# GOLDEN APPLE AWARD PORTFOLIO

## 2026-2027

The Golden Apple Teacher Recognition Program honors outstanding teachers, who upon induction into the Golden Apple Teacher Academy, will:

- Promote an awareness of educational excellence in their school district and encourage a partnership between the schools and the community,
- Recognize and support best practices in teaching,
- Mentor the next generation of educators, and
- Promote learning as a lifelong process

A nominated, certified PreK-5th grade teacher with:

- A minimum of **five years** of full-time teaching experience
- Currently teaching full-time in a public school or ISBE recognized non-public school in **Winnebago or Boone County**
- Employed in **good standing** within current school district

***PROCESS:***

- Complete portfolio packet & submit to the Golden Apple office by **5 p.m. Monday, Nov. 30, 2026.**
- Type or print clearly. If using a computer or word processor, you may use your own paper, but only use the amount of space and size of paper provided on the application.
- Complete four required components of the **Portfolio Packet:**
  - **A. Background Information-**Include the most relevant information for this process.
  - **B. Self-Reflective Essay-**Submit no more than five double spaced, typed pages with no smaller than font size 11. *Do not* state your school's name in the essay. *Do not staple* your portfolio materials. If using page numbers, *do not* place page numbers in the upper or lower right-hand corners of any pages. ***Provide in-depth insight, including specific illustrative examples in these areas; however, please do not include school logos or photographs. This essay is an opportunity for you to reflect on your career as an educator. Only a teacher can help others understand the deep commitment necessary in educating students.The essay allows our selection committee to understand the importance of the work you do as a teacher and helps the Golden Apple Foundation promote to the community the true significance of the education profession.Please use these as headings:***
    1) **Commitment** you have made as an educator and how it has affected your students.
    2) How you **challenge, monitor and manage student learning** to ensure that all students reach high standards and expectations.
    3) Ways you **involve families** in the education process**.**
    4) How you address **diversity in your classroom** and with your students**.**
    5) How you **collaborate** with other educators to increase student achievement.

    The committee uses the above criteria when reviewing your portfolio.
  - **C. Letters of Recommendation-**Provide **two** letters of recommendation. Be sure at least one is from an educator familiar with your classroom teaching. Each person sending a recommendation letter must include his/her name, address and relationship to the applicant on ***non-letterhead stationery***.
  - **D. Authorization-**Attest to authorization and eligibility criteria with signature.

***SEND COMPLETE PORTFOLIO PACKET TO:***

Golden Apple Foundation
5301 E. State St., Suite 114, Rockford, IL 61108
Email: info@goldenappleofrockford.com

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## ***BACKGROUND INFORMATION:***

**PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE:**

Name:_____

Home Address:_____

City:_____ State:_____ ZIP: _____

Home Phone:_____ Cell Phone:_____

Personal E-mail: _____ School E-mail:_____

School:_____

School Address:_____

City:_____ State:_____ Zip:_____

School Phone:_____School Fax: _____

Principal's Name:_____

**AUTHORIZATION AND ATTESTATION**

I affirm that all thoughts and information contained in this portfolio are my own, based on my personal experiences, and not derived from others' work or generated by artificial intelligence. I authorize the Golden Apple Foundation to use the information provided herein as part of the selection process. I also confirm that I meet all eligibility criteria outlined in this portfolio.

☐ By checking this box, I attest that all information provided is accurate and solely my own.

***For questions or more information, please feel free to contact the Golden Apple Foundation office.***

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***Current Grade Level/Subjects*:_____**

***Years at Present School:_____***

***Prior Grade Levels/Subjects Taught*** ***Years***

_____

_____

_____

**Total Years Teaching Experience**:_____

| DEGREE | MAJOR | COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY | DATE DEGREE AWARDED |
|---|---|---|---|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

***Professional Recognition and Honors:*** _____

_____

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***Relevant Professional Development within the past 5 years:(not necessary to list all courses)***

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***School Related Activities/Responsibilities***:_____

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***Community Involvement:*** _____

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***AWARDS PROCESS:***

- Complete portfolio packet, including background information, essay, and two letters of recommendation.
- Submit to the Golden Apple Foundation office by 5 p.m. Monday, Nov. 30, 2026
- **Selection committee reviews and evaluates portfolios (with teacher identifying information omitted) based on:**
    1) Background Information-page 3
    2) In-depth insight provided into the required areas of the essay using **specific examples**.
    3) Well-organized, well-written, grammatically correct essays.
    4) Two supporting letters of recommendation.
- 20 semi-finalists selected for classroom observations by Thursday, Dec. 17, 2026.
- Community volunteers observe and evaluate 20 finalist teachers in their classrooms between Jan. 19 and Feb. 17, 2027.
- Interviews conducted of 20 finalists Saturday, Feb. 13, 2027. In-person attendance is required.
- Golden Apple awards presented to five teachers in surprise classroom visits Thursday, March 4, 2027.
- **Golden Apple Recipients and Finalists** will be honored at the Golden Apple Excellence in Education Banquet Friday, April 23, 2027, at the Tebala Event Center.

***AWARDS FOR 5 GOLDEN APPLE RECIPIENTS:***

- Inscribed Golden Apple
- Membership in the Golden Apple Teacher Academy
- Ticket for you and a guest to attend the Golden Apple Banquet
- Recognition at the Golden Apple Awards Banquet
- Recognition on billboards
- Cash award
- Computer (latptop, tablet or chromebook)
- Professional development stipend
- Rockford University scholarship

## SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

**___ Golden Apple Portfolio Packet**

- **___ Completed Background Information Form**
- **___ Self-Reflective Essay**
- **___ Two letters of recommendation**
- **___ Signed Authorization**
- **___ Teacher Schedule***

***If your schedule varies depending on the week, please submit a copy of a calendar for the time frame we'll be doing observations so we know when it is an A-week, B-Week, etc.***

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## TEACHER SCHEDULE

Name:_____ School:_____ School day start and end times: _____

Provide a detailed schedule for a typical week during the observation period. Note lunch periods, break or planning time, and class beginning and ending times. *

| Class Hour & Times Room # | **Monday** | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday** | **Thursday** | **Friday** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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**Please complete both sides of this form. Include with portfolio packet.**

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## TEACHER SCHEDULE

Name:_____ School:_____ School day start and end times: _____

Provide a detailed schedule for a typical week during the observation period. Note lunch periods, break or planning time, and class beginning and ending times. *

**1. Provide an explanation of any special events or conflicts that can be predicted in your schedule during the observation period. Include date, time and event(s).**

**2. Provide an explanation of any special situations that may exist in your classroom that would assist observers in their understanding of your teaching responsibility. This may include special students, inclusion students, team-teaching situations, or the use of parent volunteers.**

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