



Instructions for NJASEPS Professional Excellence Awards 2026 Applications

Please read this entire document before submitting an application.

The NJASEPS Professional Excellence Awards honor outstanding educators and support staff in various fields. *This year, we're thrilled to announce that we will be recognizing more teachers, paraprofessionals, and related service providers than ever before!* Along with this exciting expansion, there are updates to award categories, eligibility rules, and changes to the judging process. Please take the time to review these changes carefully, as they will impact both the application and selection process.

Please note: All applications this year will require email addresses for the nominator, the nominee, and the nominee's administrator. To ensure nominees receive all interview-related correspondence, all communications will include all three email addresses.

Nominees selected for an interview must respond by the end of the first week of interviews to schedule an interview time. If no response is received by that time, an interview time slot will not be offered.

Key Dates

- **Application Deadline:** March 6th, 2026
- **Notification Date:** March 16th, 2026 (all applicants will be notified about whether or not they were chosen for an interview)
- **Virtual Interview Dates (if selected to interview):** March 23rd – March 27th 2026 and April 13th- April 17th, 2026 (These dates accommodate potential Spring Break school closures. If your school is closed during the interview window, NJASEPS staff will work with you to schedule accordingly.)
- **Winners Notification:** No later than April 28th, 2026
- **Awards Ceremony:** June 6th, 2025, in East Windsor, New Jersey

New Award Categories

**If the award has a grade level attached, please use your discretion to choose which award fits your staff best.*

Teacher Categories

1. **Early Childhood/Elementary School Teacher of the Year Award** (Preschool - 5th Grade)
2. **Middle School Teacher of the Year Award** (6th to 8th Grade)
3. **High School/Transition Teacher of the Year Award** (9th Grade through Transition)

Paraprofessional Categories

1. **Early Childhood/Elementary School Paraprofessional of the Year Award** (Preschool - 5th Grade)
2. **Middle School Paraprofessional of the Year Award** (6th to 8th Grade)
3. **High School/Transition Paraprofessional of the Year Award** (9th Grade through Transition)

Related Services Categories

1. **Communication and Assistive Technology Services Award**
(Includes staff such as speech/language therapists, hearing education services, sign language interpreters, or assistive technology services staff)
2. **Physical and Sensory Support Services Award**
(Includes occupational therapists, physical therapists, orientation and mobility services staff, or visual education services staff)
3. **Social, Emotional, and Health Support Services Award**
(Includes school psychologists, counselors, school nurses, BCBA's, or social workers)

Award Prizes

A total of **9 awards** will be presented at the Luncheon. Each award winner will receive:

- **Plaque and check for \$500**

How to Apply:

- a) **Apply at this link:** <https://members.asah.org/ap/Form/Fill/pgDY2UWP>
 - Complete the application form before the **March 6th, 2026** deadline. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.
 - **Please submit one application at a time! Each award should have a separate application submitted online.**
 - **Be sure to click “I am ready to submit my nominee's application.” at the bottom of the page to submit each application. This will end the application.**
 - **To submit another application, click on the link again and start over.**
 - Each member can submit one application per category, this would be a total of 9 applicants per member.

Virtual Interviews (If Selected)

If your applicant is selected for an interview, they will be contacted to schedule a **virtual interview** between March 23rd – March 27th 2026 and April 13th- April 17th, 2026. These dates accommodate potential Spring Break school closures. If your school is closed during the interview window, NJASEPS staff will work with you to schedule accordingly.

They will be notified of their interview slot and given instructions on how to prepare.



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Notification of Winners

All winners will be notified no later than **April 28th, 2026**. Please make sure to check your email and phone for any notifications regarding your application status.

We look forward to your applications and appreciate your participation in this exciting opportunity!

*If you have any questions, please reach out to please reach out to Gianna McCloskey, Program Manager
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