

2021 Presidential Cybersecurity Education Award

Rules, Terms, and Conditions

What is the Presidential Cybersecurity Education Award?

The Presidential Cybersecurity Education Award is bestowed by the United States Secretary of Education (Secretary) on educators in the field of cybersecurity to honor their contribution to the education of our nation's students.

The award is presented annually to two educators—one at the elementary level, and one at the secondary level—who demonstrate superior achievement in instilling skills, knowledge, and passion with respect to cybersecurity and cybersecurity-related subjects. The award recognizes demonstrated superior educator accomplishment as well as academic achievement by the educator's students.

Educators from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools are eligible to apply or be nominated.

Award recipients embody the expertise and dedication of educators who are critical to increasing the cybersecurity awareness of all students, inspiring the nation's future cybersecurity workforce, and contributing to a more secure society. The award was established by Executive Order 13870 on May 2, 2019¹, and is led by the U.S. Department of Education (Department), in consultation with the White House National Security Council's Deputy Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism and the National Science Foundation.

Why Apply?

The Administration and Secretary are committed to enhancing the cybersecurity workforce and recognizing the cybersecurity educators who serve a critical role in the development of America's future cybersecurity professionals. The United States Government also recognizes the challenges and successes educators face daily in the highly technical field of cybersecurity education. Therefore, this award is intended to highlight the accomplishments of two educators by providing recognition, such as:

- A certificate signed by the Secretary;
- Public recognition as a leader in the field of cybersecurity education;
- The opportunity to write for *Homeroom*, the Department's official blog; and
- Attendance at additional events, as appropriate, which may include professional development opportunities, discussions with policymakers on how to improve cybersecurity education, and opportunities to build lasting partnerships with colleagues across the nation.²

¹ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/05/09/2019-09750/americas-cybersecurity-workforce>

² Subject to change due to the availability of staff time, and appropriations, or both.

Eligibility

Educator applicants and nominees must:

- Be an “educator” as defined in this announcement;
- Instill in their students skills, knowledge, and passion with respect to cybersecurity or cybersecurity-related subjects, increase students’ awareness of cybersecurity issues, and encourage their students to explore further education and careers in cybersecurity or cybersecurity-related subjects as part of their teaching responsibilities at a public or private “elementary school” or “secondary school,” as defined in this announcement;
- Be a full-time employee of the elementary school or secondary school, or school district, as determined by state and school district policies;
- Teach in one of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or the DoDEA schools;
- Be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident; and
- Have not received this award before.

Definitions

- Elementary school – The term “elementary school” means a nonprofit institutional day or residential school, including a public elementary charter school or tribal school, that includes any grades from kindergarten up to, and including, grade 8, as determined under State law.³ Schools serving students with special needs are also a part of this definition.
- Secondary school – The term “secondary school” means a nonprofit institutional day or residential school, including a public secondary charter school or tribal school, that provides secondary education, as determined under State law, except that the term does not include any education beyond grade 12.⁴
- Cybersecurity or cybersecurity-related subjects – The term “cybersecurity” means measures that focus on protecting computers, networks, and information from unauthorized access or attacks.⁵ Examples include, but are not limited to, the following: cyber-literacy, computer science, coding, cyber-operations, cyber-science, cyber-society, cryptography, data loss prevention and encryption, forensics, malware detection, system administration, software development and protection, web nomination exploitation, computer networks and security, information sciences and technology, information security, reverse engineering, password protection, social or systems engineering, defensive hacking, and security intelligence. Please note: “cyber-bullying” does not fall under this definition.
- Educator – The term “educator” means an individual who is employed in a public or private elementary school or secondary school, and who is responsible for educating students on cybersecurity or cybersecurity-related subjects, including, but not limited to, classroom teachers, Information Technology (IT) specialists, librarian specialists, media specialists, instructional coaches, and administrators.

³ Section 8101(19) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), 20 U.S.C. 7801(19);

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oii/nonpublic/esearchauth.pdf>

⁴ Section 8101(45) of the ESEA, 20 U.S.C. 7801(45);

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oii/nonpublic/esearchauth.pdf>

⁵ [https://niccs.us-](https://niccs.us-cert.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/teachers_guide_to_engaging_students_in_cybersecurity.pdf?trackDocs=teachers_guide_to_engaging_students_in_cybersecurity.pdf)

[cert.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/teachers_guide_to_engaging_students_in_cybersecurity.pdf?trackDocs=teachers_guide_to_engaging_students_in_cybersecurity.pdf](https://niccs.us-cert.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/teachers_guide_to_engaging_students_in_cybersecurity.pdf?trackDocs=teachers_guide_to_engaging_students_in_cybersecurity.pdf)

- Superior educator accomplishment – The term “superior educator accomplishment” means an educator’s evidence of conducting teaching and learning about cybersecurity or cybersecurity-related subjects at an increasing level of complexity over the last five years with demonstrated exceptional outcomes. Examples of such accomplishment include, but are not limited to, demonstrated evidence that the educator has, over the last five years, (1) taught the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education (NICE) Cybersecurity Workforce Framework⁶; (2) increased cybersecurity career awareness; (3) infused cybersecurity across the educational portfolio; (4) integrated innovative cybersecurity educational approaches; (5) developed work-based learning and training through an educator-employer partnership or consortia; (6) designed academic and/or career pathways aligned to the NICE Framework and the multi-part definition of career pathways from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act⁷; (7) started a successful cyber program, club, competition team, or mentoring program; (8) attended professional development workshops; (9) attended a cyber camp; (10) earned an industry-valued credential or certification in a cybersecurity or cybersecurity-related subject; and (11) scaled or repeated the cybersecurity intervention (e.g., lesson, partnership, etc.) across the school district, state, or country.
- Academic achievement – The term “academic achievement,” with respect to an educator’s students, means the increased knowledge, skills, and abilities of the students in cybersecurity or cybersecurity-related subjects. Examples include, but are not limited to, (1) high grades; (2) a concentration in a Career Technical Education (CTE) cybersecurity program of study⁸; (3) passage of performance-based cybersecurity assessments; (4) participation in a cybersecurity work-based learning opportunity via an internship, apprenticeship, or other employment; (5) an industry-valued credential (including trade or degree) in cybersecurity; (6) military placement; or (7) involvement and significant placement in student cybersecurity competitions, such as <https://www.uscyberpatriot.org/>.

The Awards Process: Overview

Nomination Process

- The information provided by either nominators or educators themselves (self-nominations) is completely voluntary. Anyone, including principals or other administrators; educators; parents; students; state and local educational agency staff; federal, state, and local elected officials; and the public may nominate exceptional individuals who teach, promote, or inform students about cybersecurity or cybersecurity-related subjects in a public or private elementary or secondary school.

To submit a nomination, the following information is required:

- Educator’s name
- Level of education taught (Elementary or Secondary)

Work information required:

- Educator’s state
- Educator’s city
- Educator’s work name (school, school district, or facility)
- Educator’s work email address

⁶ <https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/SpecialPublications/NIST.SP.800-181.pdf>

⁷ <https://community.lincs.ed.gov/document/workforce-innovation-and-opportunity-act-career-pathways-definition>

⁸ www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/2353

- Educator’s work contact number
- Nominator’s work email address and phone number (for nominations that come from someone besides the educator (e.g. principal nominating an educator))
- Narrative paragraphs that describe, with respect to the nominated educator, (1) superior educator accomplishment (as defined in this announcement) and (2) academic achievement (as defined in this announcement) by the educator’s students. Narrative paragraphs should not exceed 500 words each for 1 and 2 above and may include a weblink or a video that showcases accomplishments (a weblink or video is not required). In addition to 1 and 2 above and in accordance with the 2018 Federal STEM Education five-year strategic plan, *Charting A Course For Success: America’s Strategy For STEM Education*⁹, please include in the narrative responses how the educator has accomplished (if applicable) the following: (1) Built strong foundations for cybersecurity literacy; (2) Increased diversity, equity, and inclusion in cybersecurity; and (3) Prepared the cybersecurity workforce for the future.
- One letter of reference from a principal, school district superintendent, or general reference (e.g., a parent, local industry leader, community leader, etc. with whom the educator has worked) with work contact email and phone number. Should the nomination be a top candidate, then Department reviewers will contact the reference to verify the following with respect to the nominated educator: (1) superior educator accomplishment; (2) academic achievement by the educator’s students; and (3) that the educator is in good standing (e.g., not on probation; has received positive yearly reviews; etc.).

Nominations may be submitted by the same individual or entity for more than one educator as separate nominations.

Nominations should be submitted to CyberAwards@ed.gov. Once a nomination is submitted, an automated email response will be generated from the Department to confirm receipt to the person who submitted the nomination. Therefore, educators who are nominated by someone else will not be notified unless they are chosen to receive the Presidential Cybersecurity Education Award.

The nomination period is expected to close on January 31, 2021 at 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

Instructions to Nominators

Eligibility will be confirmed by Department reviewers. Incomplete nominations will be considered ineligible. Nominators are requested to provide evidence in a narrative not to exceed 500 words that describes the nominee’s superior educator accomplishment and academic achievement (as defined in this announcement). Documents will be accepted in Microsoft Word or Adobe Portable Document (.pdf) file formats. Please include the educator’s name, educator’s contact information, and page numbers on each page of the nomination. If the nomination is being prepared by someone other than the nominee, it is encouraged that the nominator work with the nominee to complete the nomination to ensure that the information is reported accurately.

The award is focused on those who demonstrate their abilities teaching students in a variety of environments (classroom, co-curricular, after-school programs, work-based learning, etc.), not on those who are cybersecurity practitioners. The Executive Order directs the Department to focus on demonstrated teaching accomplishments, and not consider the educator’s “research, scholarship, or technology development.” Therefore, there is no requirement that information about an educator’s “research, scholarship, or technology development” be included in the nomination, and such information will not be considered during review and selection. Thus, it is advised that nominations not include such information.

⁹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/STEM-Education-Strategic-Plan-2018.pdf>

Review Criteria

Each nomination will be evaluated based on the entirety of the document submitted. The following criteria will be used during the review of nominations:

- The extent to which the educator demonstrates evidence of superior educator accomplishment related to teaching about cybersecurity and cybersecurity-related subjects;
- The extent to which the educator substantiates teaching effectiveness using external indicators of academic achievement as defined in this announcement; and
- The extent to which the educator's leadership contributes to educational excellence at the school, district, state, and/or national level.

Selection

All nominations will be subjected to the following review process:

- Once the nomination period has ended, the Department will review the nominations for eligibility and assign all eligible nominations for review by Department staff with expertise in cybersecurity or cybersecurity-related education.
- Copies of each eligible nomination will be provided to reviewers for the selection of awardees. Staff will maintain strict confidentiality when reviewing nominations and notify the Awards Coordinator should any conflicts of interest arise.
- The reviewers will then provide their recommendation for one elementary and one secondary educator awardee to the Secretary. The Department will review and vet the awardees. The Department will notify the awardees of their selection using the contact information provided in the nomination.

Questions or Technical Assistance

Please contact CyberAwards@ed.gov.

Authority

The Secretary of Education is responsible for administering the Presidential Cybersecurity Education Award, which is authorized under Executive Order 13870.

Privacy Act Statement: The Department's authority to ask for this information is Executive Order 13870 issued on May 2, 2019. The information provided is voluntary. The main purpose for the information is to make awards. Should nominations not provide the information requested, nominations may be deemed ineligible. The routine use disclosures which may be made of the information will be published in a Systems of Records Notice (SORN) in the Federal Register. The Department will be able to disclose information from this SORN for certain enumerated purposes to specific users without the nominees' or awardees' prior written consent pursuant to such routine use disclosures. The routine use disclosures are expected to include disclosures to references listed in applications and nominations in order to permit the Department to determine that applicants and nominees meet the criteria for the Presidential Cybersecurity Education Award, to the general public to announce the awardees, to the media to announce the awardees and to respond to inquiries about them, to government officials to notify them of the awardees in their States or districts, to assist with preparing congratulatory letters, certificates, or other honors, or to schedule events and office visits, to state and local education official to inform them of awardees in their states, districts, or schools, to White House or other Federal agencies for speechwriting and briefings of officials who will be

addressing the awardees at events or to obtain needed security clearances at such events, to individuals and entities, such as vendors, in preparation for the awards ceremony or related educational and celebratory activities, to the Department's contractors as needed to carry out any function of the Department, to members of Congress in response to an inquiry made at the nominee's or awardee's written request, to the Department of Justice to obtain advice, to the Department of Justice, parties, counsel, representatives, witnesses, courts, or other adjudicative authorities as relevant and necessary to administrative or judicial litigation, to appropriate parties and entities to respond to a breach of data, to researchers to carry out research on the purposes and functions of the system of records, to law enforcement officials if information in the system of records on its face or in connection with other information indicates that there has been a violation of statute, regulation, or order, and to the Department of Justice or the Office of Management and Budget if the Department concludes that disclosure is desirable or necessary in determining whether particular records are required to be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act or the Privacy Act.