

2021-22 Tennessee Supervisor of the Year

Application Extended Response Guidance

The goal of the Tennessee Supervisor of the Year program is to recognize and celebrate the wealth of excellent district leaders that exist across the state. The tips and suggestions included in this guidance are not to be considered “magic.” However, they can help guide reflection about the application and can encourage fruitful conversations about the essays. There is not a formula and there aren’t right or wrong answers. Using these suggestions does not guarantee a specific outcome in the selection process. The purpose of this guidance is to help you present yourself and your instructional practices in the best light.

The Application Extended Response Prompts

1. How do you strategically engage with community stakeholders to support your district’s mission, vision, and goals? *Do not exceed 750 words.*
2. How do you define diversity within your district and community? In this context, what does it mean to have a commitment to diversity as a district leader? How have you applied this commitment in your district and community? *Do not exceed 750 words.*
3. Describe a project or initiative you have been involved in which contributed to the improvement of your district. What was your role, how did you collaborate with others, and what is the status of this project today? Include evidence of impact in your response. *Do not exceed 500 words.*
4. Effective leaders continually reflect on their performance and seek feedback to improve their practice. As a leader in your district, describe how you reflect on your performance and seek feedback to improve your practice. What is an area of opportunity that you have identified for your professional growth, and how do you plan to improve within this area? *Do not exceed 500 words.*

Criteria Used to Evaluate the Prompts

Overall, each response question will be assessed according to the degree to which the response:

- adheres to standard grammar, spelling, and punctuation conventions;
- answers the question clearly and concisely; and
- provides a compelling narrative that speaks to the applicant’s ability to serve as the Tennessee Supervisor of the Year.

Additionally, the application will be evaluated holistically to assess the degree to which the applicant demonstrates superior abilities in:

- managing and motivating students and faculties;
- evoking high standards;
- demonstrating a commitment to excellence;
- implementing innovative programs; and

- having a track record of exceptional gains in student learning.

Though a strong response may look different for each extended response prompt, these guiding criteria can help you ensure that the components of your application complement one another and give the most comprehensive view of your excellence as an educator.

Questions to Address Common Misteps

- Are you answering the question?
 - Take the time to unpack the question and think about what it is asking.
 - Ask someone else to read your response and ask if they can determine the question being addressed.
- Are you answering **all parts** of the question?
 - Use the unpacking strategy below to ensure that you plan for and address all parts of the prompt with sufficient detail.
- Are you giving a comprehensive picture of yourself as an educator throughout all responses?
 - Try to avoid using the same example or idea in your response to each question. Your goal is to give a complete picture.
- Are you writing to show what learning looks like in your classroom?
 - Write to **show not tell**. Use examples and things that students, parents, or colleagues have said.
 - Show how your work influenced the learning and growth of others through examples and evidence. Highlight your accomplishments rather than being humble about them.
 - Write “through” the word count in your draft. Often, it takes writers some time to get to the best part of their responses, so begin by writing more than you need to and then strategically edit to meet the word count.

Unpacking the Application Prompts

Unpacking is a useful writing preparation strategy that can ensure you successfully plan for and address all aspects of a writing prompt with sufficient detail. Often, it can be easy to allocate a significant portion of your allotted word count to one aspect of the prompt, leaving the other aspects unanswered and ultimately sabotaging your success. A sample “unpacking” for each application prompt is provided below. Again, it is important to note that using this strategy and these samples will not guarantee a particular outcome in selection. Instead, this strategy should serve as a solid foundation to ensure that the personal experiences and instructional practices you describe in each response are represented in a way that allows reviewers to focus on evaluating your innovation and excellence as an educator.

Question 1

How do you strategically engage with community stakeholders to support your district’s mission, vision, and goals? Do not exceed 750 words.

[How do you strategically engage with community stakeholders..] [What actions do I take to engage with](#)

the community around my district? I should describe any community engagement activities or strategies I employ. [...to support your district's mission, vision, and goals?] I should articulate my district's mission, vision, and goals. I should clearly connect the community engagement I described to the mission, vision, and goals. Where possible, I should include stories, anecdotes, data, and other types of evidence to show the impact of community engagement on my district.

Question 2

How do you define diversity within your district and community? In this context, what does it mean to have a commitment to diversity as a district leader? How have you applied this commitment in your district and community? *Do not exceed 750 words.*

[How do you define diversity within your district and community?] I should clearly articulate what diversity is in my district and community context, particularly for students and teachers. Is my district or community diverse in race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, or disability? [In this context, what does it mean to have a commitment to diversity as a district leader?] In my role, what does it look like to serve the population I described in the first part of the question? In addition to diversity, I should also address the themes of equity and inclusion, as well as why these themes are important to my context and education. [How have you applied this commitment in your district and community?] I should describe and provide evidence of specific actions I have taken as a result of my commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. What stories, anecdotes, data, or other evidence can I provide to show the impact of my commitment on my district and community?

Question 3

Describe a project or initiative you have been involved in which contributed to the improvement of your district. What was your role, how did you collaborate with others, and what is the status of this project today? Include evidence of impact in your response. *Do not exceed 500 words.*

[Describe a project or initiative you have been involved in which contributed to the improvement of your district.] What have I done to improve my district within my role? When I describe the project or initiative, I want to focus on sharing the ways this project or initiative contributed to our district's success. [What was your role, how did you collaborate with others, and what is the status of this project today?] Here, I want to specifically define my role and tasks I completed as part of the project or initiative. I need to be clear about how I collaborated with others and the value of this collaboration—for my practice, the project, and/or the district overall. I need to be explicit about the result of the project or initiative, how it is being carried forward and/or improved, and my current role in the project. [Please include evidence in your response.] Here – or earlier when I'm describing the project – I need to make the connection between the project, my role, and ultimately the impact on my district. How do I know the project was successful? Put differently, how did students, teachers, or community members explicitly benefit from this project or initiative? What stories, anecdotes, or data can I share that shows this success?

Question 4

Effective leaders continually reflect on their performance and seek feedback to improve their practice. As a leader in your district, describe how you reflect on your performance and seek feedback to improve your practice. What is an area of opportunity that you have identified for your professional growth, and how do you plan to improve within this area? *Do not exceed 500 words.*

[As a leader in your district, describe how you reflect on your performance...] How do I assess and reflect on my own performance? I should describe specific strategies and tools I use to measure my own success as it relates to my specific role and focus area. [...and seek feedback to improve your practice.] How do I solicit feedback from others to reflect on my performance? I should clearly articulate who I seek feedback from, what feedback I seek, and how I solicit that feedback. [What is an area of opportunity that you have identified for your professional growth...] I should identify an area of opportunity in my professional practice where I could continue to improve and grow. I should reflect on why the area I identified is an area of opportunity and connect to specific feedback and reflection where possible. I should clearly articulate an understanding of why I should grow in this area to benefit my own professional growth and the success of my district. [...and how do you plan to improve within this area?] I should describe a plan to improve within this area that includes specific action steps I will take to grow.