2021 Mississippi Teacher of the Year

Program Nomination Guidelines

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# **Mississippi Department of Education**

# **Office of Teaching and Leading**

**P.O. Box 771 - Jackson, MS 39205-0771  
Phone: 601-359-3631   
Website:** <https://www.mdek12.org/OTL/OTC/recognition>



**Teacher of the Year Program Overview**

The purpose of the Mississippi Teacher of the Year Program (MTOY) is to recognize the outstanding performance by teachers at the district, state, and national level. Effective classroom teachers are the backbone and heroes in creating a world class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful. It is the vision of the MTOY program to elevate student success by honoring, celebrating, and promoting excellence to strengthen the teaching profession.

**Eligibility and Criteria**

The 2021 Mississippi Teacher of the Year must be a certified (K-12) teacher and employed full time in a state-accredited public school with three (3) years of teaching experience. The teacher must have plans to continue in an active teaching status the following year.

The Mississippi State Teacher of the Year candidate should have respect and admiration of their colleagues and:

* Is an expert in their field who guides students of all backgrounds and ability to achieve excellence
* Collaborates with colleagues, students, and families to create a school culture of respect and success
* Connects the classroom and key stakeholders to foster a strong community at large
* Demonstrate leadership and innovation in and outside the classroom walls that embodies lifelong learning and
* Express themselves in an engaging and articulate way.

**Role of the State Teacher of the Year**

The Mississippi Teacher of the Year will serve as an ambassador for the teaching profession by speaking to civic and professional organizations, K-12 schools, colleges and universities, conduct professional development and, assist with recruitment and retention of educators.

As the Mississippi State Teacher of the Year, the selected teacher will have the opportunity to apply for the National Teacher of the Year (NTOY) (See Nationals, page 3).

**Awards and Rewards**

The 2021 Mississippi Teacher of the Year Program provides the following awards and rewards:

* A $5,000 salary supplement from MDE for one school year
* Formal statewide recognition ceremony by MDE
* Tuition wavier from William Carey University for an advanced education degree such as masters, specialist or doctoral degree
* Classroom Technology Package from SMART Technology
* Paid travel expenses (availability of funds) for the duration of MTOY service year(s)
* Opportunities to speak at various conferences, conduct professional development sessions, and serve on various education and leadership committees
* Serve as a life-long alumnus of past MTOY recipients
* Attend and participate in National Teacher of the Year (NTOY) activities (availability of funds)

**Application and State Selection Process**

The Mississippi Teacher of the Year application is available each year starting in October with the application deadline in January. A memo and the application are sent to each school district superintendent by email. Application and guidelines are available on the webpage at: <https://www.mdek12.org/OTL/OTC/recognition>

**Local District Selection**

At the local district level, districts may select their district teacher of the year by following all local criteria and guidelines. Each district is allowed only **one entry** for the state program.

**Selection Committees and Process**

Selection of the State Teacher of the Year will be the combined responsibility of two groups: MDE Screening Committee and the State Selection Committee. Each applicant application will be reviewed a minimum of three (3) times by three (3) different members of the MDE Screening Committee. The top sixteen (16) candidates, four (4) from each congressional district, will be identified for consideration for the State Selection Committee. The sixteen (16) applications are sent to the State Selection Committee for reviewing and scoring. The Selection Committee will meet and discuss the sixteen (16) applicants and then choose the top four candidates, with one being selected from each congressional district. The selected teachers will be named Mississippi Teacher of the Year finalists.

After selecting one teacher from each congressional district, the State Selection Committee will:

* Interview each congressional district finalists
* Assess a performance task presented by the finalist during the interview process
* Score and discuss each finalist, and
* Recommend the Mississippi Teacher of the Year and Alternate Teacher of the Year.

**Nationals**

As the Mississippi State Teacher of the Year, the selected teacher will have the opportunity to apply for the National Teacher of the Year. The National Teacher of the Year Program is sponsored by the Council Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). Information about the National Teacher of the Year Program can be found at: [www.ntoy.ccsso.org](http://www.ntoy.ccsso.org) . If the Mississippi Teacher of the Year is selected as the National Teacher of the Year, the Mississippi Teacher of the Year will be released from classroom duties during the year of recognition to serve as spokesperson and advocate for the entire teaching profession across the nation.

**Application Instructions**

Please complete all parts of the application (Sections 1 – 5). Any incomplete parts on the application will result in a score reduction. All applications should be **typed and not handwritten**, **printed one-sided not two sided.** To be recognized as your district teacher of the year at the Mississippi Administrator and Teacher of the Year Awards Ceremony, an application must be submitted.

**Section I – Application Form**

Complete the application form and include the following signatures:

* School Principal
* School District Superintendent
* Applicant

**Section II – Resume**

Attach a formatted resume (do not exceed two pages) using 11-point font (may use larger font for headings, titles, and names) that includes the following components:

* Education (colleges and universities attended, dates, and degree earned)
* Certifications (list endorsements and endorsement codes)
* Teaching Experience (school district and school, position, subject(s) taught, and dates)
* Teacher Leadership (organization, position, dates)
* Awards and Other Recognition (title of award and dates)

**Section III – Professional Biography**

Complete a professional biography in 3rd person with no more than 500 words (double-spaced), 1-inch margins, and 12-font size. Include the following details:

* Personal philosophy of education and teaching
* Factors that influenced you to become a teacher
* Your greatest contribution and accomplishments in education
* Community Involvement through service-oriented activities, volunteer work, civic responsibilities, and other group activities.

**Section IV – Response Questions**

Respond to the five questions on pages 14-18 of the application. Each response should not be more than 500 words (double-spaced), 12-font size. The questions will be scored and based on the following:

* Adheres to standard grammar, spelling, and punctuation
* Answers the question clearly and concisely; and
* Provides a compelling narrative that speaks to the applicant’s ability to serve as the Mississippi Teacher of the Year.

Response questions will focus on the following:

* Describe a content lesson that defines you as a teacher. How did you engage students of all backgrounds and abilities in the learning? How did that learning influence your students? How are your beliefs about teaching demonstrated in the lesson you described?
* 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 collaborate with others, and what is the status of this project today? Please include evidence of student impact.
* How do you ensure that education transcends the classroom? Describe specific ways in which you deliberately connect your students with the community. Please include evidence of student impact.
* What do you consider to be a public education issue today? Address the issue in depth, outlining possible causes, effects, and resolutions.
* If you are chosen as the 2021 Mississippi Teacher of the Year, what would be your message? What will you communicate to your profession and to the public?

**Section V – Letters of Recommendation**

Attach three (3) letters of recommendations that support why you should be the 2021 Mississippi Teacher of the Year. At least one of these letters must be a recommendation from your principal, the remaining letters may be from the following: parent, colleague, administrator, student/former student, civic leader. Submit all letters with the application. Letters should not exceed one page in length and double-spaced between paragraphs, 12-font size, letterhead (if available), signature of supporter.

**Letter Details:**

* Student achievement and success **(Principal’s letter only)**
* Applicant’s achievements in and outside the classroom, or other specific evidence
* Applicant’s efforts to strengthen and improve the teaching profession and why the applicant qualify to become Mississippi’s 2021 Teacher of the Year.

**Submitting Applications**

After completing sections 1-5 of the application, submit **one original and (4) four stapled copies** by **January 29, 2021** to:

**Mississippi Department of Education**

**Office of Teaching and Leading**

**P.O. Box 771**

**Jackson, MS 39205**

**2021 Mississippi Teacher of the Year Program Timeline**

**(Tentative)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Activity** |
| October 2020 | 2021 Teacher of the Year nomination application is emailed to district superintendents. The application is available on the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Teaching and Leading webpage: <https://www.mdek12.org/OTL/OTC/recognition> |
| January 29, 2021 | Deadline for application submission. Submit one original application and four (4) stapled copies to the Mississippi Department of Education. Faxed entries will not be accepted. |
| February 2021 | MDE Screening Committee will review district applications. Four (4) applicants with the highest score from each congressional district will be chosen for a total of sixteen (16) applicants. |
| February 2021 | A letter of congratulations will be emailed to district teachers. |
| March 2021 | State Selection Committee will review the sixteen (16) district applications and choose four (4) finalists. The committee will interview the four (4) finalists and recommend a teacher for the Mississippi Teacher of the Year and an Alternate Teacher of the Year. |
| **TBD** | Mississippi Administrator and Teacher of the Year Awards Ceremony |
| October 2021 | The application of the Mississippi Teacher of the Year will be forwarded to the National Teacher of the Year Program |

**CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT MAP**



2021 Mississippi Teacher of the Year

**Application Form**

**Please Type**

**Section I**

| **Employment Information** |
| --- |

Full Name:

Congressional District: \_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_ 4

School District:

School Name:

School Address:

City: State: Zip:

School Phone:

School Website:

Subject Area:

Grade Level:

Years of Teaching: Years in Position:

| **Candidate’s Personal Information** |
| --- |

Personal Address:

City: State: Zip:

Personal Email:

Work Email:

Cell Phone: Home Phone:

Twitter Handle (If applicable):

Facebook Profile (If applicable):

Instagram Profile (If applicable):

Other Social Media (If applicable):

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**Application Form**

**Section I (continued)**

| **For Publicity Purposes Only** |
| --- |

Spouse’s Name (If applicable):

Spouse’s Occupation (If applicable):

Children’s Name, Age, & School or Occupation:

| **Professional Information** |
| --- |

List all professional association memberships in which you are currently active (i.e. AFT, NEA, etc.):

Platform and Areas of Interest:

| **Demographic Information** |
| --- |

**The following information is not required and will have no bearing on your selection. It is collected for informational purposes only.**

School Size:

District Size:

School Type:

* Public
* Charter Public

School Location:

* Rural
* Suburban
* Urban

I am a National Board-Certified Teacher:

* Yes
* No
* In Progress

What is your gender? \*

* Male
* Female
* Decline to answer

2021 Mississippi Teacher of the Year

**Application Form**

**Section I (continued) Demographic Information**

What category below includes your age? \*

* 21 – 29
* 30 – 39
* 40 – 49
* 50 – 59
* 60 or older

What is your ethnicity? \*

* White
* Hispanic or Latino
* Black/African American
* Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
* Asian/Indian Subcontinent
* Native American/Alaskan Native
* Other
* Decline to Answer

\*The Mississippi Teacher of the Year will be selected without regard to race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, and will not be discriminated against on the basis of disability.

| **School Principal** |
| --- |

Name: Title:

Principal’s Email Address:

School Name:

School Address:

City: State: Zip Code:

Telephone:

*I acknowledge that the nominee submits this application with my approval and that if the nominee is selected as the Mississippi and/or National Teacher of the Year, he or she will have additional travel responsibilities during the year of recognition.*

**Signature of School Principal**  **Date** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

| **School District Superintendent** |
| --- |

Name: Title:

Superintendent’s Email Address:

District Address:

City: State: Zip Code:

Telephone:

*I acknowledge that the nominee submits this application with my approval and that if the nominee is selected as the Mississippi and/or National Teacher of the Year, he or she will have additional travel responsibilities during the year of recognition.*

**Signature of District Superintendent**  **Date**

| **Teacher of the Year Candidate** |
| --- |

*I hereby give my permission that any or all of the attached materials (other than home address and telephone) may be shared with persons interested in promoting the Mississippi Teacher of the Year Program. I acknowledge if I am selected as the Mississippi and/or National Teacher of the Year, I will have additional travel responsibilities during the year of recognition.*

**Signature of Candidate**  **Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**2021 Mississippi Teacher of the Year Application**

**Section II: Resume**

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**2021 Mississippi Teacher of the Year Application**

**Section III: Professional Biography (Complete in 3rd Person)**

**2021 Mississippi Teacher of the Year Application**

**Section IV: Response Questions 1-5**

1. 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? How did that learning influence your students? How are your beliefs about teaching demonstrated in the lesson you described?
2. 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 collaborate with others, and what is the status of this project today? Please include evidence of student impact.
3. How do you ensure that education transcends the classroom? Describe specific ways in which you deliberately connect your students with the community. Please include evidence of student impact.
4. What do you consider to be a public education issue today? Address the issue in depth, outlining possible causes, effects, and resolutions.
5. If you are chosen as the 2021 Mississippi Teacher of the Year, what would be your message? What will you communicate to your profession and to the public?

| **2021 Mississippi Teacher of the Year Application** |
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**Section V: Three (3) Letters of Support**



**2021 Mississippi Teacher of the Year Application**

**Evaluation Rubric**

Each candidate will be rated on the components of the application. The following rubric will be used to evaluate each candidate’s completed application. Incomplete applications will result in a score reduction. Each candidate may receive up to **100 points**.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **CRITERIA** | **LOW SCORE** | **AVERAGE SCORE** | **HIGH SCORE** | **MAX POINTS** | **SCORE** |
| **II. Resume** **(2 pages, 11- point font)**   1. Education-colleges/universities, dates, and degree 2. Certifications – clearly defined 3. Teaching Employment History 4. District/School leadership activities-position, dates 5. Awards/Recognition – title and dates | Fails to cover all required areas.  0-3  Points \_\_\_\_\_ | Provides adequate evidence in all areas.  4-7  Points \_\_\_\_\_ | Provides clear and exceptional evidence in all areas.  8-10  Points \_\_\_\_\_ | **10** |  |
| **III. Professional Biography** **(maximum 500 words)**   1. Written in third person 2. Personal Philosophy of Education and Teaching 3. Factors that Influenced you to become a teacher 4. Greatest Contribution and Accomplishments 5. Community Involvement through service oriented, volunteer, civic, and other group activities | Fails to cover all required areas.  0-3  Points \_\_\_\_\_ | Provides adequate evidence in all areas.  4-7  Points \_\_\_\_\_ | Provides clear and exceptional evidence in all areas.  8-10  Points \_\_\_\_\_ | **10** |  |
| **IV. Response Question #1** **(maximum 500 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? How did that learning influence your students? How are your beliefs about teaching demonstrated in this lesson or unit? (philosophy of teaching)**   * Lesson defines applicant as a teacher * Lesson engaged all learners * Lesson influenced all learners * Lesson demonstrated applicant’s beliefs about teaching | Fails to cover all required areas.  0-4  Points \_\_\_\_\_ | Provides adequate evidence in all areas.  5-9  Points \_\_\_\_\_ | Provides clear and exceptional evidence in all areas.  10-15  Points \_\_\_\_\_ | **15** |  |
| **IV. Response Question #2** **(maximum 500 words)**  **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 collaborate with others, and what is the status of this project today? Please include evidence of student impact.**   * Describes how teacher involvement in this project resulted in an improvement in overall school culture * Clearly describes the role the teacher played and how he or she influenced the involvement of others * Clearly states where the projects is today * Cites/provides evidence of student impact | Fails to cover all required areas.  0-4  Points \_\_\_\_\_ | Provides adequate evidence in all areas.  5-9  Points \_\_\_\_\_ | Provides clear and exceptional evidence in all areas.  10-15  Points \_\_\_\_\_ | **15** |  |
| **IV. Response Question #3** (**maximum 500 words)**  **How do you ensure that education transcends the classroom? Describe specific ways in which you deliberately connect your students with the community. Please include evidence of student impact.**   * Describes how education transcends the classroom * Describes how teacher connects students to the community * Describes how connections impact student learning | Fails to cover all required areas.  0-4  Points \_\_\_\_\_ | Provides adequate evidence in all areas.  5-9  Points \_\_\_\_\_ | Provides clear and exceptional evidence in all areas.  10-15  Points \_\_\_\_\_ | **15** |  |
| **IV. Response Question #4** **(maximum 500 words)**  **What do you consider to be a major public education issue today? Address the issue in depth, outlining possible causes, effects, and resolutions.**   * Addresses a major public education issue of today * Outlines possible causes * Outlines effects * Outlines resolutions | Fails to cover all required areas.  0-4  Points \_\_\_\_\_ | Provides adequate evidence in all areas.  5-9  Points \_\_\_\_\_ | Provides clear and exceptional evidence in all areas.  10-15  Points \_\_\_\_\_ | **15** |  |
| **IV. Response Question #5** **(maximum 500 words)**  **If you are chosen as the 2021 Mississippi Teacher of the Year, what would be your message? What will you communicate to your profession and to the public?**   * Message (developed, based on research and tied to teacher’s belief system) * Audience impact (Is the message inspiring? Does it move you to action? Is it passionate and compelling? Would you support this teacher?) | Fails to cover all required areas.  0-4  Points \_\_\_\_\_ | Provides adequate evidence in all areas.  5-9  Points \_\_\_\_\_ | Provides clear and exceptional evidence in all areas.  10-15  Points \_\_\_\_\_ | **15** |  |
| **V. Letters of Recommendation**   1. Includes three (3) letters 2. At least one letter is from the principal citing student achievement (letterhead). The remaining letters may be from: parent, colleague, administrator, student/former student, civic leader 3. Teacher’s achievements in and outside the classroom, or other specific evidence 4. Teacher’s efforts to strengthen and improve the teaching profession 5. Why the teacher is qualified to become Mississippi’s 2021 Teacher of the Year 6. Letters do not exceed one page in length (double-spaced between paragraphs and 12 font size) 7. Signature of supporter | Fails to cover all required areas.  0-1  Points \_\_\_\_\_ | Provides adequate evidence in all areas.  2-3  Points \_\_\_\_\_ | Provides clear and exceptional evidence in all areas.  4-5  Points \_\_\_\_\_ | **5** |  |
|  | | | **Maximum Points** | **100** |  |
| **Tally the points allotted in each of the sections. This is the candidate’s final score. The highest total any candidate may earn is 100 points.** | | | **Final Score** | |  |