

# [***Jill Biden is hosting a White House 'state dinner' to honor America's 2024 teachers of the year***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BXX-12M1-DYMD-60HF-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

WASHINGTON — First lady [*Jill Biden*](https://apnews.com/hub/jill-biden) opened the White House on Thursday to more than 50 of America's best educators, hosting the 2024 [*national*](https://ntoy.ccsso.org/2024-national-teacher-of-the-year/#:~:text=Missy%20Testerman%20the%202024%20National,families%20and%20her%20fellow%20teachers.) and [*state teachers*](https://ntoy.ccsso.org/2024-state-teachers-of-the-year/) of the year at a fancy dinner to recognize them for their commitment to students and excellence in the classroom.

The teachers typically attend a White House ceremony every year after their selection by an organization representing elementary and secondary school educators.

But Jill Biden, [*who teaches English and writing*](https://apnews.com/article/business-jill-biden-6a025ecc48cd6efed9c99ce578fb7fb4) at Northern Virginia Community College, was putting a new twist on the annual event by hosting them on Thursday for a teachers' “state dinner” instead.

She [*announced the change*](https://apnews.com/article/jill-biden-state-dinner-teachers-tennessee-43710cd4f153844d4b36397478847818) during a nationally televised appearance in April with [*Missy Testerman,*](https://apnews.com/article/national-teacher-missy-testerman-tennessee-cc4391a1f647e74c4bc49416db8e939b) the 2024 National Teacher of the Year. Testerman is an English as a second language teacher at Rogersville City School in Rogersville, Tennessee.

“It’s one of my favorite events at the White House when we bring in the teachers of the year and we celebrate them every year,” the first lady said at the time.

A White House [*state dinner*](https://apnews.com/hub/state-dinners) is a diplomatic tool selectively wielded by presidents to highlight cooperation from close U.S. allies. Key features include a pomp-filled welcome ceremony for the visiting head of state, face time with the president and a glitzy, black-tie dinner with hundreds of guests, including titans from the worlds of ***politics***, business and Hollywood.

Teachers were getting a slimmed-down version.

As guests began arriving, they posed for photos in front of a book shelf-like display featuring encyclopedias and other books with the papers of past presidents, brass hand bells, gold-painted apples and vases of irises, the official state flower of Tennessee, in honor of the National Teacher of the Year. Some of the vases holding the irises were made out of upside-down pencils.

At the dinner tables, each teacher was to find a handmade, personalized thank you note from their students, fellow teachers and school leadership that was organized by their school principal, the White House said.

On the menu: apple, walnut and celery root salad followed by a main course of lobster ravioli. Dessert was a trio of strawberries and cream, apple mousse and coconut custard cake.

Rounding out [*the guest list*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/05/02/white-house-releases-teachers-of-the-year-state-dinner-guest-list/) of more than 200 people were Doug Emhoff, the husband of Vice President Kamala Harris; Cabinet members, including Education Secretary Miguel Cardona and Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, whose husband Chasten is a teacher; and members of Congress and the heads of the two major teachers' unions. Emhoff, a former entertainment lawyer, teaches at Georgetown Law School.

This year's State Teachers of the Year include those from 49 states, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense. Florida did not participate.

The [*Council of Chief State School Officers*](https://ccsso.org/) oversees the National Teacher of the Year Program.

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