

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

2016
MARY V. BICOUVARIS
VIRGINIA TEACHER OF THE YEAR PROGRAM

Application Due Date: Friday, May 29, 2015

For additional information contact:

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MARY V. BICOUVARIS VIRGINIA TEACHER OF THE YEAR PROGRAM

Part 1: General Information

Overview

Since 1964, Virginia has participated in the National Teacher of the Year Program. The program is a project of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in partnership with Voya Financial, Inc. In 2006, Virginia's Teacher of the Year program was renamed in honor of Dr. Mary V. Bicouvaris, the 1989 Virginia and National Teacher of the Year. The late Dr. Bicouvaris was a teacher of government and international relations in Hampton City public schools. She was Virginia's first National Teacher of the Year.

The Mary V. Bicouvaris Virginia Teacher of the Year 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, Teachers of the Year, or National Teachers of the Year become ambassadors for education and enjoy a lifetime of positive memories.

Qualifications

Individuals who possess **current renewable Virginia teaching licenses** with an endorsement(s) in the assignment teaching and who teach in Virginia public or accredited nonpublic schools are eligible to participate in the Mary V. Bicouvaris Virginia Teacher of the Year program. Individuals holding provisional, provisional (special education), provisional (career switcher), eligibility, or international educator licenses are not eligible to participate. The program is open to all teachers, including school librarians, 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 relinquish their eligibility. 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 also should be poised, articulate, and knowledgeable about their teaching areas and education in general.

Numerous criteria are used in evaluating the nominees, including the abilities of the teachers in the classroom and in communicating their message to a broad audience. Candidates will be considered on the basis of the following criteria developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers:

- Inspires students of all backgrounds and abilities to learn;
- Has the respect and admiration of students, parents, and colleagues;

- Plays an active and useful role in the community as well as in the school;
- Is poised and articulate; and
- Possesses the energy to withstand a taxing schedule.

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 six stapled copies** of the completed portfolio must be received by the Virginia Department of Education **no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, May 29, 2015.**

Send by first class priority mail to: Mary V. Bicouvaris Virginia Teacher of the Year Program
 Attention: Dr. Joan B. Johnson
 Virginia Department of Education
 P. O. Box 2120
 Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120

or overnight carrier to: Mary V. Bicouvaris Virginia Teacher of the Year Program
 Attention: Dr. Joan B. Johnson
 Virginia Department of Education
 101 North 14th Street, 24th Floor
 Richmond, Virginia 23219-3684

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, sex, color, national origin, religion, age, political affiliation, veteran status, or against otherwise qualified

persons with disabilities in its programs and activities. 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.
- Time needs to be allocated for the development of the nominee's portfolio. For that reason, the Department 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.**

Part 2: Application (Portfolio) Procedure

An application packet (application, educational history and professional development activities, four narrative essays, and letters of support) must be submitted according to established guidelines. National and state review committees agree that the content and complete representations 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 and easy-to-read format. Candidates should present themselves clearly and professionally. Narratives should be checked carefully for spelling and typographical errors.

General Portfolio Guidelines

Portfolios (application packet) must be received by the Virginia Department of Education no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, May 29, 2015.

The original portfolio:

1. The original portfolio 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 Superintendents' Regional Study Group number. It should be marked "Original Copy."
3. Pages within the folder are 8-1/2 by 11-inch paper.
4. All word-processed pages containing the four narrative essays must be double spaced, of letter quality, with a font size no smaller than 10 point. [Letters of support may be single-spaced.]
5. Pages within the folder are typed only on the front side of the page and are numbered.

6. Pages of the original copy are **clipped** together – **no staples**.
7. No artistic embellishments are allowed.
8. Three original letters of support must be included at the end of the narrative pages. They may be single-spaced.

Six copies of the portfolio:

1. Pages included in each of the six copies of the portfolio must be stapled together.
2. The copies must be submitted in a folder marked “copies.”

Specific Sections of the Portfolio (Application Packet)

- I. **Application:** The application (Attachment B) is the **first page** of the portfolio. An original application is required; signatures of the teacher, principal, and division superintendent are required on this form. A copy is not acceptable. **All information must be completed on this form.**
- II. **Educational History and Professional Development Activities:** This section must be in outline form and limited to two pages, one side only, using a font size no smaller than 10. These two pages may be single-spaced.
 - A. Beginning with the most recent, list colleges and universities attended, including postgraduate studies. Indicate degrees earned, conferral dates of degrees, 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 the most recent, list professional association memberships, including information regarding offices held and other relevant activities.
 - D. Beginning with the most recent, list personal professional development leadership activities and leadership activities related to the professional development of future teachers. Also, list professional development activities in which you participated (but did not have a leadership role).
 - E. Beginning with the most recent, list awards and other recognition of your teaching.
- III. **Four Narrative Essays:** Each essay in this section must be limited to the number of double-spaced pages indicated below, one side only, using a font size no smaller than 10.
 1. ***Professional Biography (Two double-spaced pages):*** Describe the factors that influenced you to become a teacher. Describe what you consider to be your greatest contributions and accomplishments in education.

2. ***Community Involvement (One double-spaced page):*** Describe your commitment to your community through service-oriented activities such as volunteer work, civic responsibilities, and other group activities.
3. ***Philosophy of Teaching (Two double-spaced pages):*** 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?
4. ***Education Issues and Trends (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.

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 the 2015 Virginia Teacher of the Year. These letters, that will be included in your portfolio, rather than mailed separately, should be addressed to Dr. Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Commonwealth of Virginia, P. O. Box 2120, Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120. The **three original** letters of support with original signatures must be placed in the **original** portfolio.

Copies of three letters of support must be placed in each of the six copies of the portfolio. **Limit each letter to one typed page.** Letters may be single-spaced with a font size no smaller than 10 point.

State Selection Process

The portfolios are submitted to the Department of Education, and regional teachers of the year are selected by a panel representing professional associations and other educational groups.

In the fall, 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 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 announcement at a special awards ceremony.

National Selection Process

Prior to November 1, 2015, 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 2016 National Teacher of the Year will be introduced by the President at a White House ceremony in late April 2016.

Responsibilities of Teachers of the Year

The focus of Virginia's program is to recognize and promote excellence in teaching. The selected Virginia teachers will continue their classroom responsibilities, but also will serve as ambassadors throughout the state in communicating the many contributions of the classroom teacher. The teachers may make public appearances 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.