

**Virginia Department of Education
P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, VA 23218-2120**

2007

VIRGINIA TEACHER OF THE YEAR PROGRAM

Application Due Date: Friday, June 30, 2006

For additional information contact:

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VIRGINIA TEACHER OF THE YEAR PROGRAM

Part 1: General Information

Overview

Since 1964, Virginia has participated in the National Teacher of the Year Program, a project of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), presented by the ING Foundation, and sponsored by Scholastic Inc. The program honors teachers who represent the best in teaching in the Commonwealth of Virginia and the nation. The program provides school divisions the opportunity to recognize outstanding teachers and to focus positive public attention on education and the teaching profession. Those who are selected as Regional Teachers of the Year, Virginia Teacher of the Year, or finalists in the national competition become ambassadors for education and enjoy a lifetime of positive memories.

Qualifications

Individuals who possess **current Virginia teaching licenses** and who teach in state-accredited public or accredited nonpublic schools are eligible to participate in the State Teacher of the Year program. (Individuals holding provisional teaching licenses are not eligible to participate.) The program is open to all teachers, including school librarians, technology specialists, guidance counselors, and reading specialists. Candidates should be teachers who are exceptionally skilled and dedicated and who are planning to continue in an active teaching status. Candidates who accept administrative or supervisory positions will no longer be eligible. Teachers selected should have the respect and admiration of students, parents, and colleagues. Additionally, they should play active and meaningful roles in their communities as well as in their schools. Many candidates will have distinguished themselves as leaders in public education at the local, regional, and/or state levels. Candidates should also be poised, articulate, and knowledgeable about their teaching areas and education in general.

Numerous criteria are used in evaluating the nominees, but the most important is the ability to inspire the love of learning in students of all backgrounds and abilities. Candidates will be considered on the basis of the following criteria developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers:

- Concern for individual students and ability to inspire learning;
- Ability and willingness to work cooperatively with fellow professionals;
- Willingness to devote time and energy to activities that result in improved instruction for children;
- Ability to work effectively with the community;
- Desire to keep abreast of current educational theories and practices;
- Ability and willingness to make contributions to the field of education;
and
- Examples of innovative practices initiated by the candidate.

Submission of Application

The Virginia school division superintendent must submit the application packet of the teacher selected to represent the school division. Please be sure that all materials are in durable packages. **One original (so marked) and eight stapled copies** of the completed portfolio must be received by the Department of Education **no later than 5p.m. on Friday, June 30, 2006.**

Send by first class priority mail to:

Virginia Teacher of the Year Program
Attention: Dr. Thomas A. Elliott,
Assistant Superintendent
Division of Teacher Education, Licensure,
and Professional Practice
Virginia Department of Education
P. O. Box 2120
Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120

or overnight carrier to:

Virginia Teacher of the Year Program
Attention: Dr. Thomas A. Elliott,
Assistant Superintendent
Division of Teacher Education, Licensure,
and Professional Practice
Virginia Department of Education
101 North 14th Street, 24th floor
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Selection of Local Nominees

Virginia division superintendents are invited to nominate one teacher for state-level recognition. In addition, superintendents are encouraged to use the program as a basis for recognizing deserving teachers within the system. The selection procedures and guidelines within a school division are **local decisions**; however, the following suggestions are offered for local selection.

- Develop a democratic procedure that avoids the appearance of an arbitrary decision. For instance, the superintendent may ask building principals to use one of the following methods to select initial nominees: (1) a committee of building teachers, (2) a faculty council or advisory group, (3) a committee of teachers, parents, and the principal, (4) the entire school staff, (5) all teachers in the building, or (6) the principal, based on input from the faculty and staff.
- The nomination procedure at the division level should not be elaborate. After the school level selection, the candidates may then be considered by a committee of teachers, parents, administrators, school board members, community leaders, or other appropriate persons.

- All nominations should be made without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability. Teachers retiring from the profession at the end of the school year should **not** be nominated because the teacher must be active during the following school year.
- Local recognition should be an integral part of the selection process. Recognition need not be elaborate, but should involve public congratulations and appropriate awards to the teachers involved.
- It is important that time be allowed for the development of the nominee's portfolio. For that reason, the Department of Education encourages school divisions to make their selections known to the teachers as early as possible, so the teachers have adequate time to prepare the necessary materials, gather letters of support, and develop the written portions of the portfolio. The review of the written portfolio by the members of the selection panel is a critical first step in the selection process. **The importance of developing a well-written portfolio free of grammatical and spelling errors cannot be overly emphasized.**

Nonpublic School Participation

An individual possessing a current Virginia teaching license in a nonpublic accredited school may be nominated to represent his/her school or diocese for participation in the State Teacher of the Year Program. Provisional licenses are not acceptable. Portfolios should be sent directly to the coordinator at the Department of Education.

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Part 2: Application Procedure

A portfolio of information must be developed according to established guidelines. National and state review committees agree that the content and complete representation of the teacher in the portfolio are more important than an elaborate presentation. Candidates should provide a concise, well-thought-out text, presented in a neat, easy-to-read format. Candidates should present themselves clearly and professionally. Narratives should be checked carefully for spelling and typographical errors. While a typographical error may not eliminate a candidate, it certainly reflects unfavorably on the teacher and the profession.

General Portfolio Guidelines

Portfolios must reach the Department of Education by Friday, June 30, 2006.

The original copy of the portfolio:

1. Must be submitted in a simple **pocket folder**. **Do not use a three-ring notebook.**
2. The cover of the original folder contains **only** the candidate's name, school division, and geographical region; and is marked, "Original Copy."
3. Pages within the folder are 8-1/2 by 11-inch paper.
4. No artistic embellishments are allowed.
5. Pages within the folder are typed only on the front side of the page and are numbered.
6. All typewritten or word-processed pages should be double-spaced, of letter quality, and font size no smaller than 10 point.
7. Pages of the original copy are **clipped** together – **no staples**.
8. Attach a recently taken photograph of the head and shoulders to the **original copy**. A 5 X 7 photo in color is preferred.
9. The eight copies of the portfolio should be stapled together and submitted in a folder marked "copies."

Specific Sections of the Portfolio:

- I. **Basic Data Sheet:** The basic data sheet is **first page of the portfolio**. Signatures of the school superintendent, principal, and candidate are required on this form – a copy is not acceptable. **The Basic Data Sheet is the last page of this attachment – all information is required.**
- II. **Educational history and professional development activities:** This section must be in **outline form and limited to two pages using a font size no smaller than 10.**
 - A. Beginning with the most recent, list colleges and universities attended, including post-graduate studies. Indicate degrees earned and dates of attendance.
 - B. Beginning with the most recent, list teaching employment history indicating time period, grade level and subject area.

- C. Beginning with most recent, list professional association memberships including information regarding offices held and other relevant activities.
- D. Beginning with the most recent, list professional development leadership activity and leadership activity in the training of future teachers.
- E. Beginning with the most recent, list awards and other recognition of your teaching.

III. Three Narrative Essays: Each essay in this section should be limited to two double-spaced pages using a font size no smaller than 10.

1. ***Community Involvement:*** Describe your commitment to your community through service-oriented activities such as volunteer work, civic responsibilities and other group activities.
2. ***Philosophy of Teaching:*** Describe your personal feelings and beliefs about teaching, including your own ideas of what makes you an outstanding teacher. Describe the rewards you find in teaching. How are your beliefs about teaching demonstrated in your personal teaching style? What factors influenced you to become a teacher?
3. ***Education Issues and Trends:*** What do you consider to be the major public education issues today? Address **one** in depth, outlining possible causes, effects, and resolutions.

IV. Letters of Support: Include **three letters of support from any of the following: superintendent, principal, administrator, colleague, student/former student, parent, or civic leader. An effective letter of support contains evidence of personal knowledge of the teacher and an indication of the qualities that would qualify the candidate to be Virginia's Teacher of the Year. These letters should be addressed to State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Commonwealth of Virginia, P.O. Box 2120, Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120. **Do not mail or send the letters of support directly to the state.** The **three original** letters of support with original signatures must be in the **original** portfolio. Copies of three letters of support must be placed in each of the eight copies. **Limit each letter to one typed page.****

V. Publicity Photograph: Include with the application package one photograph suitable for publicity purposes. A 5 X 7 inch head shot in color is preferred.

State Selection Process

During the summer, the portfolios submitted to the Department of Education are reviewed by a panel representing professional associations and other educational groups. Panel members first read the portfolios independently, evaluate them using an evaluation instrument, and then convene for a day to discuss the portfolios. By consensus, a Regional Teacher of the Year from each of the eight superintendents' study regions of the state is selected. In early October, the Department of Education announces the Regional Teachers of the Year. The eight regional winners will be asked to submit a more extensive portfolio.

During October, the selection panel convenes in Richmond a second time to interview each of the eight Regional Teachers of the Year. At the beginning of each interview, each teacher will address the panel for three minutes on an educational issue. The teachers will be notified of the topic in advance of the interview to allow time to prepare remarks. Following an initial address to the panel, each teacher is asked a standard set of interview questions regarding educational issues.

At the conclusion of the interviews, the panel revisits the strength of the eight written portfolios, and considers the introductory address and the response to the interview questions by each of the Regional Teachers of the Year. Then from the regional teachers, the panel chooses the next Virginia Teacher of the Year. The individual's name is kept in confidence until the special banquet and awards ceremony. The banquet is held in Richmond in mid- to late-October.

National Selection Process

Prior to November 1, 2006, the teacher representing Virginia in the national awards program will have the opportunity to revise his or her portfolio to accommodate any additional changes in requirements for the national program. The individual's portfolio and application are submitted as the state nominee by the Superintendent of Public Instruction to the Council of Chief State School Officers in Washington. The national selection process occurs during the period between December and March. The 2007 National Teacher of the Year will be introduced by the President at a White House ceremony during the second week of April.

Relationship of Teachers of the Year to Department of Education

The focus of Virginia's program is to recognize and promote excellence in teaching. The selected Virginia teachers will continue their classroom responsibilities, but will also serve as ambassadors throughout the state in communicating the many contributions of the classroom teacher. The teachers make public appearances, participate in a state-sponsored teacher forum, and conduct other activities that help to meet the needs of local school divisions and recognize teachers for the quality of their teaching and leadership.