



Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

*Indiana*  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

INTOY

Teacher  
of the  
Year

# 2026 INTOY Application



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## Indiana Teacher of the Year Sponsors



ARCHITECTURE · INTERIOR DESIGN



CENTRAL INDIANA EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER



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 cultivate a thriving school environment built for 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



## **Qualifications for School District's Teacher of the Year Candidates**

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 the 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. For more information, please see the "Selection Process" pdf at <https://www.in.gov/doe/educators/teacher-of-the-year/>.

**Indiana Teacher of the Year candidate/s must:**

### **General Requirements:**

- ☐ Be an exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable, and skilled teacher in an Indiana accredited public or non-public school, pre-kindergarten through grade 12, who is planning to continue in an active teaching status (supervisory and administrative responsibilities should be of secondary consideration);
- ☐ Inspires students of all backgrounds and abilities to learn;
- ☐ Has the respect and admiration of students, parents, and colleagues;
- ☐ Play an active and useful role in the community as well as in the school;
- ☐ Is poised, articulate, and able to withstand a taxing schedule;
- ☐ Demonstrates innovative 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills and continuing professional growth;

### **Logistical Requirements:**

- ☐ Be willing and able to fulfill the INTOY duties;
- ☐ Meet with classes of students: e.g. a classroom teacher, a special area teacher, instructional coach, counselor, or a library media specialist who has an instructional role that involves direct work with students for a majority of the work day;
- ☐ Maintain employment in a role such as articulated above, even if her/his specific position changes during the application process;
- ☐ Complete the Indiana Teacher of the Year Application appropriately for consideration as the Indiana Teacher of the Year;
- ☐ District must comply with IC 20-20-4 (Indiana Teacher of the Year Program).

*Policy Notification Statement- It is the policy of the Indiana Department of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability, in its programs, activities, or employment policies as required by the Indiana Civil Rights Law (I.C. 22-9-1), Title VI and VII (Civil Rights Act of 1964), the Equal Pay Act of 1973, Title IX (Educational Amendments), Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 USCS ' 12101, et. seq.) Inquiries regarding compliance by the Indiana Department of Education with Title IX and other civil rights laws may be directed to the Human Resources Director, Indiana Department of Education, 100 North Senate Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46204, or by telephone to 317-232-6610, or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 111 North Canal Street, Suite 1053, Chicago, IL 60606-7204.*



## **Application Procedure**

**Completed Indiana Teacher of the Year applications must be received by**

**July 7, 2025, 5:00 p.m. ET**

**Submit Application Here: <https://form.jotform.com/242626216326150>**

- ☐ A confirmation of receipt will be sent to the applicant from JotForm.
- ☐ Please do not mail any documents.
- ☐ Please provide all information requested in the application form.
- ☐ Limit your answers to the number of pages or words requested in each section.
- ☐ Check and recheck narratives for spelling and typographical errors. While a typo may not eliminate a candidate, it certainly reflects unfavorably.
- ☐ Responses should be written in the teacher's own words; if sources are used, please make sure to cite appropriately, or the application will be disqualified.

**It is recommended that candidates save responses in a format that allows for copying/pasting into the Jotform to ensure responses are not lost if there is an error in the submission process.**

### **The Application Jotform Consists of the Following:**

#### **Professional Biography**

Please complete your professional biography in 3rd person, as this will be used on the INTOY website. By completing this section, you agree that your biography can be used in INTOY materials. Please follow the content and style guidelines below. Please limit your biography to 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 (e.g., Bachelor of Science in Special Education from Indiana State University)
- Any awards or points of pride
- A sentence or two about pedagogical priorities

In your bio, please follow the following style guidelines:

- Spell out your degrees (e.g., Bachelor of Art not BA)
- Only capitalize a subject area when it's a language (e.g., 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 acronyms the first time they are used



## **Educational History and Professional Development Activities**

- List colleges and universities attended including graduate studies;
- Indicate degrees earned and dates of attendance;
- Indicate all Indiana licensures;
- List teaching employment history beginning with the most recent and indicate time period, grade level, and subject area;
- Include professional association memberships, offices held, service on committees, commissions, task forces, and other relevant activities;
- List leadership activities in staff development and the training of future teachers;
- Include awards and other recognition.
- Candidates will be required to upload a pdf copy of their resume. Resumes should not exceed two pages

## **Student Engagement**

- Please limit your response to 750 words;
- Describe a content lesson or unit that defines you as a teacher. How did you engage students of all backgrounds and abilities in the learning? Show how your deliberate instructional decisions create student learning and reveal your beliefs about teaching and learning.

## **School Culture**

- Please limit your response to 750 words;
- 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 to teach students of all backgrounds, abilities and identities. What is the status of the project today? Please include evidence of student impact.

## **Community Learning**

- Please limit your response to a maximum of 750 words;
- 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. Please include evidence of student impact.

## **Education Issues and Trends**

- Please limit your response to a maximum of 750 words;
- 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.

## **Indiana Teacher of the Year Message**

- Please limit your response to a maximum of 750 words;
- As the 2026 Indiana Teacher of the Year, you serve as a spokesperson and representative for





teachers and students. You have been asked to give a speech to a large audience of teachers; this speech is being recorded and will be shared broadly with a larger audience. What is your message? What is the talk you give? What will you communicate to your profession and to the public? (You may indicate a specific audience. For example, a “back to school” talk.) Ensure the Indiana Teacher of the Year Message impacts teachers, students, parents, legislators, and educational organizations.

### Additional Information

- We want to know more about what makes you a great educator! This is an additional opportunity to highlight your accomplishments and demonstrate the impact that you have on your students, school, and community.
- Please limit to no more than **two pages** (*cannot include links to additional webpages or resources*)

*In this section, please feel free to include materials such as:*

- Student or class data
- News clippings
- Published articles
- Innovative programs
- Classroom activities
- Sample speech
- Lesson plans
- Community projects
- Photos

### Required Uploads:

- Headshot-5x7 inch (or larger) in JPEG format (may be used for INTOY Website, INTOY Program, INTOY Recognition, IDOE Press Releases, IDOE Communications Department)
- [2026 Indiana Teacher of the Year Assurances](#) (blank copy can be found below) - must be signed by the applicant, superintendent, and school principal
- Three letters of Support

Please provide letters of support from any of the following individuals:

- District superintendent **(Required)**;
- Principal;
- Instructional Coach;
- Department Head;
- Colleague;
- Current or former student;
- Parent;
- Legislator;
- Educational Organization or Association;
- Community leader.

Letters should:

- Be addressed to the Teacher of the Year Screening and Selection Committees;



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- Be no longer than one page for each letter of support;
- Show an original signature;
- Contain evidence of personal knowledge of the teacher and an indication of the qualities that would qualify the candidate to be Indiana's Teacher of the Year.





## 2026 Indiana Teacher of the Year Assurances

The superintendent acknowledges that the nominee submits this application with their approval. Should the candidate be selected as a Top 10 finalist they must be available for a formal interview on Tuesday, August 12. If a district candidate is selected as the 2026 Indiana Teacher of the Year, they are granted permission to be released minimally from classroom responsibilities during their year of recognition (spring semester of 2026) and minimally during their INTOY year of service (2026-2027 school year) in order to fulfill the obligations inherent in this honor. The district candidate also agrees to the INTOY roles and responsibilities if selected as the Indiana Teacher of the Year. We hereby give our permission that any or all of the following materials may be shared with persons interested in promoting the Indiana Teacher of the Year program.

I endorse and support \_\_\_\_\_'s application to be the 2026 Indiana Teacher of the Year.

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**Signature (Superintendent)**

**Date**

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**Signature (Principal)**

**Date**

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**Signature (Applicant)**

**Date**