Kansas Horizon Award Program

2026 NOMINATION FORM

Postmarked by October 10, 2025

KANSAS HORIZON AWARD PROGRAM 2026 NOMINATION PACKAGE

Contents

[Mission, Nominations, General Qualifications, Selection Process, Recognition and Awards, Professional Development Activity and Time Line 1](#_Toc47682292)

[Mission 1](#_Toc47682293)

[Nominations 1](#_Toc47682294)

[General Qualifications 2](#_Toc47682295)

[Eligibility Criteria 2](#_Toc47682296)

[Selection Process 2](#_Toc47682297)

[Recognition 2](#_Toc47682298)

[Time Line](#_Toc47682299)

[Instructions for Completing the Kansas Horizon Award Program Nomination Form 4](#_Toc47682300)

[2026 Kansas Horizon Award Nomination Form 5](#_Toc47682301)

[Section I: General Information 5](#_Toc47682302)

[School/Building Principal 6](#_Toc47682303)

[School District Superintendent 6](#_Toc47682304)

[Section II: Essay Questions 7](#_Toc47682305)

[Instructional Skills 7](#_Toc47682306)

[Interaction with Students 7](#_Toc47682307)

[Effective Communication 8](#_Toc47682308)

[Building Administrator Recommendation 8](#_Toc47682309)

[Nominee’s Original Essay 8](#_Toc47682310)

[Section III: Letters of Support 9](#_Toc47682311)

# Mission, Nominations, General Qualifications, Selection Process, Recognition and Awards, Professional Development Activity and Timeline

## Mission

The Kansas Horizon Award Program, sponsored by the Kansas State Department of Education, identifies, and recognizes representatives of excellent teaching in the elementary and secondary classrooms of the state. The mission of the program is . . .

To recognize exemplary first-year teachers who perform in a way that distinguishes them as outstanding.

## Nominations

Each school district may nominate **one elementary classroom teacher and/or one secondary classroom teacher** for the Kansas Horizon Award Program.

All teachers should have an equal opportunity to be nominated for and selected as the district nominee. The local nomination and selection process should not be biased nor give the appearance of bias. You may consider getting input from parents, veteran teachers, etc. in making your selection. School principals and superintendents are encouraged to plan recognition ceremonies honoring the exemplary teachers.

Nominations should be made without regard to age, sex, race, or religion.

**Please submit six sets – the original and five copies** – of the completed nomination package must be submitted. All nominations for the 2026 Kansas Horizon Award Program must be postmarked by **Oct. 10, 2025,** to the following address:

Kansas Horizon Award Program

Communications and Recognition Programs

Landon State Office Building

900 SW Jackson Street, Suite 102

Topeka, KS 66612

**Nominations postmarked after October 10 will not be accepted – no exceptions.**

## General Qualifications

The Horizon Award nomination is available to any novice teacher meeting all other requirements on any license type with the exceptions of emergency substitute and standard substitute licenses, which do not qualify. Teachers who are completing an alternative route and teaching under a pre-standard license (still in the process of completing the professional education or preservice program) are eligible to be nominated. Applications should be postmarked by October 10 of **their second year of teaching**, and recognition will occur in February of their second year.

## Eligibility Criteria

* Nominee will have successfully completed his or her first year of teaching in a pre-kindergarten through grade 12 Kansas school accredited by the Kansas State Board of Education.
* Nominee will be a full-time classroom teacher.
* Nominee will be responsible for the assessment of students, assignment of grades, preparation of lesson plans, parent-teacher conferences, discipline, attendance, and other daily educational tasks.
* Nominee will have performed in a way that distinguishes him or her from other novice teachers.
* Nominee will be selected by the school district superintendent and building principal.

## Selection Process

The Kansas Horizon Award Program is a regional competition. The regions correspond to the state’s four U.S. congressional districts.

The Kansas State Department of Education will appoint regional selection committees responsible for reviewing the nomination forms and selecting up to four elementary classroom teachers and four secondary classroom teachers per region for a total of thirty-two teachers.

## Recognition

The possible thirty-two teachers, four elementary classroom teachers and four secondary classroom teachers from each region, will be individually recognized during a luncheon at the Kansas Exemplary Educators Network (KEEN) conference in Topeka on Feb. 20, 2026. Also, they will be invited to participate as special guests in the two-day KEEN conference. The conference will take place in Topeka on Feb. 19-20, 2026.

## Timeline

| DATE | ITEM |
| --- | --- |
| August 2025 | Nomination forms are available on the KSDE website ([https://www.ksde.org](https://www.ksde.org/)) |
| October 10, 2025 | Postmark date for submitting 2026 award nominations to the Kansas State Department of Education. |
| November 2025 | Selection committee members will review and score nominations. |
| December 2025 | The Kansas State Department of Education will tabulate the results and check references. |
| January 2026 | Recipients and nominees will be notified. |
| February 20, 2026 | Recipients recognized at KEEN conference. |

# Instructions for Completing the Kansas Horizon Award Program Nomination Form

* The nominee must meet the general qualifications for the Kansas Horizon Award Program as outlined in this nomination package.
* All information requested in the nomination form must be provided.
* Signatures of the nominee, the nominee’s principal, and the nominee’s district superintendent (chief school administrator) MUST be provided.
* Responses must be:
  + **Limited to the number of pages requested in each section.**
  + Type size must be **no smaller than 12 point**.
  + **Margins must be at least one inch** at the top, bottom, and sides.
* Section I (pages 1-2) must be submitted on the form provided.
* Section II, **the essay topic** (i.e., Instructional Skills, Interaction with Students, etc.) **must appear at the top of each page**.
* Section III, include **three letters of support** from any of the following: professors, cooperating teachers, administrators, colleagues, parents, or students.
* The nomination should be stapled in the upper left corner. **Do not include a cover** **page.**
* **Submit original form and support documents along with five additional copies.**
* In order to provide all nominees with an equal opportunity, **applicants must adhere to all the instructions outlined in the packet.**
* The nomination **must be postmarked by Oct 10, 2025**, to the following address.

Kansas Horizon Award Program

Communications and Recognition Programs

Landon State Office Building

900 SW Jackson Street, Suite 102

Topeka, KS 66612

# 2026 Kansas Horizon Award Nomination Form

## **SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION**

Nominee name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Home address: Click or tap here to enter text.

City: Click or tap here to enter text. State: Click or tap here to enter text.

Zip code: Click or tap here to enter text.

USD #: 000. USD name: Click or tap here to enter text.

School email address: Click or tap here to enter text.

Home email address: Click or tap here to enter text.

School Profile (check one):

 

Number of Students in Nominee’s:

District :Click or tap here to enter text. Building: Click or tap here to enter text.

Major Subject Area (if any): Click or tap here to enter text.

Grade Level: Click or tap here to enter text.

I hereby give my permission that any or all of the attached materials may be shared with persons interested in promoting the Kansas Horizon Award Program. I meet the general qualifications for the award program as outlined in the nomination package.

Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

Signature of nominee

### School/Building Principal

Name: Click or tap here to enter text. Title: Click or tap here to enter text.

School name: Click or tap here to enter text.

School address: Click or tap here to enter text.

City: Click or tap here to enter text. State: Click or tap here to enter text.

Zip code: Click or tap here to enter text.

Telephone: Click or tap here to enter text. Email: Click or tap here to enter text.

I acknowledge that the nominee meets the general qualifications for the Kansas Horizon Award as outlined in the nomination package and submits this nomination with my approval.

Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

Signature of principal

### School District Superintendent

Name: Click or tap here to enter text. Title: Click or tap here to enter text.

School district name and #: Click or tap here to enter text.

District address: Click or tap here to enter text.

City: Click or tap here to enter text. State: Click or tap here to enter text.

Zip code: Click or tap here to enter text.

Telephone: Click or tap here to enter text. Email: Click or tap here to enter text.

I acknowledge that the nominee meets the general qualifications for the Kansas Horizon Award as outlined in the nomination package and submits this nomination with my approval.

Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

Signature of superintendent

## 

## **SECTION II: ESSAY QUESTIONS**

**Essay topic** (i.e., Instructional Skills, Interaction with Students, etc.) not the question, **must appear at the top of each page.**

### Instructional Skills

**Nominee’s Performance in First Year of Teaching**

The response to this question must be completed by the nominee. It must be no more than one typed page, double spaced and using no smaller than 12 pt. type. The essay topic **must** appear at the top of the page.

Question - What instructional strategies are you using in your classroom?

Please be specific. Describe how you use these strategies by giving examples and stating results that were achieved. Be sure the information provided is relevant to this section.

### Interaction with Students

**Nominee’s Performance in First Year of Teaching**

The response to this question may be completed by a school system administrator, professional colleague, parent, or student. It must be no more than one typed page, double spaced and using no smaller than 12 pt. type. The essay topic must appear at the top of the page. Please sign and give your title at the bottom of the page.

Question - As compared with other 1st year teachers you have known, please describe how this teacher motivates and inspires students.

Please be specific. Describe how the teacher met these standards by giving examples and stating results, where appropriate, that were achieved. Be sure the information provided is relevant to this section.

### Effective Communication

**Nominee’s Performance in First Year of Teaching**

The response to this question may be completed by a school system administrator, professional colleague, parent, or student. It must be no more than one typed page, double spaced and using no smaller than 12 pt. type. The essay topic **must** appear at the top of the page. **Please sign and give your title at the bottom of the page.**

Question - As compared with other 1st year teachers you have known, please describe how this teacher effectively communicates with parents.

Please be specific. Describe how the teacher met these standards by giving examples and stating results, where appropriate, that were achieved. Be sure the information provided is relevant to this section.

### Building Administrator Recommendation

**Nominee’s Performance in First Year of Teaching**

This page must be completed by a school system administrator. It must be no more than one typed page, double spaced and using no smaller than 12 pt. type. The essay topic must appear at the top of the page. Please sign and give your title at the bottom of the page.

Question - What is it that distinguishes your teacher as most outstanding?

Please be specific. Describe how the teacher met these standards by giving examples and stating results, where appropriate, that were achieved. Be sure the information provided is relevant to this section.

### Nominee’s Original Essay

**Nominee’s Performance in First Year of Teaching**

This page must be completed by the nominee, and it must be no more than one typed page, double spaced and using no smaller than 12 pt. type. The essay topic must appear at the top of the page.

Question - After successfully completing your first year of teaching, what advice would you give a beginning teacher?

## 

## **SECTION III: LETTERS OF SUPPORT**

Include **three** letters of support from among the following:

* Professors
* Cooperating teachers
* Administrators
* Colleagues
* Parents
* Students.

The letters should be no more than one typed page, single spaced using no smaller than 12 pt. type.

**Letters should be included in the completed packet. They should not be mailed separately.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Should you have questions regarding the nomination process or this form, please contact:  Tamla Miller  Public Service Administrator  Communications and Recognition Programs  (785) 296-4950  tamla.miller@ksde.gov | Logo Kansans Can | Kansas State Department of Education  900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 102  Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212  (785) 296-3201  www.ksde.gov |

The Kansas State Board of Education does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to any group officially affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America and other designated youth groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: KSDE General Counsel, Office of General Counsel, KSDE, Landon State Office Building, 900 S.W. Jackson, Suite 102, Topeka, KS 66612, (785) 296-3201.