



## Application Process

Join the Illinois State Board of Education in recognizing the incredible work happening in and around Illinois schools and celebrating the exemplary educators who go above and beyond to make positive impacts in their school communities.

*Please see our eligibility guidelines for teachers and other educators.*

### Professional Categories

- **Teachers** - Teachers with five or more years of teaching experience (including the current school year)
- **Early Career Educators** - Teachers with less than five years of experience (including the current school year)
- **Administrators** - Superintendent, principal, assistant principal, etc.
- **Student Support Personnel** - School nurse, psychologist, social worker, school counselor, speech/language therapist, dean, librarian, etc.
- **Educational Service Personnel** - Aides/paraprofessionals, cafeteria workers, custodians, administrative assistants, support professionals, bus drivers, resource officers, etc.
- **Community Volunteers** - Parent teacher association members, school board members, or any individuals not employed by the school/district, who positively contribute time and energy to their school/district
- **Teams** - A group of individuals from any combination of the above categories that positively contributes time and energy to their school/district

### Application Requirements

- **1 essay** (750 words maximum)
  - **2 letters of recommendation**
    - (1 letter from a direct supervisor or school principal)
    - (1 letter from a colleague)
  - **Resume** (Resumes are not required for Team applicants.)
  - **Brief professional biography** (250 words maximum)
- \*See additional requirements for Teachers of the Year Cohort eligibility on the next page.*

[isbe.net/TWETOY](https://isbe.net/TWETOY)

### Nominate an outstanding colleague or apply today!

Nominations are accepted year-round for Those Who Excel (TWE) & Teacher of the Year (TOY) and other applicable awards.

Applications for 2024 TWE & TOY are due by **October 29, 2023**.

See all important dates and access the submission portal at [isbe.net/TWETOY](https://isbe.net/TWETOY).



**Illinois**  
**State Board of**  
**Education**

## Additional Criteria for Teachers of the Year Cohort Award Consideration

- Currently teach in an Illinois school more than 50% of the school day.
- Be prepared to hold a teaching position in an Illinois school during the next two school years.
- Not have been selected for Teachers of the Year Cohort since 2019.
  - Members of previous Illinois Teachers of the Year Cohorts are not eligible to participate for a period of 5 years.
- Submit the signature of a superintendent (or equivalent administrator) on their application acknowledging that applicants selected for Illinois Teacher of the Year award will leave their classroom duties for a one-year sabbatical. (Not applicable for Outstanding Early Career Educator applicants.)
- 2 additional essays (750 words maximum)
- Additional letter of recommendation
  - (1 letter from a parent or student)

See individual awards within Teachers of the Year Cohort below.

## Award Categories

### Teacher Awards

#### Illinois Teachers of the Year Cohort

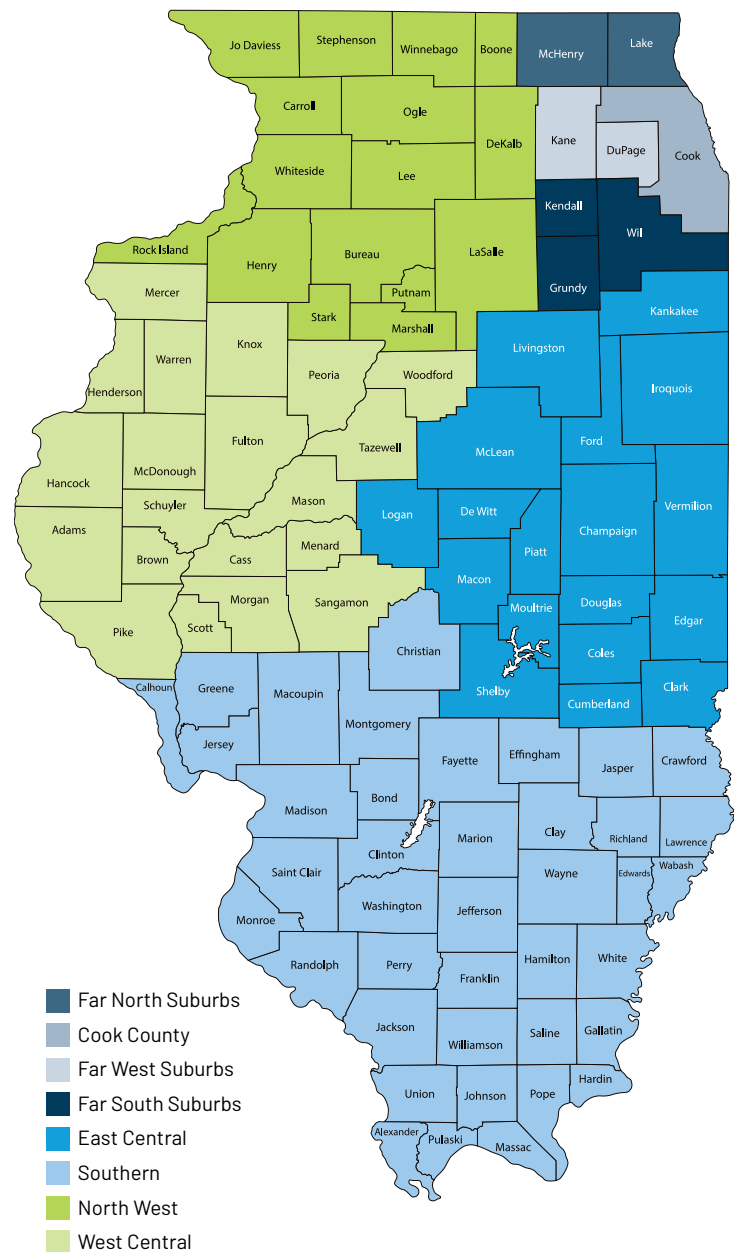
Teachers selected for the 2024 Illinois Teachers of the Year Cohort have greatly improved their school communities and the teaching profession. Beyond being lifelong learners, these teachers are trend-setters, implementing best-practices, piloting new and innovative classroom strategies, and inspiring other teachers within and beyond their school communities. These educators consistently collaborate with colleagues and work with changemakers from outside of their school communities. They have become integral members of their schools, districts, and the profession. The Regional and Specialized Teachers of the Year listed below are all part of the Illinois Teachers of the Year Cohort. Among this cohort, those with five or more years of teaching experience qualify as Illinois Teacher of the Year finalists.

#### Regional Teachers of the Year

- Cook County Regional Teachers of the Year (Minimum of 3)
- East Central Regional Teacher of the Year
- Far North Suburbs Regional Teacher of the Year
- Northwest Regional Teacher of the Year
- Far South Suburbs Regional Regional Teacher of the Year
- Southern Regional Teacher of the Year
- West Central Regional Teacher of the Year
- Far West Suburbs Regional Teacher of the Year

#### Specialized Teachers of the Year

- Bilingual Teacher of the Year
- Special Education Teacher of the Year
- Early Childhood Teacher of the Year
- Outstanding Early Career Educator of the Year



## All Educator Awards

### Award of Special Recognition

Educators presented with the Award of Special Recognition have connected with their school community and made a positive impact. Those who work closely with these educators can attest to their skills, passions, and talents.

### Award of Meritorious Service

Educators presented with the Award of Meritorious Service have shaped their school community for the better. These educators frequently employ their talents and passions, but also strive to be of service in unfamiliar domains. They have taken on leadership opportunities and their accomplishments are known and valued by multiple populations: colleagues, students, parents, and school leaders.

### Award of Excellence

Educators presented with the Award of Excellence have greatly improved their school community by advocating for positive change and have shared opportunities for improvement with colleagues. These educators are lifelong learners, striving to partner with and be of service to all students, staff, and community members. They regularly collaborate with colleagues, students, parents, and school leaders across all departments and teams. These educators have become an integral member of their departments and larger school culture.

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## Projected Timeline

*(Timeline is approximate and subject to change.)*

- Nominations may be submitted year round
- September 1, 2023 - Applications open
- September 6, 2023, at 3 p.m. - Informational Webinar
- October 29, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. - Applications close
- January 2024 - All awardees announced
- March 2024 - Teachers of the Year Cohort Reception and finalist interviews
- April 2024 - Illinois Teacher of the Year announced
- May 2024 - 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Those Who Excel & Teacher of the Year Banquet



**Nominate an  
outstanding  
Illinois educator**