

# Georgia Teacher of the Year Program

2024 Georgia Teacher of the Year Application Guide

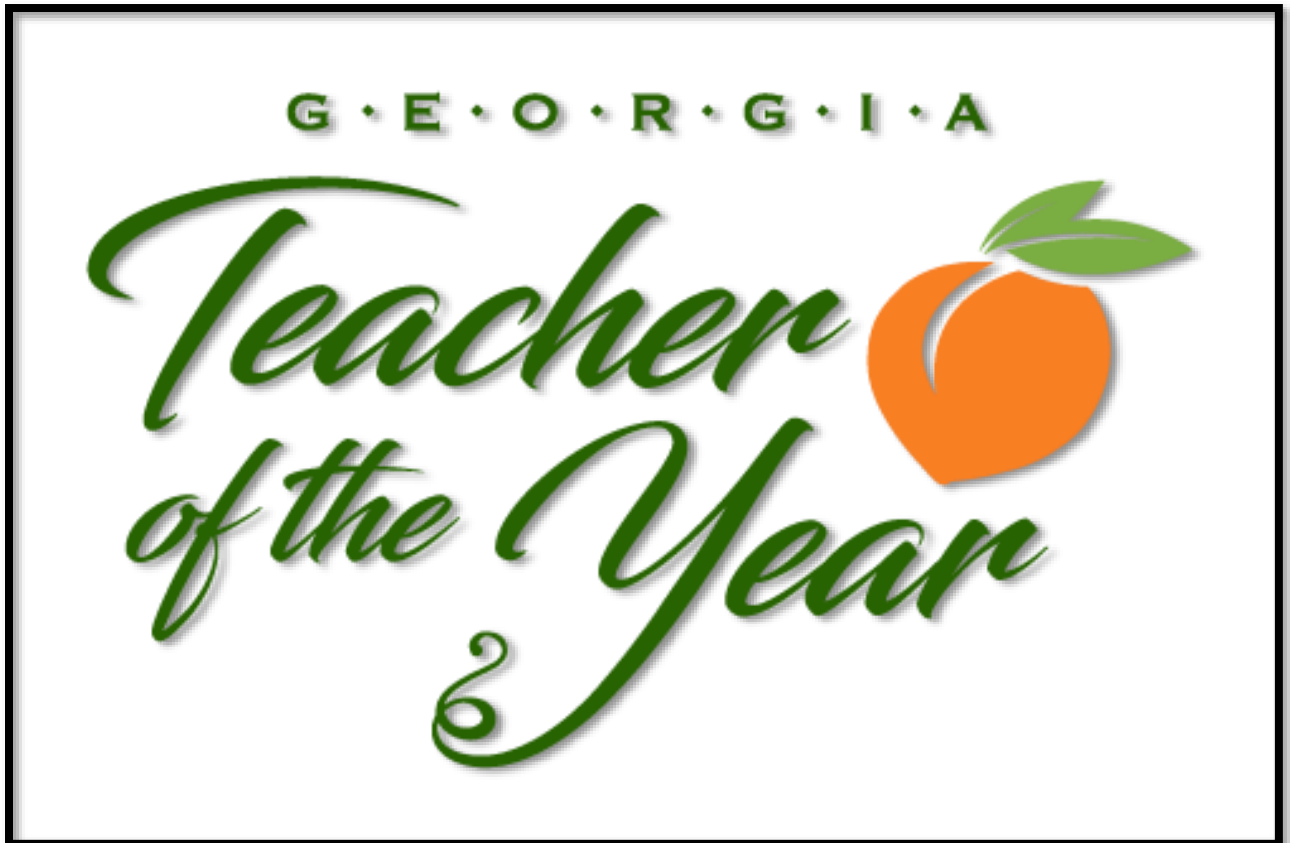


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## Georgia Teacher of the Year Program

The State School Superintendent is responsible for selecting the Georgia Teacher of the Year and has appointed the Director of Strategic Alignment to oversee this program and to select the state's representative. The Georgia Department of Education does not discriminate against any person or group in the selection of candidates for the program on the basis of race, religion, sex, national origin, handicap, or educational affiliation. Learn more about the Georgia Teacher of the Year Program [here](#).

### Program History

The first Georgia Teacher of the Year was selected in 1971. Georgia's Teacher of the Year Program (GaTOTY) annually spotlights the teaching profession and recognizes outstanding public school teachers at the local and state levels. It is a prestigious awards program that focuses attention on excellence in teaching. The 1999 Georgia Teacher of the Year, Andy Baumgartner, honored our state by being named the 47<sup>th</sup> National Teacher of the Year. [Georgia Teachers of the Year \(1991-present\)](#)

### Program Goals

The GaTOTY program strives to promote and retain quality teachers and focuses on three program goals:

1. Elevate the teaching profession by recognizing, celebrating, and providing unique and innovative learning experiences for highly accomplished teachers.
2. Amplify teacher voice to advance student learning and champion student success.
3. Expose teachers to relevant policy topics and develop the context for teacher leadership.

### Georgia Teacher of the Year Ambassadorship

Being named a Georgia Teacher of the Year is an honor that comes with an enormous amount of responsibility to represent the teaching profession in the state. The Georgia Teacher of the Year is a full-time position requiring a one-year sabbatical from their district teaching duties while working directly with the Georgia Department of Education. The commitment spans the full fiscal year from July 1 to June 30.

The GaTOTY serves on the Georgia State Board of Education as an Ex-Officio (non-voting) member and acts as an educational ambassador for Georgia public education representing and advocating for all Georgia public school teachers, students and families. During their tenure, the GaTOTY speaks to various groups throughout the state; conducts staff development activities in his or her area of expertise; serves on statewide committees; and participates in numerous state conferences. The GaTOTY is also responsible for social media communications on the official Georgia Teacher of the Year Facebook and Twitter accounts. Visit our Facebook page here [GaTeacher](#).

The GaTOTY represents Georgia at national events as a member of the CCSSO National Teacher of the Year (NTOY) program cohort with other state teachers of the year. The GaTOTY will enter

the NTOY competition and if selected, will commit to all of the responsibilities that come with that honor, including an additional year as an ambassador for public education across the nation.

## 2024 Georgia Teacher of the Year Application and Program Timeline

The 2024 Georgia Teacher of the Year will be selected during the 2022-2023 school year. The 2024 GaTOTY application window opens **September 30** and closes on **December 2, 2022**.

2022-2023 SY District Teachers of the Year Selected	Spring or Early Fall 2022
2024 Georgia Teacher of Year Application Window Opens	September 30, 2022
2024 Georgia Teacher of Year Application Window Closes	December 2, 2022
2024 Application Review Period	December – February 2023
2024 GaTOTY Ten Finalists Announced	March 6, 2023
2024 GaTOTY Finalist Interviews and Luncheon	March or April 2023
2024 GaTOTY Conference and Gala, Jekyll Island; 2024 GaTOTY Announced	June 9-10, 2023
2024 GaTOTY Term of Service Begins	July 1, 2023
2024 GaTOTY Term of Service Ends	June 30, 2024

## State Program Qualifications

The Georgia Teacher of the Year candidate has the respect and admiration of their colleagues and must possess the following attributes:

1. A certified public school classroom teacher with a valid and current Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) [Professional](#) or [Advanced/Lead Professional](#) certificate in prekindergarten through Grade 12. Special education, physical education, art, music, and ROTC are eligible, along with media specialists.\*
2. Full-time, with a minimum of three (3) years of classroom teaching experience.
3. Is an exceptional, dedicated, knowledgeable, and skilled teacher planning to continue in **active teaching status\*\***.
4. Is an expert in the field who advances growth for students of all backgrounds and abilities.
5. Builds collaborative relationships with colleagues, students, and families to create a school culture of success.
6. Plays an active and useful role in the community as well as in the school.
7. Deliberately connects the classroom to community to impact student growth and learning.

8. As a lifelong learner and teacher leader, utilizes innovation to create learning experiences within and beyond the classroom.
9. Expresses themselves in an engaging and clear way, conveying the classroom experience to a variety of audiences.

\*Counselors and Speech Pathologists are **not** eligible for the state or national programs.

\*\**Active teaching status* is defined as spending **at least 50%** of contract time teaching students in a classroom setting through the term of the GaTOTY. Supervisory responsibilities should be of secondary consideration.

## Georgia Teacher of the Year Application Eligibility

### 2024 State Application Eligibility

2023 District Teachers of the Year serving in the 2022-2023 school year are eligible to apply for the 2024 Georgia Teacher of the Year. The state program runs one calendar year ahead to align with the national program.

### Former TOTY Eligibility

Teachers who have received previous recognition as a Georgia Teacher of the Year are not eligible for state nomination. Teachers who have been recognized as a District Teacher of the Year in the previous three (3) years are not eligible for a 2024 state nomination.

## Georgia Teacher of the Year Application Process

District coordinators should refrain from submitting a state application on behalf of the District Teacher of the Year without the candidate's full knowledge and consent. Before selecting a local TOTY, district coordinators should ensure each nominee is willing to accept the state title if offered. Candidates should be fully informed of the program expectations and have ample opportunity to review and edit their application. GaDOE reserves the right to communicate directly with any candidate who submits a state application.

### Application Requirements

The 2024 Georgia Teacher of the Year application link will open on **September 30, 2022** and close **December 2, 2022**. The application link can be found on the GaTOTY program site at [www.gadoe.org/gatoty](http://www.gadoe.org/gatoty).

All required information must be submitted with the application, including but not limited to:

- Completed electronic application
- Three (3) letters of recommendation supporting why the candidate should be considered for the 2024 Georgia Teacher of the Year.

*\*Letters of recommendation written for district-level applications will not be accepted.*

- A professional photograph. Photographs will be used for public announcements and conference programming. Photographs must be high-resolution. The candidate should be the only subject in the photo. Photos should not be cropped.
- Completed [2024 Application Signature Form](#).

## Initial Application Review

A panel of respected educators from across the state assesses all applications based on a standardized rubric to narrow the field to ten finalists. Although judges carefully consider all items in the application, the ability and desire to be an articulate spokesperson for Georgia public education is the most important qualifications. The ten finalists are announced in early March.

## Finalist Interviews and Luncheon

The ten finalists will participate in a panel interview and prepare a presentation on a provided topic. A panel of judges consisting of GaDOE senior leadership, GTOY Association members, and statewide educational leaders selects the runner-up and the Georgia Teacher of the Year winner. Results remain confidential until announced at the banquet held in the spring. The interview process culminates with a luncheon to honor the ten finalists.

## Finalists Expectations

Finalists are expected to fully participate in the interview process, the honorary luncheon, and the annual conference and banquet. Districts are responsible for travel and lodging costs associated with these events. All other expenses are funded by the Georgia Teacher of the Year program sponsors. Learn more about the Georgia Teacher of the Year Program [here](#).

## 2024 Georgia Teacher of the Year Application Questions

### Contact Information

1. Candidate Contact Information
2. District Information
3. School Information: Name, Address, Grade Band, Demographics
4. School Principal: Name, Email, Phone
5. District Superintendent: Name, Email, Phone
6. District TOTY Coordinator: Name, Email, Phone

### Candidate's Resume

1. Demographics
2. Current Teaching Assignment
3. Professional Association Memberships
4. Education History
5. Georgia Professional Standards Commission Certifications and Endorsements

6. Teaching Experience
7. Leadership Experience
8. Awards and Recognitions

## Candidate's Professional Biography

The candidate's biography has a **250-word count maximum**. Biographies can be created in a MS Word document then copied and pasted into the electronic application. The biography may **not** be uploaded as separate attachment. Biographies must include the following elements:

### Biography Content:

- 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)
- Any awards or points of pride
- Pedagogical priorities


### Biography Style Guide:

- Completed in 3<sup>rd</sup> person format
- Spell out your degrees (i.e., Bachelor of Art not BA)
- Only capitalize a subject area when it's a language (i.e., capitalize English, 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

## Candidate's Headshot:

Headshots must be a professional, high-resolution photo with the candidate as the only subject in the photo. Do not use cropped or grainy photos. School photos are acceptable. Upload a portrait orientation color photo of at least 300 dpi.

**Candidate's Headshot - Upload a portrait orientation color photograph of the candidate that is at least 300 dpi. Image resolution in .jpg, .jpeg or .png file format only. A professional or school photo is preferred. \***



**Browse Files**

Drag and drop files here

Naming convention for headshot: DistrictName\_LastName\_Headshot. Photos will be used in the GaTOTY media packets and audio/visual presentation and not in the selection process. Max. file size: 300 MB. Max files: 2

## Narrative Response Questions

The narrative response questions in the Georgia Teacher of the Year application parallel the questions for the national program. Questions are subject to change based on national program guidance. Applicants should carefully review the state application questions before submitting a response.

Narrative response questions one through five have a **750-word count maximum** and question number six has a **250-word count maximum**. Candidates should make every effort to write concise yet thorough essays and maximize the allotted word count. Candidates should highlight their personal story and include evidence of student impact in each essay. Essays can be created in a MS Word document then copied and pasted into the electronic application. The essays may **not** be uploaded as separate attachment. All questions will be judged and require a response.

### Narrative Response Questions

1. Describe a content lesson or unit that defines you as a teacher. How did you engage students of all backgrounds and abilities in the learning? Show how your deliberate instructional decisions create student learning and reveal your beliefs about teaching and learning.
2. Describe a project or initiative you have been involved in that deliberately creates culture in your classroom or school. Describe how you build and use relationships to collaborate and to teach students of all backgrounds, abilities, and identities. What is the status of this project today?
3. Describe specific ways in which you deliberately connect your students with the community. Show how these community connections dissolve classroom walls and are used to impact student learning and success.
4. Describe a time when you grew as a teacher leader and life-long learner as a result of being an advocate in your school, state or beyond. Describe your advocacy, how it helped you to grow and how it impacted students.
5. As the Georgia Teacher of the Year, serving as the ambassador of education for Georgia, you have been asked to give a speech to a large audience of teachers. This speech is being recorded and will be shared broadly with a larger audience. What is your message? What is the talk you give? [You may indicate a specific audience. For example, a "back to school" talk.]
6. The Georgia Teacher of the Year serves as an advocate and spokesperson for educational stakeholders through public speaking engagements and social media. The GaTOTY must refrain from voicing political views on any platform. Describe your experience with public speaking and using social media. How does your experience make you qualified for this position?



## Supporting Evidence

Attach three (3) letters of recommendation that support why the candidate should be the 2024 Georgia Teacher of the Year.

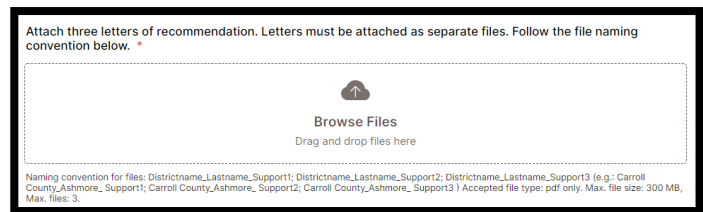
- At least one recommendation must be from a parent, colleague, administrator or student.
- Letters must be signed, dated, and indicate the relationship to the candidate.
- Each letter should not exceed one page in length.
- Refrain from using letters of support written for the district-level competition, as these will not be accepted. Letters should reference support for the position of the 2024 Georgia Teacher of the Year.

Use the following file naming convention for the three letters of recommendation:

1. Districtname\_Lastname\_Support1
2. Districtname\_Lastname\_Support2
3. Districtname\_Lastname\_Support3

For example:

- Carroll County\_Ashmore\_Support1
- Carroll County\_Ashmore\_Support2
- Carroll County\_Ashmore\_Support3



Accepted file type: pdf only. Max. file size: 300 MB, Max. files: 3.

## Acknowledgement and Signatures

### Georgia Teacher of the Year Application Signature Form

Signatures are required from the teacher candidate, school principal, district superintendent, and district TOTY coordinator on the [Application Signature Form](#). The electronic application can be saved until all signatures are received and the completed form is uploaded.

**Applications will not be accepted without all signatures.**

Naming convention for file:

Districtname\_TeacherLastname\_Signatures.

For example: CarrollCounty\_Ashmore\_Signatures

Accepted file type: pdf only.

Max. file size: 300 MB

**GEORGIA TEACHER OF THE YEAR PROGRAM**  
2024 APPLICATION SIGNATURE FORM

The 2024 Georgia Teacher of the Year will serve as an ambassador for Georgia public education traveling to speaking engagements and working with the Georgia Department of Education, requiring considerable time away from home. This is a full-time position. The commitment spans the full fiscal year from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. The 2024 GaTY will enter the 2024 National Teacher of the Year competition and if selected, will commit to all the responsibilities that come with that honor including an additional year as an ambassador for public education across the nation.

*I understand that if selected as the 2024 Georgia Teacher of the Year, the teacher relinquished from my school and school district will need to be released from all responsibilities to perform speaking and public appearance duties in his or her role as ambassador for Georgia public education. Due to budget cuts, the GaTYE is no longer able to provide funds for a year's substitute. If this applicant is selected as the Georgia Teacher of the Year, the district will pay the salaries of the teacher and a replacement for one year.*

Name of Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_  
District Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

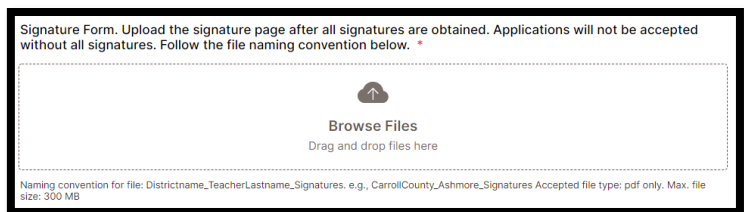
Superintendent's Name (Please Print)	Superintendent's Signature
Principal's Name (Please Print)	Principal's Signature
District TOTY Coordinator's Name (Please Print)	District TOTY Coordinator's Signature

*I understand that if selected as the 2024 Georgia Teacher of the Year, the commitment spans the full fiscal calendar year from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024. In this position, I will spend considerable time away from school and family while traveling to speaking engagements, attending meetings and conferences, and giving workshops as an ambassador for Georgia public education. As the Georgia GaTYE will enter the National TOTY competition and if selected will commit to all of the responsibilities that come with that honor. I hereby give my permission that any or all of the attached materials may be shared with persons interested in promoting the Georgia Teacher of the Year Program.*

Signature of Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_

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) and the Civil ID. Provisions

Georgia Department of Education  
July 10, 2022  
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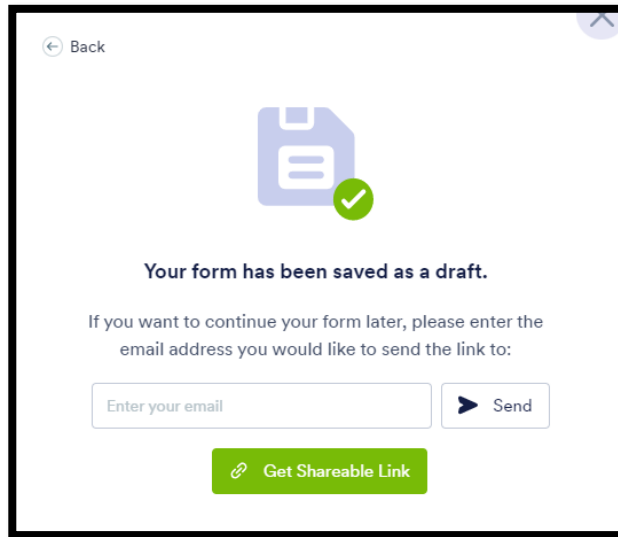
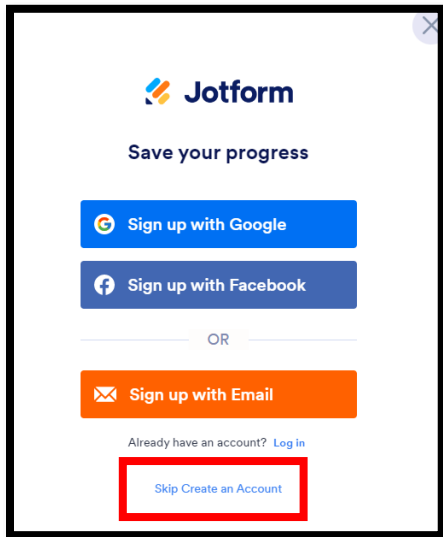


## Saving the Application

The application may be saved if the candidate requires more time to collect the necessary documents or information. Saving the application will also allow for the creation of a sharable link if district coordinators would like to review the application before it is submitted to the state.



When first saving the application, a JotForm pop-up will appear. Candidates may create a free account or click "*Skip Create an Account*" at the bottom of the pop-up. If skipping the account creation, a second pop-up will appear asking for the email address where the recovery link should be sent.

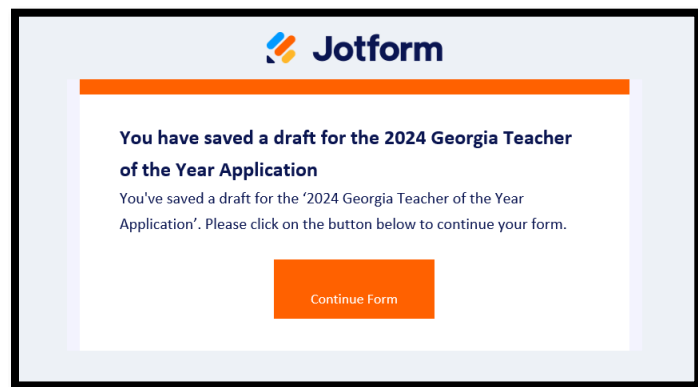
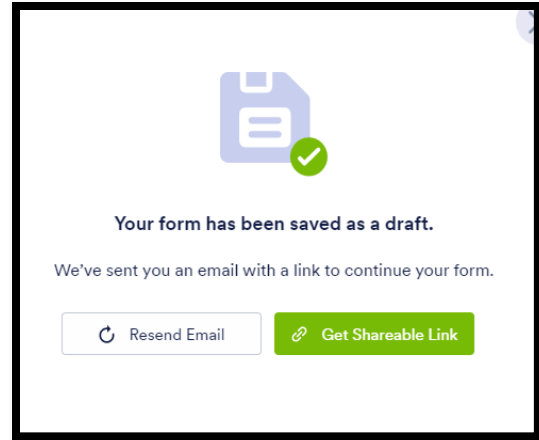


After entering your email address and sending, a confirmation pop-up will appear. Candidates should check their email before navigating away from this site. If the email is not received, candidates may resend the application link to their email or create a shareable link. It is highly recommended that candidates **copy and save the sharable link** in a safe location for easy access.

GaDOE cannot retrieve a saved application that has not been submitted.

### Recovery Email

An email will be received with the recovery link to the application. This link will work until the application is submitted. Be sure to check your junk mail after sending the link if it is not received within a few minutes. You may also need to verify that JotForm is not blocked from your servers with your district's IT department. In this case, you will need to use the saved Shareable Link.

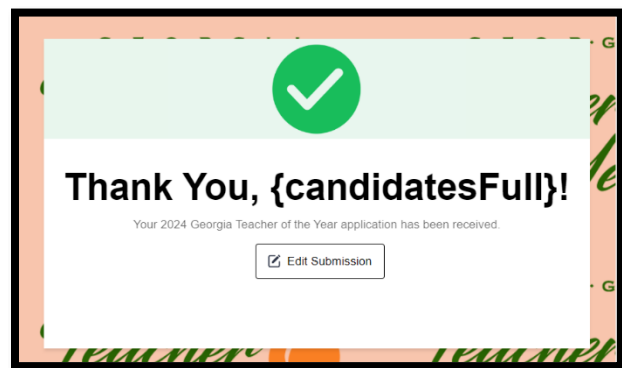


### Submission Acknowledgement

Once submitted, the candidate will receive a pop-up "Thank You" and a confirmation email. **If you do not receive a confirmation email, your application has not been received.**

The district coordinator and school principal will also receive an emailed copy of the application.

Candidates may make edits to their application by clicking the *Edit Submission* button on the pop-up acknowledgement. Edits may not be made once the pop-up is closed.



### Application Errors

If corrections to a submitted application are required after closing the application submission pop-up, email Dawn Ashmore, Director of Strategic Alignment [dashmore@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:dashmore@doe.k12.ga.us).

# GEORGIA TEACHER OF THE YEAR PROGRAM 2024 APPLICATION SIGNATURE FORM



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*I understand that if selected as the 2024 Georgia Teacher of the Year, the teacher nominated from my school and school district will need to be released from all responsibilities to perform speaking and public appearance duties in his or her role as ambassador for Georgia public education. **Due to budget cuts, the GaDOE is no longer able to provide funds for a year's sabbatical.** If this applicant is selected as the Georgia Teacher of the Year, the district will pay the salaries of the teacher and a replacement for one year.*

Name of Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_  
District Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent's Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal's Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
District TOTY Coordinator's Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
District TOTY Coordinator's Signature

*I understand that if selected as the 2024 Georgia Teacher of the Year, the commitment spans the full fiscal calendar year from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024. In this position I will spend considerable time away from school and family while traveling to speaking engagements, attending meetings and conferences, and giving workshops as an ambassador for Georgia public education. As the Georgia TOTY I will enter the National TOTY competition and if selected will commit to all of the responsibilities that come with that honor. I hereby give my permission that any or all the attached materials may be shared with persons interested in promoting the Georgia Teacher of the Year Program.*

*Signature of Nominee:* \_\_\_\_\_

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 and the Carl D. Perkins

Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990); or disability (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) in educational programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.

Employees, students, and the general public are hereby notified that the Georgia Department of Education does not discriminate in any educational programs or activities or in employment policies.

The following individuals have been designated as the employees responsible for coordinating the department's effort to implement this nondiscriminatory policy.

Perkins Act—Audrey Bergeron, Vocational Equity Coordinator (404) 657-8317

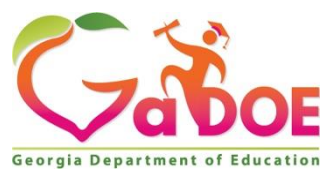
Title VI—Legal Services (404) 656-4689

Title IX—Legal Services (404) 656-4689

Section 504 and ADA—Legal Services (404) 656-4689

Inquiries concerning the application of the Perkins Act, Title VI, Title IX, or Section 504 and ADA to the policies and practices of the department may be addressed to the Georgia Department of Education,

Twin Towers East, Atlanta 30334, (404) 656-2800; to the Regional Office for Civil Rights, Atlanta 30323; or to the Director, Office for Civil Rights, Education Department, Washington, D.C. 20211.



205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive SE  
Atlanta, GA 30334  
[www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org)



@georgiadeptofed

Richard Woods, State School Superintendent  
*Educating Georgia's Future*