Application for Nebraska Teacher of the Year 2012

The **Nebraska Awards of Excellence Program**, which features selection of the **Nebraska Teacher of the Year**, serves to recognize the contributions of the classroom teacher. Candidates should be exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable, and skilled teachers; have the respect and admiration of parents, colleagues, and students; play active and useful roles in the community as well as in the school; be poised and articulate; and possess the energy to withstand a busy schedule. The most important criterion is a superior ability to inspire students of all backgrounds and abilities to learn.

The Nebraska Application Review Committee examines all applications submitted and selects up to five **Award of Excellence Teachers**. Each of the Award of Excellence Teachers will be interviewed to determine the **Nebraska Teacher of the Year**, who will be eligible for consideration as the National Teacher of the Year.

Application Guidelines

- Certified teachers, who plan to continue in an active teacher status in any state-approved or accredited school pre-kindergarten through grade 12 may be nominated. Supervisory and administrative responsibilities are secondary considerations.
- Whether nominated by someone else or applying directly for the honor, each candidate must personally complete the application form. All answers must be in the teacher's own words.
- Although the selection committee will consider all items on the application, effective classroom teaching and the capability to inspire students of all backgrounds and abilities to learn are the most important qualifications.
- Use white paper, one side only, adequate margins, standard size font (10-12 point), and staple in upper left hand corner.
- Applications will be disqualified if:
  - More than three letters of support are submitted.
  - Portfolios or other binders are used.
  - Scrapbooks are submitted.
  - Any materials are attached to the application.
- Applications will not be returned.
- Questions and requests for application forms should be directed to Lora Sypal at 402-471-5059 or lora.sypal@nebraska.gov.
- Applications must be **postmarked** no later than **August 15, 2011.** Send the application to Nebraska Teacher of the Year Program, Nebraska Department of Education, 301 Centennial Mall South, P.O. Box 94987, Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-4987.

Application Form

Name _____ Social Security Number _____

Grade and Subject Taught _____ School _____

School Address _____ City _____ Zip Code _____

Home Address _____ City _____ Zip Code _____

School Phone _____ Home Phone _____

Email Address _____

I endorse this individual's application and understand that if selected as an award winner, the teacher nominated from my school district will need release time to perform speaking and public appearance duties in his or her role as ambassador for Nebraska pre-kindergarten through 12 education. I acknowledge that if the nominee is selected as National Teacher of the Year, he or she will be released from classroom responsibilities during the year of recognition.

_____ _____

Superintendent's Signature Principal's Signature

Professional Preparation

Check appropriate boxes and fill in other information.

Degrees Earned	Field	Institution	Year Received
☐ Undergraduate			
☐ Master's			
☐ Doctorate			
☐ Other			

Type of Teaching Certification _____

Professional Experience

List schools where you have taught, what subject was taught, and beginning and ending dates at each school.

School	Subject Taught	From	To

I understand that if selected as Nebraska Teacher of the Year, I will spend considerable time away from school and family traveling to speak, attending meetings, and giving workshops as an ambassador for Nebraska pre-kindergarten through 12 education. I hereby give my permission for any or all of the attached materials to be shared with persons interested in promoting the Nebraska Teacher of the Year Program. I also acknowledge that if selected as the National Teacher of the Year I will be released from classroom responsibilities during the year of recognition in order to fulfill the obligations inherent in the honor.

I understand that by signing the application I hereby grant permission to the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and its employees and representatives, to allow NDE to take photographic images that may include images of me inside and outside of the school classroom setting in and above district for use in informational / promotional materials that may be published by NDE. Such publication is anticipated to consist of a brochure.

I authorize the use of such images by NDE indefinitely, unless I specifically revoke to NDE in writing. I understand that all negatives, positives, prints and digital reproductions will be property of NDE.

_____

Signature of Nominee

_____

Date

The following questions should be answered on separate sheets of paper. Restate the question at the top of the page of each answer and begin each question on a separate sheet. Points may be deducted for not following instructions and for grammatical and typographical errors.

1. **Educational History and Professional Development Activities** **Maximum 20 points**
   (Limit your typed response to two double-spaced pages.)
   Beginning with the **most recent**: (a) list colleges and universities attended including postgraduate studies and indicate degrees earned and dates of attendance; (b) list teaching employment history, indicating time period, grade level and subject area; (c) list professional association memberships including information regarding offices held and other relevant activities; (d) list staff development leadership activity and leadership activity in the training of future teachers; and (e) list awards and other recognition of your teaching.

2. **Professional Biography** **Maximum 10 points**
   (Limit your typed response to two double-spaced pages.)
   What were the factors that influenced you to become a teacher? Describe what you consider to be your greatest contributions and accomplishments in education.

3. **Community Involvement** **Maximum 5 points**
   (Limit your typed response to one double-spaced page.)
   Describe your commitment to your community through service-oriented activities such as volunteer work, civic responsibilities, and other group activities.

4. **Philosophy of Teaching and Learning** **Maximum 25 points**
   (Limit your typed response to two double-spaced pages.)
   A. Describe your personal feelings and beliefs about teaching and learning, including your own ideas of what makes you an outstanding teacher. Describe the rewards you find in teaching.
   B. How are your beliefs about teaching demonstrated in your personal teaching style?

5. **Technology in Education** **Maximum 5 points**
   (Limit your typed response to one double-spaced page.)
   Explain how you incorporate technology into your classroom teaching. Include in your statement how students use technology and how you use technology as a teaching tool for classroom preparation and professional work.

6. **Education Issues and Trends** **Maximum 10 points**
   (Limit your typed response to two double-spaced page.)
   What do you consider to be the major public education issues today? Address **one** in depth, outlining possible causes, effects, and resolutions.

7. **The Teaching Profession** **Maximum 15 points**
   (Limit your typed response to two double-spaced pages.)
   A. What do you do to strengthen and improve the teaching profession?
   B. What is and/or what should be the basis for accountability in the teaching profession?

8. **Nebraska Teacher of the Year** **Maximum 10 points**
   (Limit your typed response to one double-spaced page.)
   As the Nebraska Teacher of the Year, you would serve as spokesperson and representative for the entire teaching profession. As Teacher of the Year, what would be your message to Nebraska? What would you communicate to your profession and to the general public?

9. **Letters of Support**
   (Limit of three letters, each a maximum of one page.)
   Include three letters of support from among any of the following: superintendent, principal, colleague, student/former student, parent, or civic leader.

Background Information

The National Teacher of the Year Program originated in 1952 and continues to recognize teachers on the local, state, and national levels. The Nebraska Teacher of the Year Program has been in place since 1972 and affords opportunity to honor dedicated teachers for excellence in the classroom. In association with the National Teacher of the Year Program, sponsored by ING and Target, is a project of the Council of Chief State School Officers in partnership with University of Phoenix and People to People Ambassador Programs.

In order to encourage innovative educational programs to benefit students and local school districts, the Nebraska State Board of Education awards a $1,000 grant to each of the finalists so that each honored teacher can pursue an educational project of special interest. Since 1988, teachers and their students have acquired (or produced) special curriculum materials, purchased classroom technological equipment, acquired new skills through attendance at seminars, studied arts and humanities, sponsored student field trips, and purchased unique items not otherwise budgeted for (such as art work for display and a school sign for placement outside a new building).

The Nebraska Teacher of the Year Program has received financial support from BlueCross BlueShield of Nebraska, SMART Technologies, the Nebraska Council of School Administrators, the Nebraska State Education Association, the Nebraska Association of School Boards, Nebraska PTA, Data Recognition Corporation (DRC), and Dillard's in Lincoln, Nebraska . These sponsors and other friends of the Nebraska Teacher of the Year Program provided stipends to the Award of Excellence recipients and to the Nebraska Teacher of the Year. The amounts for 2012 have yet to be established; however, in 2011 the Teacher of the Year received mementos, gifts, $3,000 and educational equipment valued at over $17,000. The Awards of Excellence recipients received mementos, gifts, $1,700 and educational software.

Timeline

March 2011	Application packets available.
August 15, 2011	Postmark deadline for receipt of applications. Applications that are incomplete or do not comply with the format will be disqualified.
September-October 2011	Finalists will be selected and notified.
October 2011	Finalists will be interviewed in Lincoln.
November 8, 2011	Recognition luncheon.

Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); sex (Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972); or handicap (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) in educational programs of activities receiving federal assistance. Employees, students and the general public are hereby notified that the Nebraska Department of Education does not discriminate in any educational programs or activities or in employment policies.