



**UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 9a.m. EDT
APRIL 3, 2024**

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Tennessee English as a Second Language Teacher Named 2024 National Teacher of the Year

Washington, D.C. (April 3, 2024) – The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) today announced [Missy Testerman](#), a kindergarten through eighth grade English as a second language (ESL) teacher, as the 2024 National Teacher of the Year.

Testerman served as a first and second grade teacher at Rogersville City School in Rogersville, Tennessee, for three decades before taking advantage of the state’s Grow Your Own initiative and adding an ESL endorsement three years ago. She currently works as an ESL specialist at Rogersville City School, where she teaches K-8 students who do not speak English as their first language and supports them in all academic areas. A staunch advocate for students, teachers and families, Testerman prioritizes instruction that ensures her students have the skills and knowledge necessary to achieve. She knows families are extensions of the classroom and often advocates for her families who speak little English.

In her rural Appalachian community, Testerman builds bridges between cultures – families who have been in the area for centuries and newer immigrants – through a curriculum focused on a study of Americans from diverse backgrounds, allowing students to better understand that people are inherently the same and that they all belong. As Tennessee’s State Teacher of the Year, she forged partnerships with East Tennessee State University and the University of Tennessee to encourage pre-service teachers and give authentic feedback to university leaders about their educator preparation programs.

As the 2024 National Teacher of the Year, Testerman will spend a year representing educators and serving as an ambassador for students and teachers across the nation. She plans to spend her year of service empowering teachers to advocate for students and fellow educators by using their voices and sharing their experiences with those outside of the classroom. Testerman believes strongly in teachers embracing their roles as education experts to build bridges and inform decision-makers of today’s classroom experiences to meet the needs of all students.

“There is often a misconception in education that we can love kids into achievement. Make no mistake: Loving and caring for our students is important, but it is not enough. If we love them, we must teach them in a way that gives them the skills they need and allows them to meet high expectations and have a future. Teachers know and understand this,” Testerman said. “Classrooms across the country are led by passionate and talented teachers who have the power to use their voices to speak for the voiceless – our students. I’m honored to have the opportunity as National Teacher of the Year to uplift the voices of my students and my fellow educators.”

CCSSO's [National Teacher of the Year Program](#) identifies exceptional teachers across the country, recognizes their effective work in the classroom, engages them in a year of professional learning, and amplifies their voices.

“Elevating the positive impact teachers like Missy are having on students throughout classrooms nationwide is at the heart of the National Teacher of the Year program, which CCSSO is proud to have supported for over 70 years. Missy knows and understands that all children can learn and succeed. I look forward to supporting her over the next year as she shares her passion and voice across the country,” said CCSSO Chief Executive Officer Carissa Moffat Miller. “State education leaders value the hard work and dedication of classroom teachers every day, and it is critical that we come together to celebrate their successes.”

Each year, states, U.S. extra-state territories, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Education Activity select outstanding educators to serve as State Teachers of the Year. From that group, the National Teacher of the Year is chosen by a [Selection Committee](#) composed of 16 individuals and education organizations.

The Selection Committee said in a statement, “With a rallying call to action for her fellow teachers, Missy’s message of advocating for inclusivity and success for all students meets the moment we’re in as a country. We believe her knowledge of both the issues and the people involved in education policy and practice will lead to better outcomes for students, and we know Missy’s voice will resonate with every teacher she meets as she serves as the 2024 National Teacher of the Year.”

“The commitment and dedication Missy has shown in serving her students and community throughout her career as an educator is truly inspiring,” Tennessee Commissioner of Education Lizzette Reynolds said. “She’s a leader, an advocate and a mentor in the great state of Tennessee, and we’re thrilled to see her now elevated as a model of great teaching for the country.”

The National Teacher of the Year Program appreciates the generous support of partners Google for Education, Pearson, AIR, Equitable, Cambium Assessments, Curriculum Associates, Data Recognition Corporation, ETS, MetaMetrics, Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation, Maxwell Leadership Foundation, NWEA, Smarter Balanced, and Voya.

The finalists for the 2024 National Teacher of the Year included Catherine Walker (Alaska), Christy Todd (Georgia) and Joe Nappi (New Jersey.) You can read more about the finalists [here](#).

Learn more about Missy Testerman, including her biography and photos, at <https://ntoy.ccsso.org/>.

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The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, Bureau of Indian Education, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public.