



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



TO: Superintendents of Schools
Superintendents of Unified School Districts
Executive Directors, Regional Educational Service Centers
Principals of Endowed and Incorporated Academies

FROM: Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education *Dianna R. Wentzell*

DATE: May 19, 2016

SUBJECT: 2017 Connecticut Teacher of the Year Program

It gives me great pleasure to invite your school district to participate in the 2017 Connecticut Teacher of the Year Program and join one of the oldest and most prestigious recognition programs to focus public attention on excellence in teaching. The program is designed to recognize and honor and celebrates excellence by selecting one teacher to serve as the state's representative of what is best in the profession.

Program Overview

Connecticut's Teacher of the Year Program begins with the selection of a teacher of the year within the local district. Each district designs its own process for selecting a local teacher of the year. Teachers, administrators, and the public must view the process as fair and inclusive. Districts participating in the Teacher of the Year Program have found the program to have a positive impact on the entire community. Recognizing an outstanding teacher in the district establishes a culture that rewards excellence in teaching, gives the community a sense of pride in its teachers, and showcases teachers as positive role models.

District teachers of the year are invited to submit an application for consideration as Connecticut Teacher of the Year. Upon completion of a rigorous selection process, fifteen semifinalists are interviewed to determine four finalists. The Connecticut Teacher of the Year is selected from among the four finalists and honored along with district teachers of the year at an annual recognition ceremony in the fall. The Connecticut Teacher of the Year, finalists and semifinalists serve as teacher-ambassadors for public education. They are appointed to Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) advisory councils and other education advisory committees to serve as voices from the field. The Connecticut Teacher of the Year also represents the state at the national level and can be considered for the honor of National Teacher of the Year. All state teachers of the year are invited to participate in national education forums, National Teacher of the Year educational planning and networking sessions, and various U.S. Department of Education convenings.

Recognition Ceremony

Each district teacher of the year is individually recognized at a statewide recognition ceremony. This year's ceremony will take place on **Thursday, November 10, 2016, at The Bushnell, 166 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut.** We look forward to having you in attendance.

Connecticut Teacher of the Year Application Process

The 2017 Connecticut Teacher of the Year application must be completed and submitted electronically. A link to the online application is located on the CSDE website at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/toy>. Paper applications will not be accepted.

Application preparation requires a significant amount of time; therefore, I encourage you to identify and notify your district's teacher of the year in the spring so that your teacher has ample time to complete the application process. The deadline for submission of Connecticut Teacher of the Year applications is **Wednesday, August 3, 2016**.

Important

Your local teacher of the year will only be considered as a candidate for the Connecticut Teacher of the Year Program if s/he completes the entire application, works directly with students at least 50% of the time, and is currently working under a Connecticut certificate with a teaching endorsement or a vocational teaching endorsement.

If your candidate does not meet these requirements or chooses not to be considered as a candidate for the Connecticut Teacher of the Year award, s/he can still be honored at the annual recognition ceremony. If this is the case, your candidate will need to create an account, enter his or her profile information into the online application website (found at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/toy>), and formally "opt out" of the Connecticut Teacher of the Year application process. This formal registration will ensure that the CSDE has accurate contact information, which will be needed to prepare invitations for the recognition ceremony. Your teacher must complete the profile information section of the electronic application by **Wednesday, August 3, 2016**, in order to receive the invitation to participate in the recognition ceremony at The Bushnell.

As some districts do not announce their Teacher of the Year until the opening of the new school year, all applications will be confidential until September 7, 2016.

If you have any questions, please contact Kim Wachtelhausen at 860-713-6841 or via email at kim.wachtelhausen@ct.gov. We look forward to receiving your nominee's 2017 Connecticut Teacher of the Year application by **Wednesday, August 3, 2016**.

cc: Ellen E. Cohn, Deputy Commissioner
Sarah J. Barzee, Ph.D., Chief Talent Officer
Anne M. McKernan, Chief, Bureau of Leadership Development
Kim L. Wachtelhausen, Education Consultant, Connecticut Teacher of the Year Program