



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



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

**FROM:** Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, Commissioner of Education 

**DATE:** April 17, 2020

**SUBJECT:** 2021 Connecticut Teacher of the Year Program

In this new era of extraordinary, educators across the country are meeting the challenges of virtual learning environments. Connecticut educators are collaborating with colleagues, designing and delivering instruction, attending to the social and emotional needs of their students and families “from a distance” all while maintaining the health and well-being of their own families like never before. This is a historical moment in public education but also a period in our world history where we are all at the center.

In these past weeks, I have had the opportunity to witness Connecticut educators doing what they do best, even better. The Connecticut Teacher of the Year Program is designed to recognize, honor, and celebrate excellence by selecting a teacher ambassador to represent the many exemplary educators in service of students and families across Connecticut. This year, I encourage you to participate in the program to give us an opportunity to capture the extraordinary actions of Connecticut’s finest educators within circumstances never before seen by a generation.

**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 gives the community a sense of pride in its teachers and showcases teachers as the positive role models they are.

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 and are invited to contribute to Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) advisory councils and other education committees. 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 **Tuesday, November 10, 2020, at The Bushnell, 166 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut**. We look forward to having you in attendance.

### **Connecticut Teacher of the Year Application Process**

The 2021 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.

The application process 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 s/he has ample time to complete the application in its entirety. The deadline for submission of Connecticut Teacher of the Year applications is **Sunday, August 2, 2020**.

**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. Please follow the link for eligible endorsement codes: <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Certification/Endorsement-Codes>.

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 **Sunday, August 2, 2020**, in order to receive the invitation to participate in the recognition ceremony at The Bushnell.

If you have any questions, please contact Kim Wachtelhausen at 860-713-6841 or via email at [kim.wachtelhausen@ct.gov](mailto:kim.wachtelhausen@ct.gov). We look forward to receiving your nominee's 2021 Connecticut Teacher of the Year application.

cc: Dr. Shuana K. Tucker, Chief Talent Officer  
Christopher M. Todd, Bureau Chief, Talent Office  
Kim Wachtelhausen, Coordinator, Connecticut Teacher of the Year Program