



ROBERT E. YAGER EXEMPLARY TEACHING AWARD

PROGRAM SUMMARY

The Robert E. Yager Exemplary Teaching Award will recognize exemplary innovation in the field of science education. This award acknowledges teachers who share Robert Yager’s passion for education and continued professional development. This award also honors Robert Yager’s effort to make excellent science education accessible to students of the 21st century and beyond. Awardees will have exhibited exemplary innovation in the field of science education and embody the mission statement of NSTA.

AWARD

Six awardees will be selected annually. The individual awardees will receive a \$1,000 award, up to \$1,000 for travel expenses to attend the NSTA National Conference, and a plaque. They will be asked to present at the NSTA National Conference on Science Education, with their presentation videotaped for future use. The awardees will be invited to attend and present at their grade band share-a-thon at the National Conference, attend the district director meet and greet, attend and participate in their NSTA District Director Leadership retreat.**

ELIGIBILITY

Individuals who apply for this award must be a current K-12 classroom science educator in one of NSTA’s districts. The eligible districts have a rotation cycle that includes six (6) districts per cycle as follows:

2025–26, Districts I, VI, VII, XII, XIII, and XVIII are eligible this cycle.

2026-27, Districts II, IV, VIII, X, XIV, XVI

2027–28, Districts III, V, IX, XI, XV, XVII

NSTA Districts:

I – CT, MA, RI

II – ME, NH, VT

III – DE, DC, MD

IV – NJ, NY, PA

V – AL, GA, FL, PR

VI – NC, SC, TN

VII – AR, LA, MS

VIII – KY, VA, WV

IX – MN, ND, SD

X – IN, MI, OH

XI – KS, MO, NE

XII – IL, IA, WI

XIII – NM, OK, TX

XIV – AZ, CO, UT

XV – ID, MT, WY

XVI – CA, HI, NV, AS, GU, TPI

XVII – AK, OR, WA

XVIII – Canada

CRITERIA FOR JUDGING

The target audience for the Robert E. Yager Award will be grades K-12 science teachers working in one of NSTA’s districts; who exemplify exemplary innovation in the field of science education. Among the criteria to be considered by the committee are:

- ★ exhibited excellence and innovation in the field of science education;
- ★ effective planning and presentation skills;
- ★ ability to motivate and challenge students;
- ★ proficiency in science and science education (e.g., publications, presentations);
- ★ participation in professional growth activities, leadership roles, and involvement at professional meetings; and
- ★ support NGSS and/or national science education standards.
- ★ alignment to Yager Emphasis Matrix (see chart, page 3)

AWARD SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applications should reflect national science education standards and must include the following information:

- ★ 1000-word **summary** describing how the nominee implements the teaching of science education in the classroom; highlighting the nominee’s methodology and practice of teaching science in the classroom and showing that it exhibits creative, innovative, and sustainable teaching methods that enhance not only the immediate learning process for the student, but also provides the student with a framework of inquiry and practice for all of his or her interactions with the sciences;
- ★ A **narrative**, not to exceed the character equivalent of five pages, describing the outstanding nature of the nominee’s contributions and including specific examples of the nominee’s outstanding contributions;
- ★ a resume/vitae (up to three pages), describing science teaching experience, professional development, professional activities, and awards;
- ★ Support NGSS and/or national science education standards

- ★ Three letters of support from individuals and groups who are familiar with the applicant's work. Letters should not exceed two pages each and must accompany packet. Letters sent separately will not be considered. When possible, use letterhead. Make sure letters are signed and dated accordingly. Letters should be written for and refer to the nominee's strengths and accomplishments and highlights of his or her teaching methods and experiences that directly connect to the application.

Prior to Uploading Application

Occasionally we receive entries that are incomplete or in which the applicant did not follow the specified guidelines. Entries that do not follow the stated rules for submission are disqualified, regardless of the merit or innovation of the entry. Make sure you and a colleague review the checklist below before sending in your application so you can ensure that your efforts will not be disqualified. Ensure that your application communicates the information you intend. Don't forget to check for correct spelling.

Please be advised that you may apply for more than one award; however, you are eligible to win only one NSTA award per year. Each application must be based on a unique program and process. Submission of the same idea and materials to different NSTA award programs will result in the disqualification of all applications. If your idea or project has received an NSTA award in the past, that idea or project is not eligible to receive an additional award.

If you are selected to receive an award, NSTA must request and receive your social security number to issue a 1099 form to you. If your program is currently grant funded, confirm that you, as an individual, are eligible to receive a cash award. If you have received an award for this project from another provider, you must notify NSTA.

Please note that, for security purposes, this online application form has a 2-hour time limit. If you are inactive for the maximum time, you will be automatically logged out of the system. You may log back in with your username (email address) and password. At any time during the application process, you may click the Save & Logout button, located at the top of every screen. This will save the information you have entered thus far and allow you to log back in to complete your form at a later date.

Upon receipt, all submissions become the property of NSTA. Applications will not be returned. Late or faxed applications will not be accepted. **Completed applications must be received by December 19th.** Applications may only be submitted via the online submission form found at <https://www.nsta.org/awards>. Questions? Please feel free to e-mail awards@nsta.org.

****Please note, the issuance of this award is contingent upon successful negotiation with the sponsor for continued financial support.**

Yager Emphasis Matrix

Criteria for Identifying K-12 Science Teachers for the Annual Yager Exemplary Teaching Award and Ways of Assessing Real Student Learning

Exemplary Teaching

- Understanding and responding to individual student interests, strengths, experiences, and needs
- Selecting and adapting curriculum by students and teachers
- Focusing on student understandings and use of scientific concepts, ideas, and inquiry processes
- Guiding students in active and extended scientific inquiries
- Providing opportunities for scientific discussions and debates among students
- Continuously assessing student understanding (and involving students in the process)
- Sharing responsibility for learning with students
- Supporting classroom communities with cooperation, shared responsibilities, and respect
- Working with other teachers across the whole curriculum to enhance science and special Projects

Exemplary Student Outcomes

- Assessing what is most highly valued
- Assessing rich and well-structured concepts
- Assessing scientific understanding and reasoning
- Assessing students to determine what students understand
- Assessing achievement and opportunities to learn
- Engaging students in ongoing and continuous assessment of their own work as well as that of other students
- Involving teachers in evaluating external assessments that are prepared by testing companies