



Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

*Indiana*  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

INTOY



# 2026 INTOY

## Building, District, and State Level Selection Processes



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### Indiana Teacher of the Year Sponsors





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March 14, 2025

Dear Superintendents and Principals:

Each year, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) conducts the Indiana Teacher of the Year program to recognize outstanding classroom teachers from across the state. From this talented group, one person is selected to represent Indiana teachers at the national level, in accordance with National Teacher of the Year guidelines.

A candidate for Indiana Teacher of the Year (INTOY) is a teacher in a state-approved or accredited school (*including private, charter, and virtual*), pre-kindergarten through grade 12, who is planning to continue in an active teaching status. The INTOY candidate 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 community to impact student growth and learning;
4. As a lifelong learner and teacher leader, they utilize innovation to create learning experiences within and beyond the classroom;
5. Expresses themselves in an engaging and clear way, conveying the lived classroom experience to a variety of audiences.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) sponsors the National Teacher of the Year (NTOY) program and hosts national events that will begin in spring 2026. These events include a week-long induction for all state Teachers of the Year; a week-long trip to Washington, D.C. for recognition by the President; Educator Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama; and other workshops with policymakers.

**Based on feedback from school superintendents in previous years, IDOE remains committed to working with the recipient and their district to support a year of service that allows the teacher to remain in the classroom while supporting release time to participate in valuable opportunities as a voice for Indiana educators.**

As we work to attract and retain the best and brightest teachers in Indiana, this is one way we can elevate the profession and celebrate those who dedicate their lives to helping Hoosier youth achieve their greatest potential. I hope you will join me in helping to ensure these incredible educators receive the recognition they deserve.

Sincerely,

Dr. Katie Jenner  
Indiana Secretary of Education



## Selection Process

### Building and District Process

**March - May 2025:** School districts recognize building Teachers of the Year (TOY) and implement a process for determining District Teacher(s) of the Year. District Teacher of the Year recipients are invited to complete the 2026 Indiana Teacher of the Year application by 5:00 p.m. ET, Monday, **July 7, 2025**. **Each school district *may* nominate two locally recognized TOYs from 2024-2025 school year, one at the elementary and one at the secondary level, to be considered during the 2026 Indiana Teacher of the Year selection process.** Since grade divisions and classroom arrangements vary across the state, each district will outline its own process. A strong local process is public, democratic, transparent, and involves multiple stakeholders. Most importantly, all nominations must be void of any type of discrimination.

School districts can utilize various processes to recognize a **building** Teacher of the Year recipient.

**The following is a *suggested*, not prescribed or mandated method for selecting a building Teacher of the Year:**

- 1.) Staff members vote by ballot for a Teacher of the Year in their respective building.
- 2.) A local selection committee is created, made up of former recipients, business leaders, School Board members, Union representation, parent group members, Higher Education staff, media and various other local organizations.
  - Select members of the committee tally votes and report a final three per building to each building principal.
- 3.) A second round of voting within each building takes place.
- 4.) Selection committee members report to building principals which of the final three teachers garnered the most votes.
- 5.) Principals publicly conduct Building Teacher of the Year announcements.

School districts can utilize various processes to select their **district nominee(s)** for the Indiana Teacher of the Year program. Typically, building recipients are given the opportunity to produce a locally developed portfolio that will be reviewed by the local Selection Committee. However, the production of the portfolio is not mandatory (as other creative and fair methods are in place across the state). If a district does ask building recipients to produce a portfolio, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) suggests modeling the portfolio off of the state application.



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## Keys to a successful local process:

- Maintain a focus on local teacher public recognition as the motivation for implementing a TOY program;
- Explore appropriate rewards, sponsorships, public speaking and marketing possibilities both within your district and externally with local businesses and organizations;
- Select your nominee early to allow ample time for preparation of the INTOY application;
- Share the good news about great teachers!
- **Encourage your nominee(s) to submit the application to IDOE by Monday, July 7, 2025.**

## State Process

### Early July 2025

The Indiana Teacher of the Year **Screening Committee** reviews all eligible applications. The Screening Committee will be made up of former INTOY recipients, IDOE staff, educational organization leaders, business and community leaders, as well as representatives from Higher Education.

- All Screening Committee members will be given explicit direction on scoring by the State Coordinator. To avoid implicit bias, JPEG head shots and video submissions will not be shared during this phase of the screening. If the candidate includes images of themselves within the application, those images will not be altered.
- All applications are independently scored by two members of the Screening Committee.
- The 25 applications with the highest total score will move onto the Selection Committee.
- At the conclusion of the screening phase, the State Coordinator will inform all applicants of their application status.

### Late July 2025

The Indiana Teacher of the Year **Selection Committee** reviews all eligible applications. The Selection Committee will be made up of former INTOY recipients, IDOE staff, educational organization leaders, business and community leaders, and representatives from Higher Education.

- All Selection Committee members will be given explicit direction on scoring by the State Coordinator.
- All applications are independently scored by two members of the Selection Committee.



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- The ten applications with the highest total score will move onto the “Top 10”.
- The State Coordinator will inform all applicants of their application status.

## **August 2025**

- IDOE publicly announces the Top10 INTOY finalists
- Top 10 Finalists are interviewed - Tuesday, August 12

## **Fall 2025**

- 2026 INTOY Announcement

## **Early Spring 2026**

- Teacher of the Year Induction and Recognition (requiring minimal classroom release days supported by IDOE in collaboration with the INTOY’s district)
- INTOY participation in CCSSO’s Teacher of the Year Induction and other CCSSO Teacher of the Year events

## **2026 - 2027 School Year**

- Teacher Year of Service (requiring minimal classroom release days supported by IDOE in collaboration with the INTOY’s district)
- The 2026 Indiana Teacher of the Year will be recognized at a formal event (Date TBD)