

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**HB Section(s):** 2.215

**Teacher of the Year**

**Program is found in the following core budget(s):** Teacher of the Year

**1a. What strategic priority does this program address?**

Educator Recruitment and Retention

**1b. What does this program do?**

The major purpose of the Teacher of the Year program is to reward classroom teachers for their contributions to Missouri students through public recognition, an awards banquet, cash awards and donated gifts. Teacher quality and effectiveness is the most important school-based factor impacting student learning. No one person has a greater impact on the education of a child than does the teacher who creates the learning environment where children flourish and grow. The mission of the Missouri Teacher of the Year Program is to honor, promote and celebrate excellence in the teaching profession.

Districts participating in the Teacher of the Year Program have found the program to have a positive impact on the entire community. Recognizing outstanding teachers: a) establishes a culture that rewards excellence in teaching; b) validates the work of teachers; c) provides teachers with a platform to speak about educational issues; d) gives students a sense of pride in their teachers; e) showcases teachers as positive role models; f) encourages students to think about teaching as a career; g) gives the community a sense of pride in its teachers; and h) helps to get the public involved and invested in the schools.

Beginning with the 2015-2016 year, the department added a Regional Teacher of the Year recognition level to the Missouri State Teacher of the Year Program. Through this addition, the program was able to recognize excellence in teaching at the school, district, regional and state levels. In addition, this fulfills the following goals: First, design a plan to recognize exemplary teachers from diverse educational communities (i.e. urban, suburban, rural) and second, provide a structure and protocol for identifying and recognizing exemplary performance statewide.

**2a. Provide an activity measure(s) for the program.**

The Teacher of the Year program is available to all Missouri school districts and charter schools with approximately 69,000 teachers statewide. The addition of the regional program and nomination process is allowing more districts and charter schools to actively participate by removing the barrier of requiring a formal district process. Prior to 2017, the majority of our applicants represented only three regions of the state found along the I-70 corridor (St. Louis, Kansas City, and Heart of Missouri). As more districts are seeing the value and want to actively participate and have their district represented regionally, this is changing. DESE now has representation from every region.

*See Chart on Next Page:*

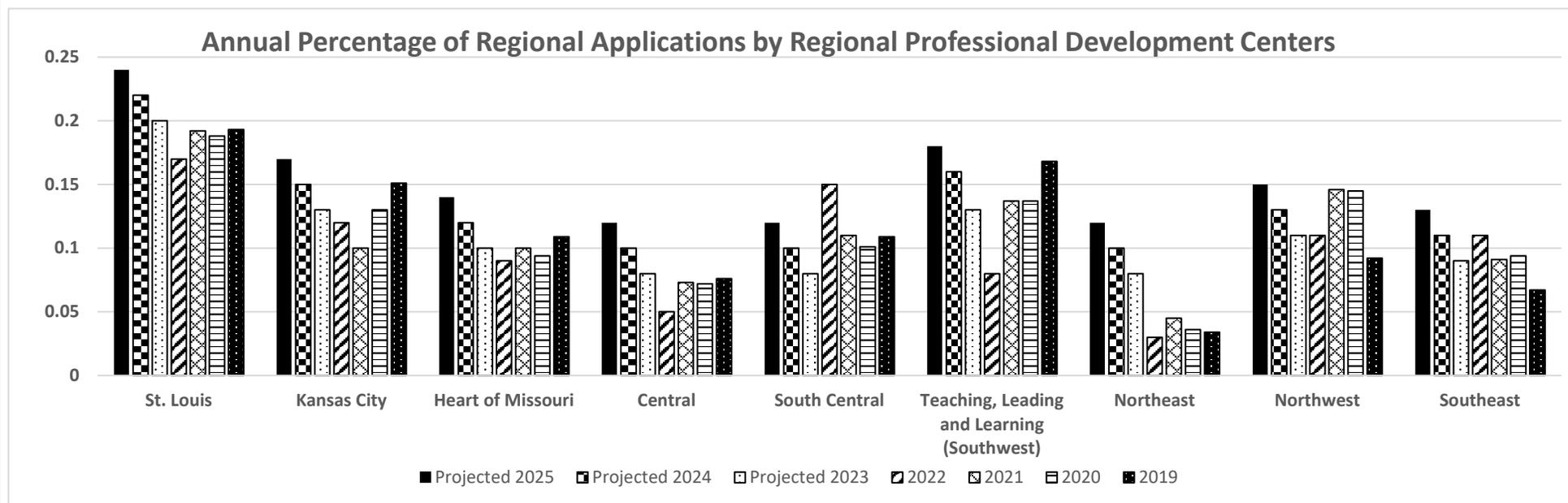
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**2b. Provide a measure(s) of the program's quality.**

The response received via nominations and district recommendations indicates that the department's customers feel that the addition of the Regional Teacher of the Year Program is highly successful. It speaks to the quality of the program when an implementation of another strategy allows a greater number of teachers to be recognized and rewarded. The number of statewide applications typically received prior to the advent of the nominations and Regional Program was between 35 and 40 statewide. Since 2017, with the implementation of the Regional Program, the nominations have significantly increased along with the quality of the applicants. For the FY 2022 cycle, DESE received 431 nominations, the highest ever submitted. In addition, this has allowed us to meet an ever growing demand by our districts, educator prep programs, and education associations for the service of the State Teacher of the Year by mobilizing semifinalists, finalists, and regional Teachers of the Year. Teachers in this program are taking leadership roles in their districts, serving on state committees and associations, presenting at both state and national conferences, as well as advocating for teaching as a career. Leveraging these recognized teachers allows Missouri to better meet the needs of our students.

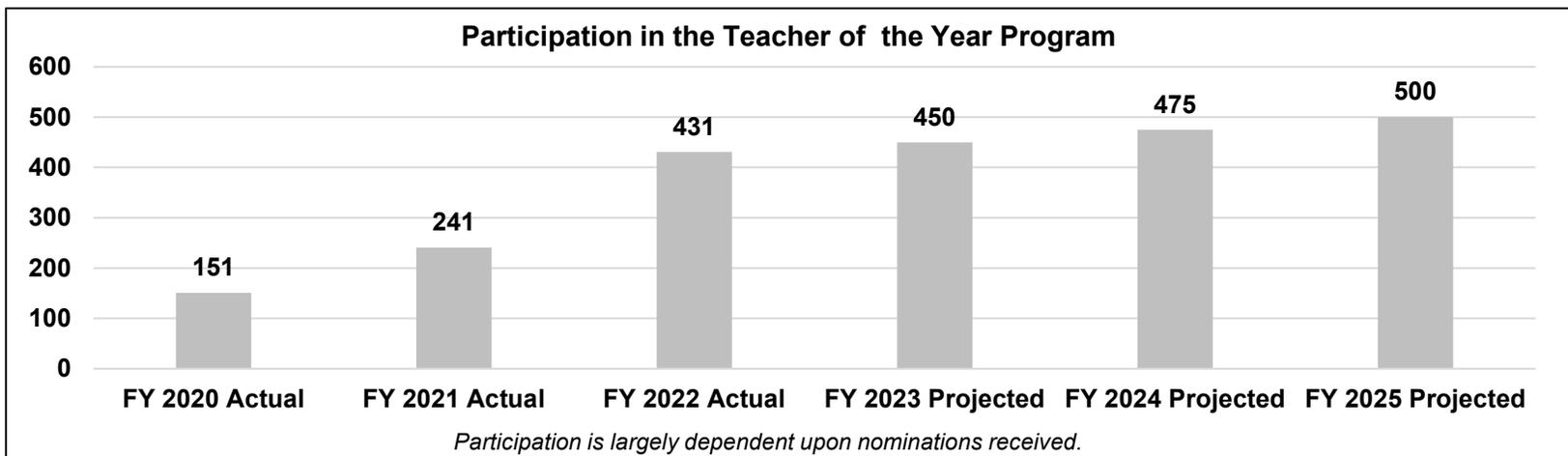
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2c.

In 2017, the Office of Educator Quality within the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education implemented the Regional Teacher of the Year recognition process as an intermediary step to the Missouri State Teacher of the Year Program. Many of the state’s smaller districts and charter schools do not have a formal process in place to select a district Teacher of the Year and were unable to participate. Prior to 2017, only between 35 to 40 districts typically participated. Implementing the Regional Teacher of the Year process with two paths to the Missouri State Teacher of the Year (district selected teacher and nomination process), enabled all districts to participate through the nomination path. Each district is allowed to either self- select a District Teacher of the Year or nominate one teacher per district or charter school for Regional Teacher of the Year. Due to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 and the districts increasing understanding of the importance of recognizing highly qualified teachers, 209 districts received nominations. Grant funding is used to recognize and reward these great teachers through Regional Teacher of the Year Banquets, the State Teacher of the Year Awards Banquet, cash awards and other donated gifts. In addition, the program supports best practice sharing across the state, working with pre-service teachers, advocating for public education as a career choice, and showcasing highly effective teachers.

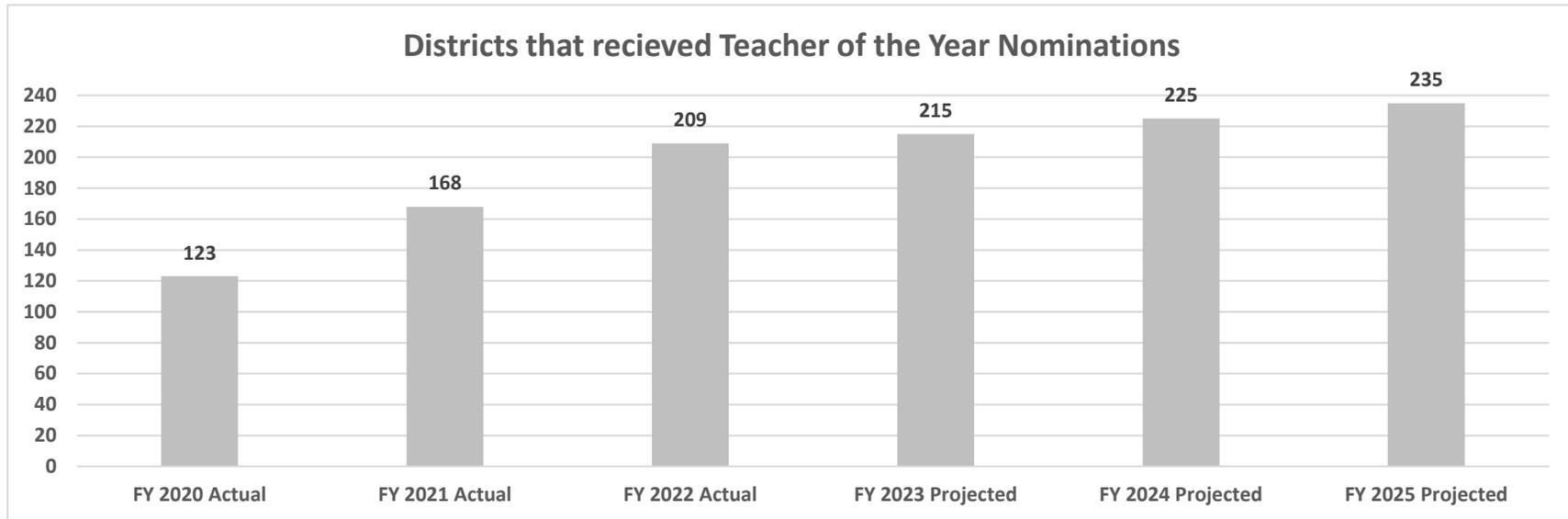
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**2d. Provide a measure(s) of the program's efficiency.**

Through the implementation of the two-pronged approach to the Regional Teacher of the year Program, the program is now able to recognize and reward three times as many highly effective teachers across the state than in previous years. Regional applications are read and scored by regional teams and selections are made at the regional level. In addition, teachers are recognized regionally with celebrations and the regional centers are able to utilize these highly effective teachers in their respective regions. Now, each region of the state has candidates competing for Missouri State Teacher of the Year and the number of teachers being recognized regionally will continue to grow as more districts become aware of the nomination process.

The State Teacher of the Year Selection Committee reads and scores the state applications that are submitted from the 34 Regional Teachers of the Year. This has greatly streamlined the state process and also ensures that the state applications are of the highest quality. This process has been in place since 2017. In addition, all 34 Regional Teachers of the Year, along with their district superintendent, building principal, school board president and his or her significant other, are recognized at the state level awards banquet. This program not only recognizes the work of great teachers but the wonderful districts that support them.

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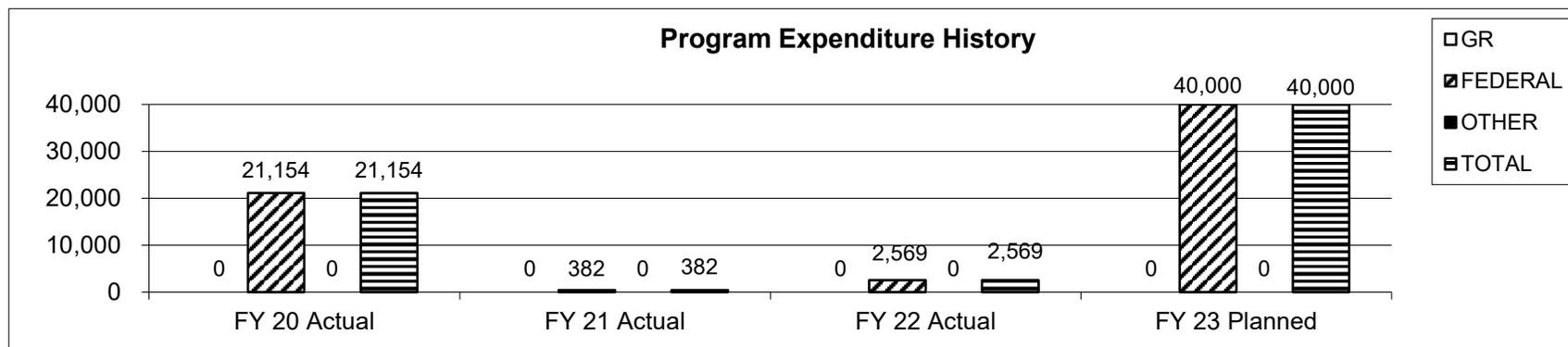
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**2d. Continued**

The implementation of the Regional Teacher of the Year Program allows better service at all districts and charter schools by creating a model that allows participation from all. Recognizing the needs of the districts served and working hard to eliminate any roadblocks that hinder participation will allow the program to continue to grow, be more effective and efficient at the state level, and more equitable statewide. Ultimately, it allows the program to honor many more hard working and highly effective teachers across the state.

**3. Provide actual expenditures for the prior three fiscal years and planned expenditures for the current fiscal year. (Note: Amounts do not include fringe benefit costs.)**



*Note: DESE continues to look for potential funders to support this event.*

**4. What are the sources of the "Other" funds?**

N/A

**5. What is the authorization for this program, i.e., federal or state statute, etc.? (Include the federal program number, if applicable.)**

House Bill 2 - Section 2.215

**6. Are there federal matching requirements? If yes, please explain.**

N/A

**7. Is this a federally mandated program? If yes, please explain.**

N/A