



2025-2026
Teacher of the Year
APPLICATION



TIMELINE FOR SELECTION

September 2024	Online Application opens
Upon Request	Applications mailed to local school systems and schools
December 2024 - January 2025 (Dates set by local school systems)	Applications selected by local school systems
January 22, 2025	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 2025	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 2025	Awards Ceremony
November 2025	The application of the Alabama Teacher of the Year will be forwarded for entry in the National Teacher of the Year Program.



CONTENTS

Greetings from the 2024-2025 Alabama Teacher of the Yearii

Purpose, Duties, Eligibility, and Administration.....iii

The Selection Process.....iv

Timeline for Selectionvi

Honors and Awards.....vii

Alabama State Board of Education Districtsviii

Instructions for Submitting Applications
to the Alabama State Department of Educationix

Documents Needed to Complete the Alabama Teacher of the Year Applicationx

Criteria for Judging the Alabama Teacher of the Year
Candidates 2025-2026xi

Teacher of the Year Application Form1

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



**Greetings from Deborah Stringfellow
Airport Road Intermediate School
Elmore County School System
2024-2025 Alabama Teacher of the Year**

I hope this message finds you well and inspired as you embark on the exciting journey of completing your application for Alabama Teacher of the Year. Reflecting on my own experience, I am reminded of the deep sense of pride and purpose that comes with such an honor. It has been a humbling and deeply rewarding experience to represent such an honorable profession, one that I have cherished for four decades.

Being named Alabama Teacher of the Year for your school district, and possibly for the state, isn't about perfection; it's about authenticity. Embrace this honor as a call to service – an invitation to share your unique story and experiences. Use this opportunity to elevate others in our profession, to be a voice for those who work tirelessly in classrooms across our state, and to highlight the joys and challenges we all encounter in teaching. This role empowers you to advocate for teachers on a broader scale, extending your impact beyond your own community to inspire and uplift educators everywhere.

As a seasoned educator, I am often asked what keeps me going. The answer is simple. Each school year is a new adventure, and I know I can make a difference every day in the lives of students and fellow teachers. The honor of shaping the future by influencing the hearts and minds of our nation's most valuable treasures has been a driving force in my career. Teaching is more than a profession; it is a calling. It resonates with purpose and passion. Every student deserves the best chance at success and that opportunity is in your hands. As teachers, you are the single most important factor in student achievement, the guiding light that ignites curiosity and fuels dreams. Your role in the classroom is essential, and your dedication is deeply appreciated.

I am committed to embracing every opportunity to support you, the educators who make a difference every day. The ripple effect of your dedication extends far beyond the classroom. Together, we must not only attract new teachers to this noble profession but also cherish and retain those who have already answered the call. Let's continue to inspire each other by cultivating and celebrating the greatness of our profession. You are, and will always be, a HERO to those you teach. Your impact is immeasurable, your influence unmatched, and your dedication deeply valued. Keep believing in the power of education. Keep pushing boundaries. And most importantly, keep being the incredible educator you are.



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.alabamaachievers.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 Conference of Educators
- ☞ 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.

2024-2025 ALABAMA TEACHER OF THE YEAR SPONSORS

CORPORATE SPONSORS

ALFA Farmers Federation and ALFA Insurance Companies
Alabama Education Association • Alabama Federation of Teachers
Alabama Power Company • Alabama Scottish Rite Foundation
Alabama State University • Data Recognition Corporation
Goodwyn Mills and Cawood, Inc. • Interior Elements • McKee & Associates

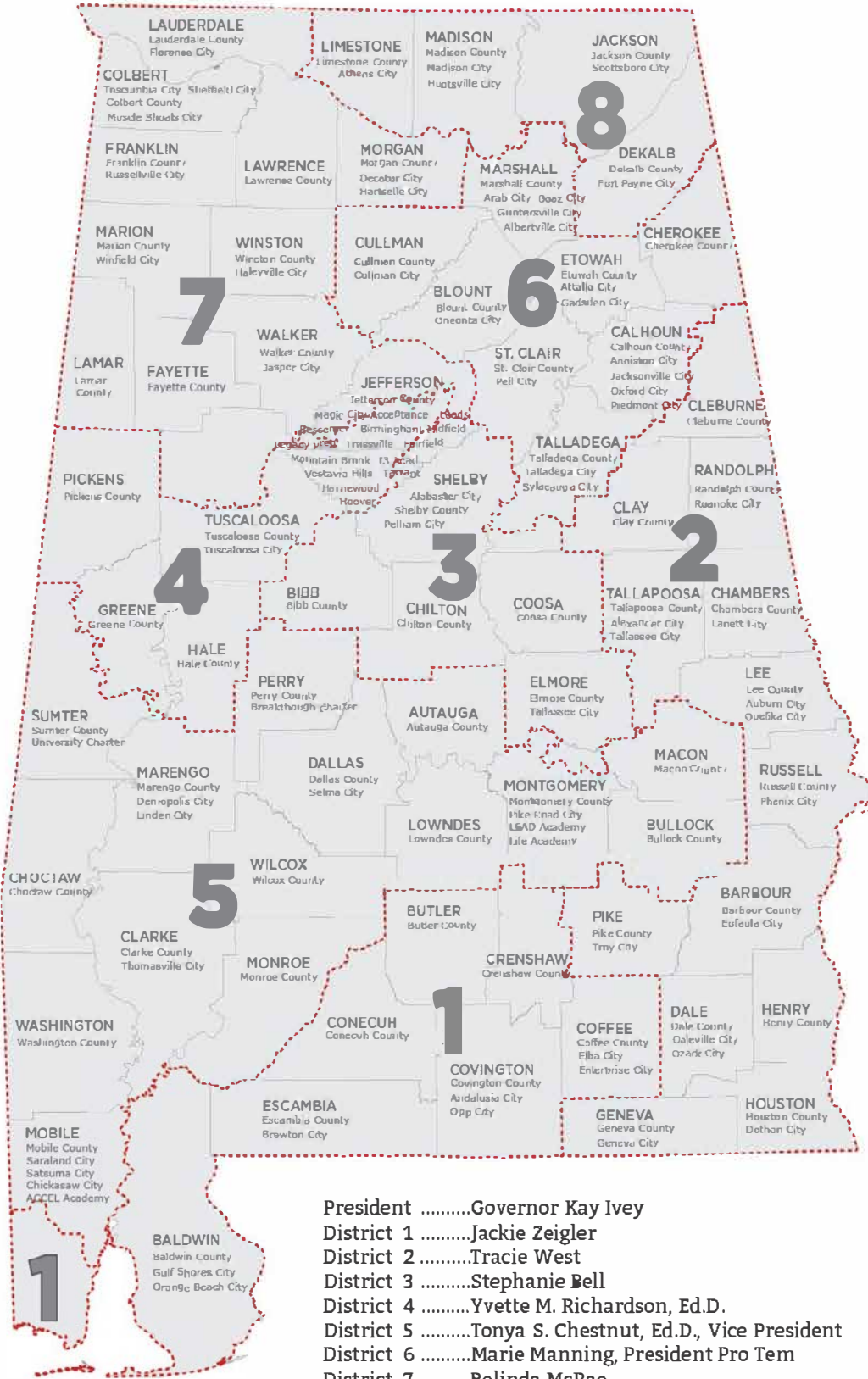
PROGRAM SPONSORS

A+ Education Partnership • Alabama Congress of Parents and Teachers • Alabama Association of School Boards
Charlie's Trophies and Plaques • Baptist Health • Jean's Florist • Jenilyn's Creations • Josten's • Montgomery Biscuits
School Superintendents of Alabama • The College of Education, The University of Alabama

2024-2025 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
- ◆ **Auburn University Montgomery** – Program Support
- ◆ **Baptist Health** – Trophy for Alabama Teacher of the Year and Alternate Teacher of the Year
- ◆ **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
- ◆ **Interior Elements** – Classroom Makeover
- ◆ **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
- ◆ **Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts** – Program Support
- ◆ **Troy University** – Program Support

ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION DISTRICTS



- PresidentGovernor Kay Ivey
- District 1Jackie Zeigler
- District 2Tracie West
- District 3Stephanie Bell
- District 4Yvette M. Richardson, Ed.D.
- District 5Tonya S. Chestnut, Ed.D., Vice President
- District 6Marie Manning, President Pro Tem
- District 7Belinda McRae
- District 8Wayne Reynolds, Ed.D.

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 2025. Applications must be hand-delivered or postmarked by that date. Late applications will not be considered.



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 Other Recognition

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.

IV. Response Questions

- Describe a lesson that describes you as a teacher.
- Describe a project or initiative you have been involved in.
- How do you ensure that your students are connected to the world around them?
- **What** do you consider to be a major public education issue today?
- **What** would your message be as the 2025-2026 Alabama Teacher of the Year?

V. Letters of Support

Attach three recommendations that support why you should be the 2025 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.

Criteria for Judging the Alabama Teacher of the Year Candidates 2025-2026

Level: (circle one) Elementary Secondary

State Board of Education District _____

Teacher's Name _____

For Judges' Use

Categories

Scoring

Resumé

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

Professional Biography

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

Response Questions

- Provides clear description of teaching philosophy and includes evidence of outstanding teaching qualities
- Clearly indicates how beliefs are demonstrated in teaching style

Education Issues and Trends

- Develops and describes one issue
- Has a story to tell

Alabama Teacher of the Year Message (Response Questions)

- Message is presented in a coherent and convincing manner
- Addresses relevant issues for the teaching profession

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. <i>For example, in Education Issues and Trends: Uses research with multiple sources, has well-reasoned solution, issue is timely and significant.</i> |
| Very Good (3) | Outstanding. <i>For example, in Professional Biography: Tells a compelling, personal, and "catchy" story.</i> |
| Average (2) | Sufficient. <i>For example, in Education History: Attended conferences, but didn't play a leadership role in presenting; has minimal education requirements, but has not pursued advanced courses and degree in past 5-10 years.</i> |
| Does Not Meet Standard (1) | No evidence or incorrect information provided. |

2025-2026 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:

2025-2026 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:

2025-2026 Alabama Teacher of the Year Application

Guidelines, Timeline, and Application

Part II: Resumé

Please keep your resumé as simple as possible. We recommend that you enter each item as a separate line of text. Categories are as follows:

Education

Certifications

Experience

Leadership

Awards and Other Recognition

2025-2026 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)

2025-2026 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 2025-2026 Alabama Teacher of the Year. Maximum word counts are indicated in parenthesis.

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 2025-2026 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*)

2025-2026 Alabama Teacher of the Year Application

Guidelines, Timeline, and Application

Part V: Supporting Evidence

Attach three recommendations that support why you should be the 2025-2026 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 one page in length.

2025-2026 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 2025-2026 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, SS# 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 2025-2026 Alabama Teacher of the Year, I will be released from classroom responsibilities during the year of my recognition in order 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 2025-2026 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 2025-2026 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: _____



ALABAMA
ToY

TEACHER *of the* YEAR

2025 - 2026

