

# Expanding the Rhode Island Teacher of the Year Program

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## Purpose and Context:

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) envisions an expanded Teacher of the Year Program to recognize our state's best teachers. We believe that rewarding the talent and dedication of our state Teacher of the Year (TOY) and district Teachers of the Year (DTOYs) in more visible, exciting, and meaningful ways will not only provide a tremendous experience for the winning teachers, but will also help to encourage and model excellence among all educators and to publicly promote the importance and value of the teaching profession to our community.

RIDE worked with current and past TOYs and other outstanding educators to develop an expanded Teacher of the Year Program in Rhode Island. Educators expressed a desire to improve the public perception of the teaching profession and a need to recognize excellence in teaching, and they identified improving our existing Teacher of the Year Program as a means of meeting both needs.

To accomplish this, RIDE is seeking sponsors for new opportunities and benefits for future TOY and DTOY winners. In addition, RIDE has adjusted the timeline for the selection of the TOY to better align with the school-year calendar and allow more time to plan opportunities for the selected TOY and DTOYs.

## Opportunities, Supports, and Benefits:

Subject to successful fundraising, beginning with the 2014 TOY (to be selected June 2013 and serve September 2013-September 2014), the TOY would receive new opportunities, supports, and benefits, such as:

- ❖ A new teacher to serve as co-teacher of the TOY's classroom, so that the TOY can mentor the new teacher, and so that there is coverage of the TOY's classroom when TOY-related duties pull the TOY out of the school building
- ❖ Leased car for the TOY's one-year term to ease the burden of traveling around the state
- ❖ Cash prize and/or donation of classroom resources
- ❖ Enhanced TOY ceremony held at a venue large enough to hold all DTOYs and their guests, with a celebratory atmosphere and refreshments
- ❖ Media opportunities and speaking engagements with community leaders to allow the TOY to serve as an ambassador who promotes the teaching profession and improves public perception of teachers
- ❖ Speaking engagements and opportunities to conduct and engage in professional development with other teachers
- ❖ Sponsored opportunities for the TOY to attend local, regional, or national conferences in his/her field

## Timeline Changes for State Process:

Traditional Timeline	New Timeline (effective 2012-13)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Each district selects a DTOY by September and submits that name to RIDE</li>   <li>❖ RIDE assembles selection panel in October to begin paper screening</li>   <li>❖ Panel interviews top 6 candidates and determines final 3 in October</li>   <li>❖ Rhode Island selects state TOY in October</li>   <li>❖ Selected TOY serves a one-year term, November to November</li>   <li>❖ RIDE submits RI TOY candidate to National TOY selection process in early November</li>   <li>❖ Ceremony to honor the TOY is held in May, mid-way through term</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Each district selects a DTOY by mid-April and submits that name to RIDE. Those DTOYs embark on a year of support in preparation for completing the state TOY application in spring 2013. (See page 3 for more details.)</li>   <li>❖ RIDE assembles selection panel in April to begin paper screening. The applications that the panel reviews are from the prior year's DTOYs, who benefited from a year of support and assistance with completing the state TOY application.</li>   <li>❖ Panel conducts on-site observations of the top 6 applicants in May</li>   <li>❖ Panel interviews top 3 finalists in June</li>   <li>❖ Rhode Island selects state TOY in June</li>   <li>❖ Selected TOY serves a one-year term, September to September</li>   <li>❖ RIDE submits RI TOY candidate to National TOY selection process in early November</li>   <li>❖ Ceremony to honor the TOY is held in September, when the TOY winner is announced</li> </ul>
<p>Example: If you were selected as TOY in November 2010, you served from November 2010 to November 2011. You were announced as TOY in November 2010, but the ceremony to honor you was held in May 2011.</p>	<p>Example: If you are announced as the TOY winner in September 2013, you will serve from September 2013 to September 2014. Your selection will be announced at the September 2013 ceremony to honor you and all DTOYs.</p>

## Support for District Teachers of the Year:

Another important component of the expanded Rhode Island Teacher of the Year Program is the additional support that DTOYs will receive. The DTOYs chosen by all Rhode Island districts will have the opportunity to participate in one year of support and assistance completing the state TOY application before they apply for the state title. As a cohort, DTOYs will meet three to four times during their year of service as DTOYs to share ideas and also receive support from RIDE in how to complete the state TOY application. RIDE is excited to offer this opportunity for DTOYs to gather together and also to encourage and support teachers in pursuing the state TOY title if they are interested. Participation in this opportunity will be optional.

*For the 2012 selection of the state TOY, the selection panel will choose from among the teachers who submitted applications in 2011.*

*The newly named DTOYs in the spring of 2012 will be the first to benefit from a year of support completing the state application and will have the option to apply for the state title in 2013.*