



Updated Process as of May, 2025



2026 Information

Teacher of the Year Program

The Teacher of the Year (TOY) Program recognizes the contributions of a certified classroom teacher in pre-kindergarten through grade twelve. There are three awards for which a teacher may be eligible:

- District Teacher of the Year (DTOY)
- Wyoming Teacher of the Year (WTOY)
- National Teacher of the Year (NTOY)

Each DTOY awardee is eligible to be considered for the WTOY award. Candidates wishing to be considered for both the DTOY and WTOY awards must complete this application in its entirety.

IMPORTANT: The DTOY candidate must complete the electronic application and submit it to the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) no later than **Friday, June 27, 2025**. Upon receipt of this application, the DTOY will be considered for the WTOY.

DTOY Selection Process

Each school district determines its own nomination and review process. Teachers can be nominated from each school in the district, or districts may choose to nominate teachers from one small, one medium, and one large school within the district. The method for selecting candidates is determined by the district, and teachers can be nominated by parents, students, colleagues, principals, and so on. The DTOY review committee may consist of building principals, district superintendents, colleagues, student organizations, building staff/faculty, the general public, and local legislators (relatives of the DTOY candidates should be excluded from the review process). Districts may only submit one name as their DTOY. The DTOY must be an active teacher through December 2025.

DTOY applicants must submit their own application to the WDE no later than **Friday, June 27, 2025**. Only the application for the DTOY awardee should be submitted to the WDE. Only one (1) application per district will be accepted.

The DTOY awardees from each district will be considered for the WTOY award. Additionally, the WTOY awardee will be considered for the NTOY award. The timeline and selection process for the WTOY and NTOY awards is detailed in this application information packet.

Duties & Responsibilities of the WTOY

The successful candidate who serves as the Wyoming Teacher of the Year must maintain his/her current employment position. If the WTOY is selected as the National Teacher of the Year, *they will be released from classroom responsibilities during the year of national recognition.*

Being named Wyoming Teacher of the Year comes with the significant responsibility of representing the entire teaching profession in Wyoming.

The WTOY acts as:

- A liaison between the teaching community, Wyoming Legislature, WDE, districts, and communities.
- An education ambassador to businesses, parents, service organizations, and media.

- A resource on the state of the profession; to be available for workshops and conferences across the state.
- An education leader involved in teacher forums and education reform.

The WTOY is expected to attend both state and national events such as educational meetings, conferences, and workshops. Since the WTOY will be requested to attend many events and make presentations and speeches during the year, they must be poised, articulate, and have the energy to withstand a busy schedule.

The WTOY automatically becomes the nominee for the NTOY Program, which is a project of the [Council of Chief State School Officers](#).

Selection Criteria for WTOY

A candidate for WTOY is a DTOY who teaches pre-kindergarten through grade twelve, who is planning to continue in an active teaching status.

The candidate for WTOY has the respect and admiration of their colleagues and:

1. Is an expert in their field who advances growth for students of all backgrounds and abilities.
2. Builds collaborative relationships with colleagues, students, and families to create a school culture of equity and success.
3. Deliberately connects the classroom to the community to impact student growth and learning.
4. Demonstrates leadership and innovation in and outside of the classroom walls that embodies lifelong learning.
5. Expresses themselves in an engaging and clear way, conveying the lived classroom experience to a variety of audiences.

Contents of a Complete Application

Districts may submit one DTOY to be considered for the WTOY award. The DTOY must submit the complete [electronic application](#) to the WDE by the deadline.

The following items must be submitted electronically* to the WDE by the deadline:

- Section 1: Teacher Information
- Section 2: District Information
- Section 3: School Information
- Section 4: Professional Biography
- Section 5: Response Questions
- Section 6: Recommendation Letter
- Section 7: Demographic Information (will not be given to the selection committee)**

Incomplete application packets and late submissions will NOT be considered for the WTOY or NTOY award. Please note sections that go over the maximum word/page requirement may lose points.

Additional information will be requested from the WTOY for the submission of the NTOY application. The WDE TOY Coordinator will reach out for this information once the WTOY is selected.

* If you or your district is unable to submit the application electronically, you must let the WDE TOY Coordinator know prior to the application deadline to make other arrangements.

** The WTOY will be selected without regard to race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, and will not be discriminated against on the basis of disability.

Level Up

All DTOYs and their principal are eligible to be a part of the [Level Up Leadership Program](#). The Level Up Leadership Program seeks to elevate Wyoming's education professionals by providing leadership development to an annual cohort of Wyoming's leading educators. Upon completion of this program, these educators will be better prepared to tackle the daily challenges of providing an exceptional education to Wyoming students as well as become leaders in their community.

This program will help education leaders build relationships that cross district lines, increase the knowledge of what is going on in other parts of the state, and help these leaders develop strategies to continue to engage with their community.

The Level Up Leadership Cohort is made up of the District Teachers of the Year (DTOY) and their principals, Milken Educator Award winners, and Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching (PAEMST) recipients and finalists.

WTOY Selection Process

All DTOY applications received by the deadline will go to the WDE selection panel for review. The scoring of each application will be based on this [rubric](#). The selection panel will individually score each application. Each application will be redacted to remove the name, district, city, and school. Grade level and subject area will not be redacted as they give context to the answers. The top three applications will become finalists.

The three finalists will be scheduled for virtual interviews where the entire selection panel will ask questions about their teaching style and practices. The questions for this interview will NOT be given out ahead of time. In addition, the finalists will be asked to present a 5-7 minute keynote presentation conveying their platform message. The interviews and keynote will be scheduled at the same time, the finalist may select which they would like to do first.

The selection panel will score both the interviews and the keynote individually. Scores will be combined to select the Wyoming Teacher of the Year. If there is a tie, the selection panel will meet to discuss and select a recommendation. Final approval will be made by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

NTOY Application and Necessary Approvals

If selected as the WTOY, the following process and approvals are required for the NTOY application:

1. The WDE TOY Coordinator will reach out to the WTOY to complete the entire NTOY application which is more in-depth than what is in the WTOY application. The WTOY will write the application sections in word or Google docs and share it with the TOY Coordinator.
2. The WDE TOY Coordinator will move the word/Google Doc answers into the electronic NTOY application for the WTOY. Only the WDE Coordinator is given edit access to the NTOY application.
3. The WDE TOY Coordinator will send an acknowledgment and electronic signature request to:
 - The State Superintendent of Public Instruction.
 - The WTOY District Superintendent.
 - The WTOY Principal.
4. The WDE TOY Coordinator will send a copy of the entire application packet for review by the WTOY awardee. The WTOY will need to thoroughly read and review the application. The WDE TOY Coordinator will make any revisions requested. Once the WTOY has approved the final application packet, the WTOY will electronically sign off.
5. Once all necessary approvals have been received, the WDE TOY Coordinator will submit the NTOY application.

Timeline and Selection Process

Timeline	Description
A deadline established by your local school district	Complete any needed paperwork required by your district to apply for the Wyoming Teacher of the Year. The DTOY must be approved by the District Superintendent.
June 27, 2025	Each DTOY submits the online application to the WDE. All applicants become candidates for the WTOY award.
July 1 through September 2025	WDE Team moves through its selection process for WTOY.
No later than September 1, 2025	Each participating district publicly announces its DTOY awardee. The local school district may choose to announce its DTOY any time before this date but no later than this date. Please note: a DTOY that becomes a finalist for WTOY will be notified sometime between July and August.
September 2025	2026 WTOY is announced by the WDE at the Wyoming Education Summit. The date of the conference is not yet set.
October 31, 2025	Application for the National Teacher of the Year (NTOY) award is due. This is submitted by the WDE on behalf of the WTOY.
December 2025	The National Selection Committee moves through its selection process for NTOY and selects the top four finalists.
December 2025	Four NTOY finalists, their state superintendent, and state teams of the four states selected will be notified by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).
February 2026	The four NTOY finalists will be brought to Washington, D.C., where they will meet with the Selection Committee in a variety of situations, including individual interviews.
April/May 2026	The 2026 National Teacher of the Year will be announced and honored in Washington, DC.

The following pages contain an outline of the information required for the online application. Please note that only electronic submissions will be accepted unless pre-arranged with the WDE TOY Coordinator prior to the submission deadline.

It is recommended that you keep a Word or Google Document copy of the application in case you encounter issues with the electronic submission process. If issues arise, please contact the WDE TOY Coordinator for assistance.

2026 WTOY Application

Section 1: Teacher Information

Full Name	
Preferred Name	
Personal Address*	
City	
State	
Zip Code	
Personal Phone Number*	
Personal Email*	
Work Phone*	
Work Email*	
Subject Area(s) Taught	
Grade Level Taught	
Years in Current Position*	
Total Years in Education*	
PTSB ID Number*	
Highest Level of Education*	

Professional Association Memberships*

- ☐ NEA (including state and local affiliates)
- ☐ AFT (including state and local affiliates)
- ☐ ASCD
- ☐ National Council of Teachers of English
- ☐ National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
- ☐ National Science Teachers Association
- ☐ National Association for Music Education
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Other
- ☐ None of the Above

I am a National Board Certified Teacher.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ In progress

** Information is not shared with the selection committee.*

Section 2: District Information

District Name	
District Superintendent Name	
District Superintendent Email	
District Address (ex. 1408 District Lane, Cheyenne, WY 82002)	
Will you remain in the same District for the 2026 TOY term?	
Will you remain an active teacher for the 2026 TOY term (until December 2025)?	

Section 3: School Information

School Name	
School Principal Name	
School Principal Email	
School Address (ex. 1408 School Lane, Cheyenne, WY 82002)	
School Phone Number	

School Type*

- ☐ Traditional Public School
- ☐ Charter Public
- ☐ Private
- ☐ Other

School Location*

- ☐ Rural
- ☐ Suburban
- ☐ Urban
- ☐ Other

** Information is not shared with the selection committee.*

Section 4: Professional Biography & Photo

Write your professional biography in the third person, as this will be used in promotional materials for WTOY and NTOY speaking opportunities and engagements. By completing this section, you agree that your biography and headshot can be used in DTOY, WTOY, and NTOY materials (maximum 250 words).

In your bio, please include the following items:

- The grade level and subject you currently teach.
- The school in which you currently teach, including city and state.
- All degrees you hold include the institution where they were received (i.e., Bachelor of Science in Finance from the University of Connecticut).
- Any awards or points of pride.
- A sentence or two about pedagogical priorities.

In your bio, please adhere to the following style guidelines:

- Spell out your degrees (i.e., Bachelor of Art not BA).
- Only capitalize a subject area when it's a language (i.e., capitalize English but not calculus).
- Use your first and last name in the first reference, but your last name only on second and subsequent references. Spell out all acronyms the first time they are used.

Professional photo*:

- Format of jpeg or png.
- Name the file with your first and last name.
- Portrait orientation.
- Quality resolution, at least 300 ppi.

** Information is not shared with the selection committee.*

Section 5: Response Questions

Respond to the following questions, highlighting your personal story, and why you believe you should be the 2024 Wyoming Teacher of the Year. Please indicate evidence of student impact. Do NOT include external links. Maximum word counts are indicated in parentheses. Each question refers back to the aligned criteria on page 2.

1. Describe a project or initiative you have been involved in that deliberately creates culture in your classroom or school. Describe how you build and use relationships to collaborate and teach students of all backgrounds, abilities, and identities. What is the status of the project today? (maximum 750 words)
2. Describe specific ways in which you deliberately connect your students with the community. Show how these community connections dissolve classroom walls and are used to impact student learning and success. (maximum 750 words)
3. Describe a time when you grew as a teacher leader and life-long learner as a result of being an advocate in your school, state, or beyond. Describe your advocacy, how it helped you grow and how it impacted students. (maximum 750 words)
4. As the 2026 Wyoming Teacher of the Year, you serve as a spokesperson and representative for all teachers and students. What is your message? What will you communicate to your profession and to the public? (maximum 750 words)

Section 6: Recommendation Letter

Attach one (1) letter of recommendation that supports why you should be the Wyoming Teacher of the Year. The recommendation can be from a parent, colleague, administrator, or student. (maximum one page).

Please save your letter as follows:

- LastName_District_Recommendation1

Section 7: Candidate Demographics

The information on this section will not be shared with the Selection Committee. It is used for program contact information and the CCSSO database. The Wyoming Teacher of the Year will be selected without regard to race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, and will not be discriminated against on the basis of disability.

Do you speak a language other than English fluently?*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If you said yes to the question above, please list the language(s) that you can speak fluently.*

What is your gender identity?*

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Decline to answer
- ☐ Other

Which category below includes your age?*

- ☐ 20 or below
- ☐ 21-29
- ☐ 30-39
- ☐ 40-49
- ☐ 50-59
- ☐ 60+
- ☐ Decline to answer
- ☐ Other

What is your ethnicity?*

- ☐ White (A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. Not Hispanic or Latino.)
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino (A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin.)
- ☐ Black/African American (A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.)
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.)
- ☐ Native American/Alaskan Native (A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America [including Central America], and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.)

- ☐ Asian/Indian Subcontinent (A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, and Vietnam.)
- ☐ Decline to answer
- ☐ Other

* Information is not shared with the selection committee.

Submission Instructions

The application in its entirety must be electronically submitted on or before the **Friday, June 27, 2025** deadline.*

*If your district is unable to submit the application electronically, you must let the WDE TOY Coordinator know prior to the application deadline for other arrangements to be made.

WDE Contact Information

For questions about the Teacher of the Year Program, please contact:

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