The Star

10 teachers vying for top award

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Game changers: (Clockwise from top to bottom) Anne Margarette, Ashok Pillai, Goh, Mohammad Shukri, Muhammad Anas Murugan, Sumathy, Siti Intan Farahana, Siti Ainulmursyida, Shawn Stanly and Muhammad Nur Asnawi.

VOTING has begun to select the most inspiring teacher in the nation.

From now until May 10, the public is invited to cast votes for any of the 10 outstanding teachers shortlisted for Taylor's College RISE (Remarkable Impact in Student Education) Educator Award 2024.

Earlier in March, the college opened nominations for the most inspiring teacher stories in national, private and international pre, primary and secondary schools across the nation.

The shortlisted teachers' stories are now shared on the college's social media platforms for public voting, highlighting their exceptional dedication to their schooling communities and the transformative impact of their teaching.

After the voting period ends, the five teachers with the most votes will advance to the finals. These public votes will account for 25% of the final decision.

Their stories will then be evaluated by a panel of judges, including Teach For Malaysia chief executive officer Chan Soon Seng and RISE Educator of the Year 2023 Kumaresan Muniandy.

The panel will assess each teacher's contributions, focusing on effort and impact. This will account for 75% of the decision in determining the RISE Educator Award 2024 recipient.

The winner will receive a grand prize of RM5,000, with RM500 awarded to the nominator, and RM20,000 to the recipient's school for the development of facilities or infrastructure.

The other finalists will each receive RM1,000, with RM250 awarded to their respective nominators. Additionally, RM10,000 in sponsorship will be provided to develop the finalists' school facilities or infrastructure.

Who's who

STEM education

Goh Kok Ming, SJK(C) Hua Lian 1, PerakHis leadership led to the creation of the Taiping Innovation Centre, a hub offering free science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) learning accessible to all. Additionally, his two-year Empowering STEM programme has positively impacted nearly 250 B40 pupils across 10 schools.

Muhammad Anas Murugan Abdullah, SK Seri Intan, PerakThrough his STEM Garden initiative, he teaches pupils how to produce fertilisers from canteen leftovers, not only to nourish plants but also to foster a sense of environmental responsibility and innovation. The project empowers pupils with practical skills, potential income opportunities, and a deeper understanding of sustainability.

Inclusivity and special needs education

Siti Intan Farahana Mhd Fauzy, SK Bandar Laguna Merbok, Kedah

She has revolutionised the school's infrastructure by introducing rehabilitation rooms, self-management spaces and modern kitchen facilities. She has also embraced digitalisation by integrating technology and collaborating with both domestic and foreign agencies to incorporate drones into education. This approach ensures that her special

needs pupils are not only prepared for the demands of the Fifth Industry Revolution, but are also empowered to thrive in an inclusive and progressive environment.

Mohammad Shukri Mohd Zain, SK Pendidikan Khas Jalan Peel, Kuala Lumpur
To ensure his pupils with hearing difficulties thrive in the classroom, he uses a holistic approach that includes lip reading, communication and auditory skills, and manual-visual sign language. He also takes the time and effort to teach sign language to the parents of the pupils. His commitment to sign language has enabled his choir team to perform with famous singers at the Gegar Vaganza music reality TV show and other events.

Siti Ainulmursyida Shamsudin, SMK Orked Desa, KL
Recognising the challenges faced by special needs students in accessing information and communication technology (ICT) resources, she took proactive steps to enhance the school's digital resource centre, transforming it into a state-of-the-art facility featuring a smart classroom and cutting-edge robotics equipment.

Her innovative approach has actively engaged them in their learning.

Sumathy Appannah, SK Seri Setia, Perak
She took the initiative to organise and implement the Road Safety project for pupils with disabilities, a group often overlooked in road safety education. She trained these pupils in road crossing rules and regulations, thereby improving their safety and well-being. Her commitment to creating a safer world has inspired many to take action in their communities. As a result of the project's success, it has been recognised by the school authority and District Education Offices, leading to the implementation of similar initiatives in other schools.

Student wellness and access
Ashok Pillai Kuppusamy, SJK(C) Jerik, Pahang
Despite facing obstacles like irregular attendance, he serves as a lifeline for his financially challenged pupils. He provides free tuition, meals, and even arranges additional classes and transportation at his own expense. His support and personal sacrifices have paved the way for his pupils' academic success.

Anne Margarette Kho, SK Belipat, Sarawak

She faced the challenge of managing the largest number of Pemulihan pupils in the Lawas district, along with a concerning attendance rate. To address this, she transformed the Pemulihan class into Kedai Runcit Cikgu Anne, using her own funds to provide supplies as rewards. This approach sparked excitement among pupils, leading to increased participation in school activities. Her success has made her a sought-after speaker, with District Education Offices across Malaysia seeking to learn from her methods.

Experiential learning and community engagement

Shawn Stanly Anthony Dass, SK RPS Banun, Perak

He brings distant realities to life in an all-Orang Asli school through hands-on, inventive approaches. These include organising class monitor elections to teach about democracy, transforming his science classroom into a flight simulator using a projector and forest resources, and creating a beach-themed classroom to educate pupils about marine conservation. His methods are not only effective in curbing illiteracy, but also in engaging pupils in deeply meaningful learning experiences.

Muhammad Nur Asnawi Romly, SK Pos Musoh LZ, Perak

An Orang Asli teacher, he ensures his pupils' success extends beyond the classroom. He organises study visits to KL, providing his pupils with invaluable experiences. His community literacy initiative, which won a small grant, established Independent Book Centre Huts that benefit both his pupils and the local community.