



**The 2026 Florida Department of Education Teacher of the Year
Timeline for Selection**

- September 2024** Applications are distributed to superintendents, eligible institutions and program coordinators.
- February 10, 2025** Applications must be submitted online by clicking [2026 Florida Teacher of the Year Application](#). **All documentation will be submitted electronically as part of the online application.** Submissions received after **February 10, 2025**, will not be considered.
- March 1, 2025** The Department begins communication with District Teachers of the Year.
- March – April 2025** State selection committees review nominees.
- May 2025** Announcements of the Teacher of the Year Finalists are made.
- May – June 2025** State selection committee interviews finalists in Tallahassee.
- July 2025** Florida Department of Education Teacher of the Year Roundtable, Gala and announcement of the 2026 Florida Department of Education Teacher of the Year.

Teacher of the Year Program Mission

The mission of the Teacher of the Year program is to honor and recognize excellence in teaching, support continued learning for all educators and highlight the importance and impact of the profession. Selecting a Teacher of the Year celebrates the thousands of outstanding professional educators in Florida schools.

The goals of the Florida Teacher of the Year program are to:

- Enhance the stature of teachers and the teaching profession.
- Promote the importance of quality education and teaching for our future.
- Inspire and attract talented people to become teachers.
- Provide information regarding Florida's scholarship and loan programs related to teaching.
- Promote the teaching profession within community and business groups.
- Provide information to retired military personnel and other individuals who might consider teaching as a second career.

The Teacher of the Year will perform the following duties:

- Work with and represent the Department of Education, as needed.
- Work with and encourage the efforts of school and district teachers of the year.
- Support the activities of the Florida Future Educators of America Program.
- Represent Florida teachers at business, trade, education, and other conferences and meetings.
- Promote the teaching profession in other ways related to the teaching responsibilities, background experiences and aspirations of the Ambassador for Education.

Learn more about the Christa McAuliffe Ambassador for Education Program in [Section 1012.77, Florida Statutes](#).

Nomination Procedures

- As you make nominations, please consider your district nominee's data and their impact on student learning.
- Prior to **February 10, 2025**, participating districts and institutions must select a candidate who will represent the district or institution as their Teacher of the Year. The method and materials used to select the candidate may vary according to the district.
- The online Teacher of the Year Application must be submitted no later than **February 10, 2025**.
- **All** documentation will be submitted as part of the **online application**.

Eligibility Requirements

The following requirements must be met when nominating a candidate for the 2026 Florida Department of Education Teacher of the Year:

- Each district and/or participating institution may nominate only one teacher.
- Teacher of the Year candidates shall have a track record of a positive impact on student learning.
 - A positive impact on student learning can be reflected in the form of achievement, learning growth or a combination of the two.
 - Available data will be reviewed by the state selection committee in context by comparing performance to school, district, state and/or national performance, as appropriate.
 - Examples of data may include but are not limited to: passing rates on International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced Placement (AP), Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE), End-of-Course assessments (EOC), Florida Standards Assessments (FSA), Music Performance Assessment (MPA) scores, Value-Added Model (VAM) scores, Career & Technical Education (CTE) pass rates, Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) assessments and learning growth on FSA grade-level assessments.
 - Teachers who have recent VAM scores that are not classified as at least Effective using the State Board of Education’s approved methodology will not be considered.
- The candidate selected should be willing and able to attend the Teacher of the Year Roundtable and Gala held in Orlando in the summer of 2025.
- The following full-time district educators are eligible for nomination:
 - ✓ Classroom teachers in traditional and charter public schools - grades Pre-K through 12
 - ✓ School counselors
 - ✓ Media specialists
 - ✓ Speech/language pathologists
 - ✓ Special area teachers (e.g., exceptional student education, world languages, music)
 - ✓ Other professional educators performing instructional support services **with students** (e.g., school psychologists, school social workers and instructional coaches)
 - ✓ Adult education teachers
 - ✓ Postsecondary vocational/technical education teachers

School personnel who work in an administrative or supervisory capacity, such as principals or deans of students, are ineligible.

Submission Procedures

Application Checklist:

The application is comprised of the following:

- Instructional Lesson Video
- Resume
- Writing Prompt Responses
- Christa McAuliffe Reflection Video
- Lesson Plan
- Letters of Recommendation
- Superintendent Nomination Letter
- [W-9 Form](#)
- Professional Headshot

Note: Before accessing the online application, please prepare the components listed above.

Guidelines for Submission

Instructional Lesson Video:

The lesson chosen for the video submission should represent the nominee's daily teaching practice.

Step 1 – Obtain signed parent consent forms prior to recording nominee's video. If a student's parents refuse to grant permission, please ensure that the student is seated out of the camera's range and that his or her full name is not used in the video. Videos may be used for training selection committee members or may be featured on the Florida Department of Education website or similar sites and social media.

Step 2 – Prepare to record nominee's instructional lesson video. Almost any type of camera can be used to film the lesson, including a digital camera, camcorder, flip cam or iPhone. If the lesson is being taught in a virtual setting, the recording of the instructional lesson may be obtained through an online platform, such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

Please keep in mind the following:

- Use a tripod, if possible.
- Keep the camera stationary at the side of the classroom instead of moving back and forth.
- Turn on all the lights and close the blinds.
- Close the classroom door and windows to minimize background noise.
- Repeat student responses to make them audible, if students speak in a soft voice.
- High-quality video recording is preferred. Some digital cameras have a limit on video length. Be sure to test the camera before recording.
- An external microphone enhances the audio quality but is not required.

- **Do NOT edit the video in any way.** The submission must be continuous and unedited. If the recording appears to have been edited, the entire application will not be scored.
- **The recommended video length is between 20-30 minutes and must not exceed 35 minutes.**

Step 3 – Record and review nominee’s lesson. In order for a reviewer to have sufficient information to perform an evaluation, please record:



- The teacher’s actions;
- The majority of the students’ actions; and
- Clear audio of the teacher and students.

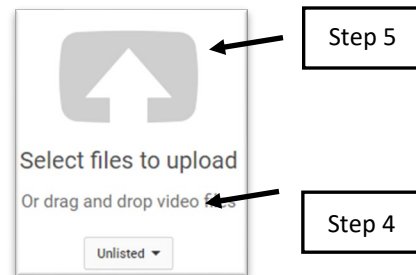
Note that the instructional lesson video must not exceed 35 minutes and cannot be edited in any way before submission. The recording must be continuous and unedited. If the recording appears to have been edited, the entire application will not be scored.

If using an online platform to record a virtual lesson, please ensure the teacher’s actions and students’ actions can be seen. For example, when using Zoom, gallery view in the recording settings would provide the best video option.

Step 4 – Submit the video via the YouTube link in the online application. Ensure the video is **unsubscribed and unlisted** on the privacy settings. Directions for uploading the video submission are below, but the nominee may also work with the school and/or district’s technology representative for assistance.

Creating a YouTube link:

1. Go to www.youtube.com.
2. Create a YouTube account by clicking  at the top right of the screen. An existing Gmail account may be used to create the YouTube account.
3. Click the  at the top right of the screen to upload the video.
4. When the upload screen loads, click the dropdown arrow to change it from “Public” to “Unlisted.”
5. Click the arrow graphic to select the video file to upload.
6. Select the video file to upload for submission.
7. Wait for the video to completely upload. A link will be provided to the uploaded video submission.



Resume:

Nominee’s **resume** must be typed in no less than a 10-point font, with at least one inch margins and a two-page maximum. Please name this file “*District Name, Nominee Last Name, Resume.*” The resume will be uploaded into the online application.

Writing Prompt Responses:

Nominee’s responses to the following five **writing prompts** will be entered into the online application. We recommend that the nominee draft the responses prior to beginning the online application.

Writing Prompts:

1. What inspired you to become an educator? *(250 word limit)*
2. Describe the strongest objectively verifiable evidence available that illustrates your success at achieving meaningful learning outcomes for **all** of your students. Using data, formal/informal and short/long term, how are your students performing when they leave your classroom versus when they entered it? *(500 word limit)*
3. Describe the instructional practices panelists will see in your instructional lesson video. What are the strengths that are evident? How did you develop one of these strengths? What does the video show as an opportunity for further growth? *(500 word limit)*
4. A teacher leader is someone who affects student outcomes in classrooms beyond their own. Describe how you have been a teacher leader in your school, district or subject area. *(500 word limit)*
5. Describe a project or initiative you have been involved in which contributed to the improvement of overall school culture. What was your role, how did you involve others and where is this project today? Please include evidence of student impact. *(500 word limit)*

Christa McAuliffe Reflection Video:

The Christa McAuliffe reflection video should represent the nominee’s response to the prompt below. The video should be between one and two minutes in length and follow the guidelines provided.

Reflection Video Prompt:

As Teacher of the Year, you would serve as a spokesperson and representative for the teaching profession. What would be your primary message?

Step 1 – The reflection video should focus on the teacher and should not include additional participants or a presentation. Videos may be featured on the Florida Department of Education website or similar sites and social media.

Step 2 – Prepare to record your reflection video. Almost any type of camera can be used to film the reflection, including a digital camera, camcorder, flip cam or iPhone.

Please keep in mind the following:

- Use a tripod or stand, if possible.
- Keep the camera stationary and focused on the teacher.
- Film in landscape (horizontally) not in portrait mode.
- High-quality video recording is preferred. Some digital cameras have a limit on video length. Test the camera before recording.
- An external microphone enhances the audio quality but is not required.
- **Do NOT edit the video in any way.** The submission must be continuous and unedited. If your recording appears to have been edited, the entire application will not be scored.

- **The recommended video length is between 1-2 minutes and must not exceed 2 minutes.**

Step 3 – Record and review the reflection video. In order for a reviewer to have sufficient information to perform an evaluation, please ensure the focus of the video is on the teacher and there is clear audio of the teacher speaking.

Note that the reflection video must not exceed two minutes and cannot be edited in any way before submission. The recording must be continuous and unedited. If the recording appears to have been edited, the entire application will not be scored.

Step 4 – Submit the reflection video via the YouTube link in the online application. Ensure the video is **unsubscribed and unlisted** on the privacy settings. Directions for uploading the reflection video to YouTube are included in the Lesson Video instructions on page 4. The nominee may also work with the school and/or district’s technology representative for assistance.

Lesson Plan:

Nominee’s lesson plan and printed materials used in the video submission must include the objective of the lesson and the standards and benchmarks taught (e.g., [SC.6.P.12.1](#) *Measure and graph distance versus time for an object moving at a constant speed. Interpret this relationship*). Student work samples may be included. Please name this file “*District Name, Nominee Last Name, Lesson Plan Documents.*” These documents will be uploaded into the online application.

Letters of Recommendation:

Three letters of recommendation, no more than one page each, must be provided. *One letter of recommendation must be from the nominee’s supervisor*; the other letters may be from colleagues, former principals, parents, students, or civic or community leaders. Letters should provide specific examples of the nominee’s contributions to his/her school and district and be distinct in content. No more than three recommendation letters, one page each, will be accepted. Please name these files “*District Name, Nominee Last Name, Letter of Recommendation 1,*” “*District Name, Nominee Last Name, Letter of Recommendation 2,*” and “*District Name, Nominee Last Name, Letter of Recommendation 3.*” The three letters of recommendation will be uploaded into the online application.

Superintendent Nomination Letter:

A letter from the district superintendent verifying that the nominee has been selected as the District Teacher of the Year will be uploaded into the online application. The letter must acknowledge the superintendent’s agreement to release the nominee from his/her classroom responsibilities in the event the nominee is selected as the 2026 Florida Department of Education Teacher of the Year. Please name this file “*District Name, Nominee Last Name, Superintendent Nomination Letter.*”

W-9 Form:

Each district nominee must complete and submit the **Florida Substitute Form W-9** online at <https://flvendor.myfloridacfo.com>. Please name this file “*District Name, Nominee Last Name, W-9.*”

Paper copies will not be accepted.

- One of the following confirmations **must** be included:
 - Confirmation page indicating the 10-step process has been completed; or
 - Print screen page of the W-9 Form with the Florida State Seal.
- For additional support, please contact the Department of Financial Services at 850-413-3089.

- The confirmation page will be uploaded into the online application.

Professional Headshot:

A professional headshot of the nominee must be included as a JPEG file, 1000x1025 pixel minimum. The nominee’s headshot will be uploaded into the online application. Please name this file “*District Name, Nominee Last Name, Headshot.*”

Online Application Submission

Please have the following components prepared:

- Instructional Lesson Video
- Resume
- Writing Prompt Responses
- Christa McAuliffe Reflection Video
- Lesson Plan
- Letters of Recommendation
- Superintendent Nomination Letter
- [W-9 Form](#)
- Professional Headshot

Once the components listed above are prepared, please access the online application at [2026 Florida Teacher of the Year Application](#).

The Florida Department of Education’s selection committee will consider and review only the required materials, thus additional materials shall not be submitted with the application.

Please contact the department via email at edrecognition@fldoe.org with any questions regarding the nomination process.

Applications must be received by **Monday, February 10, 2025**, in order to be considered by the selection committee. **Applications submitted after this date will not be considered.** Communication from the Florida Department of Education to the District Teachers of the Year may begin on **March 1, 2025**.

Based upon availability of funds, the Florida Department of Education presents awards to the 2026 Florida Teacher of the Year, each state finalist and each District Teacher of the Year.

Application Scoring:

The instructional lesson video will be scored using the Lesson Video Observation Score Sheet with a maximum of 64 points. The application will be scored using the Florida Teacher of the Year Application Rating Form with a maximum of 78 points. The scores are weighted equally resulting in the nominee’s total score.

Sample Teacher of the Year Score Calculation

Instructional Lesson Video Score: 56/64

Application Score: 68/78

Total Score: $(56/64)(0.5) + (68/78)(0.5) = \mathbf{0.87}$