California Department of Education
2020 California Teachers of the Year

Application Instructions

Application Due Date: July 26, 2019

For Program Questions:
Patricia McLeod, Regional Support and Awards Office
pmcleod@cde.ca.gov | 916-319-0555

California Teacher of the Year
California Department of Education Improvement and Accountability Division Regional Support and Awards Office 1430 N Street, Suite 6208 Sacramento, CA 95814

Application may be accessed at https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/ct/index.asp
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Application Instructions

Downloadable Application

For your convenience, the 2020 California Teachers of the Year (TOY) Application is available as a “fill-in form” on the California Department of Education (CDE) California TOY web page at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/ct/index.asp. The fill-in form must be downloaded and saved to a directory or desktop before data entry begins. The application is locked so that the question content, type, size, and spacing may not be altered. The form contains text and numeric fields that appear as small gray boxes for data entry.

Application Formatting

Failure to observe the following formatting requirements may result in disqualification. Please proofread the application carefully.

Paper, Spacing, and Fonts

All application components must be printed on standard 8½” by 11” white paper. Responses must be typewritten; using a 12 point Arial font; double spaced; and margins of ¾ inch on all sides (right, left, top, and bottom). Do not use compressed type. All application components should be numbered at the bottom center of the page.

Page Titles

All sections should have a title at the top of each page.

Sequence and Pagination

Assemble the application package as follows:

1. 2020 TOY Application
2. Introductory Letter
3. Professional Biography
4. Professional Resume
5. Essay Response:
   a. Student Progress
   b. School Culture
c. School-Community Involvement

d. Philosophy of Teaching

e. Education Issues and Trends

f. National Teacher of the Year

6. Letters of Support

7. Current School Schedule

Application Components: Section for Submission

The State Superintendent of Public Instruction’s, Blueprint for Great Schools: Version 2.0 outlines recommendations in five critical areas: California standards, teaching and leading excellence, student success, continuous improvement and accountability systems, and systems change and supports. One of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction’s areas of focus is to address the teacher and administrator shortage and support additional professional development by expanding training so all teachers can continually improve throughout their careers. Another is to better prepare students for twenty-first-century careers and college. Please use these themes to set the tone for the application.

California TOY are frequently called upon to deliver brief, inspirational messages and to address questions from the media, the public, and peers. It is important that our teacher representatives are able to provide answers that are succinct, yet thoughtful and inspirational in nature. Even though teachers may represent particular subject areas, teachers should show a broad, global view of educational practice.

The essence of this application is a set of essays, closely paralleling that of the National TOY Application, in which the applicant describes his or her background experiences, professional development, and personal views about education. All candidates, as representatives of their county, are considered exemplary in the teaching field. However, application reviewers report that the best applications are those that inspire through specific and compelling examples; provide evidence of meeting all students' needs; and convey "passion" and commitment above and beyond that of most applications. Reviewers note that a prevailing personal "voice of authenticity" runs throughout the best applications. Applications directly address each topic in a clear and memorable way.

A 2020 California TOY Application must be completed and accompanied by the following six sections:
Section 1– Introductory Letter from the Applicant to the Evaluation Committee (1–2 pages)

This section should be 1–2 pages in length. The letter should present a powerful statement about the applicant and his or her commitment to continued achievement for all students, and should:

- Explain what it is like to be a student in your class
- Relate an inspirational vignette from your own teaching experience that illustrates an important aspect of education
- Paint a clear picture that helps the reader to envision a typical day
- Include a brief example of an ideal real day and a brief example of how you turned a challenging moment into a teachable moment

Section 2– Professional Biography (maximum 250 words)

Please complete a professional biography in the first person.

Describe:

- The grade level and subject you currently teach
- The school in which you currently teach, including city and state
- All degrees you hold include the institution where they were received (i.e., Bachelor of Science in Finance from the University of Connecticut)
- The factors that influenced you becoming a teacher
- Your greatest contributions and accomplishments in education, to date

Please follow the following style guidelines:

- Spell out your degrees (i.e., Bachelor of Arts not BA)
- Only capitalize a subject area when it is used as a language (i.e., capitalize English but not calculus)
- Use your first and last name in the first reference, but your last name only on second and subsequent references
- Spell out all acronyms the first time they are used
Section 3– Professional Resume
Please complete a professional resume beginning with the most recent experience. Do not exceed two pages. Include the following:

Education:
- Colleges and universities attended (including postgraduate studies), years of attendance, majors, and degrees earned (include the 5 most recent items in chronological order)

Certifications:
- Professional association memberships, including information regarding offices held, year obtained, and other relevant activities (include the 5 most recent items in chronological order)

Work Experience:
- Teaching employment history with title, organization, years in position, grade level, and subject area of each assignment (include the 5 most recent items in chronological order)

Leadership Experience:
- Staff development position, organization, years in position, leadership activities, mentorships, and leadership activities in the training of future and current teachers that you have presented (include the 5 most recent items in chronological order)

Awards and Other Recognition:
- Awards and other recognition of your teaching, including the year received and exact involvement (include the 5 most recent items in chronological order)

Section 4– Essays
There are six essays that are required of all applicants. The essays must be attached to the 2020 TOY Application.

1. Student Progress (*maximum 500 words*)
   - Describe how you know that your students are achieving
Consider:

- Types of formative and normative assessments used to determine student progress
- Types of data that you use
- How data are used to inform instructional decisions
- How you assess and address the needs of at-risk students
- How you differentiate instruction to meet the variety of needs of at-risk students and how you differentiate instruction to meet the variety of classroom needs

2. School Culture (*maximum 500 words*)

Describe:

- A project or initiative you have been involved in which contributed to the improvement of overall school culture
- Your role and how you collaborated with others
- The status of this project today, and include evidence of student impact

3. School-Community Involvement (*maximum 500 words*)

Describe:

- How you ensure that education transcends the classroom
- Specific ways in which you deliberately connect your students with the community, including evidence of student impact
- Partnerships, such as involvement with colleagues and creating school-community partnerships
- How you involve and utilize the community in your classroom
- Your commitments to the community through service-oriented activities (such as volunteer and civic) that enhance the home, school, and/or community connection
• How you establish local partnerships that strengthen family involvement in children’s education
• How you involve the community beyond that which is considered basic school-related involvement
• How you get your students involved in community service projects

4. Philosophy of Teaching (*maximum 750 words*)

Describe:
• Your personal views about teaching, including what aspects make you an outstanding teacher
• The rewards you find in teaching
• How your views about teaching are demonstrated in your personal teaching style
• A content lesson or unit that defines you as a teacher
• How you engage students of all backgrounds and abilities in the learning and how that learning influences your students
• How your beliefs about teaching are demonstrated in this lesson or unit

5. Education Issues and Trends (*maximum 500 words*)

Describe:
• What you consider to be a major public education issue today (address the issue in depth, outlining possible causes, effects, and resolutions)
• How you demonstrate being a lifelong learner, leader, and innovator about this issue, both in and outside of the classroom

6. National Teacher of the Year (*maximum 750 words*)

If chosen as the 2020 National TOY, you would serve as a representative and spokesperson for the nation’s teaching profession. You would represent all outstanding practices, subjects, and types of classrooms (pre-kindergarten through grade twelve)

Describe:
• Your message and platform
• Skills, values, knowledge, and ethics you would convey
• Positive messages you would communicate to your profession and to the public
• Why you would recommend individuals to enter the teaching profession
• How you would strengthen and improve the teaching profession
• How you support the teaching profession, such as through teacher collaboration and mentoring
• What is and/or what should be the basis for accountability in the teaching profession

Section 5– Letters of Support

Include three letters of support from among the following: district superintendent, principal, administrator, colleague, student, parent, or community civic leader. All letters should extend the application by covering areas or examples not addressed elsewhere and must be written by the person from whom they are from.

Letters of support are limited to one page each. Do not include other materials, such as portfolios or press clippings.

Section 6– School Schedule

Attach a current school schedule for September–October 2019.

Submitting the Application

Copies

Provide one original application (printed single-sided) and an additional 25 copies (printed back-to-back). The original and copies must be stapled in the upper left-hand corner, not paper clipped or rubber banded. The application must not have decorative covers or bindings.

Mailing or Delivering the Application

Applications must be submitted to your County Office of Education Teacher of the Year Coordinator. Please allow ample time for the County Office of Education Teacher of the Year Coordinator to process and submit the application to the CDE prior to the CDE due date of Friday, July 26, 2019.
2020 Teacher of the Year Applicant Checklist

☐ 2020 California TOY Application
   ☐ Original copy of application
   ☐ Signed by nominee
   ☐ Signed by Principal
   ☐ Signed by District Superintendent
   ☐ Signed by County Superintendent
   ☐ Signed by COE TOY Coordinator

☐ Section 1: Introductory Letter from the Applicant to the Evaluation Committee
   ☐ Did you use 12 point Arial font?

☐ Section 2: Professional Biography

☐ Section 3: Professional Resume

☐ Section 4: Essays:
   ☐ Student Progress
   ☐ School Culture
   ☐ School-Community Involvement
   ☐ Philosophy of Teaching
   ☐ Education Issues and Trends
   ☐ National Teacher of the Year
   ☐ Have you answered all questions?
   ☐ Did you double space in 12 point Arial font?
   ☐ Did you follow the word limits for each question?
   ☐ Did you have someone else proofread your application?

☐ Section 5: Letters of Support (3)
   ☐ Were all three letters written by someone else, in their own writing?
   ☐ Letters do not exceed one page each?

☐ Section 6: School Schedule