2024-2025 Mississippi Teacher of the Year

Program Nomination Guidelines

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***Sponsored by***

# **Mississippi Department of Education**

# **Office of Teaching and Leading**

**Administrator and Teacher of the Year Program**

**P.O. Box 771 - Jackson, MS 39205-0771  
Phone: 601-359-3513   
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 of teachers at the district, state, and national level. Effective classroom teachers are the backbone and heroes in creating a world class educational system that provides 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 2024 Mississippi Teacher of the Year candidate must:

* Be a full-time certified (K-12) teacher employed in a state-accredited Mississippi public school at each stage of recognition process (district, congressional district finalist, state, and national levels)
* Have a minimum of three (3) years of teaching experience and
* Have plans to continue in an active teaching status the following year.

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

* Is an expert in their field who advances growth for students of all backgrounds and abilities;
* Builds collaborative relationships with colleagues, students, and families to create a school culture of equity and success;
* Deliberately connects the classroom to community to impact student growth and learning;
* As a lifelong learner and teacher leader, they utilize innovation to create learning experiences within and beyond the classroom;
* Express themselves in an engaging and clear way, conveying the lived classroom experience to a variety of audiences.

**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/presenting his/her platform for the year served 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 4).

**Awards and Rewards**

The 2024 Mississippi Teacher of the Year Program provides the following awards and rewards:

* A one-time $5,000 salary supplement sponsored by MDE
* Formal statewide recognition ceremony by MDE
* Tuition wavier from William Carey University for an advanced education degree (masters, specialist or doctoral degree)
* Paid travel expenses (contingent upon the 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)
* Serve on the state Teacher of the Year Selection Committee.

**Application and State Selection Process**

The Mississippi Teacher of the Year application is available each year in October with the application deadline in January. A memorandum, application guidelines, and the application are sent to each school district superintendent by email. Application and guidelines are available via the following 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 candidate application will be reviewed at least two (2) times by two (2) 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 their findings based on the content of the applications submitted by the sixteen (16) candidates 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 finalist, which includes a performance task
* Debrief and score 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 a chance to serve as 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**

Complete all sections of the application (Sections 1 – 5). Any part of the application that is left incomplete will result in a score reduction. All applications should be **typed and not handwritten**, **printed one-sided not two sided.** Forsections 2-4, include your school district number and congressional district number in the top right header*.* 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:

* Applicant
* School Principal
* School District Superintendent

**Attach the application form (pages 11-13) to the original application only**

**Section II – Resume**

Complete the resume section found on page 14. You may add more rows, as needed (do not exceed two pages). Include your school district number and congressional district number in the top right header. Please do not add your name, address, phone number, and references on the resume page.

**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 and
* Community Involvement through service-oriented activities, volunteer work, civic responsibilities, and other group activities.

**Include your school district number and congressional district number in the top right header.**

**Section IV – Response Questions**

Respond to the five questions on page 16 of the application. Each response should not be more than 750 words (double-spaced), 12-font size. The question responses 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 refers to the five (5) aligned criteria on page 2:

* Describe a content lesson 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.
* 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?
* 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.
* 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.
* The Mississippi Teacher of the Year serves as a spokesperson and representative for all teachers and students. If you are chosen as the 2024 Mississippi Teacher of the Year, what would be your message? What will you communicate to your profession and to the public?

**Include your school district number and congressional district number in the top right header of each question per page.**

**Section V – Letters of Support**

Attach three (3) letters that supports why you should be the 2024 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, or civic leader. Submit all letters with the application. Letters should not exceed one page in length and double-spaced between paragraphs with 12-point font size.

**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 2024 Teacher of the Year.

**Submitting Applications**

After completing sections 1-5 of the application, submit **one original (with all sections 1-5)** and **(4) four stapled copies (with sections 2-5)** **postmarked** by **January 10, 2024** to:

**Mississippi Department of Education**

**Office of Teaching and Leading**

**Teacher of the Year Program**

**P.O. Box 771**

**Jackson, MS 39205**

**For questions, contact Sandra Hilliard at 601-359-3513 or by email:** [**shilliard@mdek12.org**](mailto:shilliard@mdek12.org)

**FYI: Submit only the requested sections 1-5 (original), sections 2-5 (4 stapled copies), please do not send:**

* **Cover page**
* **Guidelines**
* **Timeline**
* **Congressional map**
* **Evaluation rubric**
* **Folders or notebooks**

**2024-2025 Mississippi Teacher of the Year Program Timeline**

**(Tentative)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Activity** |
| October 2023 | The 2024 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 10, 2024  (Postmarked) | Deadline for application submission. Submit one (1) original application (application sections 1-5) and four (4) stapled copies (application sections 2-5) to the Mississippi Department of Education. |
| February 2024 | A letter of congratulations will be emailed to district teachers. |
| February 2024 | MDE Screening Committee will review district applications. Four (4) candidates with the highest score from each congressional district will be chosen for a total of sixteen (16) candidates. |
| February 2024 | State Selection Committee will review the sixteen (16) district applications and choose four (4) finalists. MDE will notify school district superintendents of the selected finalists. |
| March 2024 | Four (4) congressional district finalists’ interviews. |
| April 26, 2024 | Mississippi Administrator and Teacher of the Year Awards Ceremony (State Teacher of the Year and Alternate will be announced) |
| October 2024 | The application of the Mississippi Teacher of the Year will be submitted to the National Teacher of the Year Program. |

**CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT MAP**



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**2024-2025 Mississippi Teacher of the Year Application**

**Evaluation Rubric**

Each candidate will be rated on the components of the application. Please use the following rubric as a checklist and guide when completing your 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** **(maximum 2 pages)**   1. Education-colleges/universities, major, dates, and degree 2. Teaching Employment History – district/school, position, subjects, and dates 3. District/School leadership activities-position, dates 4. Awards/Recognition – title and dates 5. Certifications – clearly defined (endorsements and year obtained) | 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 750 words)**  *Criteria 1: Is an expert in their field who advances growth for students of all backgrounds and abilities.*  **Describe a content lesson 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. (philosophy of teaching)**   * Lesson defines applicant as a teacher * Lesson engaged all learners * Lesson influenced all students * Lesson demonstrated applicant’s beliefs about teaching and 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 #2** **(maximum 750 words)**  *Criteria 2: Builds collaborative relationships with colleagues, students, and families to create a school culture of equity and success.*  **Describe a project or initiative you have been involved in that deliberately creates culture in your classroom or school. Describe how you build and uses relationships to collaborate and to teach students of all backgrounds, abilities and identities. What is the status of the project today?**   * Describes how teacher involvement in this project creates culture in the classroom or school * Describes how the teacher builds collaborative relationships with students and others to impact school/or learning culture * Clearly states where the projects is today | 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 750 words)**  *Criteria 3: Deliberately connects the classroom to community to impact student growth and learning.*  **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.**   * Describes how teacher connects students to the community * Show how connections dissolve classrom walls * 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 750 words)**  *Criteria 4:* *As a lifelong learner and teacher leader, they utilize innovation to create learning experiences within and beyond the classroom.*  **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.**   * Describes growth as a teacher leader and lifelong learner within and beyond the classroom * Describes advocacy, how it helped you grow and how it impacted students | 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 750 words)**  *Criteria 5: Express themselves in an engaging and clear way, conveying the lived classroom experience to a variety of audiences.*  **The Mississippi Teacher of the Year serves as a spokesperson and representative for all teachers and students. If you are chosen as the 2024-2025 Mississippi Teacher of the Year, what would be your message? What will you communicate to your profession and to the public?**   * Message clear, developed and tied to teacher’s belief system * Impacts a wide range of audiences (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 Support (3 letters)**   1. At least one letter is from the principal citing student achievement (letterhead). The remaining letters may be from: parent, colleague, administrator, student/former student, or civic leader 2. Teacher’s achievements in and outside the classroom, or other specific evidence 3. Teacher’s efforts to strengthen and improve the teaching profession 4. Why the teacher is qualified to become Mississippi’s 2024-2025 Teacher of the Year 5. Letters do not exceed one page in length (double-spaced between paragraphs and 12 font size) 6. 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** | |  |

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2024-2025 Mississippi Teacher of the Year

**Application Form**

**Section I** (*please type*)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Candidate’s Employment Information** | |
| **Full Name:**  *(Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr.)* | |
| **School District:** | **School:** |
| **School District Number:** | **Congressional District: \_\_\_1 \_\_\_2 \_\_\_3 \_\_\_4** |
| **School Address** *(city, state, zip code):* | |
| **School Phone:** | **School Website:** |
| **Subject Area:** | **Grade Level:** |
| **Years of Teaching:** | **Years in Position:** |
| **Work Email:** | |
| **Principal’s Name:** | |
| **Principals’ Email:** | |
| **Superintendent’s Name:** | **Superintendent’s Phone:** |
| **Superintendent’s Email:** | |
| **Candidate’s Personal Information** | |
| **Home Address** *(city, state, zip code)***:** | |
| **Personal Email:** | |
| **Cell Phone:** | **Home Phone:** |
| **Twitter Handle:** | **Facebook Profile:** |
| **Instagram Profile:** | **Other Social Media:** |
| **Professional Information** | |
| **Professional Memberships (i.e., AFT, MAE, etc.):** | |
| **Platform/Areas of Interest:** | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **School and District 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** *(number of students)***:** | **District Size** *(total number of students)***:** |
| **School Type:**  **□ Public**  **□ Charter Public** | **School Location:**  **□ Rural**  **□ Suburban**  **□ Urban** |
| **How much time do you spend working directly with students?**  **□ 100%**  **□ 75%**  **□ 50%**  **□ Less than 50%** | |
| **Candidate Demographic Information** | |
| **National Board-Certified:**  **□ Yes**  **□ No**  **□ In Progress** | **\*Gender:**  **□ Male**  **□ Female**  **□ Decline to answer** |
| **\*Age Category:**  **□ 21 – 29**  **□ 30 – 39**  **□ 40 – 49**  **□ 50 – 59**  **□ 60 or older** | **\*Ethnicity:**  **□ Asian/Indian Subcontinent**  **□ Black/African American**  **□ Hispanic or Latino**  **□ Native American/Alaskan Native**  **□ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander**  **□ White**  **□ Multiple Ethnic/Racial Identities**  **□ 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 basic of disability. This information will not be shared with MDE Screening Committee and State Selection Committee.*** | |

|  |
| --- |
| **Teacher of** **the Year Candidate Signature** |
| By signing this nomination form, I acknowledge that:   * I have read and understand the eligibility and criteria guidelines for Mississippi Teacher of the Year and agree to accept the responsibilities as outlined in the nomination packet on pages 2-3. * I understand that I will become ineligible if I am not a full-time K-12 classroom teacher at each stage of the recognition process (district, congressional finalist, and state). * If selected as the 2024-2025 Mississippi Teacher of the Year, I will be released from classroom responsibilities during the year of my recognition as necessary to fulfill the obligations (listed on pages 2-3) inherent in the honor. * If selected as the 2025 National Teacher of the Year, I will be released from classroom responsibilities during the year of recognition to fulfill the obligations inherent in the honor. * I give my permission that any or all the materials provided (other than home address and telephone) may be shared with persons interested in promoting the Mississippi and/or National Teacher of the Year.   **Signature of Candidate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** |
| **Principal and Superintendent’s Approval and Signatures** |
| By signing this nomination form, I acknowledge that:   * I have read and understand the eligibility and criteria guidelines and responsibilities for Mississippi Teacher of the Year as outlined in the nomination packet on pages 2-3. * The candidate meets the criteria guidelines for Mississippi Teacher of the Year as outlined in the nomination packet and submits this nomination with my approval. * The candidate will become ineligible if he/she is not a full-time K-12 classroom teacher at each stage of the recognition process (district, congressional finalist, and state). * If the candidate is selected as a congressional finalist, the district agrees not to send a news release until the Mississippi Department of Education announces the candidate as a congressional finalist. * The candidate will be released from classroom responsibilities during the year of recognition as necessary to fulfill the obligations (listed on pages 2-3) inherent in the honor, if selected as the 2024-2025 Mississippi Teacher of the Year. The district agrees to provide a substitute on these occasions. * If the candidate is selected as the 2025 National Teacher of the Year, the candidate will be released from classroom responsibilities during the year of recognition to fulfill the obligations inherent in the honor.   **Signature of Principal \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **Signature of Superintendent\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** |

School District Number \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Congressional District Number \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**2024-2025 Mississippi Teacher of the Year Application**

**Section II: Resume (2 pages maximum)**

**Education**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **School Name** | **Degree** | **Major** | **Years Attended**  **(i.e., 2010-2014)** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**Teaching Work Experience**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Title** | **District/Organization** | **Subject(s) Taught** | **Years in Position**  **(i.e., 2010-2014)** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**Teacher Leadership Experience**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Position** | **Organization** | **Years in Position**  **(i.e., 2010-2014)** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

**Awards and Other Recognition**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Award/Recognition** | **Year Received** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

**Licensure Certifications**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Endorsement Code/Area** | **Year Obtained** |
| *(i.e., 154 Mathematics)* | *(i.e., 2010)* |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

School District Number \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Congressional District Number \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**2024-2025 Mississippi Teacher of the Year Application**

**Section III: Professional Biography**

**(Complete in 3rd Person/maximum 500 words, see page four (4) of the guidelines for details)**

School District Number \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Congressional District Number \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**2024-2025 Mississippi Teacher of the Year Application**

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

1. Describe a content lesson 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.

**(maximum 750 words)**

1. Describe a project or initiative you have been involved in that deliberately creates culture in your classroom or school. Describe how you build and uses relationships to collaborate and to teach students of all backgrounds, abilities, and identities. What is the status of the project today? **(maximum 750 words)**
2. 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. **(maximum 750 words)**
3. 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. **(maximum 750 words)**
4. The Mississippi Teacher of the Year serves as a spokesperson and representative for all teachers and students. If you are chosen as the 2024-2025 Mississippi Teacher of the Year, what would be your message? What will you communicate to your profession and to the public? **(maximum 750 words)**

| **2024-2025 Mississippi Teacher of the Year Application** |
| --- |

**Section V: Three (3) Letters of Support**

**(See page five (5) of the guidelines for details)**