**Program Overview**

The Tennessee Teacher of the Year program is designed to promote recognition, respect and appreciation for teachers, to stimulate interest in teaching as a career, and to encourage public involvement in education.

The regional teacher of the year finalists are part of the Commissioner’s Teacher Advisory Council. The council members share feedback and advice on issues that impact teachers, and help communicate information with teachers in their region. The nine finalists serve a one-year term on the council and the three grand division winners serve a two-year term; thus, the council has twelve total members each year.

The Tennessee Teacher of the Year represents Tennessee in the National Teacher of the Year competition, which is sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers, Inc.

Terry Weeks, 1988 Tennessee Teacher of the Year, was named 1988 National Teacher of the Year. 1994 Teacher of the Year Frank Bluestein was named by Disney/McDonald's as the 1996 Performing Arts National Teacher of the Year. The Tennessee Teacher of the Year 2016-17 is Derek Voiles of Hamblen County Schools.

Teachers of the Year are selected competitively through five cycles: School, District, CORE office level, Grand Division and State in three grade bands: Grades PreK-4, 5-8, and 9-12. **Please note that these levels refer to the grade(s) taught by the teacher and not to the grade structure or designation of the school.**

Teachers selected at each cycle receive local recognition and awards underwritten by local sources. State recognition/awards include a banquet honoring the nine Tennessee Teacher of the Year finalists and certificates of appreciation from the governor.

**Eligibility & Selection Criteria**

**A Teacher of the Year candidate must:**

* Be a full-time, certified, in good standing, Pre K-12 teacher in a state-accredited Tennessee public school at each stage of the recognition process (local, regional, grand division, state and national levels).
* Spend the majority of the school day in direct instruction to students.
* Have a minimum of three years experience as a teacher in Tennessee public schools
* Have a track record of exceptional gains in student learning.

**Teachers of the Year at all levels must:**

* Have a broad understanding of research-based models for effective teaching and of current trends and issues in education.
* Be facilitators of learning, skilled in implementing creative teaching strategies.
* Be able to show evidence of positive teacher effect over time related to student achievement through formal and informal documentation.
* Be able to explain, discuss and defend a personal philosophy of teaching.
* Be poised, articulate, enthusiastic, and energetic.
* Be exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable and skilled teachers.
* Have a superior ability to teach and to inspire in students a love of learning.
* Be recognized as leaders in the community as well as in the school.
* Show active involvement and leadership in professional development and extra-curricular activities.
* Inspire students of all backgrounds and abilities to learn.
* Have the respect and admiration of students, parents and colleagues.

For Building-level Teacher of the Year

We recommend that districts share the goals of the Teacher of the Year program, eligibility and selection criteria (here) with teachers and principals to inform their nominations. Each school faculty may choose a teacher(s) in each category to participate in system competition. Categories consist of grades Pre K-4, 5-8, and 9-12. Please note that these categories refer to the grade taught by the teacher and do not refer to the grade structure or designation of the school.

The number of teachers chosen in each category is not to exceed 1 per 20 faculty members (or portion of 20) in that category.

Each principal completes the *Building-Level Teacher of the Year* Survey Report Form before January 30th. *In order to ensure enough time for your TOY winners to complete their application for District-level (which is due Feb 1st) please choose and report your school level winners as soon as possible.*

[**Building Level Teacher of the Year 17-18 - DEADLINE JANUARY 30**](http://knoxschools.org/cms/module/selectsurvey/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=333)

*If a Building-Level Teacher of the Year does not wish to proceed to the District-Level, they do not need to complete any additional paperwork.*

*Principals will provide the application for Building-level winners moving on to the District-level competition. Please have them complete Part 1 of the attached application and return it to the appropriate TOY coordinator on or before February 1, 2017.*

PK-4 Cindy Fowler 594-1787 [cindy.fowler@knoxschools.org](mailto:cindy.fowler@knoxschools.org)

Grades 5-8 and 9-12 Kim Smith 594-1710 [kim.smith@knoxschools.org](mailto:kim.smith@knoxschools.org)

If you need additional information, visit the TN.GOV website at this link: <https://www.tn.gov/education/article/teacher-of-the-year>