



Delaware Educational Support Professional of the Year Program

Background and Purpose

In 2018, the Delaware State Educational Support Professional of the Year Program was established under House Bill 134 as amended by House Amendment No. 1 of the 149th General Assembly. In 2019, the Delaware Department of Education drafted Regulation 237 to implement the program and establish policies and procedures for the award. The first state winner will be selected in November 2020 to serve as the 2021 Delaware Educational Support Professional of the Year.

This program requires that each year, every school district recognizes outstanding service by school employees who provide direct or indirect services to students and their families. The Delaware Charter School Network also is invited to participate. These include paraprofessionals, custodial staff, secretaries, nutritional staff and school- and district-employed bus drivers and aides.

From those nominated at a building level, one educational support professional of the year moves forward to represent each district or the charter school community in the state program. The state program will choose one person annually to serve as Delaware Educational Support Professional of the Year.

Eligibility

Nominees should be skillful and dedicated educational support professionals working directly with students. Teachers are not eligible for the Educational Support Professional of the Year Award.

To be eligible as a state nominee, the candidate must:

- Have at least three years' experience as an educational support professional (the experience is not required to be in the same district/school or position);
- Continue to serve in an educational support professional position for the award year.

Individuals named Delaware Educational Support Professional of the Year are not eligible for nomination in a future year.

Individuals who have been recognized as a district or charter network Educational Support Professional of the Year in the previous three years are not eligible for state nomination.

Educational support professionals who have been nominated in prior years but did not achieve at least a district/charter network ranking may be nominated the following year.

Nomination Process

Each school district will nominate one educational support professional employed within one of its school buildings to represent the district each year. Likewise, the Delaware Charter School Network is invited to select one nominee to be selected from any charter school to represent all charter schools. The resulting 20 district/charter school ESP representatives will compete for the statewide ESP of the Year Award.

Local nomination processes are at the determination of the local district or charter network. The state recommends final selection of each school-level and district/charter school-level Educational Support Professional the Year include a broad-based committee representative of educational support professionals, teachers, administrators and families.

The Delaware Department of Education recommends local timelines allow for building-level nominations to be complete by the end of the prior school year with district winners determined by mid-September. The districts/charter network must submit the names of their nominees for the state award to the Delaware Department of Education by September 30. Nominees must submit the state application by October 31. The state winner is announced each November.

Selection

The Delaware Department of Education's Educational Support Professional of the Year Selection Committee will include internal and external members. The committee will review written applications and three letters of recommendation to make a recommendation to the Secretary of Education, who will select the winner. The committee will base its selection on evidence of the following:

- Nominee is an exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable, and skilled ESP;
- Nominee promotes positive, supportive and professional image of ESPs within his/her work site and community.

The applications should include supporting evidence detailing specific incidences that indicate how the nominee meets the criteria and award requirements.

Application and guidelines for submission can be found on the Delaware Department of Education website.

Award, Recognition and Funding

- Each district/charter network winner will receive a \$1,000 personal award from the winner's district or charter school.
- The state winner will receive an additional \$1,500 personal award from the Delaware Department of Education as well as \$2,500 to be used for the educational benefit of his or her students.
- The Secretary of Education or the Secretary of Education's designee will visit the winner's work site to announce the award. Media will be invited to the announcement, which also will be highlighted in department communications.
- Recognition will include a plaque for the statewide ESP.

Complete guidance on the funding and expenditure of Educational Support Professional of the Year Awards is outlined in Regulation 237. The district is responsible for advising their nominee about Regulation 237. Likewise, DOE staff is responsible for advising the State ESP of Regulation 237.