



2024-2025 STUDENTS OF THE YEAR GUIDELINES

I. OVERVIEW

The Students of the Year Awards Program recognizes outstanding students who have demonstrated excellence in all of the following areas:

★ leadership ★ service ★ citizenship ★ academic and/or career and technical achievement

The Louisiana Department of Education and the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education sponsor this annual program, which is open to every Louisiana public and approved nonpublic school with students enrolled in the grade levels that correspond to the award categories. The winners of the three categories are selected by a selection committee.

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
STUDENT OF THE YEAR:**
one fifth-grade student

**MIDDLE/JR. HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENT OF THE YEAR:**
one eighth-grade student

**HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENT OF THE YEAR:**
one twelfth-grade student

Only students who are enrolled in the above grades are eligible to participate.

Each educational agency participating in the Student of the Year Program submits a [school system information form](#) to the state coordinator. This form indicates the point(s) of contact and level of participation. School systems are responsible for implementing a student nomination process consistently and equitably across the school system. Families are informed of this process before the school-level committee considers nominees. Students and families should be aware of the protocols for resolving potential disputes. After nominees are selected, the school will submit nominee's names to the School System Selection Committee.

II. AWARDS

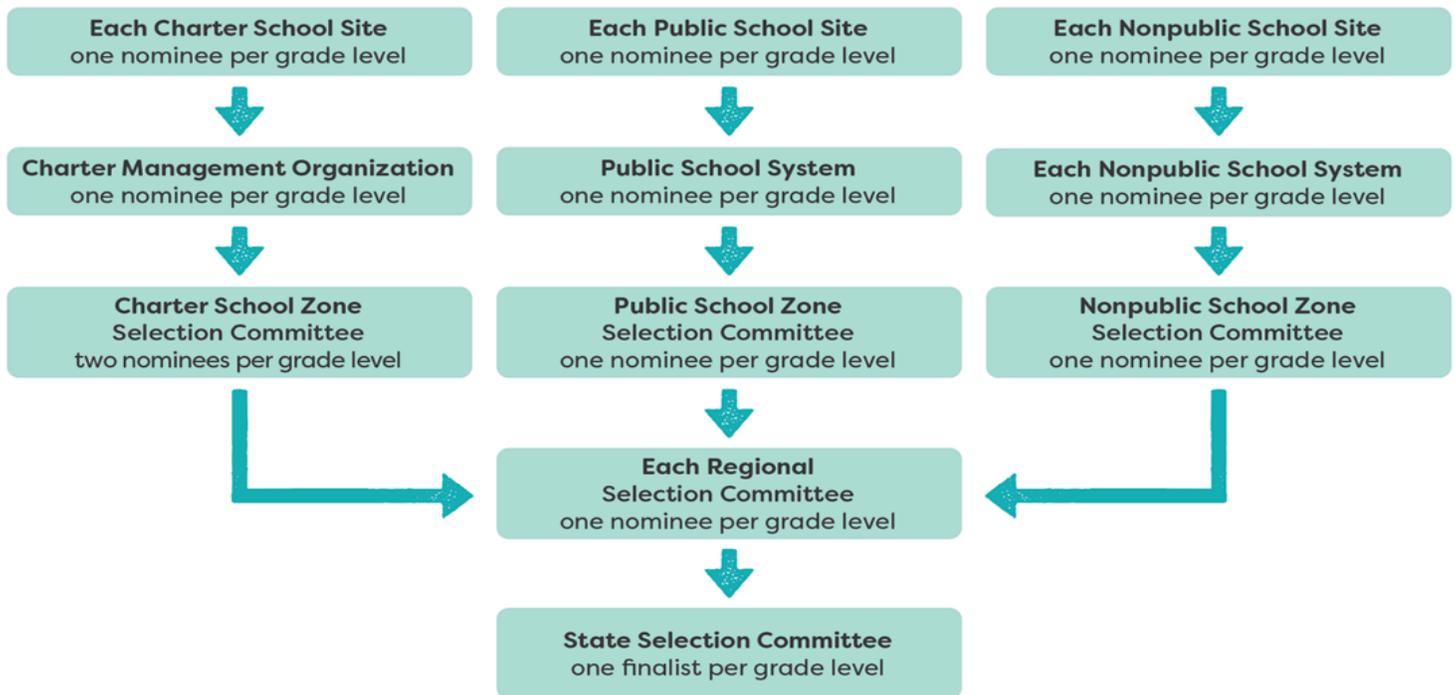
All regional nominees and their parents, system leader and principal; the State Superintendent of Education; Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education members; Legislative Educational Committee members; and news media are invited to attend the Students of the Year Awards Ceremony, which is traditionally held in Baton Rouge. Awards are presented to the twenty-four (24) regional finalists and to the three (3) State Students of the Year.

Note: The State Student Selection Committee may organize a virtual ceremony if a health or other crisis prevents groups from gathering for an in-person event.

For questions, please contact exemplaryeducator@la.gov.

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III. OVERVIEW OF SELECTION PROCESS



IV. ZONE SELECTION COMMITTEE PROCEDURES

The system leader appoints members to the school system selection committees to select nominees. The Zone Selection Committee is composed of three to five members per grade level. The function of these committees is to apply established criteria to select a nominee to represent the school systems in your zone.

All committees are to include equitable representation from various ethnic and racial groups, composed of a combination of the following stakeholders:

- grade level appropriate teacher
- professional school counselor
- school or central office administrator
- community member
- career/technical instructor or supervisor (only grade 12)
- postsecondary personnel



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V. SCHOOL SYSTEM AND ZONE SELECTION PROCEDURES

All school systems and nonpublic schools will submit their nomination forms and portfolios to the State Coordinator. Your portfolio will be assigned to the Zone Coordinator of the BESE district representing the school site of the nominee based on the school type and site code. See [Appendix A](#) for more information.

- A school site will submit nominations to their school system coordinator. A school system will then select a nominee using the established criteria and rubrics. The information in the portfolio will be submitted into an online portal.
- Nonpublic and charter Zone Selection Committees will each submit two nominees per grade level and the public school system Zone Selection Committee will submit four nominees to the Regional Selection Committee Coordinator for the BESE district representing the school site of the nominee.
- In the event of a tie, please contact the state coordinator regarding next steps.

VI. REGIONAL AND STATE SELECTION PROCEDURES

The Regional and State Selection committees will be composed of at least five members, composed of the combination of the stakeholders listed above in [Section IV](#). The following process is to be used:

1. Each regional grade level selection committee chairperson (See [Appendix A](#)) submits one nomination to the State Student of the Year Coordinator.
2. The State Selection Committee Chairperson notifies the regional nominees and their respective school system coordinator on a confidential basis a few days in advance of the public announcement. These notifications will occur in time for families to finalize their arrangements for the final phase of the selection process.
3. The State Student Selection Committee reviews the applications, evaluates the writing samples, and interviews the nominees.
4. The State Student Selection Committee names one Student of the Year for each grade level.



STUDENT ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

VII. STUDENT ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION

At minimum, Students of the Year nominees should have a cumulative grade point average of 3.1 on a four point scale based on the grades listed below. The grade point average is calculated on semester grades in the following fashion:

- Grade 5 nominees: GPA in grades 2, 3, 4 and the first grading period or semester of grade 5
- Grade 8 nominees: GPA in grades 5, 6, 7 and the first grading period or semester of grade 8
- Grade 12 nominees: GPA in grades 9, 10, 11 and the first grading period or semester of grade 12

Once nominees have been selected, the school should support the student(s) during the application process. A school representative will forward the completed application portfolios to the School System-level Selection Coordinator. Grade point average is determined using the final grade for each completed course annually.

Note: The LDOE recommends that school systems give nominees an opportunity to interview with a selection committee prior to submitting their application to the Zone or Regional Selection Committees.

VIII. STUDENT PORTFOLIOS

SCHOOL SYSTEM-LEVEL SUBMISSIONS

The nominee's application portfolio is the basis for the selection process throughout the local, regional and state levels. As such, the School System-level Selection Committee should ensure that the nominee's portfolios include all required application materials **without exceeding 50 electronic pages**. The application includes the following:

- LDOE application form
- Academic records
- Autobiographical sketch
- Leadership, service, citizenship and awards forms
- Additional artifacts and student photo ([Suggested Photo Guidelines](#))

Each of these components is explained in [Appendix B](#) and [Appendix C](#).

WRITING SAMPLES

In addition to the autobiographical sketch students include in their application portfolios, each regional honoree and finalist will write a short essay as part of the regional and state application process. The state coordinator will issue the writing topics to the school systems with nominees. Committee members consider content as well as mechanics as they review student writing. **School system-level coordinators will ensure all IEP and 504 accommodations are followed.** See [Appendix C](#) for evaluation criteria.



APPENDIX A. DISTRICT ASSIGNMENT GUIDANCE

Application materials and the online application portal will be sent to the zone coordinator corresponding to the BESE District for the school site of the nominee as well as the type of school system (public, nonpublic or charter). Each zone will have three student selection committees: one for public, one for nonpublic and one for charter, with grade levels having separate committees.

Traditional public school systems may submit one public school nominee and one charter school nominee. Charter school management organizations may submit one nominee corresponding to the Charter Zone Selection committee for the BESE District of the school site of the nominee.

REGIONAL ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are based on the public, nonpublic or charter [school site](#) of the nominee.

- **Region 1-District 1-Paul Hollis**
 - Jefferson, Orleans, St. Charles, St. John, St. Tammany
- **Region 2-District 2-Dr. Sharon Latten Clark**
 - Assumption, Jefferson, Orleans, St. Charles, St. James, St. John
- **Region 3-District 3-Sandy Holloway**
 - Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson, Lafourche, Lafayette, Plaquemine, Pointe Coupee, St. Bernard, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary, Terrebonne
- **Region 4-District 4-Stacey Melerine**
 - Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Desoto, Louisiana School for Math, Science and the Arts, Natchitoches, Red River, Sabine, Vernon, Webster, Winn
- **Region 5-District 5-Lance Harris**
 - Caldwell, Catahoula, City of Monroe, Claiborne, Concordia, East Carroll, Evangeline, Franklin, Grant, Jackson, LaSalle, Lincoln, Madison, Morehouse, Ouachita, Rapides, Red River, Richland, Tensas, Union, West Carroll
- **Region 6-District 6-Ronnie Morris**
 - Ascension, Central Community Schools, City of Bogalusa Schools, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, LSU University Laboratory School, Livingston, Tangipahoa, Washington, Zachary Community Schools
- **Region 7-District 7-Kevin Berken**
 - Acadia, Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, Evangeline, Iberia, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, St. Landry, Vermilion
- **Region 8-District 8-Preston Castille**
 - Ascension, Avoyelles, City of Baker, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Evangeline, Iberville, Pointe Coupee, Southern University Laboratory School, St. Helena, St. Landry, St. Martin, West Baton Rouge, West Feliciana, Zachary Community Schools



APPENDIX B. PORTFOLIO SUBMISSIONS

School/School System Level: School level portfolio submissions may be completed electronically or by print and an **electronic copy** will be sent to the **school system-level coordinator**. The portfolio must include information that is relevant and pertinent to the areas listed below. The initial electronic **portfolio should not exceed fifty (50) pages** and should address only the items in the application. Information submitted must be no smaller than a **11-point font** (Public Sans font preferred). A copy of all supporting documents should be retained at the local level.

State/Regional/Zone Levels: School systems should assist with the uploading of information into the online portal by the specified deadline. Zone Coordinators will submit the nomination forms to the state coordinator. Once the regional finalist for a grade level has been selected, regional coordinators will submit nomination forms to the state coordinator.

PORTFOLIO APPLICATION GUIDANCE

IDENTIFICATION AND PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

The basic data sheet must be completed and attached to the application portfolio. **Parents must sign an authorization for release of pertinent information relative to the program.** School system coordinators will enter/upload application information into the online portal.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Nominees must submit information about themselves in narrative form. This autobiographical sketch provides additional information about the nominee, but it is not scored as a writing sample. This sample, which may be typed or handwritten, accompanies the application form when it is submitted to the local Student Selection Committee. This initial writing sample should include information such as family history, interests, career aspirations, etc. The students should be encouraged to address at least three or more issues that are important to them and that have had an influence on their lives.

ACADEMIC RECORDS

A photocopy of the student's academic and attendance record, report cards and/or high school/college transcripts reflecting academic performance in all previous years and including the first semester grades of the current grade level, must accompany the application portfolio. Grade 5 portfolios should include grades 1-5. Grade 8 should include grades 1-8. Grade 12 should include grades 9-12 and Carnegie units earned prior to grade 9.

Also, scores for all statewide or non-public school annual assessments taken prior to the current school year are to be included. If grades/scores are unavailable, please include an explanation of why they are not accessible. Nominees should include their AP, CLEP, ACT, PSAT, SAT, WorkKeys scores, high school Jump Start certifications, TOPS-aligned dual enrollment coursework, TOPS/TOPS Tech eligibility status,



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work-based experience documentation from employer, Associates Degree coursework/status and/or other pertinent academic test results.

LEADERSHIP, ACTIVITIES, RECOGNITIONS, SERVICE/CITIZENSHIP

All sections are to be completed by all students. Students should include leadership they have had at their school, church or in their community. Forms provided in the application are to be completed listing specific evidence of the student's leadership ability, participation in school and community activities, citizenship and service involvement, high school pathways accomplishments, work-based learning experiences/honors and recognitions and awards. The tables in the form may have rows inserted or deleted as needed for completing the information.

APPENDIX C. WRITING SAMPLE & INTERVIEW

In addition to the autobiographical sketch submitted at the school level, the regional and state nominees will be asked to write a short essay. School coordinators will submit an electronic version of the essay directly to the regional coordinators per the guidelines provided. In reviewing the composition, the committee considers the following points:

- Clarity and continuity of thought
- Originality of ideas
- Interest/appeal
- Use of words
- Correctness of sentence structure
- Correctness of capitalization, punctuation, spelling and usage

Nominees will also be interviewed by a selection panel at the zone, regional and state levels. These interviews are structured around questions and topics appropriate to the academic level of the students. The following are some factors that are considered during the interview:

- Poise/confidence
- Ability to relate his/her ideas
- Fluency in speaking
- Good voice projection
- Clear focus on the topic
- Use of facts to support a position
- Flexibility in response to questions
- Use of correct grammar
- Relevance of answers or explanations
- Appropriate body language and eye contact



APPENDIX D. SCORING RUBRICS

EVALUATION FORMS

Students are evaluated on all three components: the application portfolio, the writing sample and the interview. The organization, format, writing sample topics and questions used in the interviews will be consistent across all regions. A copy of the evaluation form that will be used at each grade level in the program is found on the following pages. These forms have been developed to give structure and consistency to the evaluations at the local, regional and state level.

2024-2025 STUDENTS OF THE YEAR GRADE FIVE RUBRIC

I. ACADEMIC EVALUATION		
Grade Point Average		/3 possible points
Assessments		/3 possible points
	SUBTOTAL	/6 possible points
II. APPLICATION PORTFOLIO		
Leadership/Activities/Services/Citizenship		/34 possible points
Recognitions/Awards		/10 possible points
	SUBTOTAL	/44 possible points
III. WRITING SAMPLE		
Clarity/Continuity of Thought & Response to the Prompt		/5 possible points
Originality of Ideas/Interest Appeal		/5 possible points
Support, Elaboration, Organization		/5 possible points
Correctness of Sentence Structure		/5 possible points
Correctness of Capitalization, Punctuation and Spelling		/5 possible points
	SUBTOTAL	/25 possible points
IV. INTERVIEW		
Poise/Confidence		/2 possible points
Ability to Convey Ideas		/2 possible points
Fluency in Speaking		/2 possible points
Good Voice Projection		/2 possible points
Clear Focus on Topic		/5 possible points
Use of Facts to Support Position		/2 possible points
Flexibility in Response to Questions		/2 possible points
Use of Correct Grammar		/2 possible points
Relevance of Answers/Explanations		/2 possible points
Appropriate Body Language and Eye Contact		/2 possible points
Scope & Breadth of the Response to the Posed Questions		/5 possible points
	SUBTOTAL	/25 possible points
	TOTAL POINTS	/100 possible points



2024-2025 STUDENTS OF THE YEAR GRADE EIGHT RUBRIC

I. ACADEMIC EVALUATION

Grade Point Average	/4 possible points
Assessments	/4 possible points
SUBTOTAL	/8 possible points

II. APPLICATION PORTFOLIO

Leadership	/12 possible points
Activities	/10 possible points
Services/Citizenship	/10 possible points
Recognitions/Awards	/10 possible points
SUBTOTAL	/42 possible points

III. WRITING SAMPLE

Clarity/Continuity of Thought & Response to the Prompt	/5 possible points
Originality of Ideas/Interest Appeal	/5 possible points
Support, Elaboration, Organization	/5 possible points
Correctness of Sentence Structure	/5 possible points
Correctness of Capitalization, Punctuation and Spelling	/5 possible points
SUBTOTAL	/25 possible points

IV. INTERVIEW

Poise/Confidence	/2 possible points
Ability to Convey Ideas	/2 possible points
Fluency in Speaking	/2 possible points
Good Voice Projection	/2 possible points
Clear Focus on Topic	/5 possible points
Use of Facts to Support Position	/2 possible points
Flexibility in Response to Questions	/2 possible points
Use of Correct Grammar	/2 possible points
Relevance of Answers/Explanations	/2 possible points
Appropriate Body Language and Eye Contact	/2 possible points
Scope & Breadth of the Response to the Posed Questions	/5 possible points
SUBTOTAL	/25 possible points
TOTAL POINTS	/100 possible points



2024-2025 STUDENTS OF THE YEAR GRADE TWELVE RUBRIC

I. ACADEMIC EVALUATION

Grade Point Average	/3 possible points
Difficulty Level of Courses	/3 possible points
Test Scores	/2 possible points
CTE Credentials	/2 possible points
Technical Diploma, Associate Degree or Work-based Learning Experience Credentials	/2 possible points
SUBTOTAL	/12 possible points

II. APPLICATION PORTFOLIO

Leadership	/8 possible points
Activities	/10 possible points
Services/ Citizenship Activities	/10 possible points
Recognitions/Awards	/10 possible points
SUBTOTAL	/38 possible points

III. WRITING SAMPLE

Clarity/Continuity of Thought & Response to the Prompt	/5 possible points
Originality of Ideas/Interest Appeal	/5 possible points
Support, Elaboration, Organization	/5 possible points
Correctness of Sentence Structure	/5 possible points
Correctness of Capitalization, Punctuation and Spelling	/5 possible points
SUBTOTAL	/25 possible points

IV. INTERVIEW

Poise/Confidence	/2 possible points
Ability to Convey Ideas	/2 possible points
Fluency in Speaking	/2 possible points
Good Voice Projection	/2 possible points
Clear Focus on Topic	/5 possible points
Use of Facts to Support Position	/2 possible points
Flexibility in Response to Questions	/2 possible points
Use of Correct Grammar	/2 possible points
Relevance of Answers/Explanations	/2 possible points
Appropriate Body Language and Eye Contact	/2 possible points
Scope & Breadth of the Response to the Posed Questions	/5 possible points
SUBTOTAL	/25 possible points
TOTAL POINTS	/100 possible points