The American Legion

Educator of the Year Award

Program Guide

The American Legion
Department of South Dakota
P.O. Box 67
Watertown, South Dakota 57201

September 2026

Program Purpose

The South Dakota American Legion *"Educator of the Year"* Award program serves to recognize dedicated and devoted individuals who, on a constant basis, give so much of themselves on behalf of the children of South Dakota… ..... Teachers.

Many programs within South Dakota schools conducted by the South Dakota American Legion and other organizations are designed to recognize and benefit the students of these school systems.

However, no program known recognizes the work performed by teachers, not only in assisting our organizations with these programs but more importantly recognizing the contributions made by teachers on a day-in, day-out basis.

Just like veterans, teachers are the unsung heroes of this nation who build our nation's future by working with the youth of today.

The Department Americanism Committee believes the presenting of an *"Educator of the Year"* award within the South Dakota American Legion will serve to strengthen the bonds that exist between The American Legion, the schools of South Dakota, and the administrators and educators of these schools.

It is felt this program will increase the recognition factor and exposure of the South Dakota American Legion within the schools of South Dakota and be beneficial to our efforts in South Dakota schools and for South Dakota youth in years to come.

Program Criteria / Structure

1. The South Dakota American Legion *"Educator of the Year"* Award is open to any educator in grades K-12 in any public, private, or parochial school or academy in the state of South Dakota recognized by the South Dakota Department of Education.

2. The South Dakota American Legion *"Educator of the Year"* Award is open to any educator in any course(s) of instruction.

3. The South Dakota American Legion *"Educator of the Year"* Award is open to every Post in the Department of South Dakota.

4. As established by the Department Americanism Committee the levels of award for this program will be:

   A. Department *"Educator of the Year"*
   B. District *"Educator of the Year"*
   C. Post *"Educator of the Year"*

5. The Department *"Educator of the Year"* will be selected by the Department Scholarship Committee from all 8 District winner nominees and will receive a suitable plaque to be presented at a local venue.

8. It is suggested that each District establish a suitable certificate and/or plaque for presentation to the District *"Educator of the Year"* during their Spring District meeting.

South Dakota American Legion Educator of the Year Award

1. Each **Post** shall select a Chairman whose responsibility will be to provide the District Committee with a suitable and qualified nominee for the award (Grades K-12) during American Education Week in November.

2. The Department shall make an official entry form available to each Post. This form will be the **only** method acceptable for Posts to certify the name and accompanying documentation to the District Chairman. Posts will work with their nominee in completing the nomination entry form. **The nomination entry form with support of the Post nominee must be forwarded to the District Chairman at least 10 days prior to the Spring District Convention.**

3. Each District Commander shall appoint a Committee of not less than three (3) nor more than five (5) members whose responsibility shall be to judge all applications from the Posts in their District and select one (1) who shall represent that District in the Department competition.

4. Each District Chairman shall set his/her deadline for determining the District winner. However, all District winners shall be certified to the Department Headquarters no later than **May 1**.

5. The members of the Department Scholarship Committee will have the responsibility to judge and select from the 8 District candidates one (1) Department *"Educator of the Year"* winner.

6. All nominees for this award must be living, full-time educators within the State of South Dakota.

7. No Department winner may be certified for consideration of *"Educator of the Year"* for successive years.

8. Membership in The American Legion or having the status of veteran shall not be requirements for consideration in qualifying any nominees for this award.

9. The nomination for this Award of any member who sits on this committee shall not jeopardize that member's position on this committee. The nominee shall enjoy the same privileges and responsibilities as all other members.

10. Entry forms provided by the Department shall be used as the sole instrument of certifying a nominee and shall not be used as a basis of accumulating points toward determining a winner. Final judgment shall be made from the documenting materials appearing on the 28 pages of the application package.

11. The American Legion has designated November as American Education Week. It is proper that we select and honor the outstanding educator in the State of South Dakota.

Rules for Determining Department Winner for Educator of the Year Award

1. The District Chairman shall be responsible for the assembly of the District winner's scrapbook album. This may be accomplished by a method of the District Chairman's own choice. *It is suggested that the District Chairman work with the Post from which the selected candidate is from to assemble the scrapbook album

2. The application package, not to exceed 28 pages (not including the official entry form) shall be submitted via PDF format to the District Commander at least 10 days prior to the Spring District Convention.

3. A photograph of the candidate must be submitted. (Prefer a 4x6 full length or waist up photo of candidate).

4. The deadline for certifying District winners to Department Headquarters is **May 1**.

5. The chairman representing the District from whom the Department winner is selected shall be notified by mail.

6. Final judging at the Department shall be by the members of the Scholarship Committee in **May**.

7. The Department winner shall be declared on an accumulation of total points using the following rating system:

SECTION I	Professional Career	(0 to 20 Points)
SECTION II	Community Service	(0 to 15 Points)
SECTION III	Family	(0 to 10 Points)
SECTION IV	Letters of Recognition	(0 to 5 Points)

8. It is the responsibility of the District Chairman to assure the presence of the Department winner at the local venue for a presentation.

9. The Chairman representing the Department winner shall be prepared to provide additional biographical data, if necessary, for a suitable presentation.

10. Each Chairman shall commit their District to the certification of a District winner to the Department by the established deadline. If he/she feels that this cannot be accomplished, he/she shall submit his/her appointment resignation to his/her District Commander.

11. Serving as a District Chairman is an important opportunity to provide leadership and support for this program. You were selected because of your experience and commitment, and your efforts can make a meaningful difference. By staying engaged, meeting the responsibilities of the position, and working closely with your District Commander and local Posts, you can help make the program successful.

12. The District Chairman should not only give minimized reports at District meetings but should make personal contacts with various post officials throughout their District thereby encouraging muti-post participation in this outstanding program.

The American Legion

Department of South Dakota

Educator of the Year Award

Section I	Professional Career	(0 to 20 Points)
Section II	Community Service	(0 to 15 Points)
Section III	Family	(0 to 10 Points)
Section IV	Letters of Recognition	(0 to 5 Points)

South Dakota American Legion
Educator of the Year Award
Judge's Scoring Sheet

Candidate's Name _____

A. **Professional Career** (0 to 18 Points) *Has the candidate exhibited a desire to Improve his/her ability to do their job? Has the candidate received additional Training, certification, served in Leadership positions, etc.?* _____

News Clippings (0 to 2 Points)
Newspaper or magazine articles describing A school / class project / event undertaken by the candidate. _____

B. **Community Service** (0 to 15 Points) *Does the candidate participate in community service activities? This may include membership in service organizations and participation in their service activities.* _____

C. **Family** (0 to 10 Points)
Does the candidate exhibit strong family values? _____

D. **Letter(s) of Recognition** (0 to 5 Points)
Letters of achievement, commendation or Recognition the candidate has received for his/her classroom efforts. _____

TOTAL POINTS _____
(Maximum 50 Points)

Judge's Initials _____

South Dakota American Legion
Educator of the Year Award
Official Entry Form

Name:_____Date:_____

Address: _____

City:_____State_____Zip_____

Telephone ---------- _____

Recommended by: _____

Post #_____District # _____

How long engaged as an Educator? _____

Present position, giving name of city & school: _____

List of previous education experience: _____

_____

Submit a biographical sketch of nominee including education, family, social/service organizations, or other data suitable for the construction of a speech necessary in the performance of presenting the winner's award. (Attach appended sheet)

What makes this candidate an outstanding educator? _____

_____

Has this individual's supervisor been informed of this recommendation? Yes_____No _____

If yes, does he/she concur with the recommendation? Yes_____No _____

If the answer is "yes", please attach a letter of recommendation from the supervisor.

Each Post winner shall have his/her entry data submitted to the District in a PDF Format. Each District winner shall have his/her submission prepared as outlined by the rules presented to each District Chairman. Post submissions should be documented by photos, certificates, news clippings, and other items relating to the nominee's career. Submissions should not exceed 28 pages in length to the District and shall not exceed 28 single pages to the Department.

Judging will be governed by the rules approved by the District Chairman and appended to this entry form.

Attach a small photo of the nominated person.

This recommendation was submitted by _____

Who is from Post #_____District # _____

_____ _____ _____

Post Commander Post Adjutant Post Chairman