



# Contra Costa County Office of Education

77 Santa Barbara Road, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523 • (925) 942-3388  
Lynn Mackey, Superintendent of Schools

## Teachers of the Year (TOY) Program 2024-2025 Application Instructions

### Downloadable Application

For your convenience, the *2024-2025 Contra Costa TOY Application Cover Page* is available as a “fill-in form” on the CCCOE Teacher of the Year Web page at:

[www.cocoschools.org/toyapplication](http://www.cocoschools.org/toyapplication)

The fill-in form must be downloaded and saved your desktop before data entry begins. Please fill out the *Application Cover Page* electronically and then print it. This *TOY Application Cover Page* serves as the cover/first sheet of your application packet.

### Application Formatting

Note: Failure to observe the following formatting requirements may result in disqualification. Please proofread the application carefully.

#### Paper, Spacing, and Fonts

All application components must be printed on standard 8½” by 11” white paper. Responses must be typewritten; using a 12 point Arial font; double spaced; and margins of ¾ inch on right, left, top, and bottom. Do not use compressed type. All application components should be numbered at the bottom center of the page.

#### Page Titles

All sections should have a title at the top of each page.

#### Sequence and Pagination

Assemble the application package as follows:

- *2024-2025 Application Cover Page*
- Background Experience and Professional Development Activities      Limit 2 pages
- Essays
  - 1. Professional Biography      Limit 2 pages
  - 2. Philosophy of Teaching      Limit 1 page
  - 3. Student Progress      Limit 2 pages
  - 4. School-Community Involvement      Limit 1 page
  - 5. The Teaching Profession      Limit 2 pages
  - 6. Letters of Support      Limit 3-4 letters

## Submitting the Application

### Application Assistance

Districts should review applications to ensure that all instructions have been followed including font, margins, day and time constraints, and number of pages. Make sure there are no typographical errors, misspellings, or errors in grammar.

### Copies

Provide one original application with original signatures (printed single-sided and one clean additional copy (printed single-sided. The original and copy can be just paper-clipped and placed in an envelope and/or folder.

### Submitting the Application

Applications must be submitted to the Contra Costa County Office of Education, Communications Office by email to [communications@cccoe.k12.ca.us](mailto:communications@cccoe.k12.ca.us). **All applications must be received no later than Friday, March 8, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.**

**All questions should be directed to the Communications Dept.**

Marcus Walton, Director, Communications & Special Events  
CCCOE Communications Office  
77 Santa Barbara Road, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523  
Phone: (925) 942-3420 • [communications@cccoe.k12.ca.us](mailto:communications@cccoe.k12.ca.us)

## 2024-2025 Application Package

### Contact Information

The application fill-in form is primarily designated for current contact information about the applicant, school, and school district.

### Signatures

The application requires the signatures of the applicant, school principal, and district superintendent. The applicant's signature certifies that the content of the application is complete and accurate. The district superintendent's signature acknowledges that, if selected as a Teacher of the Year or nominee, the teacher may receive gifts or merchandise from program sponsors and he/she will be exempted from any district policy governing the acceptance of gifts.

## **Applicant's School Schedule**

On a separate piece of paper, please provide the school's regular Monday through Friday schedule as well as your own, including the time that you arrive, leave, and have lunch break. Indicate any days and/or times in April through June that school will not be in session and note any alternate schedule days such as minimum or planning days, or constraints that would prevent classroom observation (e.g., school closed, field trip, prep period, testing, etc). This information is necessary to ensure the applicant's availability in the classroom for site visits.

## **Background Experience and Professional Development Activities**

This section should be 1–2 pages in length. Beginning with the most recent, list:

- a. Colleges and universities attended (including postgraduate studies), dates of attendance, and degrees earned.
- b. Teaching employment history with time period, grade level, and subject area of each assignment.
- c. Professional association memberships, including information regarding offices held and other relevant activities.
- d. Staff development leadership activities, mentorships, and leadership activities in the training of future and current teachers that you have presented.
- e. Awards and other recognition of your teaching, including dates and exact involvement.

## **Essays**

This section should include essays on the following topics:

### **1. Professional Biography (Limit 2 pages)**

Describe:

- The factors that influenced your becoming a teacher
- Your greatest contributions and accomplishments in education

### **2. Philosophy of Teaching (Limit 1 page)**

Describe:

- Your personal views about teaching, including what aspects make you an outstanding teacher
- The rewards you find in teaching
- How your views about teaching are demonstrated in your personal teaching style

### 3. Student Progress (Limit 2 pages)

Describe:

- How you know your students are achieving

Include:

- Descriptions illustrating your use and understanding of data

Consider:

- Assessment methods used
- What you do with information to improve instruction
- How you assess and address the needs of students at-risk, and how you differentiate instruction to meet the variety of needs of at-risk students and how you differentiate instruction to meet the variety of classroom needs.

### 4. School-Community Involvement (Limit 1 page)

Describe:

- Partnerships, such as involvement with colleagues and creating school-community partnerships
- How you involve and utilize the community in your classroom
- Commitment to the community through service-oriented activities (such as volunteer and civic) that enhance the home, school, and/or community connection

Include:

*Note:* descriptions should not include personal/family volunteer service, and do not include professional development that is required by your school/school district.

- How you establish local partnerships that strengthen family involvement in children's education
- Community involvement beyond that which is considered basic school-related involvement
- How you get your students involved in community service

### 5. The Teaching Profession (Limit 2 pages)

Describe:

- Why you would recommend that individuals enter the teaching profession
- How you strengthen and improve the teaching profession
- How you support the profession, such as through teacher collaboration and mentoring
- What is and/or what should be the basis for accountability in the teaching profession

## **Letters of Support**

Include three to four letters of support from among the following: district superintendent, principal, administrator, colleague, student, parent, or community civic leader. All letters should extend the application by covering areas or examples not addressed elsewhere.

Letters of support are limited to one page each. Do not include other materials, such as portfolios or press clippings.

### **Contra Costa County TOY Finalists**

The four TOY finalists, whose applications score the highest, will receive a site visit from our TOY Classroom Evaluators/Interviewers. School principals and district liaisons will be contacted by the second week of April, if their candidate is selected as a finalist and will receive a site visit. Additionally, an email will go out to all TOYs and TOY district liaisons announcing the four finalists.

The four TOY finalists will be required to complete an application for the California Teacher of the Year. It will be sent as soon as the Communications Dept. is notified by the state of its availability. The application deadline will be announced at that time but is usually in early August. The state application includes a video requirement. The Communications Dept. will assist the finalists with the production of the video on Tuesday, June 11, 2024 between 12 p.m - 3 p.m., the same day of the Finalist Reception. A finalist may produce the video on their own if preferred.

If the Contra Costa County Teacher of the Year is selected as a California Teacher of the Year, the candidate may need to be released from classroom duties for up to 30 days in the school year and additional days in years thereafter. If the teacher is selected as a candidate to the National Teacher of the Year Program, the district or county will provide travel reimbursement to the teacher for participation in the National Teacher of the Year meeting. If selected as National Teacher of the Year, the applicant will be released for a full year. The school, district, or other administrative authority employing the applicant will provide substitute personnel and ensure that salary and benefits are not diminished during release time.