

General Program Guidelines and Information

2008-2009 Arkansas Teacher of the Year

Selection Process

The Arkansas Teacher of the Year (ATOY) Program adheres to the requirements of the national program regarding schedules; composition of the portfolios; and areas in which nominees will be judged. This year's selection process will exceed the national guidelines. The selection process will focus on the instructional practices and strategies that applicants have used to increase student achievement in their classroom and in the overall school setting. The process will include having a panel consisting of at least three judges to make the final recommendation based on the following areas:

- Personal Application
- Panel Interviews principal and/or superintendent
- 5-Minute Video Presentation
- Classroom Observation

Following the submission of the portfolios from each district/regional cooperative, the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) will identify and select educators and former Arkansas Teacher(s) of the Year to serve as a panel of judges to rate nominees according to the *Program Guidelines* in selecting the four (4) semi-finalists.

A panel of at least three judges will conduct on-site classroom observations of the semi-finalists. The judges shall recommend one person to the Commissioner of Education to declare as the ATOY. The three remaining semi-finalists will be ranked as first, second, and third Runners Up.

Qualifications for Nominees for the Teacher of the Year

Nominees shall be skillful and dedicated teachers in grades pre-kindergarten through 12. Administrative personnel such as principals and guidance counselors are **not eligible** to be considered for ATOY.

The candidate should:

- be an exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable, and skilled teacher;
- inspire students of all backgrounds and abilities to learn;
- have the respect and admiration of students, parents, and colleagues;
- play an active and useful role in the community as well as in the school; and
- be poised, articulate, and possesses the energy to withstand a taxing schedule.

Nominees shall have an employment history of teaching, continuously or intermittently, for an accumulative period of three years or more in a Arkansas public school previous to the date of such person's nomination.

The ATOY candidate must actively be teaching in their district school in Arkansas at the time of their nomination. Nominees for ATOY who are not actively engaged in teaching in a public school at the time at which observations are made shall be disqualified.

The ATOY will remain an actively employee of the nominating school district during his / her term of service. *If the candidate chooses to leave the district school during the selection period, the district school shall submit another candidate.*

Candidate must hold a valid and current teacher's license, as approved by the Professional Licensure, ADE.

DISTRICT TEACHER OF THE YEAR NOMINATION GUIDELINES

General

The ADE will annually provide district coordinators of the ATOY Program with detailed instructions and proper forms based on the National Teacher of the Year (NTOY) program for the presentation of nominees. Also, upon request, sample questions will be made available to the district level selection committee by the district level coordinator.

Each district may only nominate one teacher. Once applications are received and sorted, according to the 15 regional service cooperative areas and one for school districts in Pulaski County, the selection committee will then select one applicant to represent each of the cooperative areas and the districts in Pulaski County.

Nominees shall submit a portfolio describing himself / herself and setting forth their positions on education issues. In Arkansas, Teachers of the Year are annually chosen at the school and district levels through a variety of procedures. District-level processes range from open nomination to formal selection by a district-wide committee from among nominees from every school. Continuous changes to improve the selection process are expected and recommended.

It is the desire of the ATOY program to promote and encourage a consistent selection process in every school district to ensure the selection of a person who will represent his or her fellow teachers.

School and district nominations should take place at the beginning of the school year for the following year. This will give the nominee ample time to prepare his or her portfolio for submission to the state.

The selection process should be completed by a broad-based committee representing teachers, building administrators, parents, and students.

Teachers who have received recognition as ATOY are **not** eligible for nomination. Those who have been recognized as a District Teacher of the Year in the previous three years are **not** eligible for nomination. Teachers who have been nominated in prior years, but did not achieve at least a district ranking, may be nominated the following year.

District Coordinator's Responsibilities

The process should be facilitated at the district school level by a coordinator who fully understands the process and who can work with the Teacher of the Year nominees so that they fully understand the process. Their responsibilities are as follows:

- Confirm that school and district level processes are conducted according to guidelines/timelines and maintain supporting documentation.
- Ensure that each Regional Educational Service Cooperative is represented with at least one (1) Teacher of the Year candidate at the state level.
- Provide sample questions to district level selection committee. Upon request, the ADE will assist in making these questions available.
- If necessary, establish a building and district-level process that provides access for all teachers
- Mail the **Teacher of the Year Application Form** to Gloria Stephens at ADE by 4:30 p.m., Friday, September 19, 2008.
- Assist the District School Teacher of the Year with completing the application, explaining timelines, and reviewing and critiquing the application prior to it being submitted to the ADE.