

# LOUISIANA TEACHER & PRINCIPAL of the Year

The Louisiana Department of Education is proud to announce the 2025 Teacher and Principal of the Year state-level honorees. These educators are making exceptional gains with students, guiding them to achieve at the highest levels in the state. Their commitment to student success exemplifies Louisiana's teaching profession.

All Teacher and Principal of the Year finalists and semifinalists were honored at the 18th Annual Cecil J. Picard Educator Excellence Gala, which was held at the World War II Museum in New Orleans. This exciting event was co-sponsored by [Dream Teachers](#).

*Congratulations to these outstanding educators!*

## 2025 OVERALL TEACHER OF THE YEAR



*Elise Boutin*  
Acadia Parish

**Elise H. P. Boutin** is a Publications and Senior English teacher at Rayne High School in Acadia Parish. She earned a Bachelor's degree from UL Lafayette, a Master's of Art in Teaching from McNeese State University, and is currently working on a Graduate Certificate in Professional Writing. After 14 years of teaching, Boutin believes that connecting curriculum to experience is the most important aspect of teaching students to become lifelong learners. During her time at Rayne High School, Boutin has revived the *Rayne, Alive!* program--a student-produced YouTube channel. Through this program, students work with reporters and camera crews from several Lafayette news stations. Some have even met celebrities and had them create introductions for episodes. The program has built a culture on campus and helps students to recognize the opportunities that exist on campus and in the area. Boutin also started a Senior Project Fair for students to feature their capstone projects in the areas of Academics, Career, and Community Service where Community members and business owners are able to walk through the fair and meet students. In addition, she connects high school students to community activities through sponsoring the Interact Club, which works in conjunction with the Rayne Rotary Club. Boutin also started a Cross Country team this past year. Runners participated in meets and 5ks and were welcomed by the local running community. Students leave her classroom prepared for their next step and are ready to, "Be a Liver," a lesson that reminds you to do what is right for yourself—even if no one else gets it.

## 2025 OVERALL PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR



*Dr. Amanda Austin*  
Iberville Parish

**Dr. Amanda Austin** is currently serving Iberville Parish as the Director of the Iberville Math, Science, and Arts (MSA) Academy East in St. Gabriel. MSA Academy East is the magnet program of East Iberville High School. With 15 years of experience, her extensive knowledge of STEAM academic and extracurricular programming, in elementary, middle, and high school settings made this position a best fit. Dr. Austin's career in education did not start with her taking the traditional route. She earned a Bachelor's in Sociology with a concentration in Criminology with a minor in African and African American Studies from Louisiana State University, alternative teaching certification and a Master of Arts in Teaching from Louisiana College, as well as gained an endorsement for Educational Leadership from McNeese State University. She also pursued a Doctor of Education degree in Educational Leadership from Lamar University. One of Dr. Austin's proudest professional achievements was being selected as the Principal to reopen North Iberville High School (NIHS) after the school had been shuttered for over a decade. With community support, input from district leadership, and full hiring autonomy, NIHS is a thriving traditional school with a STEM magnet program. With her recent participation in the Louisiana Superintendent's Academy and acceptance into ASCD's Champion in Education cohort, Dr. Austin continuously strives to grow as an instructional leader and expects to lead her school to meet or exceed each student's individual growth target. Through teamwork with all stakeholders, she believes that all students can and will succeed.

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## 2025 TEACHER DIVISION-LEVEL HONOREES



**J. Joy Stalnaker**  
Elementary School – Lafayette Parish



**Christopher Kourvelas**  
Middle School – Bossier Parish



**Dr. Suresh Babu Chiruguru**  
High School - Calcasieu Parish

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## 2025 PRINCIPAL DIVISION-LEVEL HONOREES



**Amanda LaFollette**  
Elementary School – DeSoto Parish



**Dr. Decina Rodriguez**  
Middle School – Lafourche Parish



**Brandon LaGroue**  
High School – Central  
Community School District

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## 2025 TEACHER OF THE YEAR FINALISTS



**Hannah Sanders**  
Claiborne Parish



**Nora McGann**  
Collegiate Academies



**Jessica Marie-Capseta**  
Evangeline Parish



**Jennifer Callender**  
Ouachita Parish



**Annette Blanchard**  
St. Charles Parish

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## 2025 PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR FINALISTS



**S. Chad Schulz**  
Beauregard Parish



**Dr. Shonna Anderson**  
Calcasieu Parish



**Glenda Welch Baylis**  
FirstLine Schools



**Michael Beck**  
Red River Parish



**Jennifer Wilbanks**  
Vernon Parish

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## 2025 TEACHER OF THE YEAR SEMIFINALISTS

**Christian Harrington**  
Allen Parish

**Morgan Green**  
Ascension Parish

**Jodie Territo  
Melancon**  
Avoyelles Parish

**Jazmyne Darby**  
Hynes Charter School

**Racquell Archangel**  
Iberia Parish

**Dawn  
LaFargue-Armelin**  
Jefferson Parish

**Steven Kennedy**  
Morris Jeff  
Community School

**Susan Garsee Shrader**  
Richland Parish

**Christina Dennis  
McCarta**  
St. Bernard Parish

**Rebecca Nguyen**  
St. Mary Parish

**Carra "Beth" Melton**  
St. Tammany Parish

**Jill Williams**  
Tangipahoa Parish

**Leah Gaudet Voisin**  
Terrebonne Parish

**Raven Cole**  
University View Academy

**Adrienne Hodgkins  
Dykes**  
Zachary Community  
School District

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## 2025 PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR SEMIFINALISTS

**R.J. Middleton**  
Caddo Parish

**Dr. Tongelia McCray**  
East Baton Rouge Parish

**Anna Tarver**  
Franklin Parish

**Jennifer Winslett**  
Grant Parish

**Tiffany Curry**  
Lincoln Parish

**Anne Jones**  
Livingston Parish

**Micah Coleman**  
Natchitoches Parish

**Holly Farizo Eiswirth**  
Plaquemines Parish

**Rebecca Warren**  
Rapides Parish

**Donya Tatum**  
Sabine Parish

**Dr. Kara  
Washington Lawson**  
St. John the Baptist  
Parish

**Casey Comeaux**  
St. Landry Parish

**Tiedra Broussard-  
Hawkins**  
St. Martin Parish

**Kelley Stein**  
West Baton Rouge Parish

**Brittney Rosenbach**  
West Feliciana Parish

