

WE REWARD OUTSTANDING SCIENCE TEACHERS

The Texas Medical Association encourages you to apply for an Excellence in Science Teaching Award by completing the following requirements and the mandatory supporting materials. Highlight your energy and enthusiasm for science through creative and innovative methods!

Applications to the TMA Ernest and Sarah Butler Awards for Excellence in Science Teaching must be submitted online and contain the following:

EDUCATIONAL HISTORY AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

(include dates)

- College, university, and post-graduate study, with degrees earned;
- Teaching employment history, with grade levels and subject areas;
- Professional association memberships, including leadership positions, and other relevant activities;
- Continuing education completed during the past two years (identify those required by the district);
- Science-related professional development sessions presented (e.g., collaborative efforts with colleagues) and attended during the past two years (identify those required by the district);
- Awards and other recognition;
- Grants received; and
- Involvement outside the classroom such as before- and after-school tutoring, extracurricular programs, and guidance of students' independent research experiences.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Provide signed letters of support that reflect your teaching skills, leadership, and cultivation of student interest/understanding of science. **Letters must include examples to demonstrate science teaching excellence, and should come from each of the following:**

- Principal, vice principal, or area superintendent;
- On-campus colleague (teacher or peer); and
- Student or parent (current or former).

PROFESSIONAL ESSAY

(1,500-word maximum that addresses prompts below)

- Describe your passions and beliefs about teaching, and how they have shaped your teaching philosophy. (Approx. 300 words)
- Explain what makes you an outstanding science teacher and how you demonstrate your beliefs about teaching in your teaching style. Include a personalized science-related classroom lesson and your assessment of its effectiveness. (Approx. 700 words)
- Provide lesson plan outcomes. How do you gauge what your students know and what they need to know next? (Approx. 500 words)

PORTFOLIO/SUPPORTING MATERIALS

(Limit the portfolio to a reasonable length and make sure links work. Max individual file size: 20 MB)

Submit supporting materials that best demonstrate your science knowledge, exemplify your teaching, and display how you engage your students. We want to understand how you teach, so be specific. These items **must** contain a:

- One-page narrative explaining your portfolio items, with items listed in sequential order; and
- High-quality, focused lesson plan you developed within the past two years in one of these formats: PowerPoint, lab or field investigations, or a video not exceeding five minutes.

Applications and submitted materials become the property of TMA. If you receive an award, TMA reserves the right to reproduce information/photos/other content from your application in promotional materials and on the TMA website.

Winning teachers and their schools receive generous cash prizes!

APPLICATION DEADLINE: JAN. 4, 2026

texmed.org/Teachers • SciTeacherAward@texmed.org



Physicians Caring for Texans



Ernest and Sarah Butler Awards
for Excellence in Science Teaching
Physicians Caring for Texans

ERNEST AND SARAH BUTLER AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN SCIENCE TEACHING

SCORING RUBRIC

JUDGE NAME: _____

NAME OF TEACHER: _____

NAME OF SCHOOL: _____

CATEGORY: ☐ K-5 ☐ 6-8 ☐ 9-12

EDUCATIONAL HISTORY AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Evaluation Criteria	Exceptional	Highly Effective	Acceptable	Poor	Score
Consistent pursuit of formal continuing education and/or related avenues.	3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points	
Evidence of involvement in community programs related to science education that goes beyond the call of duty.	3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points	
Description of professional activities including association affiliations, awards and recognition, and leadership endeavors.	3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points	
COMMENTS					

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Evaluation Criteria	Exceptional	Highly Effective	Acceptable	Poor	Score
Cultivation of student interest and understanding of science.	3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points	
Demonstrated leadership that impacts science education beyond the classroom.	3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points	
Community involvement that distinguishes the candidate from their peers.	3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points	
Examples of excellence as related to science.	3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points	
COMMENTS					

PROFESSIONAL ESSAYS

Evaluation Criteria	Exceptional	Highly Effective	Acceptable	Poor	Score
Demonstrates a passion for teaching and learning.	5 points	3 points	1 point	0 points	
Expresses a desire to impact the lives of students by helping them find their potential.	3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points	
Examples of "excellence in science teaching" include your assessment of (1) instructional plan, (2) lesson plan, and (3) student outcome.	5 points	3 points	1 point	0 points	
Stimulates students' interest in and understanding of science.	3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points	
Challenges students' problem-solving skills and invites them to actively participate; involves more than regurgitation of facts. Demonstrates how the applicant gauges what students know and what they still need to learn.	5 points	3 points	1 point	0 points	
COMMENTS					

PORTFOLIO/SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Applicants were required to provide supporting materials that exemplify their philosophy of teaching and demonstrate how they engage students in the classroom.

Evaluation Criteria	Exceptional	Highly Effective	Acceptable	Poor	Score
Shows knowledge of science content.	6 points	4 points	2 points	0 points	
Explains how the applicant exemplifies a creative and innovative approach to teaching.	5 points	3 points	1 point	0 points	
Quality of lesson plan addresses scientific standards.	5 points	3 points	1 point	0 points	
Demonstrates student engagement and student work product.	4 points	3 points	2 points	0 points	
COMMENTS					

TOTAL SCORE: _____
(62 POINTS MAX)