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CA TOY Application Documentation Instructions

Instructions for completing the Documentation component of the California Teachers of the Year (CA TOY) Application.

This web page contains information about the requirements for the Documentation component that must be completed and uploaded into the California Teachers of the Year (CA TOY) Application.

It is recommended that you collect information and complete the Documentation component prior to beginning the Application. Instructions for completing the CA TOY Application can be found on the CDE [CA TOY](#) web page.

Documentation Format

The Documentation must be uploaded into the 2023 CA TOY Application (Online Survey) as one complete file in Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat.

The Documentation is limited to 23 pages, formatted as follows:

- 1-inch margins
- Arial size 12-point font
- Single-spaced

The Documentation should be named as follows: County Name, District Name, followed by the candidate First Name and Last Name. (Do not include the words "county" or "school district.") For example: Orange Garden Grove Unified Jane Smith. Include the documentation name on the Cover Page.

The Documentation should include page breaks so that each component has its own page(s). For each component, include the name of the component followed by the requirement. Do not include the requirement description. Each component

has its own word or page maximum. The name of the component will not count towards the requirement word count.

Documentation Components

The Documentation must include the following components:

- Cover Page
- Introductory Letter
- Professional Biography
- Professional Resume
- Essays
- Letters of Recommendation
- Headshot
- Introductory Video

Cover Page

Requirement Description: Provide a cover page. (Not to exceed one page.)

The cover page should include the documentation name and the following information about the candidate:

- Documentation Name (County Name, District Name, followed by candidate First Name and Last Name)
- First Name and Last Name
- Grade Level(s) Teaching - Subject(s) Teaching
- School where Employed, City
- School District, County

Introductory Letter

Requirement Description: Provide an introductory letter from the candidate to the Evaluation Committee. (Not to exceed two pages.)

The introductory letter should present a powerful statement about your commitment to continued achievement for all students.

Include the following:

- Explain what it is like to be a student in your class.
- Relate an inspirational vignette from your own teaching experience that illustrates an important aspect of education.
- Paint a clear picture that helps the reader to envision a typical day.
- Include a brief example of an ideal real day and a brief example of how you turned a challenging moment into a teachable moment.
- Optional: Consider providing examples that reflect your work implementing accelerated learning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Professional Biography

Requirement Description: Provide a professional biography from the candidate. (Not to exceed 250 words.)

Include the following:

- The factors that influenced you becoming a teacher.
- Your greatest contributions and accomplishments in education, to date.

Professional Resume

Requirement Description: Provide a professional resume from the candidate. (Not to exceed two pages.)

Include the candidate's accomplishments in the areas listed below, include the five most recent items for each of the following in chronological order (most recent first):

- Education - Colleges and Universities attended (including postgraduate studies), degrees earned, majors, and the years of attendance.
- Certifications - Professional association memberships, including information regarding offices held, and the year obtained.
- Work Experience - Teaching employment history with title, organization, years in position, grade level, and subject area of each assignment.
- Leadership Experience - Staff development position, organization, and years in position.
- Awards and Other Recognition - Awards and other recognition of your teaching and the year received.

Essays

Requirement Description: Provide an essay addressing each of the following six topics. Please indicate evidence of student impact. Do not include external links. (Each essay is not to exceed 750 words.)

Essay 1 - Philosophy of Teaching

Requirement Description: Describe a content lesson or unit that defines you as a teacher. Show how your deliberate instructional decisions create student learning and reveal what you value in education.

Include the following:

- The aspects that make you an outstanding teacher.
- The greatest rewards you find in teaching.
- How your views about teaching are demonstrated in your personal teaching style.
- A content lesson or unit that defines you as a teacher.
- How you engage students of all background, abilities, and readiness levels in the learning and how that learning influences your students.
- How your beliefs about teaching are demonstrated in this lesson or unit.
- Optional: Consider providing a response focused on how your philosophy of teaching aligns with the work of closing the achievement and/or opportunity gaps.

Essay 2 - School Culture

Requirement Description: Describe how you deliberately create culture in your classroom and school. Demonstrate how you use the relationships and collaboration to teach students of all backgrounds and identities.

Include the following:

- Your role and how you collaborated with others.
- The status of this project today, including evidence of student impact.
- Optional: Consider providing a response focused on an example that promoted positive school culture in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Essay 3 - School Community Involvement

Requirement Description: Describe specific ways in which you deliberately connect your students with the community. Demonstrate the impact of this work on student learning and success.

Include the following:

- Specific ways in which you deliberately connect your students with the community, including evidence of student impact.
- Specific ways you are involved with colleagues in creating school-community partnerships.
- How you involve and utilize the community in your classroom.
- Your commitments to the community through service-oriented activities (such as volunteer and civic) that enhance the home, school, and/or community connection.
- How you establish local partnerships with family involvement in children education that strengthen home-school partnerships.
- How you involve the community beyond that which is considered basic school-related involvement.
- How you get your students involved in community service projects.
- Optional: Consider providing a response focused on examples of school-community involvement during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Essay 4 - Education Issues and Trends

Requirement Description: Determine an issue you have had to advocate for either in your school, state, or beyond. Describe how you demonstrated teacher leadership as part of your work on this issue and how your work impacted students.

Include the following:

- Address the issue in depth.
- Outline possible causes.
- Outline possible effects.
- Outline possible resolutions.

- Describe how you address or work to improve the issue both within and outside of the classroom.

Essay 5 - National Teacher of the Year

Requirement Description: As the 2023 National Teacher of the Year, serving as the ambassador of education for the United States, 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?

Include the following:

- The skills, values, knowledge, and ethics you would convey.
- The positive messages you would communicate to your profession and to the public.
- Why you would recommend individuals to enter the teaching profession.
- How you would strengthen and improve the teaching profession.
- How you support the teaching profession, such as through teacher collaboration and mentoring.
- What is and/or what should be the basis for accountability in the teaching profession.
- Optional: Consider providing a response that addresses how you will represent America's teaching profession in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Essay 6 - State Superintendent of Public Instruction's Initiative

Requirement Description: Describe how your teaching and/or professional experiences contribute toward the work of California's State Superintendent of Public Instruction's (SSPI) Initiatives.

Include one or more of the following:

- Statewide Literacy - Describe how your teaching and/or professional experiences help to improve reading levels in your classroom and/or school.
- Reducing Chronic Absenteeism - Describe how your teaching and/or professional experiences help to increase student attendance in your

classroom and/or school.

- Closing the Achievement Gap - Describe how you have helped students of color score higher in your classroom and/or school.
- Jobs for Tomorrow - Describe how you have helped all students in your classroom and/or school have equal access to Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM), and Computer Science programs.

Letters of Recommendation

Requirement Description: Include three letters of recommendation from a diverse array of colleagues/stakeholders that support why you should be a 2023 California Teacher of the Year. (Each letter of recommendation is not to exceed one page.)

When choosing letters of recommendation to submit, consider how they might extend the Application by covering areas or examples not addressed elsewhere. Do not include other materials, such as portfolios or press clippings.

At least one letter must be from a parent, colleague, administrator, or student. Letters may be from among the following titles or education stakeholders, and should only be one per title:

- District Superintendent
- Principal
- Administrator
- Colleague
- Student
- Parent
- Community Civic Leader

Headshot

Requirement Description: Include a headshot. (Not to exceed one page.) The headshot should be one photograph in:

- Color
- Portrait Orientation

- 300 ppi, .jpg format

Introductory Video

Requirement Description: Include an introductory video. (Not to exceed 3 minutes.)

Provide a link to where the introductory video can be viewed.

The introductory video should include:

- An introduction including your name and the county you are representing. (e.g., My name is ... I am a 2023 California Teacher of the Year Candidate from ... County."
- A description of why you teach.

Questions: Awards Unit | awards@cde.ca.gov | 916-319-0842

Last Reviewed: Thursday, June 9, 2022
