

2026 Indiana Teacher Of the Year SCORING RUBRIC



Please create a holistic score for Criteria 1, 2, 3 and 4 based on all of the essay questions.

The Indiana Teacher of the Year candidate has the respect and admiration of their colleagues and:

1. Is an expert in their field who guides students of all backgrounds and abilities to achieve excellence.

This teacher shows pedagogical and content expertise. They demonstrate how knowing their students leads to learning and growth. This teacher recognizes, values and advocates for students of all backgrounds and abilities through deliberate and relevant instruction.

| 4 points | 3 points | 2 points | 1 point |
|---|---|--|---|
| There is consistent and compelling evidence that this teacher's unique understanding of teaching and learning impacts both individuals and groups of students, alike. This teacher understands the nuances of the classroom and builds community both within and outside the classroom walls. While the essays may not be perfect, this teacher undoubtedly inspires possibility and promise in others. | There is consistent evidence that this teacher's thoughtful understanding of teaching and learning impacts individuals and/or groups of students. This teacher builds community in the classroom and sometimes outside of the classroom. This teacher is someone others look up to and respect. | While there may be compelling moments in this application, the evidence is not consistent. The teacher may use the same example for multiple questions or the description may rely on a surface "telling" without examining the pedagogy underneath. | The evidence in this response is not consistent and may even overlook or omit parts of the question. This response may focus too heavily on the teacher and lack specific student examples. |

The Indiana Teacher of the Year candidate has the respect and admiration of their colleagues and:

2. Collaborates with colleagues, students, and families to create a school culture of respect and success.

This teacher shows how collaboration enhances the learning and educational experience of students. They demonstrate an ability to see and make connections with others and often uses creative and inventive ways to bring groups of people together in order to positively impact school and/or learning culture.

| 4 points | 3 points | 2 points | 1 point |
|--|---|---|---|
| There is consistent and compelling evidence that this teacher's unique understanding of teaching and learning impacts both individuals and | There is consistent evidence that this teacher's thoughtful understanding of teaching and learning impacts individuals and/or groups of students. | While there may be compelling moments in this application, the evidence is not consistent. The teacher may use the same example | The evidence in this response is not consistent and may even overlook or omit parts of the question. This response may focus too heavily on |

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|---|--|---|--|
| <p>groups of students, alike. This teacher understands the nuances of the classroom and builds community both within and outside the classroom walls. While the essays may not be perfect, this teacher undoubtedly inspires possibility and promise in others.</p> | <p>This teacher builds community in the classroom and sometimes outside of the classroom. This teacher is someone others look up to and respect.</p> | <p>for multiple questions or the description may rely on a surface “telling” without examining the pedagogy underneath.</p> | <p>the teacher and lack specific student examples.</p> |
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The Indiana Teacher of the Year candidate has the respect and admiration of their colleagues and:

3. Deliberately connects the classroom and key stakeholders to foster a strong community at large.

This teacher works to dissolve classroom walls and works to bring the community into the classroom and/or take the classroom to the community. This teacher is able to recognize and form connections within and/or outside of the school district in order to use their role as a teacher to influence larger communities.

| 4 points | 3 points | 2 points | 1 point |
|--|--|---|--|
| <p>There is consistent and compelling evidence that this teacher’s unique understanding of teaching and learning impacts both individuals and groups of students, alike. This teacher understands the nuances of the classroom and builds community both within and outside the classroom walls. While the essays may not be perfect, this teacher undoubtedly inspires possibility and promise in others.</p> | <p>There is consistent evidence that this teacher’s thoughtful understanding of teaching and learning impacts individuals and/or groups of students. This teacher builds community in the classroom and sometimes outside of the classroom. This teacher is someone others look up to and respect.</p> | <p>While there may be compelling moments in this application, the evidence is not consistent. The teacher may use the same example for multiple questions or the description may rely on a surface “telling” without examining the pedagogy underneath.</p> | <p>The evidence in this response is not consistent and may even overlook or omit parts of the question. This response may focus too heavily on the teacher and lack specific student examples.</p> |

The Indiana Teacher of the Year candidate has the respect and admiration of their colleagues and:

4. Demonstrates leadership and innovation in and outside of the classroom walls that embodies lifelong learning.

This teacher is a leader in the profession. They understand the importance of engaging in professional communities and how those communities can both impact the classroom as well as the students, teachers and the profession at large. Further, this teacher is an innovator and lifelong learner. This may manifest itself inside or outside the classroom, but shows how the teacher uses creativity and ingenuity to enhance learning.

| 4 points | 3 points | 2 points | 1 point |
|---|---|--|---|
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Please create a holistic score for Criteria 5 based on all of the essay questions.

NOTE: This focuses on expression and ability to communicate; a necessary quality the INTOY must possess.

The Indiana Teacher of the Year candidate has the respect and admiration of their colleagues and:

5. Express themselves in an engaging and clear way.

This teacher articulates the teaching and learning experience in ways that personalize it and make it relevant to a wide range of audiences. The reader is able to envision the classroom, the learning and relationships described by the teacher. A passion for the profession is palpable.

| 4 points | 3 points | 2 points | 1 point |
|--|--|--|--|
| There is consistent and compelling evidence that this teacher's unique | There is consistent evidence that this teacher's thoughtful understanding of | While there may be compelling moments in this application, the | The evidence in this response is not consistent and may even overlook or |

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|--|--|---|--|
| <p>understanding of teaching and learning is communicated with precision and insight. This teacher embodies the qualities of an effective communicator, able to make the realities of the classroom come alive for many audiences. They are passionate about their work, articulate in their purpose and advocate for their profession. This is a teacher's teacher.</p> | <p>teaching and learning is communicated with insight. This teacher is a strong communicator, with a particular strength towards one audience. They have articulate moments when they use their passion and purpose to teach about and advocate for the profession. Others would listen to this teacher.</p> | <p>evidence of strong communication is not consistent. The teacher may have moments in the application that are confusing or difficult to follow. While they show great care about their work, they may not articulate it to broad audiences.</p> | <p>omit portions of the prompts. This teacher may not be clear in communicating their responses and occasionally leave the reader unsure of what's being communicated. While this is definitely a dedicated teacher, it's difficult to extract meaning applicable to a broader audience.</p> |
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Please create a holistic score for the candidate based on the entirety of the application.

6. Overall Application. You may consider how the supplemental materials (resume and letters of recommendation) affirms or illuminates your complete understanding of the candidate. In other words, the supplemental materials can support your score, but should **not detract from it.**

The teacher receives a score for the application overall, including the supplemental materials.

| 4 points | 3 points | 2 points | 1 point |
|--|--|---|--|
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