my specific role and focus area. [...and seek feedback to improve your practice.] How do I solicit feedback from others to reflect on my performance? I should clearly articulate who I seek feedback from, what feedback I seek, and how I solicit that feedback. [What is an area of opportunity that you have identified for your professional growth...] I should identify an area of opportunity in my professional practice where I could continue to improve and grow. I should reflect on why the area I identified is an area of opportunity and connect to specific feedback and reflection where possible. I should clearly articulate an understanding of why I should grow in this area to benefit my own professional growth and the success of my district. [...and how do you plan to improve within this area?] I should describe a plan to improve within this area that includes specific action steps I will take to grow.

Written Response Examples

The written responses below were taken from high-performing applications in the state selection processes. Following each exemplar, a commentary is provided to identify why the response is considered an exemplar.

Question 1 Examples

How do you strategically engage with community stakeholders to support your district's mission, vision, and goals? Do not exceed 750 words.

The following response was taken from the application of a 2021-22 Tennessee Supervisor of the Year finalist.

With the student population I am honored to serve, I use a tiered approach for engaging community stakeholders to meet the District's mission, vision, and goals, of providing an innovative and exemplary education for all students in a safe, high-performing environment that encourages expansion of their horizons, achievement of their potential, and living lives of integrity.

Tier 1 engagement reflects universal, high quality connections with community stakeholders garnering mutually beneficial outcomes for both the District and the community. One such initiative I have coordinated is our annual Kids Kan Food Drive program where students bring donated food items to schools for delivery to the local Food Bank. This program exemplifies

our service-learning mindset, strengthens the bond between District and community, and meets food insecurity needs in our District.

Additionally, in promoting a positive culture and climate, I have partnered with the US District Attorney's Office and the local Department of Homeland Security to provide parent workshops on internet safety, bullying and harassment, and trafficking prevention. Our most recent presentation was attended by over 100 caregivers. Subsequently, I have maintained these partnerships between local law enforcement and the District to provide annual training on these same topics in our secondary schools.

I have collaborated with emergency service providers in conducting Active Threat safety drills for our District, school-based, and local private school personnel. Response to this training has been overwhelmingly positive based on session evaluation data. Exit surveys express a heightened level of staff confidence in implementing Active Threat safety protocols in their schools.

Implementing Tier 2 involves collaborating with local organizations such as Coats for Kids to secure outerwear for those in need during the winter months, the Red Cross for students and families who experience shelter losses, and with local grief counseling resource centers (Camp Good Grief and Camp Braveheart) for students experiencing loss of a loved one.

I facilitate professional development for school counselors, social workers, nurses, administrators and teachers to build capacity on topics such as self-harming, suicide prevention, substance abuse prevention, trauma-informed practices, and behavior management. As a result of these professional development opportunities, trend data collected over the last five years shows increases in the number of students in crisis being identified and resources put in place to support them.

I manage our Handle with Care program, a trauma-informed collaboration between local law enforcement and the District to support students exposed to violence. This program assists students by alerting principals and school counselors when students return to school after a traumatic event.

As supervisor of the District's Alternative School, I chair the Alternative School Advisory Board, whose members consist of local business partners, parents, District and school staff. The Advisory Board targets several District goals simultaneously, including the assurance of open and transparent District business, commitment to academic achievement for all students, and creation of an innovative environment that promotes success. The advisory board initiatives include mentoring and monthly presentations by community speakers across academic, career and personal-social domains. Presenters are acquired from the health department, state park, government, hospitals, banks, the community college, Tennessee Achieves, a local veteran's organization, and Coordinated School Health for promoting cultural competency and awareness of community resources for students and staff.

Highly targeted, Tier 3 focuses on intensive, individualized supports, including parent conferences, to address student mental health, safety, and physical needs and for making connections with appropriate resources. I recently organized a conference with a foster parent, our District Social Worker, Department of Children Services and Child Protective Services case managers to address the significant emotional and behavioral concerns of an Alternative School student in the foster care system. This collaborative considered resources and placement options to meet the presenting needs of this student.

As the Alternative School supervisor, I conduct parent and student orientations prior to admission to the Alternative School to develop and implement individual support plans for students. Alternative School data reflects significant decrease in high school dropout rates, successful reintegration to base schools, and a recidivism rate of less than four percent. One of my professional highlights includes the Alternative School recognition in 2019 by the Tennessee Department of Education as obtaining Exemplary Status in their Exemplary Practices in Alternative Education Recognition Program.

My practice is deeply rooted in the process of carrying out the district's mission by partnering with our community stakeholders. They have provided invaluable support in empowering our students to be productive citizens who are resourceful lifelong learners able think critically. Our community stakeholders are indeed a "pearl of great price."

Commentary:

The response begins by clearly stating the district's mission and how the applicant uses a tiered approach to engaging with the community to support this mission. The applicant then describes how they engage with families, communities, and students in pursuit of that mission by using numerous specific examples organized in the three tiers. The applicant even provides specific data and anecdotes to show that the engagement strategy is successfully in furthering the district's mission. In addition to responding to each component of the question, this response also shows evidence of the Supervisor of the Year criteria:

- The applicant demonstrates superior abilities in motivating students and faculties as evidenced by the positive success data of student programs and faculty professional development.
- The applicant demonstrates superior abilities in implementing innovative programs as evidenced by the engagement strategies employed for families and community partners.

Question 2 Example

How do you define diversity within your district and community? In this context, what does it mean to have a commitment to diversity as a district leader? How have you applied this commitment in your district and community? Do not exceed 750 words.

The following response was taken from the application of a 2020-21 Tennessee Supervisor of the Year finalist.

Before one can say they are committed to diversity, I believe that they should examine what both diversity and committed mean to them, based on their own worldview and the culture of their district and community. Diversity should not be limited to simply just one type of difference. Instead, it should be seen as a multifaceted layer of many differences that we as humans celebrate amongst ourselves such as age, gender, race, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, religion, economic status, ethnicity, culture, and even perspectives. To be committed requires loyalty, devotion, and courage to possibly make a change, if needed, in ourselves or in a practice if it helps our students, staff, and community. Commitments means that if things get challenging along the way, there is still a drive toward the overall goal. In the words of Peter Drucker, "Unless commitment is made, there are only promises and hopes... but no plans." This can be detrimental to any organization or relationship, as without a plan one cannot move forward.

Before one can commit to appreciating, learning about, or gaining any empathy toward diversity, a person must first examine themselves and work toward self-awareness of their own diverse qualities and how these may impact their role and dedication to commitment. It would be ignorant to say people do not have beliefs or bias toward others based on their diverse qualities. Growth and change can only happen when there is ownership, courageous conversations, and a true dedication to working with our youth, as they are our best chance for making a difference in some of the inequalities that we currently see in our nation today. Additionally, there must be respect for events that have happened in the history of our world, as our past will always impact our future.

I have served as the District Supervisor for 504, Title IX, and Bullying/Harassment in my district and been an advocate for mental health in a counseling role for over 20 years. As a newly formed district, I designed and developed our process, procedures, and documents for 504, Title IX, and investigations, prevention programs, and interventions for Bullying/Harassment, and all crisis responses for students. I have worked with our local mental health community partners and designed a resource guidebook specifically for our families. It is imperative that with all forms of diversity we seek to find ways to move away from stigmas that exist, as our students reach out to us for help and direction. In an earlier question, I mentioned two ladies who speak each year to our IMPACT program students. These are students who have discipline records and many have substance use issues. One of the ladies had been struggling with her son's death, as he died from an overdose. She said that others judge his death differently because it involved an overdose of drugs. One of my community roles is at our local church running a grief support group for parents who

have suffered the loss of a child. Many echo the same sentiment, especially with suicide. Consequentially, the relationships that you form with parents, teachers, and other agencies is what will move others to grow in their mindsets, healing, and overall wellness, as all of us make up the community.

Commitment to our students is a personal issue for me, as I was a target for bullying most of my childhood and some of my adulthood as well. I know first-hand how traumatic it is for a young child to feel secluded and have a lowered sense of self. That is why I feel motivated to ensuring that all students feel safe, protected, and supported regardless of the color of their skin, their physical appearance, or their mental health diagnosis. Perhaps the best way I show my commitment to this work is by providing education to others in the areas of civil rights, bullying, mental health and just this past school year, I added more open conversations around diversity. I trained teachers, principals, central office staff, counselors, plant managers, school resource officers, and others in our district. I was amazed at some of the conversations, as staff felt included and valued. It takes courage to change and is not always easy, however our future in this work depends on it. This is how you demonstrate dedication to making a difference and creating a culture of support.

Commentary:

The applicant begins by identifying a very clear definition of diversity and connecting the definition to their commitment to diversity in their role as a supervisor. For the applicant, this commitment first begins with self-awareness and personal development. Next, the applicant describes how s/he shows a commitment to diversity, first by building relationships with diverse student populations and stakeholders and then by teaching others in the district to embrace diverse needs. Throughout the response, the applicant provides specific examples and connects the importance of diversity to student well-being. In addition to responding to each component of the question, this response also shows evidence of the Supervisor of the Year criteria:

- The applicant demonstrates superior abilities in managing and motivating students and faculties through specific engagement with affinity groups and professional learning to develop the district staff's understanding of diversity.
- The applicant demonstrates superior abilities in demonstrating a commitment to excellence particularly as it relates to instilling diversity, equity, and inclusion in the district.
- The applicant demonstrates superior abilities in implementing innovative programs as evidenced by the specific strategies employed to maximize diversity, inclusion, and equity in the applicant's district.

Question 3 Example

Describe a project or initiative you have been involved in which contributed to the improvement of your district. What was your role, how did you collaborate with others, and what is the status of this project today? Include evidence of impact in your response. Do not exceed 500 words.

The following response was taken from the application of a 2021-22 Tennessee Supervisor of the Year finalist.

In April 2004, my district hired me as the first nursing supervisor to evaluate and develop the mission, vision, and goals for the nursing team. Immediately, I queried administrators and school nurses who provided valuable information and insight. The outcome of these discussions led to the identification of a medical and educational variance. Each student in the district had access to a nurse while at school; however, not every student had access to a medical provider for additional care outside of school hours. Therefore, the only medical care that some students received was the care provided by the school nurse. This disparity cultivated the nursing vision for every student in the district to have access to a medical provider during school hours. This vision for the inception of telemedicine services would bridge the gap between academics and healthcare.

Various paradigms of healthcare had already progressed toward telemedicine; schools, however, had not made this transition. This innovative model for healthcare would require a plan to engage the collaboration of community stakeholders and legislators in order to be successful. This vision and paradigm shift would transform medical care for students and promote school attendance. Subsequently, I developed a Logic Model for telemedicine services that included the mission, vision, and objectives for the inception of this project. This model received attention with the election of a new state representative in 2009. As an outcome of several meetings, the state representative requested that I create an official proposal to share with legislators. The development and advancement of the TennTelMed proposal would become the champion for the inception of Tennessee law that would enable commercial billing of telemedicine services for schools throughout the state. This would allow students to receive reimbursed medical care at school, the point of care.

During this timeframe, I also shared this proposal with the largest pediatric provider group in the region. I was transparent regarding the lack of school funding available. These pediatricians agreed with and supported the vision for telemedicine in schools. These community stakeholders agreed to form a unique partnership with the district for the inception of telemedicine and earmark all pending expenses. The district became one of the first in the nation to start a telemedicine program in 2013. The impact of this project would decrease medical disparity as well as bridge the gap between academics and healthcare.

Both I and state representative continued efforts to advocate for students throughout the state. On April 14, 2014, Governor Bill Haslam signed the Tennessee law that would allow commercial insurance to pay for telemedicine.

The inception of the 2021-22 school year will highlight the 8th year that the district's registered nurses have facilitated telemedicine visits throughout the district. Outcome measurements have provided evidence of the positive impact this project has made on promoting attendance thus enhancing academic success. This vision for telemedicine has augmented the methodologies that bridge the gap between medical diversity, disparity, and education for all Tennessee students.

Commentary:

The applicant clearly identifies implementing telemedicine in their district as a project they led. The response describes exactly what role the applicant played in implementing telemedicine and how they collaborated with a local legislator and pediatric care provider to further success. The response details specifically the impact that the project has had on both the district and schools across the state. The applicant also shares that this project continues to impact students in the district today, highlighting how the project has improved attendance data. In addition to responding to each component of the question, this response also shows evidence of the Supervisor of the Year criteria:

- The applicant demonstrates superior abilities in evoking high standards through developing an innovative proposal to improve student well-being.
- The applicant demonstrates superior abilities in demonstrating a commitment to excellence as evidenced by the development and achievement of an ambitious goal for all students to have access to medical care during school hours.
- The applicant demonstrates superior abilities in implementing innovative programs as evidenced by the project impacting not only the district, but schools across the state.
- The applicant demonstrates superior abilities in having a track record of exceptional gains in student learning as evidenced by the attendance improvements as a result of this project.

Question 4 Example

Effective leaders continually reflect on their performance and seek feedback to improve their practice. As a leader in your district, describe how you reflect on your performance and seek feedback to improve your practice. What is an area of opportunity that you have identified for your professional growth, and how do you plan to improve within this area? Do not exceed 500 words.

The following response was taken from the application of a 2021-22 Tennessee Supervisor of the Year finalist.

In August 2021, I will enter my 30th year in education. I have been blessed throughout my career with mentors who invested in my potential, encouraged my leadership, and supported me as I grew in experience and age. I have earned degrees as well as a plethora of on-the-job experiences throughout my career. However, I firmly believe that no matter how much practical experience one has collected; it is essential to continue to learn, grow, and gather tools for the toolbox of effective servant leadership.

My success is measured by student success - first and foremost. I know every action I take should be in service to ensuring the best possible opportunities for student growth and

achievement. Therefore, student outcomes will always be the first point of reflection for me. I look at trends in formative and summative data to find bright spots we should highlight. I reflect on areas of growth to ascertain next steps - shifting instructional materials, targeting professional learning, human capital decisions, or other supports we should adjust to optimally serve our students.

I keep up with current best practices and am open to innovative strategies to meet our students' needs. As educators, we must exhibit a continuous improvement mindset and willingness to learn. Reflective practice is critical where the priority is preparing students for the future. Listening to feedback and problem-solving with more "knowledgeable others" are qualitative ways I gather information to guide my growth and continuous learning.

I am resolute in my purpose to provide the rigorous instruction our students need to be successful in the future. Sometimes, my sense of urgency and task-driven personality cause me to overlook the necessity of celebrating success along the way. I am always thinking about next steps because there is much work still to be done, which means I often miss opportunities to celebrate. I know this is an area of growth in my leadership. Celebrating success - even the smallest improvements - matters in achieving our district goals.

I have come to understand there are social-emotional needs of not only students but also adults in our school community. Celebrating successes in our district is critical to our mission of building individual and collective efficacy of students and adults. I have worked on this by purposefully attending to building personal relationships so I may find more opportunities to celebrate successes of individuals as well as collective efforts of grade levels, departments, and school communities. I have developed our Teacher Leader Connection so we may lift our teacher leaders by recognizing their successes thereby multiplying their impact across our district.

My leadership journey is a work in progress - but I believe in learning for everyone at all stages in their career. It is my responsibility to model lifelong learning, embrace mistakes, and revel in victories along the way. As the great golfer, Phil Mickelson, said upon his historic win at the 2021 PGA Championship, "you can accomplish anything at any age if you are willing to put in the work."

Commentary:

The applicant clearly identifies how they have utilized mentorship, additional education, professional development, research, student success data, feedback, and reflection to improve their practice throughout the course of their career. Through these means, the applicant identifies an area of opportunity in celebrating successes, and the response indicates that the applicant has deeply reflected about his/her practice to identify this as an area of opportunity. Additionally, the applicant identifies how improvement in this area will benefit both the district's success and the applicant's professional growth. The applicant clearly articulates steps that have already been taken to grow within this domain as well as future actions that will be taken. In addition to responding to each component of the question, this response also shows evidence of the Supervisor of the Year criteria:

- The applicant demonstrates superior abilities in managing and motivating faculties through engaging as evidenced by the preliminary steps the applicant has taken to develop teacher leaders.
- The applicant demonstrates superior abilities in demonstrating a commitment to excellence as evidenced by reflecting on the need to improve in building relationships and celebrating successes.

Video Response Guidance

The video response accounts for approximately one quarter of the points available in application scoring. This section provides several useful strategies to ensure your video best captures your story in addition to exemplars from previous application cycles.

The Application Video Response Prompts

- What is the story of your district and how have you played a role in that story? Include evidence to support your response. *Please ensure the video does not exceed 5 minutes.*
- **EDUCATION ISSUES AND TRENDS:** It is essential that educators be knowledgeable of current state and national issues.
 - What do you see as a major education issue today?
 - Identify an issue that you consider to be the highest priority or most important for your district.
 - Share with us any ideas or strategies that you have for both bringing attention to the issue and addressing it.
Please ensure the video does not exceed 2 minutes.

Criteria Used to Evaluate the Prompts

Overall, each video response question will be assessed according to the degree to which the response has the following desirable qualities:

- Delivery is made according to instructions (topic and time limit).
- Candidate displays qualities of confidence, optimism, and sincerity.
- Message is well organized, easy to follow and understand, and relevant.

Additionally, the application will be evaluated holistically to assess the degree to which the applicant demonstrates superior abilities in:

- managing and motivating students and faculties;
- evoking high standards;
- demonstrating a commitment to excellence;
- implementing innovative programs; and
- having a track record of exceptional gains in student learning.

Though a strong response may look different for each video response prompt, these guiding criteria can help you ensure that the components of your application complement one another and give the most comprehensive view of your excellence as a leader.

Video Recording Best Practices

It is important to note that the video response will **only be scored based on the message shared**, rather than the visual content of the video. However, the best practices below can help you ensure that your video can be easily accessed and scored by the review committee.

- Ensure reviewers have viewing access throughout the review period.
 - To create a link to your video, consider uploading to [YouTube](#), [Google Drive](#), [Dropbox](#), or a similar file-sharing website. Set the viewing privacy settings and/or permissions to “Anyone with a Link” to ensure reviewers can access your video. Do not delete or move your video until you have received a notification from the Supervisor of the Year coordinator that scoring has been completed.
- Maximize the quality of your audio.
 - Clear audio is critical to a great video. If possible, be sure to record in a quiet room and utilize earbuds with a microphone. If you are not able to use an external microphone or earbuds, stay within 12 inches of the microphone on your recording device.
- Follow all school- and district-level media policies.
 - If you choose to include photos or videos of students, please ensure you are following all school- and district-level media policies. Students featured in your video must have a current media release on file.

Questions to Address Common Missteps

- Are you answering the question?
 - Take the time to unpack the question and think about what it is asking.
 - Ask someone else to listen to your response and ask if they can determine the question being addressed.
- Are you answering **all parts** of the question?
 - Use the unpacking strategy below to ensure that you plan for and address all parts of the prompt with sufficient detail.
- Are you giving a comprehensive picture of yourself as an educator throughout all responses?
 - Try to avoid using the same example or idea in your response to each question. Your goal is to give a complete picture.
- Are you telling the story of what leadership and learning looks like in your school?
 - Again, it is important to **show not tell**. Use examples and things that teachers, students, parents, or colleagues have said.
 - Show how your work influenced the learning and growth of others through examples and evidence. Highlight your accomplishments rather than being humble about them.

Unpacking the Video Prompts

Unpacking is a useful preparation strategy that can ensure you successfully plan for and address all aspects of the video prompt with sufficient detail. A sample “unpacking” for each prompt is provided below.

Question 1

What is the story of your district and what role do you play in that story? Include evidence to support your response. Please ensure the video does not exceed 5 minutes.

[What is the story of your district...] How would I describe my district to someone who is unfamiliar with it? I should provide a basic description of my district: What is the community like? What are the students like? What are the faculty like? I should identify relevant history of my district, including specific challenges or barriers that my district has faced or is currently facing. [...and what role do you play in that story?] I should articulate how I have played a part in that story. This may include information about how my role has changed if I started in a different position before becoming a supervisor. I should aim to articulate how my district’s story has changed for the better as a result of my leadership. [Include evidence to support your response.] Where possible, I should include stories, anecdotes, data, and other types of evidence to show the impact of my leadership on my district.

Question 2

EDUCATION ISSUES AND TRENDS: *It is essential that leaders be knowledgeable of current state and national issues.*

- a. *What do you see as a major education issue today?*
- b. *Identify an issue that you consider to be the highest priority or most important for your school.*
- c. *Share with us any ideas or strategies that you have for both bringing attention to the issue and addressing it.*

Please ensure the video does not exceed 2 minutes.

[What do you see as a major education issue today?...] I should clearly identify and articulate an issue I see in education today. What is the root cause of that? How does it impact students? What is

my role as an educator and leader to help resolve or alleviate this issue? [...Identify an issue that you consider to be the highest priority or most important for your school...] What is an issue my school struggles with? What is my role in resolving this issue? Why is it important to focus on this issue? How will focusing on this issue help students? [... Share with us any ideas or strategies that you have for both bringing attention to the issue and addressing it]. What are some strategies that I have implemented to address these issues? How have they helped? What issues have I run into?

Additional Documentation Guidance

Additional documentation accounts for the remainder of the points available in application scoring and encompasses all application materials submitted outside of the written responses. Additional documentation is evaluated holistically to assess the degree to which the applicant demonstrates superior abilities in:

- managing and motivating students and faculties;
- evoking high standards;
- demonstrating a commitment to excellence;
- implementing innovative programs; and
- having a track record of exceptional gains in student learning.

This section provides several useful strategies to ensure your additional documentation complements your written responses and presents a comprehensive picture of your excellence as a leader.

Optional Supporting Documentation

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

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. To submit supporting documentation, upload one single PDF file in the space provided on the online form.

Additionally, applicants should consider the following best practices when compiling supporting documentation:

- ***Directly connect supporting documentation to the written responses, but do not rely on supporting documentation to make your case:*** Supporting documentation should not be a substitute for high-quality explanation in the narrative nor stand alone as extraneous information. Further, it is not required that applicants “prove” any of the information provided in the narrative, such as significant accomplishments. Therefore, effective supporting documentation should **extend** a reviewer’s understanding of your written responses by directly

connecting to aspects of the narrative where additional evidence (such as a communication plan or teacher handbook) may make your writing clearer.

- **Ensure each page of the supporting documentation demonstrates the Supervisor of the Year criteria:** In some cases, you may identify that the written response prompts do not permit you to share characteristics of your leadership or specific experiences that fully demonstrate your ability to serve as Supervisor of the Year. Like the best practice above, effective supporting documentation can serve to **expand** your reviewer’s understanding of your ability to meet the Supervisor of the Year criteria. To ensure reviewers understand what they are viewing and why it is important, be sure to provide notes with relevant information and context for any materials not directly addressed in the narrative.

Resume

Approaching the resume for the Supervisor of the Year application requires a different perspective than tailoring a resume when seeking a new job opportunity. The primary goal of the resume is to provide information about how your previous experiences have positioned you as a strong candidate for Supervisor of the Year. With this goal in mind, you should think strategically about which of your experiences (and further: what aspects of your experiences) align to the Supervisor of the Year criteria, and your resume should highlight these experiences.

At a minimum, the professional resume includes the following required components:

- **Education:** In this section, you should list any degrees that you have earned or are currently completing.
- **Licenses/Endorsement Areas:** In this section, you should list your valid license and all valid endorsements (*based on the information listed in [TNCompass](#)*).
- **Professional Experience:** In this section, you should list your most recent jobs and associated responsibilities. Be sure to note significant accomplishments in each role as well as key features of each position.
- **Professional Leadership:** In this section, you should list any professional leadership positions you have held. Professional leadership may include district-level responsibilities such as leading professional development or region-level responsibilities such as serving on your area’s Supervisor Study Council.
- **Community Leadership and Involvement:** In this section, you should list any leadership positions you have held or community organizations you have been involved with. This might include non-profits, faith-based organizations, or service organizations.

- **Awards and Recognition:** In this section, list any awards or recognition you have received for your work as an educator. This may include your district-level Supervisor of the Year award, any published articles, presentations, or featured news items.

Applicants should also consider the following best practices when completing the resume:

- Because your contact information is included elsewhere in the application, you can save space by leaving out your address and contact information on the resume.
- Similarly, since the process includes letters of recommendation, you can also save space by leaving out any references.
- Emphasize skills and experience related to the Supervisor of the Year criteria.
- Write your responsibilities using the Action + Results format and begin with an action verb to describe the type of work you did. For example: Led district improvement team to analyze and accelerate student learning, which resulted in a 15% increase in student proficiency on the TNReady.
- Be sure to define all acronyms. For example: District representative for the Tennessee Education Association.
- Proofread carefully to ensure your resume has no spelling, grammar, or formatting errors.

Letters of Recommendation

The letters of recommendation serve as a critical external perspective of your excellence from colleagues, supervisors, parents, students, and community members. Applicants should think strategically about who will provide the most compelling and clear evidence that the applicant demonstrates the qualities of a Supervisor of the Year awardee. It is recommended that applicants share the Supervisor of the Year criteria with those who will be writing the letters of recommendations as well as identify several key criteria for each letter writer to focus on.

In general, every letter should:

- Be one page in length.
- Be typed.*
- Be a PDF.
- Include evidence of the applicant's strength in on or more of the Supervisor of the Year criteria.

*Applicants may submit handwritten, translated, or transcribed letters if the letter is from a student, parent, or adult caregiver. Transcribed/translated letters must include the name and signature of the transcriber/translator and may not be transcribed/translated by the applicant.

Reviewers will pay special attention to how an applicant's accomplishments have impacted success in the current role, particularly regarding student, teacher, and principal success. In the letters of recommendation, this can be documented either anecdotally or with statistical evidence. A mix of both makes for a stronger application. Examples of success can come in many forms. Some examples are:

- Increased teacher recruitment or retention rates
- Increased participation in enrichment activities
- Increased efficiency managing programs or budgets
- Increased teacher or principal confidence and self-esteem

To reduce the impact of implicit bias on our awards and recognition programs, we may redact identifying information from letters of recommendation before the selection committee begins their review. To support this effort, we encourage applicants and recommenders to use words and phrases like "our school," "our community," "a colleague," etc. instead of naming particular places or individuals.

Professional Biography

The professional biography is used by the Tennessee Department of Education when responding to requests for information about finalists as well as in public releases and promotional materials. The professional biography should articulate your influences for entering the teaching profession and your greatest contributions and accomplishments as an educator. The professional biography must not exceed 250 words and must be written in the 3rd person.

When writing the professional biography, consider the following questions:

- Why did I seek a career in education?
- What experiences led me to the place I am today?
- What is my leadership philosophy?
- What degrees do I hold?
- What are my greatest contributions to the profession of education?
- What are significant accomplishments I have made in the profession of education?
- What awards or recognition have I received?

Example:

Dr. Kay Martin has been an educator since 1999 when she started as an eighth-grade Language Arts teacher at Walter J. Baird School in Lebanon. She joined Rutherford County Schools in 2002 as a Language Arts teacher at Siegel Middle School and later taught at LaVergne Middle School, where she became an assistant principal in 2006. Martin served as principal at Walter Hill Elementary in 2009,

joined Central Magnet School in the fall of 2013, and moved to the district level in 2017 to serve as Rutherford County's Secondary Coordinator. She was named DNJ Ruthie Favorite Principal of the Year in 2010 for Rutherford and Cannon County, served as a Principal Common Core Coach twice for the state of Tennessee, and has been a leadership mentor with Lipscomb University and Tennessee Tech University for aspiring administrators. Dr. Martin has had 14 years of administrative experience ranging in all grade levels PreK-12 and at various academic settings including a Title I school, an all-academic magnet school, and now serving the fourth largest district in TN. Throughout her life, Dr. Martin's heroes have always been her teachers. Their belief in her and encouragement inspired her to reach beyond her ambitions and opened her world. She now has a strong desire to invest in students and teachers, as others did for her, and to motivate them to dream without limits and become more than they could ever imagine. Dr. Martin will always consider her greatest contribution to be her students and their legacy.

Additional Opportunities for Support

To further support Supervisor of the Year applicants, the department will offer a webinar series as well as weekly office hours throughout the application period. Leaders can register [here](#) to attend any of the webinar sessions below. All webinars will be recorded and available on the Supervisor of the Year [website](#).

- **Jan. 30 from 3:30-4:30 p.m. CST:** Overview of the Principal and Supervisor of the Year Process
 - This one-hour webinar will orient applicants to the Principal and Supervisor of the Year process. Applicants will also hear from the 2020-21 and 2021-22 Tennessee Principals of the Year and Supervisors of the Year. Lastly, applicants will have an opportunity ask the Principal and Supervisor of the Year coordinator any questions.
- **Feb. 6 from 3:30-4:30 p.m. CST:** Approaching the Part 1 Principal and Supervisor of the Year Application
 - This one-hour webinar will dive more deeply into the components of the part 1 Principal and Supervisor of the Year applications.
- **April 23 from 3:30-4:30 p.m. CST:** Approaching the Part 2 Principal and Supervisor of the Year Application
 - This one-hour webinar will dive more deeply into the components of the part 2 Principal and Supervisor of the Year applications.
- **Weekly Office Hours:** Held on Mondays from 3:30-4:30 p.m. CST from January 22 to June 27. **Access office hours [here](#).**

Additional Resources

Please visit the Supervisor of the Year [website](#) for the following additional resources:

- **Selection Process Timeline:** This document contains important dates and deadlines for the current year selection cycle.
- **Part I Application:** This document contains all questions listed in the electronic application. Applicants are encouraged to use this document to draft and revise application responses prior to submitting via the online form.
- **Part II Application:** This document contains all questions listed in the electronic application. Applicants are encouraged to use this document to draft and revise application responses prior to submitting via the online form.