



Golden Apple

Facts and Background

Golden Apple Awards and Academy of Educators

Golden Apple's Awards for Excellence in Teaching have recognized 10 outstanding Chicago-area educators annually since 1986. While other organizations bestow awards on teachers in K-12 education, the Golden Apple Awards go beyond teacher recognition, rewarding teachers with opportunities for renewal and leveraging their award-winning ideas and experience to benefit the profession.

How are teachers selected?

Golden Apple accepts nominations each fall. Anyone may nominate an eligible teacher but teachers may not nominate themselves. Eligible teachers must be full-time classroom teachers at public or non-public schools in Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, or Will counties and be committed to continue teaching in Illinois for at least two subsequent years. Awards focus on a rotating group of grade levels (Pre-K - 3, 4 - 8, and 9 - 12). In 2008, Awards recognized educators of students in grades 4 - 8.

Distinguished teachers, administrators, and former Golden Apple Award winners serve on Golden Apple's selection committee. Committee members apply rigorous criteria to identify teachers who exemplify the highest standards and practices of the teaching profession. The selection process includes classroom observations of all Award finalists and interviews with colleagues, supervisors, students, and parents.

What do they receive?

Each Golden Apple Award winner receives a tuition-free, six-month sabbatical to study at Northwestern University. Each winner also receives a laptop computer and a \$3,000 cash award. Perhaps most importantly, Award-winning teachers become Fellows of the Golden Apple Academy of Educators, providing them a stronger voice and a larger stage from which to make an impact.

What does the Golden Apple Academy do?

The Golden Apple Academy:

- Creates and participates in Golden Apple programs, including teaching and mentoring future outstanding educators through the Golden Apple Scholars program
- Develops and shares transformative teaching practices —Innovations based on successful classroom experience
- Responds to local and national requests for expertise
- Forges alliances with compatible organizations

Individually, Academy members have published books, been named principals of schools, and served on blue-ribbon committees in education. They have conducted research in places as distant as Antarctica and returned to share insights on meaningful topics like Polar Science with other teachers. They have

demonstrated teaching at its highest levels of quality, inspiring future teachers who have gone on to win Golden Apple Awards themselves.

Quick Facts

- More than 240 teachers in Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, and Will counties have earned Golden Apple Awards since the program's inception. In addition, a cohort of 10 teachers from Central Illinois was inducted into the Academy in 2008.
- The Awards selection committee chose the most recent 10 winners from more than 850 nominees — a clear indication of the credibility, desirability, and stature of the award. Chicago's public television station WTTW televises the annual Awards ceremony.
- In addition to the Award winners, Golden Apple in 2007 began recognizing a select number of Teachers of Distinction—award finalists whose superior teaching work merits special acknowledgement.
- Golden Apple Academy members have directly helped more than 5,000 Illinois teachers to become more effective in the classroom and indirectly helped tens of thousands of others.
- The 250 currently active Academy members have more than 2,000 collective years of teaching experience.