



Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year Award Program Timeline

The Louisiana Department of Education in partnership with [Dream Teachers](#), recognizes and celebrates some of the state's most exceptional educators through the Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year programs. These programs provide an opportunity to acknowledge those teachers and leaders who are making exceptional gains with Louisiana's youngest learners. Their commitment to the growth and success of children to enter Kindergarten ready exemplifies Louisiana's teaching profession.

SELECTION PROCESS & TIMELINE

PHASE	TIMELINE	DESCRIPTION
Nominations Portal Open	September 1- October 17, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The nominations portal is open from September 1- October 17, 2025.Upon portal close, the nomination information is shared with Community Network Lead Agencies and Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies.Upon portal close, all nominees will be contacted by the Louisiana Department of Education and will be invited to apply for the Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year award program.
Application Release	October 1, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Department releases Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year application materials for the 2026 school year. Visit the Resources Library and Award's page.
Application support/Office Hours	December 18, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To assist candidates with the application process, informational/help desk calls will be conducted. On these calls, information will be shared about the applications/timeline/process, as well as answering any other questions candidates may have. <p>See call details here: Webinar Date and Time: December 18, 2025 at 10 a.m. Webinar Phone Number: 346-248-7799 Webinar Link: https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/4418921159?omn=92008292670 Meeting ID#: 441 892 1159</p> <p>Webinar Date and Time: December 18, 2025 at 4 p.m. Webinar Phone Number: 346-248-7799 Webinar Link: https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/4418921159?omn=92008292670 Meeting ID#: 441 892 1159</p>
Application Due	January 14, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none">All candidates are invited to complete their application with the assistance of their local Community Network Lead Agency, Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, or other colleagues.All nominees and those who were not nominated are invited to apply for the Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year award program.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By January 14, 2026 at 11:59 p.m., candidates are to submit their application for Early Childhood Teacher and Leader of the Year online via the Google Form Application.
Finalists Announced	March/April 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department names the Teacher and Leader of the Year Finalists.
Finalist Interviews	Spring 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State selection committees (composed of LDOE Executive Team Members) conduct virtual interviews with the Finalists.
Cecil J. Picard Educator Excellence Awards Gala	July 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2026 Teacher and Leader of the Year Finalists will be recognized and celebrated at the <i>20th Annual Cecil J. Picard Educator Excellence Awards Gala</i> that will be held in New Orleans. On this evening overall winners will be named. This exciting event is co-sponsored by Dream Teachers.

Questions- excellenteducators@la.gov or earlychildhood@la.gov.