



# Wyoming Teacher of the Year Application Information

Updated Process as of April 2026

## 2027 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).
- State Teacher of the Year (STOY) or Wyoming Teacher of the Year (WTOY).
- National Teacher of the Year (NTOY).

District Teachers of the Year (DTOY) are selected internally by their respective districts. All DTOYs are then eligible to apply for the Wyoming Teacher of the Year (WTOY) distinction. The selected state winner will serve as Wyoming's sole applicant for the National Teacher of the Year (NTOY) program.

- **Eligibility:** To be considered for the state-level distinction, the DTOY must complete this [application](#) in its entirety.
- **District Approval:** Candidates must secure district approval before beginning the application process.
- **Deadline:** The electronic application must be submitted to the WDE no later than July 1, 2026.
- **Year of Service:** The 2027 Wyoming Teacher of the Year will serve from January 2027 to January 2028.

### District Recognition & The 2027 Designation

All 48 Wyoming School Districts are encouraged to annually recognize a District Teacher of the Year (DTOY). Educators selected by their districts in Spring 2026 are officially designated as 2027 District Teachers of the Year.

The DTOY Honor Includes:

- **Statewide Recognition:** A seat of honor at the Fall 2026 recognition dinner.
- **Professional Growth:** An invitation to join the Level Up leadership cohort.
- **State Eligibility:** The opportunity to apply for the 2027 Wyoming Teacher of the Year (WTOY) distinction.
- **NTOY Eligibility:** The selected WTOY will serve as Wyoming's sole applicant for the National Teacher of the Year (NTOY) program.

### DTOY Selection Process

Each school district manages its own nomination and review process. While methods vary by district size and preference, the goal remains the same: to celebrate local excellence and ensure your community is represented in statewide education leadership.

### Selection Guidelines

- **Nomination:** Districts may solicit nominations from students, parents, colleagues, and administrators.
- **Committee Composition:** We recommend a diverse review committee (e.g., superintendents, principals, local legislators, and students). Note: Relatives of candidates must be excluded from the committee.

- **Capacity:** Each district may submit only one (1) DTOY for state consideration.
- **Requirement:** The selected DTOY must remain an active teacher through January 2028.
- **Timeline for Districts.**
- **Spring:** Begin the local nomination and review process.
- **May 15:** Finalize district selection. This ensures the awardee has sufficient time to complete the state-level application.
- **July 1:** Deadline for the DTOY to self-submit the electronic [WTOY application](#) to the WDE.

### Administrative Support & Commitment

Because the WTOY role involves significant leadership duties and travel, formal district approval is required before an educator applies. Administrative support is essential to accommodate the teacher's time away from the classroom for state and national representation.

Supporting Your DTOY: To further support your DTOY and the teaching profession, districts are encouraged to host University of Wyoming student teachers. To request a placement for your DTOY, please have your Human Resources department contact the UW College of Education.

### Duties & Responsibilities of the WTOY

The Wyoming Teacher of the Year (WTOY) serves as a high-profile advocate for the profession and a spokesperson for Wyoming's students and educators. Being named WTOY comes with the significant responsibility of representing the entire teaching profession in our state. This role requires a dedicated balance of classroom excellence, professional leadership, and ambassadorial invitations.

### Core Roles & Key Responsibilities

**Active Classroom Practitioner:** Remains a current, practicing educator to ensure that all advocacy and leadership are grounded in the daily realities, challenges, and triumphs of Wyoming's classrooms. The successful candidate must maintain their current employment position at the school where they were awarded for the duration of their Year of Service.

- **Unified & Objective Voice:** Serves as a conduit for the state's teaching workforce, championing the collective perspectives of the profession rather than personal or partisan views.
- **WDE Extension & Policy Liaison:** Acts as an official liaison between the teaching community, the Wyoming Legislature, the WDE, and local school districts to bridge the gap between state-level policy and classroom practice.
- **Public Ambassador & Media Figure:** Represents Wyoming educators to the media, businesses, parents, and service organizations. Candidates must be poised, articulate, and possess the energy to manage a demanding schedule, as they will be frequently requested to deliver keynote addresses.
- **Support Note:** The WDE provides specialized media and communications training to support the WTOY in this role.
- **Statewide Leadership & Development:** Drives student-centered growth by serving as a facilitator for workshops, forums, and conferences. This includes mandatory leadership and active engagement within the Level Up Leadership Program.
- **National Representative:** Represents Wyoming's unique educational landscape on the national stage through mandatory participation in the National Teacher of the Year (NTOY) program facilitated by the [Council of Chief State School Officers](#) (CCSSO).

## 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, and has received their district's support to apply.

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

- Is an expert in their field who advances growth for students of all backgrounds and abilities;
- Builds collaborative relationships with colleagues, students, and families to create a school culture of equity and success;
- Deliberately connects the classroom to the community to impact student growth and learning;
- Demonstrates leadership and innovation in and outside of the classroom walls that embodies lifelong learning, and
- 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 select one (1) District Teacher of the Year (DTOY) to be considered for the Wyoming Teacher of the Year (WTOY) award. The DTOY must submit the complete [electronic application](#) to the WDE by the July 1, 2026 deadline.

The following items must be submitted electronically to the WDE by the deadline for those who wish to be considered. If you or your district are unable to submit electronically, you must notify the WDE TOY Coordinator prior to the deadline to arrange an alternative submission method. Demographic information will not be provided to the selection committee.

- **Section 1:** Teacher Information
- **Section 2:** District Information
- **Section 3:** School Information
- **Section 4:** Professional Biography
- **Section 5:** Resume & Response Questions
- **Section 6:** Recommendation Letter(s)
- **Section 7:** Demographic Information (Will not be shared with 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 contact the selected teacher to gather this information.

## 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:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Once all necessary approvals have been received, the WDE TOY Coordinator will submit the NTOY application.
- National Distinction: If the WTOY is selected as the National Teacher of the Year, they will be released from their local classroom responsibilities during the year of national recognition to fulfill their duties at a federal level.

## Timeline and Selection Process

TIMELINE	DESCRIPTIONS
May 15, 2026	<b>District Selection Deadline:</b> 2027 District Teachers of the Year (DTOY) are officially named and awarded by their local school districts.
<b>July 1, 2026</b>	<b>Wyoming Teacher of the Year Application Deadline:</b> The final date for 2027 state-level applications to be submitted to the Wyoming Department of Education. <a href="#">2027 WTOY Application</a> .
July 2026	<b>Selection Committee Review:</b> The Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) begins the formal review and selection process for all submitted state-level applications.
August 2026	<b>Finalist Notifications and Program Registration:</b> The selection committee notifies finalists and conducts virtual interviews. During this window, candidates receive registration information for the Level Up Leadership Program and official invitations for the Wyoming Teacher of the Year Celebration Dinner.
September 2026	<b>Wyoming Teacher of the Year Announcement:</b> The Wyoming Department of Education officially announces the recipient of the 2027 Wyoming Teacher of the Year award.
October 2026	<b>Celebration Dinner and Level Up Program Launch:</b> The Wyoming Teacher of the Year Celebration Dinner is held (date to be determined). Additionally, the Level Up Leadership Program officially begins for the 2027 cohort.
<b>October 31, 2026</b>	<b>2028 National Teacher of the Year Application Deadline:</b> The 2027 Wyoming Teacher of the Year submits their application for the 2028 National Teacher of the Year award. This submission is completed in partnership with the Wyoming Department of Education.
December 2026	<b>National Finalist Selection and Notification:</b> The National Selection Committee identifies the top four finalists for the 2028 National Teacher of the Year award. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) officially notifies the finalists, their State Superintendents, and their respective state leadership teams.
January 2027 - January 2028	<b>Official Year of Service and Program Transition:</b> The 2027 Wyoming Teacher of the Year officially begins their term of service, while the 2026 recipient concludes their tenure. Additionally, the 2027 District Teacher of the Year (DTOY) roster is officially updated and published on the Wyoming Department of Education website.

TIMELINE	DESCRIPTIONS
Spring 2027	<b>National Teacher of the Year Interviews and Announcement:</b> The four national finalists travel to Washington, D.C., to interview with the National Selection Committee. Following these sessions, the 2028 National Teacher of the Year is officially announced and honored at a national recognition ceremony.

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.

## 2027 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 Presentations and Workshop Titles, Organization or Event Name, Month and Date	

**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
- 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: Teacher Information**

District Name	
District Superintendent Name	
District Superintendent Email	
District Address	
Will you remain in the same district for the 2027 Teacher of the Year Term (January 2028)?	
Will you remain an active teacher for the 2027 term (January - December 2027)?	

### Section 3: School Information

School Name	
School Principal Name	
School Principal Email	
School Address	
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: Resume & Response Questions

Upload an updated copy of your resume. Respond to the following questions, highlighting your personal story, and why you believe you should be the 2027 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.

- **Intentional Culture & Leadership:** Culture doesn't happen by accident; it is built through intentionality. Describe a project or initiative you founded or led that was specifically designed to shape the culture of your classroom or school community. What was the catalyst for this work, what is the status of the project today, and how has it changed the environment for your students and peers? (Maximum 750 words)
- **Learning Without Walls:** Education is most powerful when it transcends the four walls of a classroom. Describe the specific, intentional ways you connect your students with the local or global community. How have these partnerships "dissolved the walls" of your school to create authentic learning experiences? Please provide evidence of how these real-world connections have directly fueled student growth, engagement, or success. (Maximum 750 words)
- **Advocacy as a Catalyst for Growth:** Advocacy is rarely just about changing a policy or a program; it is about the transformation of the educator behind the movement. Describe a specific time when you stepped into an advocacy role—whether within your school, across the state, or on a national level. How did finding your voice in this way push you to grow as a leader and a lifelong learner? Most importantly, what was the ripple effect of your advocacy on your students and their opportunities for success?
- **The Echo—Perspective from Your School Community:** If we were to walk the halls of your school and speak with your students, colleagues, and families, what would they say is the "echo" of your impact? Describe your practice through their eyes. How would they characterize your expertise in advancing growth for every student? In what ways do they see you building a culture of equity through collaboration, or dissolving classroom walls to reach the community? Reflect on how your community experiences your leadership, your innovation, and the way you articulately champion the needs of your students. (Short Response: Maximum 250–400 words)
- **The Platform of the Ambassador:** As the 2027 Wyoming Teacher of the Year, you aren't just representing your classroom; you are the spokesperson for every student and educator in the state. You have the stage. What is your message? Define the core platform you will communicate to your colleagues and to the public at large. How will your voice champion the profession and inspire a renewed vision for what is possible in Wyoming education? (Maximum 750 words)

## Section 6: Recommendation Letter

Submit two to three letters of recommendation supporting your candidacy for Wyoming Teacher of the Year. Each letter must be limited to one page.

- Required (2):
  - One letter from your current building principal.
  - One letter from a building colleague.
- Optional (1):
  - May be submitted by a student, parent, colleague, or administrator.

**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.

### AI Usage & Professional Integrity

We recognize that generative AI tools are part of the modern professional landscape. Using these tools to polish grammar, tighten formatting, or structure an outline is acceptable; however, all applicants must honestly disclose their level of AI usage within the application.

While AI can assist with the “mechanics” of writing, it should not be the soul of your application. The selection committee is looking for the authentic voice, nuanced stories, and personal passion that define a great educator—qualities that AI cannot replicate. We want to hear the story that only you can tell.

AI Usage & Acknowledgment is collected at the end of section 5 in the application.

### Submission Instructions

The application in its entirety must be electronically submitted on or before the July 1, 2026 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

#### Madison Lacey

Teacher Leadership & Awards Consultant and TOY Coordinator

[madison.lacey@wyo.gov](mailto:madison.lacey@wyo.gov)

307.777.6840