



LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

DORAL LEADERSHIP INSIGHT

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Doral College Corner

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Teacher of the Year 2026!

Every year, DLI makes a point to celebrate the outstanding educators and staff members that stood out this past school year. Read all about the Teachers and Staff of the year below!



Click here for the full article!

Click here to check out our DLI website for certification updates, upcoming PDs and employment opportunities at <https://www.doralleadership.org/>

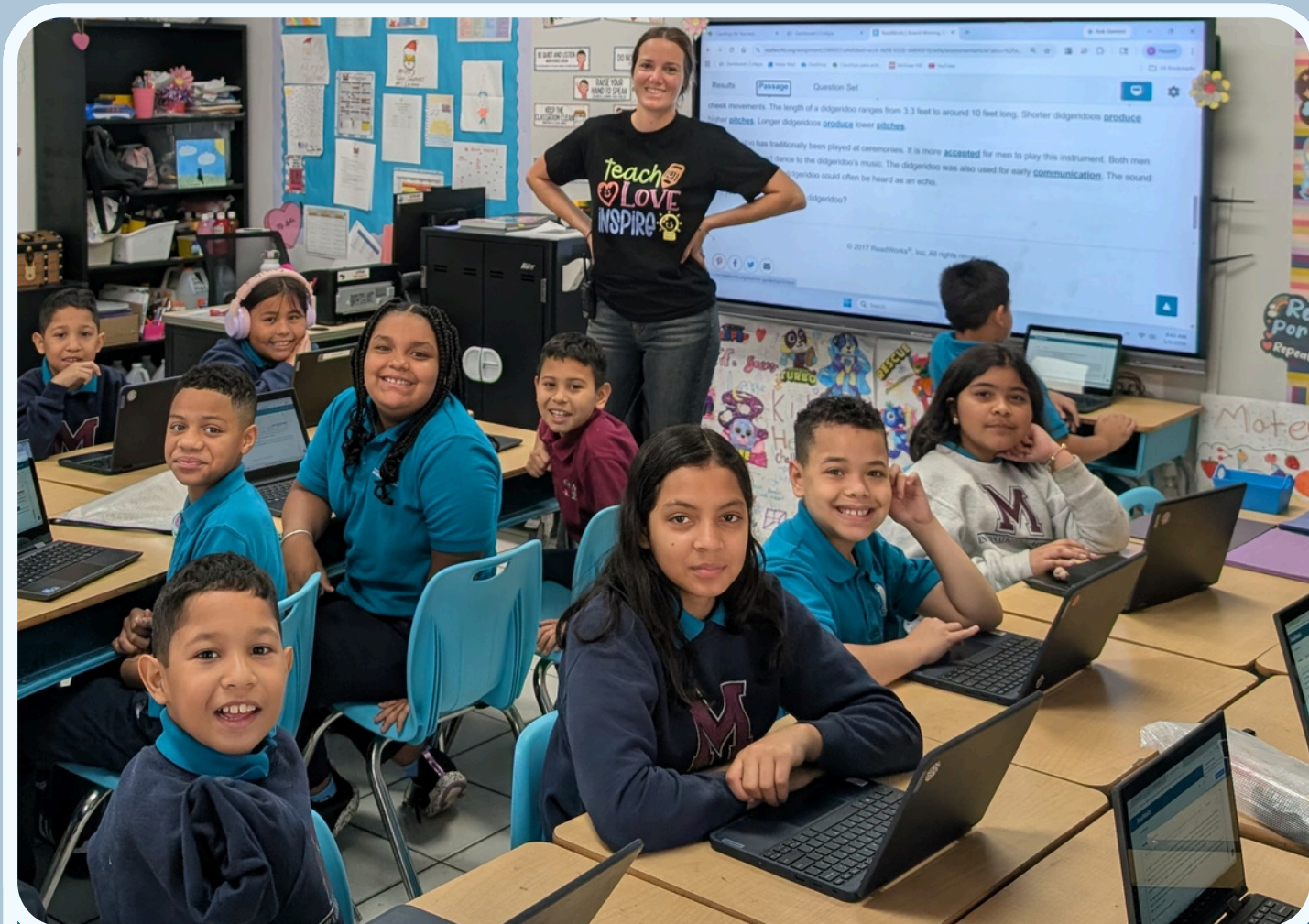
What it takes to be Teacher of the Year!

Across grades, subjects, and counties, the 2026 Teacher of the Year finalists share a powerful message: exceptional teaching isn't about doing one big thing—it's about doing many small things consistently well, and never doing them alone. From kindergarten to high school, civics to chemistry, PE to music, these educators describe a remarkably consistent picture of what it takes to reach a Teacher of the Year level of excellence.

These teachers see themselves as lifelong learners; They never stop growing. These are the teachers that stay current with research, strategies, and tools. They seek out professional development, conferences, and collaboration with experts like scientists, engineers, and community partners. Most importantly, these are the teachers that reflect and adjust: when something isn't working for students, they change it.

"Even now, working with others continues to give me new ideas and push me to grow, helping me better support my students."

*-Anthony Lucas, Mater Academy Narcoossee,
7th/Civics and High School/U.S. History*



**Veronica Lastra, Mater International Academy,
2nd to 5th-Spanish, art, music and P.E.**



**Alexa Rodriguez, Mater Academy Narcoossee,
1st Grade-All Subjects**



**Rachel Cloos, Mater Brickell Academy Middle School,
6th and 7th Grade Math**

"Teaching is always evolving, and to be effective, we have to keep learning and growing right along with our students. Collaborating with other teachers allows us to share ideas, reflect on what's working, and find new ways to reach every learner."

*Yadira Campi, Somerset Academy South Campus,
5th Grade Gifted*

These educators also know how to shape learning around students' needs to help them grow. They use small groups, one-on-one support, and targeted practice, as well as break down complex skills into manageable steps. One way these teachers do this is through integrated hands-on, movement-based, and real-world connections, like music, storytelling, discussion, and problem-solving.



**Abdiel Miranda, Somerset Preparatory
Academy Homestead
9 - 12 Music Teacher (Band Director)**

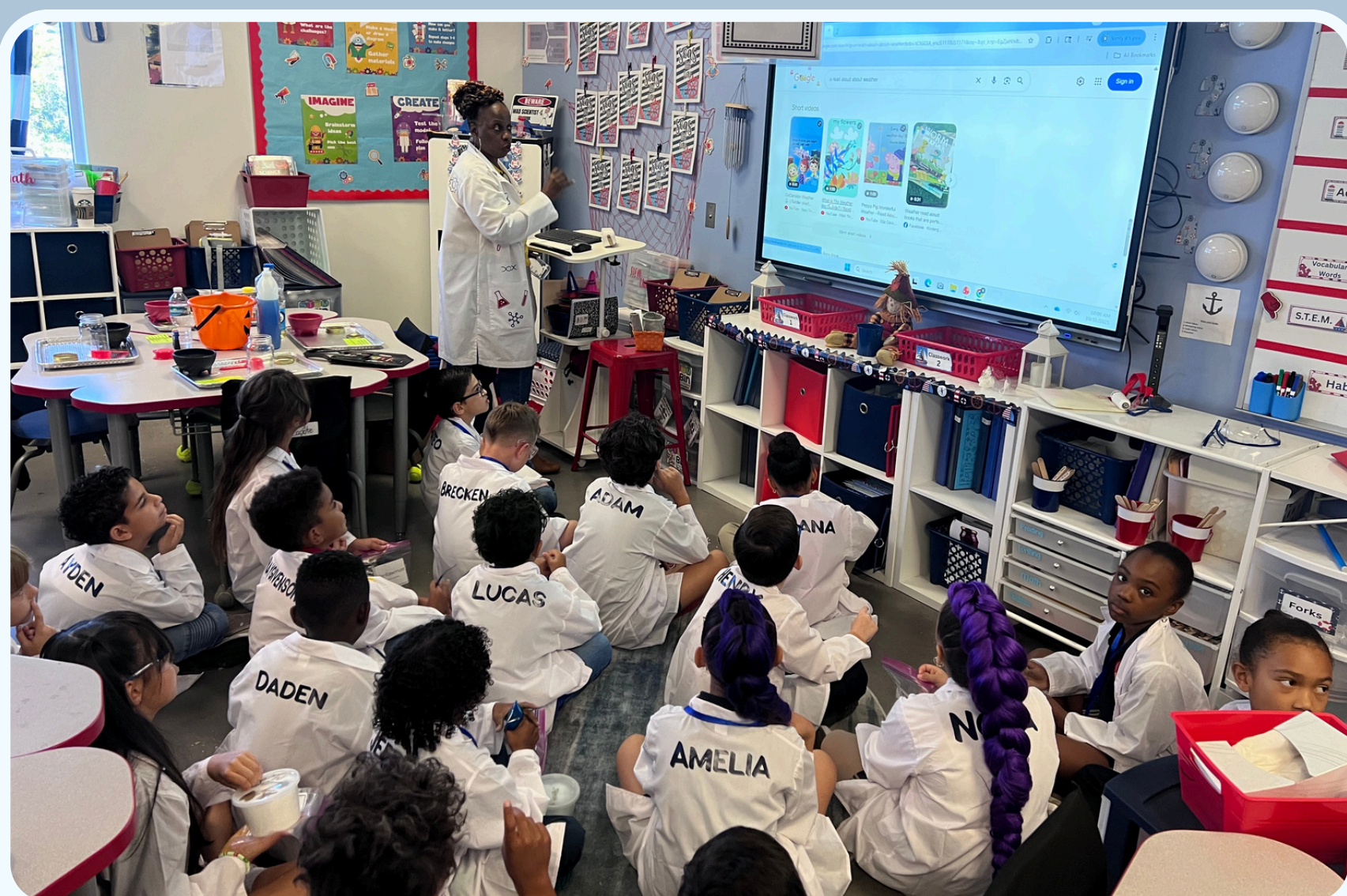


**Elizabeth Castillo, Pincrest Academy South
2nd Grade-All Subjects**

"One example of how my teaching made a big difference was with a student who came in struggling with reading and lacked confidence in participating during lessons. I noticed that whole group instruction was overwhelming for them, so I began incorporating more small group instruction and hands-on activities to better support their learning style. I also made it a point to build a strong relationship with the student, encouraging them and celebrating even small successes."

-Monica Sapp Pierre, Somerset Academy Miramar, Kindergarten

We all remember having a teacher who made joy an integral part of their teaching, and these teachers of the year know how to do just that. Whether it be through integrated technology and games within the curriculum, or hands-on labs, they find a way to make learning feel like a game.

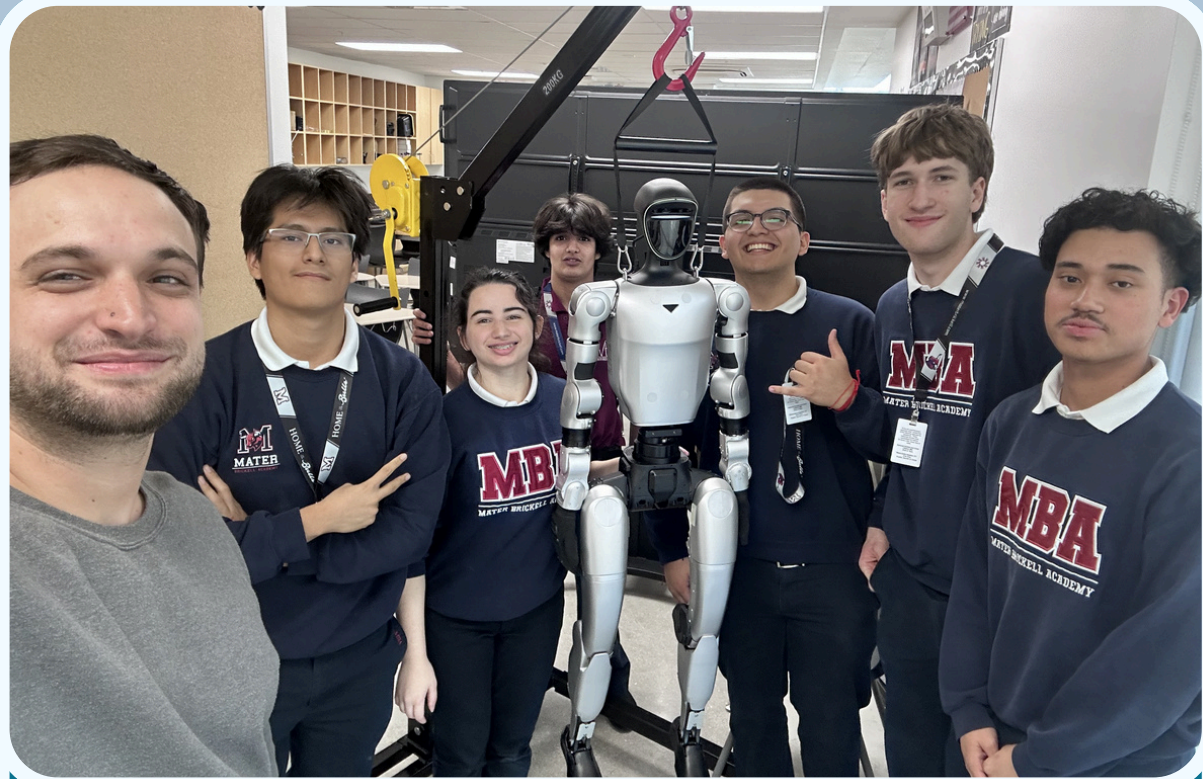


**Sherayne Flowers, Pincrest Academy Avalon
2nd Grade-All Subjects**

"I have an awesome team that helped me throughout the way to help the students. As a team we used canvas to make up games so catch their attention while learning, we used brain pop, Socrative and Epic to learn and explore the Spanish language"

*-Kelly Rivera, Mater Gardens Academy,
Spanish*

One major way these teachers stand out is for the way they measure impact with data. These educators are laser focused on students' growth, watching to see where students may need support. They monitor diagnostics, test scores, mastery of standards, and performance assessments. They notice when students begin to gain confidence in what they're learning, and place an emphasis on a long-term love for learning.



**Mauricio Cardenas, Mater Brickell Academy
Physics, Mathematics, and Computer
Science**



**Aliette Ramos, Mater Brighton Lakes Academy Preparatory High School
High School Electives**

"A perfect example of this has been the development of our Pinecrest Space Coast Innovation Lab and Outdoor Research Garden Lab... Through partnerships connected to the Artemis Space Mission, Indian River Lagoon conservation organizations, and leaders like Sylvia Earle, students began seeing how science, engineering, conservation, and innovation connect to real careers and real-world problem-solving."

-Karis James, Pinecrest Academy Space Coast, STEM:



**Daniella Ramos, Somerset Oaks Leadership Institute,
4th & 5th Grade Math & Science**

"I know my teaching methods are working when I see my students confidently participating, answering questions, and coming to class ready to learn each day... Seeing their confidence, enthusiasm, and academic growth throughout the year reassures me that I am making a positive impact on their learning."

They are restless learners who evolve with their students. They collaborate constantly, knowing great teaching is a team effort. They design instruction that meets students where they are, then push them further. They make learning joyful and memorable. And they measure impact not only through data, but through confidence gained, mindsets shifted, and futures imagined differently. These pictures and quotes make up a small amount of the phenomenal educators that were awarded the title of Teacher of the Year, highlighting a fraction of the work they do every day in the classroom. Congratulations to all of our 2026 Teachers of the year!

Spotlight your Favorite PDs!

We at DLI asked you what your favorite professional development sessions were this past school year, what we did great and what we can do to grow! One of the most important aspects of professional development is change, and we set out to do just that every year!

One participant found that citing improvements in coaching strategies and communication with teachers was incredibly impactful. They suggested incorporating more practical instructional strategies and creating connections between training for teachers, coaches, and administrators. Another attendee praised the Progress Learning PD, highlighting its relevance and impact, and requested longer sessions for deeper exploration of topics. Additionally, there was interest in future PD on writing and research techniques for middle school students.

DLI is committed to growth and plans to enhance professional development offerings this summer and next school year!

A few of our PDs from this past spring!



**Social Media Matters!
Central/North Florida**



March Coaches Corner



**Social Media Matters!
Central/North Florida**



March Coaches Corner

DLI Certification Updates

Is your Professional Certificate expiring in June, 2026?

Renewal Requirements include:

120 Master Plan Points or 6 semester hours

All educators are required to include **20 master plan points** or **1 semester hour** in **teaching Students with Disabilities (SWD)**

New Renewal Requirements for Selected Educators

Courses available through Doral College, Beacon Educator and BEESS

If your Professional Certificate has an expiration date of June 30, 2026, or later, AND you have one of the following areas listed below:

- Early Childhood Education
- Elementary Ed (K-6) (1-6)
- Prekindergarten/Primary Ed (PK-3)
- Primary Ed (K-3)
- Preschool Education (birth to age 4)
- English
- Middle Grades English (5-9)
- Middle Grades Integrated Curriculum
- Reading (K-12)
- Reading Endorsement
- ESOL (K-12) (not endorsement)
- Exceptional Student Education (K-12)

You MUST complete 40 hours of Literacy/Reading professional learning credits

Do you have Educational Leadership on your certificate?

If your Professional Certificate has an expiration date of June 30, 2026, or later, AND You have one of the following areas listed on your teaching certificate:

- Educational Leadership
- School Principal

You **MUST** also earn a minimum 20 hours of professional learning credits in Florida's Educational Leadership Standards (FELS).

Visit our webpage for information and links: www.doralleadership.org

See Courses Available at

Doral
College

or

Beacon
Educator

Certification
updates brought
to you by:



Doral College Corner

Welcome, Doral Leadership Institute participants! We're thrilled to continue our journey with the DLI Community for the 2025-2026 academic year. Doral College is here to support you with comprehensive course options tailored to meet your needs at various stages of your career.

Click below to navigate the DC/DLI Quick Guide so students can refer to the important dates and course offerings for the upcoming *Summer Semester!* Summer registration on Frontline began February 16, 2026 and will close on May 24, 2026 at 11:59 pm.

DC Tidbit for Success!

**Please use
separate browser
or incognito
window when
logging into Doral
Colegia to avoid
errors.**

**To learn more
visit doral.edu**



Courses available for:

**EPI
Recertification
Endorsement**



**DORAL LEADERSHIP
INSTITUTE
&
DORAL COLLEGE**

**Quick Guide
2025-2026**

Click here to view!