



Webinar 2: Overview of the Teacher of the Year Program Application Part 1

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Agenda

1. Overview of Part I Application Components
2. Approaching the Response Questions
3. Approaching the Optional Supporting Documentation
4. Part I Application Scoring
5. Q&A





Program Goals

The goal of the Tennessee Teacher of the Year program is to **recognize** and **celebrate** the wealth of **excellent teachers** that exist across the state.

We applaud teachers who devote their professional lives to **enriching the lives of Tennessee students** and who demonstrate exceptional **gains in student achievement**.

Learning Objectives

- Following the completion of this training, learners will be able to:
 - Identify the components of the Tennessee Teacher of the Year part 1 application
 - Identify best practices for approaching each component





- Please remain on mute throughout the session until asked to unmute and share.
- If you have any questions or comments throughout the presentation, please put them in the chat.





Answer in the Chat:

What is one thing you hope to gain from this session?

Region-Level Selection



After you have been nominated at the district-level, **you must complete the part I application by Feb. 3, 2025**, to continue to the region-level selection process. *The part I application can be found on the Tennessee Teacher of the Year website, and in a direct email sent to you by the Tennessee Teacher of the Year coordinator.*



DESCRIPTION: The part I application contains basic information about yourself and your school, three written response questions, and an optional opportunity to submit up to 3 pages of supporting documentation.



SCORING: After all applications are submitted by Feb. 3, regional scoring committees will identify one region-level semi-finalists in each of the three grade bands for each of the nine regions for a total of 27 region-level semi-finalists across the state. All region-level applicants should be notified of their application decision by April 1, 2025.

Part I Application Components



Basic Information

- *Not Scored*
- Includes demographic information like age, gender, and ethnicity
- Includes information about your teaching background, including licensure, years of experience, and professional memberships
- Includes information about your school and district, such as size, region, and location

Response Questions

- *Scored*
- Includes three questions regarding student success, a personal project or initiative, and how education transcends your classroom
- Responses are limited to 500 words each.

Supporting Documentation

- *Optional*
- Used to provide additional evidence for references made in your extended responses
- May include student work, teacher or student data, lesson plans, communication materials, etc.
- Limited to 3 pages total



Answer in the Chat:

True or False – Basic information will not be shared with the review committee.



Answer in the Chat:

True– Basic information will not be shared with the review committee.

Response Questions



1. How do you know that your students are successful in your content area specialty as a result of your instruction? Include evidence, such as data, stories, or anecdotes, to support your response. *Do not exceed 500 words.*
2. 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.*
3. How do you ensure that education transcends the classroom? Describe specific ways in which you deliberately connect your students with the community. How do you collaborate with others (e.g. colleagues, students, families) in this work? Please include evidence of student impact. *Do not exceed 500 words.*

Response Questions: Answering 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 to ensure that you plan for and address all parts of the prompt with sufficient detail.

Response Questions: Answering Common Missteps **TEACHER** OF THE YEAR

- 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 writing to show what learning looks like in your classroom?
 - Write to **show not tell**. Use examples and 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, then strategically edit to meet the word count.



Answer in the Chat:

True or False – Responses must cite achievement data to receive a favorable score from the review committee.



Answer in the Chat:

False : Responses must cite evidence data to receive a favorable score from the review committee.

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 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).
 - It is important to note that the application, including supporting documentation, will be redacted for identifying information to reduce potential unconscious bias. As such, it is best to ensure your supporting documentation is still easily understood without school logos, names, or specific addresses.
- 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 **3 pages maximum** for the part 1 application.

Optional 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.
 - 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 student work) may make your writing clearer.
- ***Ensure each page of the supporting documentation demonstrates the Teacher of the Year criteria:***
 - In some cases, you may identify that the written response prompts do not permit you to share characteristics of your teaching or specific experiences that fully demonstrate your ability to serve as Teacher 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 Teacher 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.



Answer in the Chat:

True or False : Choosing not to submit supporting documentation will negatively impact your application score.



Answer in the Chat:

False : Choosing not to submit supporting documentation will not negatively impact your application score.

Part 1 Application Scoring



- 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 Teacher of the Year.
- Additionally, the application will be evaluated holistically to assess the degree to which the applicant:
 - Is an expert in their field who guides students of all backgrounds and abilities to achieve excellence.
 - Collaborates with colleagues, students, and families to create a school culture of respect and success.
 - Deliberately connects the classroom and key stakeholders to foster a strong community at large.
 - Demonstrates leadership and innovation in and outside of the classroom walls that embodies lifelong learning.
 - Expresses themselves in an engaging and articulate way.



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Questions?

Additional Resources



- **[Tennessee Teacher of the Year Website](#)**: Includes specific program criteria with resources for applicants and 2025-26 cycle-specific information.
- **Weekly Office Hours**: Held on Mondays from 3:30-4:30 p.m. CST from January 6 to February 3. Access office hours [here](#).



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Answer in the Chat:

As a result of this webinar, what next step will you take to prepare for the Tennessee Teacher of the Year process?





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Thank You!

For questions, contact Sarah Brown at
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