2016 Suggestions for Schools Conducting Teacher of the Year Contests

**Project Design**

* Start planning early.
* Give the project high priority. Talk to administrators in other districts that participate. Check with the [regional coordinator at your Education Service Center](http://www.tasanet.org/Page/98) if you do not know which districts participate. Contact the [state coordinator](mailto:texastoy@tasanet.org) at TASA for assistance.
* Include teachers in the planning process.
* Make the focus of your program the recognition of local teachers, not the competition for a state-level nominee.
* Recognize more than your teacher nominees as part of any awards program or event to promote the perception of the program as one that recognizes teaching excellence, and not one that divides winners and losers.
* Designate one central office staff person to serve as Teacher of the Year coordinator. In many districts the director of public information coordinates the program. Curriculum and personnel directors might also take on this duty.

**Nomination and Selection**

* Use a democratic process to select your nominee.
* Districts might decide to allow teachers to nominate themselves for the honor. This may work well in smaller districts.
* Principals on each campus might ask teachers to nominate one of their peers to represent their campus in the local district contest. The nomination forms could include supporting statements.
* Alternatively, principals might ask department heads to select a campus nominee. Campus faculty councils or advisory groups might select several nominees, with one campus representative chosen from among the nominees by a vote of all teachers on the campus.
* Another option is to involve parent organizations in selecting campus nominees.
* Once campus representatives are chosen, or if nominations are open to all interested teachers, a district selection committee might be appointed. This committee might include representatives of parent groups, teacher organizations, non-certified personnel, principals, the president of a high school student council, the local newspaper publisher, the chamber of commerce president, a school board member, previous teachers of the year and others. Existing committees within the district, such as curriculum councils or district-wide faculty councils, might also take part in selections.

**Publicity and Sponsorship**

* Enlist the help of your local newspaper and/or television station to publicize the selection of your teacher of the year. Tell your local news media representatives about the program and this positive story about public education.
* Ask local businesses and organizations to get involved with your program and seek their support for awards and recognition.
* Honor the winners and finalists at special functions and at any annual staff banquet. Ask the teacher of the year to represent your district at community functions, as well as at regional, state, or national conferences.

**Reasons to Participate in the Texas Teacher of the Year Program**

Consider nominating candidates now for Texas Teacher of the Year. [Nomination/application guidelines](http://www.tasanet.org/Page/92) and [applications](http://www.tasanet.org/cms/lib07/TX01923126/Centricity/domain/59/2016/application.doc) are available on the TASA website.  The program has many benefits, and the time and effort spent in the nomination process is a worthy investment.

Each Texas Teacher of the Year nomination is:

* **memorable for the teacher**. Recognition has the immediate benefits of boosting the teacher's morale and validates the solid perceptions of students, parents, and colleagues. The Texas Teacher of the Year program opens doors to professional opportunities such as serving on various advisory groups, participating in Teacher of the Year Forums and professional organization activities. The acknowledgment expands the influence of teachers whose leadership is recognized.
* **valuable for students**. Students will feel great pride and joy when their teacher, or a teacher they know, is chosen as the teacher of the year at the school, district, regional, or state level. Students can feel special by association with an exceptional teacher.
* **significant for the school and faculty**. Nominating the Texas Teacher of the Year raises the credibility of a school and its staff in the local community.
* **meaningful for the school district, its leaders and patrons**. The positive effects that a school receives spread throughout the school district. Enhanced community prestige and community pride are priceless and directly contribute to improved expectations, support for schools, and student learning.
* **important for the profession**. Recent studies have indicated that teachers are one of the most vital links to a good education. Nominees for Texas Teacher of the Year are evidence of the inspiring impression teachers have on students and education.
* **good for the community**. A healthy society values education and appreciates the educators who work to ensure future generations are well-educated. A nominee for Teacher of the Year provides the community an opportunity to recognize a representative of the profession and celebrate the importance of teachers.