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Alabama Achieves

ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

ALABAMA

TEACHER OF THE YEAR

APPLICATION

2027-2028

alabamaachieves.org

ALABAMA TOY TEACHER of the YEAR

2027 - 2028

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Alabama Teacher of the Year Program is administered by the Communication Office of the Alabama State Department of Education. For more information, contact:

Ann Starks · Alabama Teacher of the Year Program Alabama
State Department of Education · 50 North Ripley Street
5114 Gordon Persons Building · Montgomery, Alabama 36104-3833
Tel: 334-694-4853 · Email: ann.starks@alsde.edu

ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, ERIC G. MACKEY, Ed.D., STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION SEPTEMBER 2026

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TIMELINE FOR SELECTION

October 1, 2026	Online Application opens
Upon Request	Applications mailed to local school systems and schools
December 2026 – January 2027 (Dates set by local school systems)	Applications selected by local school systems
January 25, 2027	Final Alabama Teacher of the Year applications for local school system's nominees should be mailed or hand-delivered to: Ann Starks Alabama Teacher of the Year Program Alabama State Department of Education 5114 Gordon Persons Building 50 North Ripley Street Montgomery, AL 36104-3833 Email: ann.starks@alsde.edu
February - April 2027	Alabama State Board of Education District-Level Selection Committees will select district Teachers of the Year. The state-level selection committee will select the Alabama Teacher of the Year and an Alternate Teacher of the Year.
May 2027	Awards Ceremony
October 2027	The application of the Alabama Teacher of the Year will be forwarded for entry in the National Teacher of the Year Program.



Greetings from Elizabeth Eubanks Von Hofe
Baldwin County School System
Spanish Fort Elementary School
2026-2027 Alabama Teacher of the Year

Dear Fellow Alabama Educator,

First, take a moment to be proud of yourself. Someone believed in you enough to nominate you for Alabama Teacher of the Year! Your colleagues see something in you that is worth celebrating, and I hope you will pause long enough to recognize your success. I remember what it feels like to begin this process, and you may wonder how to respond, what stories to share, or whether your experiences are "enough." I can assure you that yours is a story worth recognizing.

Please do not compare yourself and try to figure out what you think a Teacher of the Year is supposed to look like. Do not worry about having the biggest program, the longest list of accomplishments, or the most impressive résumé. Simply, tell your story. Tell us about the students who have changed you. Tell us about the moments that have reminded you why you became a teacher. Tell us about the child who needed you to see something in them before they could see it in themselves. Tell us about the lesson that did not go the way you planned or the time you got it wrong and learned from it. Tell us about the colleague who made you a better educator. Tell us about the parts of your story that are not seen on a résumé but are the very reason you continue to do this work. Let us meet your students in your stories. Let us feel the moments that have made you laugh, cry, and pull into the school parking lot the next morning to say, "Let's do this again."

Each of those moments matter. In fact, I believe those moments are where the heart of teaching lives. Teaching is so much more than what we can measure. Yes, data and achievement matters but so does belonging and connection. I live for the moment a student realizes, perhaps for the first time, "Someone (YOU) believes in me." Those are the moments to think on as you write.

When I think about my own journey, I keep coming back to the power of perspective. Our students walk into our classrooms carrying stories we may never fully know. They carry hopes, fears, challenges, dreams, and experiences that shape the way they see themselves and the world around them. We have the privilege of being a part of their story, which is an incredible responsibility and gift. So, as you complete your application, do not just tell us what you have done, help us understand your story because there is only one you, and someone saw something in YOU worth nominating for this honor, just as you see that glimmer of light in your students.

Take this opportunity to reflect. Celebrate the people who have helped you along the way. Thank the students who have taught you more than you ever expected to learn. Please give yourself permission to recognize the impact you have had, because sometimes we are so busy teaching that we forget to stop and notice the difference we are making in current and future generations.

Whether your journey continues to the next level or ends along the way, I know you will walk away from this process knowing yourself a little better, embracing new opportunities, and meeting new friends and colleagues along the way as I have been blessed to experience this past year. So, as you begin this next step, take a deep breath. Do not overthink it or try to write the "perfect" application. Just be honest, reflective, vulnerable, and most of all, be YOU!

Thank you for choosing to be an Alabama educator. It is my privilege to walk alongside you as an Alabama educator in this journey!

ALABAMA TOY TEACHER of the YEAR

2027 - 2028

PURPOSE

The Alabama Teacher of the Year Program seeks annually to honor and recognize excellence in the teaching profession by identifying outstanding Alabama classroom teachers at local, district, and state levels.

DUTIES

The Alabama Teacher of the Year serves as a full-time ambassador for the teaching profession for one year by speaking to civic and professional organizations, P-12 schools, colleges and universities; conducting workshops for teachers; and writing newspaper and magazine articles.

ELIGIBILITY

The Alabama Teacher of the Year Program is open to any public school certified classroom teacher, librarian, counselor, or other certified individual whose major responsibility is to work with children in a P-12 setting and provide learning opportunities to meet the academic goals and graduation requirements set by the Alabama State Board of Education. Individuals must be selected at the participating school and serve in a capacity for which they hold proper certification and plan to continue in an active teaching status.

ADMINISTRATION

The program is administered by the Alabama State Department of Education. Travel expenses for the Teacher of the Year and Alternate Teacher of the Year are paid by the Alabama Teacher of the Year Program.

This booklet may also be accessed at www.alabamaachieves.org.



THE SELECTION PROCESS

This application form may be photocopied as needed. For the purpose of this program, an elementary teacher is one who works in Grades P through 6 and a secondary teacher is one who works in Grades 7 through 12. The middle school teacher is considered an elementary teacher or a secondary teacher as determined by the major portion of the school day spent in teaching Grades P through 6 (elementary) or Grades 7 through 12 (secondary). Nominees should be grouped accordingly and must be full time.

School Level

A Teacher of the Year selection committee should be appointed at the school level to solicit nominees and select the school's Teacher(s) of the Year (elementary and/or secondary). The school-level Teacher of the Year selection committee should be composed of:

- Principal
- Parent organization representative
- Teacher
- Student representative
- School counselor or school librarian (if no counselor or librarian serves the school, a second classroom teacher, or specialist should be selected by the committee).

The school-level Teacher of the Year selection committee, under the guidance of the principal, should make information about the program available to all faculty, parent organizations, and students. After making its selection, the application(s) should be forwarded to the school system superintendent for participation in the school system-level selection.

School System Level

The school system-level Teacher of the Year selection committee should be appointed to receive the nominations from each school and to select from those nominations a school system elementary Teacher of the Year and/or a school system secondary Teacher of the Year. The committee should be composed of:

- Superintendent
- School board member
- Parent organization representative
- Elementary teacher
- Secondary teacher

Once the school system-level selection committee has chosen its Teacher of the Year honorees, the applications should be forwarded to the Alabama State Department of Education.

District Level

The applications of the honorees from each local school system will be reviewed by a district-level Teacher of the Year selection committee in each of the eight Alabama State Board of Education districts. Each committee will select a district elementary Teacher of the Year and a district secondary Teacher of the Year for a total of 16 district honorees.

Each district-level committee should be composed of:

- District representative on the Alabama State Board of Education
- Local superintendent
- Local board of education member
- Two business representatives
- Current District Elementary Teacher of the Year
- Current District Secondary Teacher of the Year
- Dean of education from a college or university

Each committee will evaluate applications from a district other than its own.
A map showing the districts is on page vii.

State Level

The state-level Teacher of the Year selection committee will be composed of the outgoing Alabama Teacher of the Year or Alternate Alabama Teacher of the Year and representatives of the following:

- Alabama State Board of Education
- State Superintendent of Education's Representative
- Alabama Association of Colleges of Teacher Education
- Alabama Association of School Boards
- Alabama Congress of Parents and Teachers
- Alabama Education Association
- Alabama Federation of Teachers
- A-Plus Education Partnership
- Alabama Milken Educators' Network
- Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools
- School Superintendents of Alabama
- Media and Business Community
- Higher Education

HONORS AND AWARDS

SCHOOL AND SCHOOL SYSTEM LEVEL: Local school officials are encouraged to honor and recognize their respective Teachers of the Year as they deem appropriate. STATE LEVEL: The Alabama State Board of Education District Teachers of the Year, the Alabama Teacher of the Year, and the Alternate State Teacher of the Year will be honored at a special awards reception in Montgomery and will be recognized at a meeting of the Alabama State Board of Education. Announcement of the honors will be disseminated to news media statewide. Awards are subject to change without notice.

2025-2026 ALABAMA TEACHER OF THE YEAR SPONSORS

CORPORATE SPONSORS

ALFA Farmers Federation and ALFA Insurance Companies

Alabama Education Association • Alabama Federation of Teachers

Alabama Power Foundation • Alabama Scottish Rite Foundation

Alabama State University • Bailey Education Group • Bojangles Foundation

Data Recognition Corporation • Goodwyn Mills and Cawood, Inc. • Interior Elements

Kids First Education • Lathan McKee Architects • The College of Education, The University of Alabama

PROGRAM SPONSORS

A+ Education Partnership · Alabama Congress of Parents and Teachers · Alabama Association of School Boards

Alabama Shakespeare Festival · Baptist Health · Blue Bell Creameries · Charlie's Trophies and Plaques

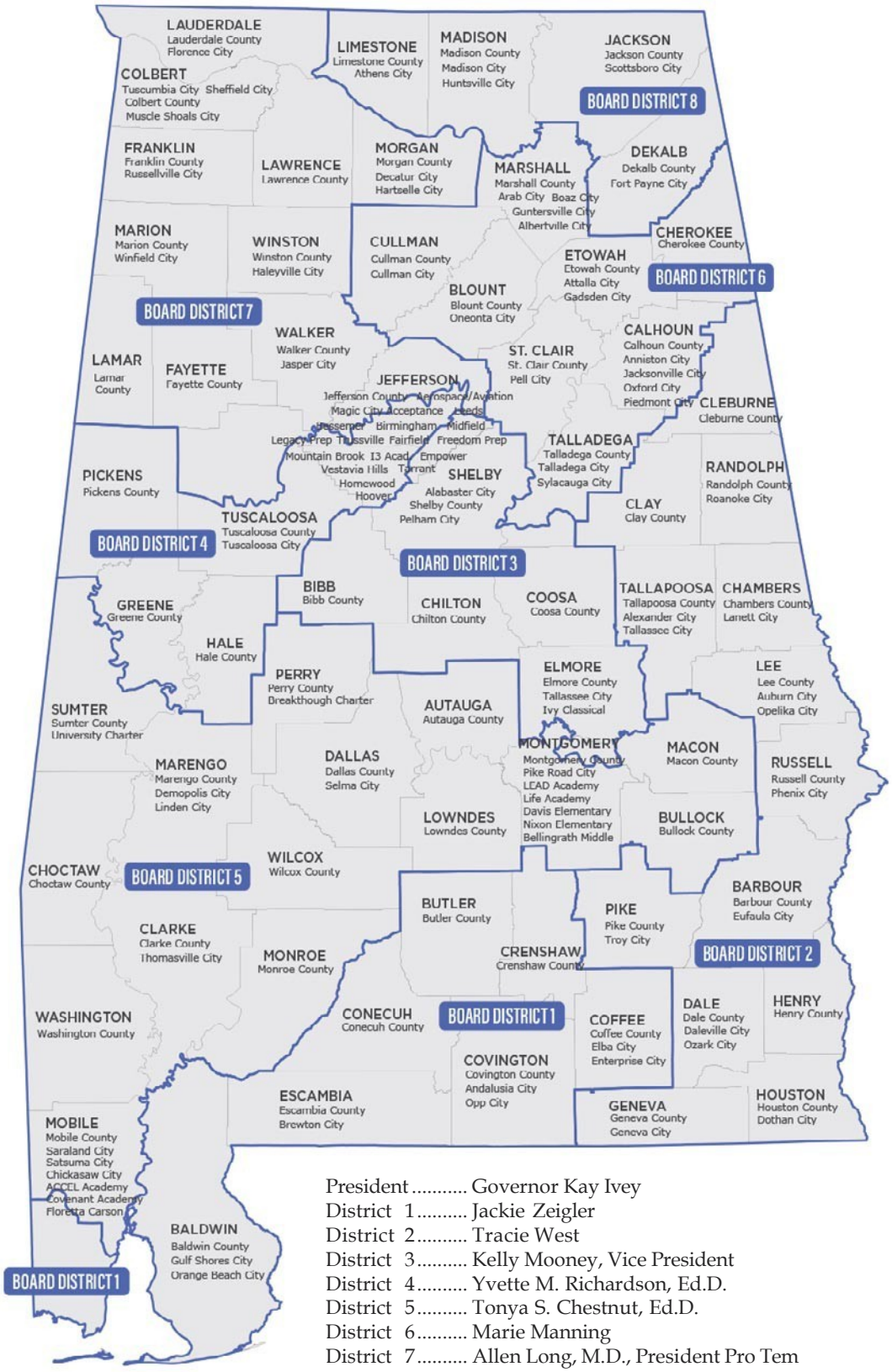
Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools · Jean's Florist · Jenilyn's Creations

Montgomery Biscuits · School Superintendents of Alabama

2025-2026 ALABAMA TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

- **Alabama Association of School Boards –** Gift Cards for District Teachers of the Year
- **Alabama State Board of Education and Alabama State Department of Education**
  Grant Awards to be used for Classroom and/or Instructional Improvement:
  Alabama Teacher of the Year.....$2,500
  Alabama Teacher of the Year's School.....$300
  Alternate Alabama Teacher of the Year.....$1,500
  Alternate's School.....$300
  Two Finalists.....$750 Each
  District Teachers of the Year.....$500 Each
- **ALFA Farmers Federation and ALFA Insurance Companies**
  Use of Traverse LS for one year for Alabama Teacher of the Year
- **Alabama Shakespeare Festival –** Program Support
- **Baptist Health –** Trophy for Alabama Teacher of the Year and Alternate Teacher of the Year
- **Blue Bell Creameries –** Program Support
- **Bojangles Foundation –** Program Support
- **Charlie's Trophies and Plaques**
  Gift for Alabama Teacher of the Year
- **Council For Leaders in Alabama Schools –** A Plaque for each District Teacher of the Year and Program Support
- **Goodwyn Mills and Cawood, Inc. –** Portfolio for Alabama Teacher of the Year Nominees
- **Jean's Florist –** Program Support
- **Jenilyn's Creations –** Floral
- **Montgomery Biscuits –** Tickets for the Alabama Teacher of the Year and District Teachers of the Year

ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION DISTRICTS



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State Superintendent of Education and Secretary and Executive Officer Eric G. Mackey, Ed.D.



Instructions for Submitting Applications to the Alabama State Department of Education

The application form for the Alabama Teacher of the Year Program incorporates portions of the National Teacher of the Year Program application form. Materials submitted must follow the instructions below and within the application form.

1. Each completed application, when submitted to the Alabama State Department of Education, should contain the following:
   (1) "Criteria for Selection" sheet (score sheet) with the first three items completed (level, district, and name).
   (2) Completed application form, including letters of support.

2. Nominees for Alabama Teacher of the Year must be nominated on the application form contained in or retyped totally from this booklet. The form may be photocopied. If the application is typed on pages other than the application form itself, the exact spacing and wording of each item of the application form must be used, including the wording regarding the number of pages for each item. Answers should not exceed the number of pages designated. Font size should be no smaller than ten point. Submit only the completed application, not the booklet pages of explanation. Applications should be neat and legible. Do not staple.

3. Provide all information requested in the application form and follow directions.

4. Carefully check applications for neatness and legibility and typographical, grammatical, and spelling errors. Judges really take note of such errors.

5. The nominee, the school principal, and the superintendent must sign in the appropriate spaces on pages one and two. The state coordinator of the program will sign each application after it is submitted.

6. No materials will be returned to nominees.

7. Deadline: All school system nominees' applications must be submitted to the Alabama State Department of Education by January 25, 2027. Applications must be hand-delivered or postmarked by that date. Late applications will not be considered.

ALABAMA TOY TEACHER of the YEAR

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APPLICANT INFORMATION

Documents Needed to Complete the Alabama Teacher of the Year Application

I. General Information/Application Form

II. Resumé

Categories are as follows:

- Education
- Certifications
- Experience
- Leadership
- Awards and Recognitions

III. Professional Biography

Please complete your professional biography in third person, as this will be used in promotional materials for Alabama Teacher of the Year speaking opportunities and engagements. Please include your "why." How did you enter the teaching profession? What moves and inspires you?

IV. Response Questions

- Describe a lesson that describes you as a teacher.
- Describe a project or initiative you have been involved in as an educator.
- How do you ensure that your students are connected to the world around them?
- Describe a time when you developed professionally as a teacher leader and life-long learner as a result of being an advocate in your school, state, or beyond?
- What would your message be as the 2027-2028 Alabama Teacher of the Year?

V. Letters of Support

Attach three recommendations that support why you should be the 2026-2027 Alabama Teacher of the Year. At least one of these must be a recommendation from a parent, colleague, administrator, or student and each letter should not exceed two pages in length.

Judges will use the following criteria and other information to select this year's Alabama Teacher of the Year.

Criteria for Judging the 2027-2028 Alabama Teacher of the Year Candidates

Level: *(circle one)* Elementary Secondary State Board of Education **District:** _____

Teacher's Name _____

FOR JUDGES' USE

Categories **Scoring**

Resumé
- Education
- Certifications
- Awards and Recognitions
- Experience
- Leadership

_____

Professional Biography
- Evidence of a story
- Clearly delineates reason(s) for becoming a teacher

Response Question 1 _____
- Provides clear description of definitive lesson
- Discusses student learning and engagement
- Clearly indicates how beliefs are demonstrated in lesson

Response Question 2 _____
- Provides clear description of involvement in initiative/project
- Discusses role and contribution to school culture

Response Question 3 _____
- Discusses and describes ways of ensuring students connected to the world

Response Question 4 _____
- Develops and describes issue considered major
- Discusses why it is important and how being addressed in classroom

Response Question 5 _____
- Message is presented in a coherent and convincing manner
- Includes both teaching profession and general public

Letters of Support _____
- Good balance of letters (e.g., parent/student, administrator, colleague)
- Clearly explains and gives examples of exceptionality

Total Points _____

Criteria Measurements

Exemplary (4) *Goes above and beyond; is at the highest level.*
Very Good (3) *Outstanding. For example, in Professional Biography: Tells a compelling, personal, and "catchy" story.*
Average (2) *Sufficient. For example, in Resume: Attended conferences, but didn't play leadership role in presenting; has minimal education requirements but has not pursued advanced courses and degree in past 5-10 years.*
Does Not Meet Standard (1) *No evidence or incorrect information provided.*

2027-2028 Alabama Teacher of the Year Application

Guidelines, Timeline, and Application

Part I: Basic Information

The information on this page will not be shared with the Selection Committee. It is used for program contact information and the Alabama Teacher of the Year Program database.

Full Name:
Personal Address:
Personal Telephone Number:
Personal Email:
School District:
District Superintendent:
District Superintendent Email:
School Name:

School Principal Name:
School Principal Email:
School Address:
School Telephone Number:
School Email:
Subject Area:
Grade Level:

2027-2028 Alabama Teacher of the Year Application
Guidelines, Timeline, and Application

Part I (continued): Demographic Information

The following information is not required and will have no bearing on your selection. It is collected for informational purposes only and will not be shared with Selection Committee Members. Coordinators will select check boxes of items that apply and will be able to write any options that are not included.

School Size:

District Size:

Years of Teaching:

Years in Position:

Twitter Handle:

Facebook Profile:

Instagram Profile:

Personal Blog Site:

Personal Website:

Other Social Media:

Do you speak a language other than English fluently?

Professional Association Memberships *(write in all that apply)*
☐ NEA
☐ AFT
☐ Other:

I am a National Board Certified Teacher.
☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ In Progress

School Demographics (*select all that apply)*
☐ Public
☐ Charter
☐ Suburban
☐ Rural
☐ Urban
☐ Other:

2027-2028 Alabama Teacher of the Year Application
Guidelines, Timeline, and Application

Part II: Resumé

Please keep your resumé as simple as possible. Categories are as follows:

Education • Certifications • Experience • Leadership • Awards and Recognitions

2027-2028 Alabama Teacher of the Year Application

Guidelines, Timeline, and Application

Part III: Professional Biography

Please complete your professional biography in third person, as this will be used in promotional materials for Alabama Teacher of the Year speaking opportunities and engagements. (maximum 250 words)

2027-2028 Alabama Teacher of the Year Application
Guidelines, Timeline, and Application

Part IV: Response Questions

Respond to the following questions, highlighting your personal story and why you believe you should be the 2027-2028 Alabama Teacher of the Year. Maximum word counts are indicated in parentheses.

1. Describe a lesson that defines you as a teacher. How did you engage all students in the learning and how did that learning influence your students? How are your beliefs about teaching demonstrated in this lesson? *(maximum 500 words)*

2. Describe a project or initiative you have been involved in as an educator. What was your role, and how did this contribute to the overall school culture and climate? *(maximum 500 words)*

3. How do you ensure that your students are connected to the world around them? Describe the ways in which you achieve this instructional goal. *(maximum 500 words)*

4. Describe a time when you developed professionally 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 grow, and how it impacted students. *(maximum 500 words)*

5. As the 2026-2027 Alabama Teacher of the Year, you serve as a spokesperson and representative for teachers and students. What is your message? What will you communicate to your profession and the general public? *(maximum 500 words)*

2027-2028 Alabama Teacher of the Year Application
Guidelines, Timeline, and Application

Part V: Supporting Evidence

Attach three recommendations that support why you should be the 2027-2028 Alabama Teacher of the Year. At least one of these must be a recommendation from a parent, colleague, administrator, or student and each letter should not exceed two pages in length.

2027-2028 Alabama Teacher of the Year Application
Guidelines, Timeline, and Application

Acknowledgements

In submitting this form, I agree to the details being used for the purposes of the selection process for the 2027-2028 Alabama Teacher of the Year. The information will only be accessed by necessary Alabama State Department of Education staff and selection committee members. I understand my data will be held securely and will not be distributed to third parties. Additionally, information about State Teachers of the Year will not be released until after the state has made an official announcement identifying the candidate as the state's teacher of the year.

CANDIDATE

I hereby give my permission that any or all of the attached materials (other than home address, telephone, and DOB) may be shared with persons interested in promoting the Alabama Teacher of the Year Program. I also acknowledge that if selected as the 2027-2028 Alabama Teacher of the Year, I will be released from classroom responsibilities during the year of my recognition to fulfill the obligations of the role.

Name of Candidate: _____

Signature of Candidate: _____ Date: _____

SCHOOL/BUILDING PRINCIPAL

I acknowledge that the candidate submits this application with my approval. If the candidate is selected as the 2027-2028 Alabama Teacher of the Year, he or she will be released from classroom responsibilities during the year of recognition.

Name of School Principal: _____

Signature of School Principal: _____ Date: _____

SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

I acknowledge that the candidate submits this application with my approval. If the candidate is selected as the 2027-2028 Alabama Teacher of the Year, he or she will be released from classroom responsibilities during the year of recognition.

Name of District Superintendent: _____

Signature of District Superintendent: _____ Date: _____

Name of State Coordinator: _____

Signature of State Coordinator: _____ Date: _____