

Ascension Parish Students of the Year (SOY) Guideline

Revised, December 2015

Welcome to the Ascension Student of the Year Awards Program for 5th, 8th, and 12th grade students. Below you will find all of the information you need to participate in this school and district level competition. *Please note that the Louisiana State Guidelines are used each year to guide our local processes.*

The current link for the state guidelines is:

<https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/awards/2015-2016-student-of-the-year-logistics-memo.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

Student Selection Information at the School Level

Parents must be notified that the selection process is occurring at each school and must be made aware of the qualifications and guidelines for selection. Each student who is a potential candidate will receive the guidelines as well as the grievance process to bring home and must sign acknowledging receipt of these.

A. GUIDELINES FOR ASCENSION PARISH SCHOOL LEVEL SOY COMPETITION

1. QUALIFICATIONS

At a minimum, candidates for Student of the Year must have a cumulative Average (GPA) of 3.5 on a four-point scale. The GPA for 5th and 8th is calculated on final grades from the last two years and 1st 9 weeks grades for the current year and for the 12th, the cumulative high school GPA is used.

Grade 5 Candidates: Grades 3, 4, and 5

Grade 8 Candidates: Grades 6, 7 and 8

Grade 12 Candidates: Grades 9, 10, 11 and 12

2. GENERAL PROCEDURES

- Each fall, upon receipt of the deadline for school level competitions from the district SOY coordinator, the principal at each school will select a SOY Chairperson and a SOY Committee.
- **School committees must be diverse in membership and representative of the population of the school. School level Chairpersons and Committee members will follow all guidelines as outlined, and will score all parts, using the same rubrics as the district.**
- The SOY Chairperson should then gather GPA's for all 5th, 8th, or 12th graders who have a minimum GPA of 3.5. *Those who qualify with a 3.5 or higher are given the link to the current student of the year application, guidelines and grievance process. The application is available electronically and it is simple to complete by a certain deadline. Only the students who choose to bring back the completed application by the deadline are considered eligible to move on in the competition. From the names of the students returned, schools make a ballot of all the students that qualify.*
- Each teacher in grades 3, 4, and 5 for 5th; 6, 7, and 8 for 8th; and 9th-12th for 12th are able to vote on a designated day. They are allowed up to 5 votes each.
- When the deadline for voting arrives, the SOY committee will tally the votes and look for the natural cut off in the number of votes in order to decide which students will advance to the full school level competition.
- At that point, those students who qualify to advance will receive a letter to sign for and bring home congratulating them on being selected as a Student of the Year Candidate. The letter will include general guidelines and expectations and will explain important information about the portfolio and the day/time for the tie-breaker essay and interviews that will be completed at the school level by the school level SOY committee.

- Each person on the school SOY committee will score GPAs, test scores and student portfolios using the provided rubrics. Each committee member should be present during each of the interviews. Committee members will be responsible for making students feel comfortable, asking questions and taking notes during the interview, and then using the provided rubric to score each student. Once the interview process is complete, the committee will tally all scores from the cumulative GPAs, test scores, portfolio and interview for each student to determine the school level Student of the Year who will, in turn, become a candidate for district level competition. (Uniformity and commitment from all members is VIP at this point, so each student can experience the process the same.)

3. APPLICATION PORTFOLIO AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Once the school level candidates have been selected, it is the responsibility of the school building level SOY committee to assist the school level winner in submitting an application portfolio of information to the parish Student Achievement Selection Committee following the timelines provided.

The candidate for district SOY's academic portfolio will be used as part of the selection criteria by the local as well as the regional and state Student Achievement Selection Committees, if the opportunity presents itself. **The portfolio must include information that is relevant and pertinent to the areas listed below. Parents must sign an authorization for release of pertinent information relative to the program.**

School to District Submission Requirements

Application Portfolio Components:

- The student data application/ release form signed by the parent
- A biographical sketch which may be typed or hand-written
This initial writing sample includes information such as family history, interests, career aspirations, etc.

The students should be encouraged to address at least three or more issues that are important to them and that have had an influence on their lives. At the fifth grade level, teachers may wish to pose specific questions for the students to address. In addition to the initial writing sample (biographical narrative) submitted in the process folio, Ascension Parish students are asked to complete tie- breaker essays at the district level. At the district level, they will only be scored in the event of a tie. A rubric will be used for tie-breaker scoring.

- The portfolio must be in a binder no larger than 11.5 X 11 inches, and it shall not exceed twenty-five pages and should address only the items in the application.
- One page can be both back and front and a sleeve with pages front and back counts as one page.
- Information submitted must be no smaller than 12 point font.
- Points shall be deducted from the student's overall score if the portfolio exceeds twenty-five pages or if the documentation is presented in a font smaller than 12 point.
- A photocopy of your cumulative record card or high school transcript, current semester grades, and a copy of your current and previous statewide assessment scores and/or ACT, PSAT, or SAT scores
- Evidence of the student's leadership ability, participation in activities, citizenship, and service involvement must be submitted on the application forms provided.
- A copy of all supporting documents should be retained at the local level.
- Nothing can be added to nor removed from the portfolio that has been submitted to the district student achievement selection committee.
- Excessively decorated or over-sized portfolios are not encouraged.

District Submission to Region for (1) 5th, 8th, and 12th Grade SOY

- A complete portfolio

Regional Submission to State for Regional Winners

- A complete portfolio
- The regional writing sample (a short, grade-appropriate composition)
Interview
- Students will be interviewed at the regional and state levels.

B. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES FOR ASCENSION PARISH SOY COMPETITION

The Ascension Parish School System wants this opportunity to be rewarding for each Student of the Year candidate. We have worked to establish guidelines to make the process not only run smoothly but to be objective and fair to each student participating. We also work hard at keeping the lines of communication open throughout the process, and we encourage input to make the process better.

In the event that a student, parent or other person feels that the process has not been fair or objective, we want to make sure that these individuals have an opportunity to communicate this and to be addressed accordingly.

1. Complaints Initiating at the School Level SOY Competition:

In the event that there are issues that arise and/or disputes related to the selection of candidates or the way the process was carried out, each individual case with concerns will be initially investigated at the school level by the principal of the school.

- a. The principal will practice due diligence when investigating the matter and will call on the SOY committee members, teachers, student, parents, etc. for support in these efforts. The findings from the investigation will be presented to the person(s) registering the complaint(s) and appropriate actions, if necessary, will be taken. The principal of the school will inform his or her Director that an investigation is underway.
- b. If the person registering the complaint(s) is not satisfied with the actions at the school level, he or she may request to have his or her complaint(s) addressed at the district level. At this level, the appropriate level Director, along with the District SOY Coordinator, will investigate the complaint(s), make a decision, inform the person(s) registering the complaint(s), and take appropriate actions if necessary.

- c. If the person registering the complaint(s) is still not satisfied with the actions at the district level, he or she may request to have his or her complaint(s) brought to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will investigate the complaint(s), make a decision, inform the person(s) registering the complaint(s), and take the appropriate action if necessary. The Superintendent's decision is final.

2. Complaints Initiating at the District Level SOY Competition:

In the event that there are issues that arise and/or disputes related to the selection of candidates or the way the process was carried out, each individual case with concerns will be initially investigated at the district level by the District SOY Coordinator.

- a. The District SOY Coordinator will practice due diligence when investigating the matter and will call on the District SOY committee members, student, parents, etc. for support in these efforts. The findings from the investigation will be presented to the person(s) registering the complaint(s) and appropriate actions, if necessary, will be taken. The District SOY Coordinator will inform the appropriate level Director that an investigation is underway.
- b. If the person registering the complaint(s) is not satisfied with the actions of the District SOY Coordinator, he or she may request to have his or her complaint(s) addressed further at the district level by the level Director. At this level, the Director, along with the District SOY Coordinator, will investigate the complaint(s), make a decision, inform the person(s) registering the complaint(s), and take appropriate actions if necessary.
- c. If the person registering the complaint(s) is still not satisfied with the actions at the district level, he or she may request to have his or her complaint(s) brought to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will investigate the complaint(s), make a decision, inform the person(s) registering the complaint(s), and take the appropriate action if necessary. The Superintendent's decision is final.