

# Welcome 2025 District Teachers of the Year

## DTOY Cohort Meeting

### September 26, 2024



- Please find your name card and sit at the table that matches the color of the sticker on the back.
- Introduce yourself to your fellow DTOYs.
- Share your name
- Where you teach
- What you teach



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# Agenda for Today's Meeting

Welcome, Introductions, R&Rs of a DTOY

Establishing Meeting Norms

Building the DTOY Community: Lockbox Challenge

Closing: Questions & Feedback

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# Meet the 2025 RI State Teacher of the Year



- Kindergarten Teacher, 10 years  
Warwick School District
- Educator, Collaborator, Spouse, Parent,  
Friend, Dog Mom, Community Ambassador
- Educational Passions: Special  
Education, Science, STEAM,  
Social & Emotional Learning

**Mrs. O'Neil Rhode Island  
State Teacher of the Year**



**wps.RISTOY**



**@milissa25RISTOY**



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# DTOY Communication Responsibilities

## *Meet the 2025 Rhode Island* District Teachers of the Year



Milissa O'Neil

### *2025 Rhode Island State Teacher of the Year*

Milissa is a passionate educator and Kindergarten teacher at Oakland Beach Elementary School in Warwick, where she has been teaching for the past 10 years. After earning a Bachelor of Science degree from Wheelock College, Boston Massachusetts, she pursued further education to obtain a special education certification.

As a dedicated collaborator and Social Emotional Learning Champion, Milissa focuses on integrating social and emotional learning (SEL) into her daily classroom practices. She is committed to helping her students develop essential skills such as self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, relationship building, and responsible decision-making. Milissa believes that these skills are crucial for creating a positive and inclusive classroom environment where students can thrive both academically and personally.

As a Community Ambassador, Milissa builds strong partnerships and continually enhances her expertise through professional development and collaboration with local organizations. She believes that students achieve their greatest success when learning within a supportive community that prioritizes trust, care, and respect. In this supportive learning environment, students are valued and heard, encouraged to take risks, share their ideas, and express themselves with assurance. Milissa is also a dedicated advocate for their needs ensuring they receive the support required to thrive.

More about the RI Teacher of the Year



Name:

24-25 District Teacher of the Year

## COMING SOON!

- Meeting Resources can be found here.
- [bit.ly/2025TOY](https://bit.ly/2025TOY)
- How will you communicate with your LEA leadership (superintendent, asst. superintendent, principal.. )?
  - Think and Jot
  - Share out at your table
  - Whip Around



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# Save the Dates:

## DTOY Professional Learning Cohort Meetings



Mary E. Keenan  
Education Specialist

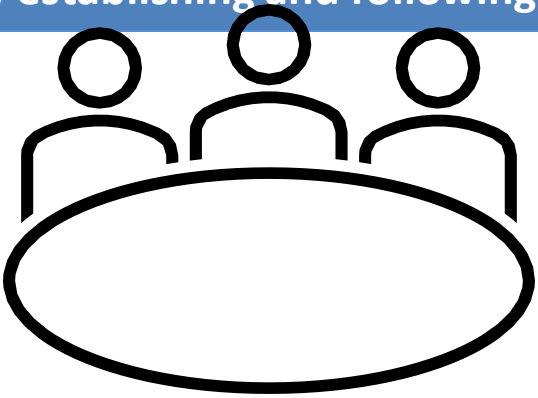
- October 9 3:00pm-6:30pm
- November 13 3:00pm – 6:30pm
- December Holiday Gathering
- January 8 3:00pm-6:30pm
- February 12 3:00am – 6:30pm (STOY application information)
- March 12 8:00am – 3:00pm (DTOY and Superintendent to attend together)
- May Closing Celebration

Please reach out to your administrator leadership for coverage for each of these dates.



# Establishing Meeting Norms Together as a Cohort

By establishing and following these norms, we'll foster a more productive and respectful environment for your group activity.



**At your table** designate one person to present the group's ideas and another to take notes.

Collaborate and brainstorm norms. Each group will select 2-3 norms  
Notetaker will scribe group ideas and circle top 3 norm ideas.

## **Whip Around:**

One member from each group will present their 3 ideas.

**Gallery Walk:** Each DTOY will review suggested norms and place a dot on their top three norm choices.

**Document the Norms:** MON will record finalized norms .



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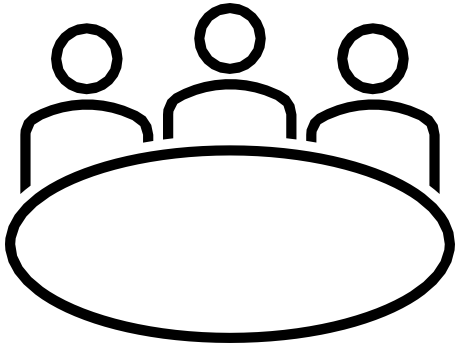
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# Meeting Norms



Respect ideas

Lean In and Lean Out

Welcome Feedback/No Bad Ideas

Listen without Judgement/Be open  
Minded

Positive Intentions

Stay on Time and Topic

Have Fun and Be in the Moment



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# Lockbox Challenge



## *Crack the Code, Unlock the Mystery*

- Your group will work together to solve puzzles and unlock the mystery of the lockbox.
- Your goal is to use teamwork, problem-solving skills, and creativity to open the lockbox and reveal its contents.



Objective: Unlock the lockbox by solving a series of clues and puzzles. Each clue will guide you closer to opening the box.

## RULES

1. **Work as a Team:** Collaborate and share ideas to solve each puzzle.
2. **Time Limit:** You have 60 minutes to unlock the box.
3. **Hints:** You can ask for up to 2 hints if needed. Use them wisely!

## Challenge Steps

1. **Read the Clues:** Start with the first clue and follow its directions.
2. **Solve Puzzles:** Each puzzle will give you information for the next lock.
3. **Keep Track:** Use the notebook to organize notes and solve puzzles.
4. **Unlock the Box:** Use the combinations or keys from solved puzzles to unlock the box.

## Final Instructions

1. Follow the instructions and work through each puzzle.
2. Remember, teamwork and communication are key!

## Tips for Success

- **Communicate:** Discuss ideas and solutions with your team.
- **Be Organized:** Keep notes and clues orderly.
- **Think Creatively:** Some puzzles may need outside-the-box thinking.



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You will have 40 minutes to work on and solve each puzzle. After the time is up, each group will present their experience and findings to the cohort, discussing the strategies they used, any challenges they faced, and how they overcame them.

GO TEAM!



# Before Our Next Meeting



- Explore the RI TOY site:
- Add 2025 District Teacher of the Year to your email signature
- Set up a system to communicate with your LEA leadership
- Request coverage for meeting dates
- Watch your email for DTOY [Contact Form](#)  
Add your Social Media handle (Handle)
  - Follow each other

# Closing, Questions, and Feedback

## Exit Ticket – Meeting Feedback: [Takeaway Form](#)

"Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world."  
- Nelson Mandela

*Congratulations on being named District Teacher of the Year! Your dedication and passion for education are truly inspiring, and your impact on students and the community is making a positive change in the world. Keep shining brightly in the lives you touch.*

