



Application New York State Teacher of the Year 2026

Round 1: Due February 7, 2025

The New York State Teacher of the Year program, now in its 56th year, is administered by the New York State Education Department. It is affiliated with the National Teacher of the Year program, which is administered through the Council of Chief State School Officers and sponsored by leading education associations. Teacher of the Year is the oldest and most prestigious teacher recognition program in the nation.

Recognition awards or other support for New York State Teachers of the Year and/or their schools are provided by New York State United Teachers (NYSUT); New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc. (NYS PTA); New York State Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development (NYSASCD); New York State Association of Teacher Educators (NYSATE); New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).

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Program Benefits and Responsibilities

The New York State Teacher of the Year speaks on educational topics to organizations and groups, engages with other state teachers of the year, and traditionally participates in recognition events with the President of the United States at the White House. The New York State Teacher of the Year participates in state and national professional development and teacher leadership opportunities.

Selection Criteria

A nominee for New York State Teacher of the Year:

- Is a skilled and dedicated professional guiding students to reach their potential;
- Demonstrates leadership and innovation that embodies lifelong learning in the classroom and community;
- Is poised and articulate regarding current education issues;
- Has New York State permanent or professional teaching certification within his or her current teaching area;
- Is working directly with students (minimum .5 of a 1.0 FTE) in a NYS public school at any grade level/subject area PreK-12;
- Has a minimum of five years of current teaching experience;
- Plans to continue in an active teaching status during and after the year of recognition; and
- Is rated “effective” or “highly effective” on his or her annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) or the equivalent.

Nomination

A teacher may be nominated by any person within the school or community, including parents, students, business leaders, school administrators, colleagues or may self-nominate.

- If you are nominating a teacher, complete the [Teacher of the Year Nomination Form](#) and forward as indicated.
- If you are self-nominating, complete and submit this application.

The application process for New York State Teacher of the Year contains the following four rounds. Applicants will be contacted after each round and notified if they have been selected to advance to the next round.

Round 1: Required information	Due: 02/07/25
Round 2: Response questions	Due: 03/28/25
Round 3: Site visit to applicant’s school/classroom	April - May 2025
Round 4: Personal interview with selection committee	June 2025 (Albany)

ROUND 1: Required Information

Due February 7, 2025

*Electronic applications are preferred and should be sent as **one** pdf file to toty@nysed.gov. Hard-copy applications may be sent to Teacher of the Year Program, NYSED, Office of Standards and Instruction, EBA 860, 89 Washington Ave., Albany, New York 12234. **Applications received after February 7, 2025, will not be considered.** Round 1 applications are reviewed by the Teacher of the Year Advisory Council. Selected applicants will be notified and asked to complete **Round 2**.*

1. **Completed Basic Data Sheet with all required signatures** (at the end of this document).
2. **Letter of Introduction** (2 pages max) is prepared and signed by your current building administrator or superintendent and provides basic information and reasons for nominating the applicant.
3. **Resume** (2 pages max) Organize your resume information in the following six categories:
 - Education
 - Certifications
 - Experience
 - Leadership
 - Awards
 - Other Recognition
4. **Professional Biography** (max 250 words) Complete your professional biography narrative in 3rd person. Include a description of your path to becoming an educator. The biography may be used in promotional materials for New York State Teacher of the Year (NYSTOY) and/or speaking engagements.
5. **Teacher of the Year Message** (max 750 words) The NYSTOY will serve as spokesperson and representative for teachers and students. What is your message? What will you communicate to your profession and to the public?
6. **SIGNED and DATED Letters of Support (3 required/1 optional from student)**. Attach letters, written within last 12 months. Maximum of 2 pages each. Provide letters as follows:
 - One from a current **colleague**
 - One from a current **administrator who did not write the Letter of Introduction**
 - One from a **parent or community leader**
 - **OPTIONAL**: One additional letter by a **student/former student**. Letter may be handwritten in ink.

DO NOT INCLUDE LINKS, PHOTOS, WORK SAMPLES OR ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ROUND 2: Response Questions

Due March 28, 2025

Applicants moved to Round 2 of the application process will be notified on or before March 7, 2025, and asked to submit their response to the following four questions as one pdf file to toty@nysed.gov.

For each of the four questions below, tell your personal story, reflecting your original work and state why you'd be an excellent representative as the 2026 NYS Teacher of the Year.

Text only. Please do not include links, photos, work samples, etc.

Defining Lesson (750 words max) - Describe a lesson or unit that defines you as a teacher. How did you engage all students and influence your students? How are your beliefs about teaching demonstrated in the lesson or unit?

Impact on School Culture (500 words max) - Describe your involvement in a project or initiative which contributed to the improvement of the overall school culture. What was your role, how did you involve others and where is the project/initiative today? Include evidence of student impact.

Connecting Students and Community (500 words max) - Describe specific ways in which you connect your students and their families with the community. Include evidence of student impact.

Education Issues and Trends (500 words max) - Discuss a major public education issue today and why it is important to you. How are you leading from your classroom about this issue? As the ambassador of New York State's 200,000 teachers, you should steer clear of specific affiliations.

ROUND 3: Site visit to applicant's school/classroom

April - May 2025

The New York State Education Department and the Teacher of the year Committee will conduct site visits for up to 5 selected top applicants. NYSED will contact applicants if they are chosen for a site visit.

ROUND 4: Personal interview with selection committee

June 2025 (Albany)

The New York State Education Department and the Teacher of the Year Committee will conduct interviews with up to 5 selected applicants. The 2026 New York State Teacher of the Year and one or more finalists will be identified and contacted in Summer 2025.

New York State Teacher of the Year Basic Data Sheet

First Name:	Last Name:
*If your certification is under a name other than the one above, please include that as well:	
Home Address:	
Preferred Phone (Indicate: Home/School/Cell):	Email:
1. Your current teaching position/title: 2. Number of years in your current position: 3. Total years of teaching experience since issuance of teaching certificate: 4. In a typical day, what percentage of your full-time position is spent as a classroom teacher:	
<p>I agree that any or all the enclosed materials (except my home address and telephone number) may be shared with persons interested in promoting the Teacher of the Year Program. This includes photos from STOY program events.</p> <p>I hereby certify that all materials and statements in this application are true to the best of my knowledge and all responses represent my original work.</p>	
_____	_____
Signature of Applicant	Date

School Name and Address:		
School Enrollment:	District Enrollment:	School Location:
Rural/Urban/Suburban/other		
Name of Current School Principal:		
Principal phone #:	Principal E-mail:	
Signature of Current School Principal:		
District Name and Address:		
Name of Current School Superintendent:		
Superintendent phone #:	Superintendent E-mail:	
<p>The Teacher of the Year nomination is consistent with the District's policies for teacher recognition and represents an important opportunity for the District to take notice of an exceptional member of our faculty. The District also understands that, if the nominee is selected as the New York State Teacher of the Year, the nominee will miss school days, not to exceed thirty, and the District is responsible for substitute costs.</p>		
Signature of Current School Superintendent:		