



## RECORDING ACADEMY® AND GRAMMY MUSEUM® HONOR LOCAL TEACHERS ACROSS UNITED STATES AS 2026 MUSIC EDUCATOR AWARD™ FINALISTS

**TEN MUSIC TEACHERS WILL RECEIVE CASH HONORARIUMS PROVIDED BY THE CHUCK LORRE FAMILY FOUNDATION: ONE AWARD WINNER TO BE ANNOUNCED DURING GRAMMY® WEEK**

**WHO:** A total of 10 music teachers from 10 cities across 10 states have been announced as finalists for the 2026 Music Educator Award™ presented by the Recording Academy® and GRAMMY Museum®. In total, more than 2,000 initial nominations were submitted from 50 states. Nominations for the 2027 Music Educator Award are now open at [www.grammymusicteacher.com](http://www.grammymusicteacher.com). A complete list of finalists is below:

Name	School Name	City	State
Jean-Paul Balmat	Mission Bay High School	San Diego	California
Stephen Blanco	Las Vegas High School	Las Vegas	Nevada
Jasmine Fripp	Tennessee State University	Nashville	Tennessee
Lisa Sunset Holt	Cedar Park High School	Cedar Park	Texas
Alyson Humphrey Smith	A.C. Steere Elementary School	Shreveport	Louisiana
Jennifer Jimenez	South Miami Sr. High School	Miami	Florida
Kevin McDonald	Wellesley High School	Wellesley	Massachusetts
Bill Podolski	H-B Woodlawn Secondary Program	Arlington	Virginia
Kevin Schoenbach	Oswego High School	Oswego	Illinois
Matthew Shephard	Meridian Early College High School	Sanford	Michigan

**WHAT:** The Music Educator Award recognizes current educators who have made a significant and lasting contribution to the music education field and demonstrate a commitment to the broader cause of maintaining music education in the schools.

The award is open to current U.S. music teachers, and anyone can nominate a teacher — students, parents, friends, colleagues, community members, school deans, and administrators.

Teachers are also able to nominate themselves, and nominated teachers are notified and invited to fill out an application.

Each year, one recipient is selected from 10 finalists and recognized for their remarkable impact on students' lives. They will receive a \$10,000 honorarium and matching grant for their school's music program. The nine additional finalists will receive a \$1,000 honorarium and matching



grants. The remaining 15 semifinalists will receive a \$500 honorarium with matching school grants.

The Music Educator Award program, including honorariums, is made possible by the generosity and support of **The Chuck Lorre Family Foundation**. In addition, the American Choral Directors Association, NAMM Foundation, National Association for Music Education, and National Education Association support this program through outreach to their constituencies.

**WHEN:** The recipient will be recognized during GRAMMY® Week 2026. For more information, please visit [www.grammymusicteacher.com](http://www.grammymusicteacher.com).

### ABOUT THE GRAMMY MUSEUM

The GRAMMY Museum is a nonprofit organization dedicated to celebrating and exploring music from yesterday and today to inspire the music of tomorrow through exhibits, education, grants, preservation initiatives, and public programming. Paying tribute to our collective musical heritage, the Museum values and celebrates the dynamic connection in people's diverse backgrounds and music's many genres, telling stories that inspire us, and creative expression that leads change in our industry.

For more information, visit [www.grammymuseum.org](http://www.grammymuseum.org), "like" the GRAMMY Museum on Facebook, and follow @GRAMMYMuseum on Instagram and TikTok.

### ABOUT THE RECORDING ACADEMY

The Recording Academy represents the voices of performers, songwriters, producers, engineers, and all music professionals. Dedicated to ensuring the recording arts remain a thriving part of our shared cultural heritage, the Academy honors music's history while investing in its future through the [GRAMMY Museum](#), [advocates on behalf of music creators](#), supports music people in times of need through [MusiCares](#), and celebrates artistic excellence through the [GRAMMY Awards](#)—music's only peer-recognized accolade and highest achievement. As the world's leading society of music professionals, we work year-round to foster a more inspiring world for creators.

For more information about the GRAMMY Awards and the Recording Academy, please visit [GRAMMY.com](http://GRAMMY.com) and [RecordingAcademy.com](http://RecordingAcademy.com). For breaking news and exclusive content, follow @RecordingAcad on [X](#), "like" Recording Academy on [Facebook](#), and join the Recording Academy's social communities on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [TikTok](#), and [LinkedIn](#). For media assets, please visit the [Recording Academy Press Room](#).

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