



2016

# Nebraska Teacher of the Year Application

**Program sponsored by:**

Nebraska Department of Education

Nebraska State Board of Education

Data Recognition Corporation (DRC)

BlueCross BlueShield of Nebraska

Nebraska Association of School Boards

Nebraska Council of School Administrators

Nebraska Parent Teacher Association

Nebraska State Education Association

SMART Technologies

Dillard's Department Store, Lincoln, Nebraska

The Sherwood Foundation

Union Bank & Trust Company

The Nebraska Academy of Sciences, Inc.

ConAgra Foods Foundation



## Eligibility Criteria:

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.

Certified teachers, who plan to continue in an active teacher status in any state-approved or accredited school pre-kindergarten through grade 12. Supervisory and administrative responsibilities are secondary considerations.

Whether nominated or applying directly, each candidate must personally complete the application form. All answers must be in the teacher's own words.

Teachers who have been nominated in prior years but did not achieve at least an Award of Excellence ranking, may be nominated.

Use white paper, one side only, adequate margins, standard size font (10-12 point).

*\*The social security number is requested for use by third party private monetary contributors for purposes of federal and state tax laws since monetary awards are provided by third party private donations to as many as five (5) applicants as Award of Excellence Teachers or as the Nebraska Teacher of the Year.*

*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.*

Teachers who have received recognition as Nebraska State Teacher of the Year or who have been recognized as an Award of Excellence Recipient in the previous three years are not eligible for nomination.

Before submitting the application, please be sure the application is complete, the required information is provided, and the format guidelines were followed.

Applications will not be returned.

## Application Review Panel:

The **Nebraska Application Review Panel** 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. Only completed applications will be considered.

## 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. The National Teacher of the Year Program, presented by Voya Financial, is a project of the Council of Chief State School Officers.

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), Dillard's Department Store in Lincoln, Nebraska, The Sherwood Foundation, Union Bank & Trust Company, The Nebraska Academy of Sciences, Inc., and ConAgra Foods Foundation. These sponsors and other friends of the Nebraska Teacher of the Year Program provided stipends to the Awards of Excellence recipients and to the Nebraska Teacher of the Year. The amounts for 2016 have yet to be established. In 2015 the Teacher of the Year received mementos, gifts, \$4,500 and educational equipment valued at over \$11,000. The Awards of Excellence recipients received mementos, gifts, \$2,050 and educational software.

## Timeline:

March 2015	Application packets available.
August 7, 2015	Postmark deadline for receipt of applications. Applications that are incomplete or do not comply with the format will be disqualified.
September-October 2015	Finalists will be selected and notified.
October 2015	Finalists will be interviewed in Lincoln.
November 5, 2015	Recognition luncheon.

## Deadline:

Applications must be **postmarked** no later than **August 7, 2015**. Send application to:

Nebraska Teacher of the Year Program  
Nebraska Department of Education  
301 Centennial Mall South, P.O. Box 94987  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-4987

## Questions/Application Requests:

Questions and requests for application forms should be directed to Lora Sypal at (402) 471-5059 or [lora.sypal@nebraska.gov](mailto:lora.sypal@nebraska.gov).



# 2016 Application for Nebraska Teacher of the Year

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security Number\* \_\_\_\_\_  
 Grade and Subject Taught \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_  
 School Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 School Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail 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 grade 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
<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Master's	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> 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 grade 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 the property of NDE.*

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Signature of Nominee

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Date

Print Form

The following questions should be answered on separate sheets of paper. Restate the question at the top of the page for 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 pages.)  
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 a 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.