

To: Superintendent Addressed

From: Rodney Watson, PhD

Date: May 5, 2026

Re: Teacher of the Year Nomination Guidelines

Each year, Region 4 honors one elementary and one secondary teacher as Teachers of the Year. The awards are sponsored by the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA). District Teachers of the Year nominees must complete the [Texas Teacher of the Year Application](#) by no later than June 15. TASA will not accept late applications or hard copies of the application.

Fees for participating districts are as follows: \$350 for K–12 and \$200 for K–8 and K–6 districts. As nomination forms are received, an invoice for payment will be generated and sent to the district.

Please read the following information for important program details.

- Each district may nominate **two** teachers—one elementary and one secondary. (In most cases, elementary is defined as Early Childhood/Prekindergarten–Grade 5, and secondary is defined as Grades 6–12.) Charter operators/districts with multiple campuses (whether they are all in one ESC region or in multiple) should select one elementary teacher and one secondary teacher for submission to the regional competition. A teacher nominated by a charter operator should enter the number of the Region ESC where their campus is located into the online application. Their application will be considered along with all other applications within that region. As such, a charter operator may have an elementary teacher submitting an application to one region and a secondary teacher submitting an application to another region.
- Regional selection is tentatively scheduled to take place at the end of June or early July. Interviews of the top five (5) elementary and top five (5) secondary nominees will take place on **Thursday, July 9, 2026**. *Please be sure district nominees mark this date on their calendars.*
- Region 4 2026 Teachers of the Year is scheduled to be announced at the annual Region 4 Teachers of the Year Luncheon and Awards Ceremony on Tuesday, August 6, 2026, at the Marriott Marquis Houston from 11:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.
- In addition, we are asking that all honorees review and follow the attached Teacher of the Year Photo Guidelines when submitting their photos with their TASA application. These photos will be used for event materials, including the website, recognition visuals, and social media. Photos that do not meet these guidelines may need to be resubmitted.

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Your support in sharing this information with your honorees helps ensure a smooth and polished experience for all.

Region 4 welcomes this opportunity to honor teaching excellence. Although there are many Teachers of the Year programs sponsored by various organizations, the Region 4 Teachers of the Year event is part of the TASA Texas Teacher of the Year program and is the initial step in the National Teacher of the Year selection process. In this regard, please be advised of the following criteria listed on the TASA website, as this must be used in the selection of the Region 4 Teachers of the Year.

A candidate for National Teacher of the Year should be an exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable, and skilled teacher in any state-approved or accredited school, Prekindergarten through Grade 12, who is planning to continue in an active teaching status (supervisory and administrative responsibilities should be of secondary consideration).

Last year, 92 teachers from 49 Region 4 school districts participated in the Region 4 Teachers of the Year program. We encourage you to continue to recognize outstanding educators in your district through this program. If you have not participated in the past, we hope that you will consider doing so this year. For questions, please contact Stephanie Noriega at 713.744.6851 or stephanie.noriega@esc4.net.

SN/ag

Attachments

TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Photo Guidelines

To ensure a consistent and professional presentation, submitted photos may be used for event materials, including the **website, recognition visuals, and social media.**



ACCEPTABLE PHOTOS



Face the camera directly
Look straight at the camera.



Head and shoulders visible
Crop the photo to include your head and shoulders.



Neutral, light-colored background
Use a plain background with no distracting objects.



Professional attire
Wear clothing you would wear to a formal event.



Clear lighting and high-quality image
Use good lighting and make sure the photo is clear and in focus.



Only one individual in the photo
Do not include other people in your photo.

EXAMPLE OF AN ACCEPTABLE PHOTO



Professional, clear, and appropriate for all event materials



NOT ACCEPTABLE



Selfies or photos taken in a car



Photos with other people



Casual attire, costumes, or accessories
(e.g., hats, tiaras)



Distracting or busy backgrounds



Filters or heavily edited images



Clothing with large logos or graphics



HELPFUL TIP

A simple photo taken against a plain wall with good lighting is perfectly acceptable. Professional photography is not required.



PHOTO REVIEW PROCESS

All photos will be reviewed. If your photo does not meet these guidelines, you will be contacted to submit a new photo.



Questions?

Contact Stephanie Escobar at stephanie.escobar@esc4.net.

Thank you!

We appreciate your help in making this event a polished and celebratory experience for all honorees.

Texas Teacher of the Year

2027 Regional/Texas Teacher of the Year Application

Each Texas public school district and open-enrollment charter operator may nominate only two teachers — one elementary and one secondary educator — for this award program. **Only those educators selected as either District Elementary Teacher of the Year or District Secondary Teacher of the Year are eligible to apply using this form.** [Please read this important information on eligibility, including information specific to charter schools, before submitting this application.](#)

The deadline to complete and submit this form is June 15, 2026.

Save & Return

This form includes several essay questions and can take some time to complete. If you would like the option to save your progress and finish it later, before you complete this form, you must first create an account so that you can log back in. We strongly encourage you to create an account before beginning this form so that you do not lose your work.

CREATE AN ACCOUNT OR
LOG IN

I am submitting this application upon being nominated by my school district as the official ... *

[Please read this important information on eligibility, including information specific to charter schools, before submitting this application.](#)

ESC Region *

Note: A teacher nominated by a charter operator should enter the number of the Region ESC where their campus is located.

Full School District Name (Name Spelled Out ISD) *

Please use upper and lowercase letters, as appropriate, throughout this form. Do NOT use all upper or lowercase.

Please Note: There is no field for entering a personal/professional website. That is not requested or needed. Thank you for not entering in another field!

Nominee's First Name *

Nominee's Last Name *

Option 1: Spell your first and last names phonetically (so we pronounce it correctly during the awards luncheon).

Option 2: Upload an audio or video file of you pronouncing your first and last names.

 No file chosen

Nominee's Work Email *

Nominee's Home Email *

Nominee's X (formerly Twitter) Handle (if applicable)

Nominee's Facebook Profile (if applicable)

Nominee's Home Address *

City *

State *

ZIP *

Nominee's Phone No. (no hyphens) *

Nominee's Gender *

Nominee's Age *

Nominee's Race/Ethnicity *

Gender/age/race are not shared with any judging panel.

Upload a Photo (color, portrait orientation, 300 dpi, jpg format, suitable for publicity purposes) Please no cellphone selfies, PDFs, or Word documents with photos embedded. No photocopies or photographs of photos will be accepted. *

 No file chosen

I hereby give my permission for any or all of the attached materials or photos that may be taken of me to be shared with persons interested in promoting, in a variety of media, the National and Texas Teacher of the Year Programs. *

[clear](#)

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