



2020

Nebraska Teacher of the Year Application Information and Instructions

Program sponsored by:

Nebraska Department of Education
Nebraska State Board of Education
BlueCross BlueShield of Nebraska
Nebraska Association of School Boards
Nebraska Council of School Administrators
Nebraska Parent Teacher Association
Nebraska State Education Association
Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA)
SMART Technologies
University of Nebraska
Dillards Gateway Mall Lincoln
Nebraska Corn Board
Community Partner:
KOLN/KGIN (Channel 10/11)

Timeline:

March 2019	Nomination forms and Application packets available. <i>(A classroom video is submitted with the Application.)</i>
August 1, 2019	Deadline for receipt of applications. Applications that are incomplete or do not comply with the format will be disqualified.
August/September 2019	Finalists will be selected and notified.
September/October 2019	Finalists will be interviewed in Lincoln.
November 7, 2019	Awards Recognition Luncheon.



Eligibility Criteria

The **Nebraska Awards of Excellence Program**, which features selection of the **Nebraska Teacher of the Year**, serves to recognize the contributions of the classroom teacher. Candidates should be exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable and skilled teachers; have the respect and admiration of parents colleagues and students; play active and useful roles in the community as well as in the school; be poised and articulate; and, possess the energy to withstand a busy schedule. The most important criterion is a superior ability to inspire students of all backgrounds and abilities to learn.

Teachers who have been nominated in prior years but did not achieve at least an Award of Excellence ranking may be nominated.

Teachers who have received recognition as Nebraska State Teacher of the Year or who have been recognized as an Award of Excellence Recipient in the previous three years are not eligible for nomination.

Application Information

Whether nominated by someone or applying directly, each candidate must personally complete the application form. All answers must be in the teacher's own words.

Use adequate margins, standard size font (10-12 point).

**The social security number is requested for use by third party private monetary contributors for purposes of federal and state tax laws since monetary awards are provided by third party private donations to as many as five (5) applicants as Award of Excellence Teachers or as the Nebraska Teacher of the Year. (Refer to page 3 of the Application.)*

***The Nebraska Teacher of the Year will be selected without regard to race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, and will not be discriminated against on the basis of disability. Answering the questions are voluntary but is requested by the National Teacher of the Year Program. (Refer to page 3 of the Application.)*

Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); sex (Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972); or handicap (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) in educational programs of activities receiving federal assistance. Employees, students, and the general public are hereby notified that the Nebraska Department of Education does not discriminate in any educational programs or activities or in employment policies.

Application Review Panel

The **Nebraska Application Review Panel** examines all applications submitted and selects **up to five Award of Excellence Teachers**. Each of the Award of Excellence Teachers will be interviewed to determine the **Nebraska Teacher of the Year**, who will be eligible for consideration as the National Teacher of the Year. Only completed applications will be considered.

Background Information

The National Teacher of the Year Program originated in 1952 and continues to recognize teachers on the local, state, and national levels. The Nebraska Teacher of the Year Program has been in place since 1972 and affords opportunity to honor dedicated teachers for excellence in the classroom. The Nebraska Teacher of the Year program recognizes outstanding Nebraska certified teachers, who plan to continue in an active teacher status in any state-approved or accredited school pre-kindergarten through grade 12. Supervisory and administrative responsibilities are secondary considerations. The National Teacher of the Year Program is a project of the Council of Chief State School Officers.

In order to encourage innovative educational programs to benefit students and local school districts, the Nebraska State Board of Education awards a \$1,000 grant to each of the finalists so that each honored teacher can pursue an educational project of special interest. Since 1988 teachers and their students have acquired (or produced) special curriculum materials, purchased classroom technological equipment, acquired new skills through attendance at seminars, studied arts and humanities, sponsored student field trips, and purchased unique items not otherwise budgeted for (such as art work for display and a school sign for placement outside a new building).

The Nebraska Teacher of the Year Program has received financial support from BlueCross BlueShield of Nebraska, the Nebraska Council of School Administrators, the Nebraska State Education Association, the Nebraska Association of School Boards, Nebraska PTA, and Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA). These sponsors and other friends of the Nebraska Teacher of the Year Program provided stipends to the Awards of Excellence recipients and to the Nebraska Teacher of the Year. The Nebraska Teacher of the Year Program has also received support from KOLN/KGIN (Channel 10/11), a Community Partner; the University of Nebraska, SMART Technologies, Dillards Gateway Mall Lincoln, and the Nebraska Corn Board. In 2019 the Teacher of the Year received mementos, gifts in the amount of \$2,700. The Awards of Excellence recipients received mementos, gifts in the amount of \$1,750. The amounts for 2020 have yet to be established.

Instructions for the Nominee to Obtain the Superintendent's Authorization for the Application

1. Right-click on the Hyperlink and then left-click to select "Copy Link Address."
2. Paste the link in an E-mail to your Superintendent. Your Superintendent will need to complete this form in order to "authorize" your Application.
3. **The Superintendent's authorization is required before the Application will be considered "submitted."**

Instructions/Notification for the Superintendent to Authorize the Nominee's Application

1. In your E-mail from the Nominee, **Click on the Hyperlink.**
2. Key in the **Nominee's Name, School, Signature and E-mail.**
3. Then proceed to bottom of page: **Click to Sign.**
 - A. The following statement will appear in Echosign: **Please check your In box to complete signing Superintendent's Authorization Form. We will send you an E-mail shortly in order to verify your identity.**
 - B. You will receive an E-mail: **Your Adobe Document Cloud Widget Superintendent Authorization Form has been created.**
 - i. Please click on the **Hyperlink** in that E-mail to complete this transaction. Your signing process will not finish until you complete this verification step.
 - C. You will receive a second E-mail: **Please confirm your signature on Superintendent's Authorization Form. Thank you for signing Superintendent's Authorization Form. To complete the process, you just need to confirm your E-mail address using the link below. It will only take seconds. Confirm my email address.**
 - D. Click on: **Confirm My E-mail Address.**
 - i. The following message will appear in Echosign: **Your e-signing of Superintendent's Authorization Form has been verified. A copy of the signed document is being sent to you.**
 - E. You will receive an E-mail: **You have signed Superintendent's Authorization Form.**
 - F. You will receive a second E-mail: **Your Authorization Form between Nebraska Department of Education and Lora Sypal is Signed and Filed!** (*This is your approval of the Nominee's Application*).
 - G. **Lora Sypal receives the final signed copy and will collate your authorization with the final submitted application from the Nominee.**

Instructions for the Nominee to Obtain the Principal's Authorization for the Application

1. Right-click on the Hyperlink and then left-click to select "Copy Link Address."
2. Paste the link in an E-mail to your Principal. Your Principal will need to complete this form in order to "authorize" your Application.
3. **The Principal's authorization is required before the Application will be considered "submitted."**

Instructions/Notification for the Principal to Authorize the Nominee's Application

1. In your E-mail from the Nominee, **Click on the Hyperlink.**
2. Key in the **Nominee's Name, School, Signature and E-mail.**
3. Then proceed to bottom of page: **Click to Sign.**
 - A. The following statement will appear in Echosign: **Please check your In box to complete signing 's Principal's Authorization Form. We will send you an E-mail shortly in order to verify your identity.**
 - B. You will receive an E-mail: **Your Adobe Document Cloud Widget Principal's Authorization Form has been created.**
 - i. **Please click on the Hyperlink** in that E-mail to complete this transaction. Your signing process will not finish until you complete this verification step.
 - C. You will receive a second E-mail: **Please confirm your signature on Principal's Authorization Form. Thank you for signing Principal's Authorization Form. To complete the process, you just need to confirm your E-mail address using the link below. It will only take seconds. Confirm my email address.**
 - D. Click on: **Confirm My E-mail Address.**
 - i. The following message will appear in Echosign: **Your e-signing of Principal's Authorization Form has been verified. A copy of the signed document is being sent to you.**
 - E. You will receive an E-mail: **You have signed Principal's Authorization Form.**
 - F. You will receive a second E-mail: **Your Authorization Form between Nebraska Department of Education and Lora Sypal is Signed and Filed!** (*This is your approval of the Nominee's Application*).
 - G. **Lora Sypal receives the final signed copy and will collate your authorization with the final submitted application from the Nominee.**

Instructions/Notification for the Nominee to Obtain Authorization for the Application

1. Click on: **Nominee's Authorization Form Hyperlink.**
2. Key in your **Signature and E-mail.**
3. Then proceed to bottom of page: **Click to Sign.**
 - A. The following statement will appear in Echosign: **Please check your In box to complete signing Nominee's Authorization Form. We will send you an E-mail shortly in order to verify your identity.**
 - B. You will receive an E-mail: **Your Adobe Document Cloud Widget Nominee's Authorization Form has been created.**
 - i. Please click on the **Hyperlink** in that E-mail to complete this transaction. Your signing process will not finish until you complete this verification step.
 - C. You will receive a second E-mail: **Please confirm your signature on Nominee's Authorization Form. Thank you for signing Nominee's Authorization Form. To complete the process, you just need to confirm your E-mail address using the link below. It will only take seconds. Confirm my email address.**
 - D. Click on: **Confirm My E-mail Address.**
 - i. The following message will appear in Echosign: **Your e-signing of Nominee's Authorization Form has been verified. A copy of the signed document is being sent to you.**
 - E. You will receive an E-mail: **Lora Sypal has signed Nominee's Authorization Form.**
 - F. You will receive a second E-mail: **Nominee's Authorization Form between Nebraska Department of Education and Lora Sypal is Signed and Filed!**
4. **Save the attached signed PDF from your E-mail to your desktop computer.**
5. Click in the File Attachment box on *page 4* of the application, *Nominee's Completed Authorization Form Attached*, and **attach the signed PDF document.**

Instructions for the Nominee to attach the Completed Essay Questions

1. Click in the File Attachment box on *page 4* of the Application: *Completed Essay Questions.*
2. **Upload/Attach your Completed Essay Questions in one PDF document.**

Instructions for the Nominee to attach Letters of Support to the Application

1. Click in the File Attachment text box on *page 4* of the Application: *Letter of Support.*
2. **Upload/Attach each of your completed/signed Letters of Support (maximum of one-page each) (Limit of three Letters of Support).**

Classroom Video Guidelines

The Application Review Panel and the Interview Panel want to see one of your teaching strategies and how you effectively communicate with students. Please submit an **unedited** YouTube video submission of a single lesson, **not to exceed 15 minutes**, of instruction. If the instruction is longer than 15 minutes, the video must include either the beginning or end of the lesson. **The video is not expected to be of professional quality, it is important that the Application Review Panel and the Interview Panel can clearly see and hear the applicant, the students, and what is happening in the lesson.**

Begin the video with a title slide introducing yourself, the grade, and course.

The video must be from the **2018-2019** school year.

Please record in a file format supported by YouTube (**mp4, avi, mov, wmv, flv**) so that you are able to upload it.

The video should be continuous footage, unedited and devoid of any stopping and restarting of the camera; come from a single camera, not containing multiple screens upon viewing; and adhere to all district or school requirements and guidelines for parental release or student permission related to classroom video recording.

Suggested Technical Guidelines for Videotaping

Although the video is not expected to be of professional quality, it is important that the Application Review Panel and the Interview Panel can clearly see and hear the applicant, the students, and what is happening in the lesson.

Use a tripod in order to minimize the jerkiness of video shots. Do not attempt to video yourself.

Place a light source behind the camera, not behind the applicant being recorded. Be sure no windows or other light source is seen in the viewfinder of the camera. If so, move the applicant and/or camera. Do not have overhead projectors, windows, lamps, etc. behind the applicant.

If the camera has an external microphone, either a wireless microphone or a corded microphone, use it. We are interested in hearing what is being said in the room, pay special attention to sound quality. Be aware of surrounding noise sources and eliminate or minimize if possible.

Effective framing contributes to a video project's ability to engage the viewer, adding variety to an otherwise static shot. It is useful to think about framing techniques; especially when people are the subject matter, as producing wide, medium, and close shots. Frame the applicant; a wide shot can be used to introduce the viewer to the site as a whole before getting the close-up shot. To get a close view, zoom in, perhaps from the waist up.

Pan (moving from side-to-side) or zoom (magnification of your view) slowly. Panning or zooming is usually distracting, unless done properly. A fluid head tripod must be used for a smooth pan; most camera zooms produce a jerky result. If necessary to pan or zoom, move slowly to reduce jerky video.

Planning is necessary before the video shoot. Give some thought to the scene, setup or location for the video shoot. Is the background so noisy that the teacher cannot be heard?

Please preview your video before submitting. Does it present the teacher in a positive way? If not, try it again. Let others critique the video and offer suggestions.

Do not include footage of the applicant providing commentary, as in an interview. Video should not include testimonials about the applicant by administration, peers, parents, or students.

How to Submit Your Video

If you do not directly have one already, create a free YouTube account at www.youtube.com

Select “**Sign In**” and then on “**Create an Account**” link in the top right portion of the Homepage

Upload your video:

1. **Login** to your YouTube Account.
2. Click on “**Upload**” using the link at the top of the page.
3. Set the privacy setting as “**Unlisted**”.
4. Click on “**Select Files to Upload**” and select the file.
5. Please be sure to do the following:
 - A. Title your video as: **First and Last Name, School Name** (example: Lora Sypal, NDE High School)
 - B. Set the privacy setting as “**Unlisted**”

Click on “**Save changes**” link to save the setting for your video - if it is highlighted.

Once the upload is complete, you will see a message “**Upload complete! Your video will be live at:** <http://youtube.be/...>

Copy this link and paste it on *page 4* of the Application in the *Classroom Video Hyperlink* section of the *2020 Nebraska Teacher of the Year Application*. If you experience technical difficulties with pasting the link within the Application, you can E-mail lora.sypal@nebraska.gov your video.

Instructions for Submitting the 2020 Nebraska Teacher of the Year Application

1. Go to the last page on the Application and scroll to the bottom of the document.
2. **Key in your Signature and E-mail.**
3. Then proceed to bottom of page: **Click to Sign.**
 - A. The following statement will appear in Echosign: **Please check your In box to complete signing 2020 Nebraska Teacher of the Year Application. We will send you an E-mail shortly in order to verify your identity.**
 - B. You will receive an E-mail: **Your Adobe Document Cloud Widget 2020 Nebraska Teacher of the Year Application has been created.**
 - i. Please click on the **Hyperlink** in that E-mail to complete this transaction. Your signing process will not finish until you complete this verification step.
 - C. You will receive a second E-mail: **Please confirm your signature on 2020 Nebraska Teacher of the Year Application. Thank you for signing 2020 Nebraska Teacher of the Year Application. To complete the process, you just need to confirm your E-mail address using the link below. It will only take seconds. Confirm my email address.**
 - D. Click on: **Confirm My E-mail Address.**
 - i. The following message will appear in Echosign: **Your e-signing of 2020 Nebraska Teacher of the Year Application has been verified. A copy of the signed document is being sent to you.**
 - E. Your signed Application is sent to Lora Sypal. Once Lora Sypal has signed the Application, you will receive an E-mail: **Lora Sypal has signed 2020 Nebraska Teacher of the Year Application**
 - F. You will receive a second E-mail: **2020 Nebraska Teacher of the Year Application between Nebraska Department of Education and Lora Sypal is Signed and Filed!**
4. **Save the attached signed PDF from your E-mail to your desktop computer for your records.**

Questions/Application Requests

Questions and requests for application forms should be directed to Lora Sypal at (402) 471-5059 or lora.sypal@nebraska.gov.

Deadline

Applications must be submitted no later than **11:59 p.m. (Central Standard Time) August 1, 2019.**

E-mail the completed application to lora.sypal@nebraska.gov.