



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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State Superintendent of Education

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**ALABAMA TEACHER OF THE YEAR ANNOUNCED –
SPANISH FORT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL’S
ELIZABETH EUBANKS VON HOFE
SELECTED STATE’S 2026-2027 TOP EDUCATOR**
*“Selma High School Secondary Teacher Eshwaa Godfrey Named
Alternate State Teacher of the Year”*

Montgomery, Ala. – A special event was held at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival in Montgomery this evening and the Alabama State Board of Education officially announced this year’s Alabama Teacher of the Year and Alternate State Teacher of the Year. This exciting event narrowed the list of finalists to the state’s top two educators.

Elizabeth Eubanks Von Hofe who teaches at Spanish Fort Elementary School in the Baldwin County School System has been named the 2026-2027 Alabama Teacher of the Year (TOY). She will serve as the state’s official ambassador for public education and the teaching profession. As a highly skilled and exceptional educator, she inspires students and families in her community to achieve.



Alabama Teacher of the Year Elizabeth Eubanks Von Hofe is the daughter of two outstanding Limestone County educators. She earned dual bachelor degrees in Business and Church Vocations from Martin Methodist College. She then earned a Master of Business Administration from The University of Alabama. Von Hofe worked for more than a decade as a successful licensed administrator in the highly competitive nursing home industry.

Alabama Teacher of the Year Elizabeth Eubanks Von Hofe discovered she wanted to impact students through education and mentorship. She stepped away from her successful healthcare career to focus on service to her local community. She accepted an inspiring teaching position and taught a diverse group of students. She balanced her time between her active career and parenting her own children and was determined to ensure all students had opportunities to receive a great education.

One local parent said, “Mrs. Von Hofe is such a supportive presence for families and an advocate for inclusive practices for all students. Her dedication extends well beyond her classroom, and she consistently models leadership through service.”

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Alabama Teacher of the Year 2026-2027

Von Hofe also earned a master's degree in Collaborative Education to become National Board Certified during her third year of teaching. Today, she is a well-rounded educator, IEP Chair, and teacher mentor.

“One of the most meaningful initiatives during my career has been serving as my school's Project Outreach Gulf Coast chapter sponsor,” said Von Hofe. “This initiative is a dynamic school and community partnership designed to foster inclusion, empathy, and belonging for students with significant disabilities. As a special education teacher, I recognize the need to create truly authentic opportunities for all students.”



Selma High School Teacher Eshwaa Godfrey was also named Alabama's Alternate State Teacher of the Year. This school is located in the Selma City School System.

Alabama Alternate State Teacher of the Year Eshwaa Godfrey is an exceptional educator. He teaches Anatomy and Physiology and is widely recognized throughout the state for his dedication, authenticity, and genuine commitment to student success.

Born in Syracuse, New York, he moved to Alabama and graduated from Georgiana High School. He grew up in a single parent household. His mother did not have an opportunity to complete her high school education. Despite hardships, he went on to earn a college degree. This was a great example of perseverance for his family.

As a student at Georgiana High School, Eshwaa Godfrey was mentored by a group of exceptional teachers. Their positive influence sparked his aspirations to become a teacher. This profession has allowed him the same opportunity to guide, mentor, and encourage individuals throughout his community. Today, he dedicates his time to creating an engaging classroom environment where all students feel supported and empowered. He works intentionally to build strong relationships and cultivate a space where academic growth and personal confidence can thrive.

Godfrey believes deeply in the ability of education to transform lives. “I ensure students are connected to the world around them by helping them recognize their personal value and the possibilities that education can open,” said Alabama Alternate State Teacher of the Year Eshwaa Godfrey.

A current Selma High School student recently said, “I can personally say that my leadership journey has been transformed because of Mr. Godfrey. He is a teacher who sees potential in every student and helps bring it to life. His influence will continue to shape student leaders for years to come. I can think of no one more deserving of this award.”

Dr. Eric G. Mackey, State Superintendent of Education said it is exciting to recognize both of these outstanding educators. “Alabama Teacher of the Year Elizabeth Eubanks Von Hofe and Alternate State Teacher of the Year Eshwaa Godfrey clearly represent the highest levels of professionalism,” said Mackey. “Both are outstanding educators. They exemplify classroom excellence and have dedicated their careers to inspiring our future generations. We are thankful for their commitment to excellence and unwavering focus on preparing all students for a lifetime of success.”

Alabama Teacher of the Year 2026-2027

The Alabama Teacher of the Year Program is one of our state's oldest and most esteemed awards programs. This year's finalists have been selected from a group of over 150 highly skilled educators. The Alabama Teacher of the Year spends the school year serving as an official spokesperson for education and the teaching profession statewide. The selected Teacher of the Year also represents Alabama for the National Teacher of the Year Award.

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