



**2008-2009 RAWLINSON INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR  
APPLICATION COVER PAGE**

**Nominee Information**

**Name:** Jonathan Dale

**Title:** Web Technologist

**School/Department:** Communications

**Phone Number:** 210-397-7648

**Description of current job responsibilities and tasks:**

Jonathan Dale joined the Communications Department in June 2006 as the web technologist for the Web Information Office. Jonathan comes to NISD with over 10 years of technical knowledge and extensive web development experience. As the NISD Webmaster, Jonathan's responsibilities include working with dozens of departments and all Northside schools to maintain current information on the massive nisd.net website.

**Nominator Information**

**Name:** Stephanie Mota

**Title:** Grants Coordinator

**School/Department:** Grants & Recognitions

**Phone Number:** 210-397-7564



## Application

**Answers to questions below must not exceed one page (single-sided) in length, with a font size no smaller than 12 pt.**

1. Describe the innovative idea **the nominee developed and successfully implemented.**

Include details on the process or product prior to the innovation.

Jonathan Dale, NISD Webmaster and mastermind of the Educator of the Year (EOY) process, created many innovative “firsts” for the district in the 2008-2009 school year: The first EOY website complete with tutorials and online applications, first user-friendly web-based electronic submission form and the first “electronic notebook” that has saved both valuable time and money for the district.

The EOY Award is the district and campus’ opportunity to recognize the hard work, dedication and excellence of our teachers. Every year campus administration and staff look forward to the ceremony, creating a buzz and excitement that is palpable throughout the district. Selected nominees proceed to prestigious local and state competitions including the Trinity Prize Award for Excellence in Education, Texas Teacher of the Year and the KENS 5 Excel award.

The EOY process involves several departments, committee members and administration—but the heartbeat of the entire operation is Jonathan Dale. Noting the complex and time-consuming process, he created a simple, yet powerful process that received accolades by many administrative officials.

The previous application was in a PDF format and required applicants to submit the form as an email attachment. Jonathan looked beyond the district to research how other applications were submitted to develop a model format for Northside. Extensive research led to the creation of an application that was more user-friendly and included a feature that allowed applicants to save and return to their work. To ease the transition into the new submission system, Jonathan greatly augmented the district’s EOY website by including video tutorials, an FAQ page and past winning applications. Jonathan also created an authorization protocol which automatically generated an email alert to principals and vice principals when a nomination was submitted. This alert permitted principals to accept or deny applications and provide feedback prior to submission in a paperless format. The second phase of this transition involved updating the EOY Committee Members’ application review process. Prior to this innovation, the entire process was extremely time consuming and very costly in terms of actual costs and allocation of staff time. After approximately 200 applications were submitted, Grant Department staff made nine copies of each application, categorized them by campus level, three-hole punched each sheet and placed the sheets into a notebook. Each notebook underwent several quality control checks to ensure every application was copied and included in every committee member’s notebook. This process was completed in three days. Notebooks were then sent to committee members via the pony. Jonathan transformed this process by creating a secure portal that allowed committee members to log into the Internet and review/score applications at their home or office. This conversion to a paperless review process saved the district an estimated \$15,000 in materials and labor. In the final transitional phase Jonathan also created a method to export the EOY applicant list from the on-line database to Excel. In the previous process each applicant’s name was manually entered into a spreadsheet, increasing the chance of errors and misspelled information. This export feature greatly reduced staff time and eliminated errors.

As the “man behind the curtain”, Jonathan has created the district’s most innovative process through electronic applications, web-based programs and Internet sites that can serve as the model for many of the district processes in the future.



## 2. What **impact** did this have on the department/campus and/or the district?

The enhanced Educator of the Year (EOY) process Jonathan created directly and positively impacted all campuses and several departments throughout the district. This behind-the-scenes process contributes to one of the district's most important and visible award ceremonies.

Whereas the past process was very labor-intensive, and required manual work by many departments, the on-line and paperless process Jonathan developed has saved an estimated \$15,000 for the district. The enhanced EOY website has provided a venue site for nominators to learn about the program, download the new application and watch step-by-step tutorials.

In the past, the Grants & Recognitions Department processed every application, often more than 600 pages (each application averaging about 3 pages each). Once an application was submitted the department would manually sort, categorize, and conduct several quality control checks before printing. Once printed, applications were once again sorted by campus type and campus name and placed in accordion folders that would contain all of the applications as well as scoring rubric and instructions for the EOY committee members to review. With the volume of applications received, the previous process was time consuming, very laborious, and tedious, requiring every minute detail (down to the correct spelling of the name) to be perfect. Additionally, committee members scoring these nominations were burdened with very large notebooks to score by hand.

To answer this challenge, Jonathan relied on his technical skills and vision to create a more efficient approach. The first step was to eliminate the expensive and laborious paper process in favor of a more cost effective and efficient on-line system. Jonathan noted the complexity and burden that resulted from creating committee notebooks, so he created the district's first "electronic notebook." In addition, a unique and secured website was created within the EOY site, allowing committee members to log in, review and score applications electronically. Jonathan created electronic scoring tabs at the bottom of each question, eliminating the need for a separate rubric and allowed reviewers the opportunity to score while they read. At the end of the review, each nominator can review scores and submit them electronically—feeding straight into the EOY database he also created. "What I liked most was the ability to log in from home or campus to access the applications. It was organized very well, and you can tailor the application to your personal review style. I really enjoyed the ease of the entire process," commented Paul Moreno, Vice Principal at Northwest Crossing and EOY committee member.

Understanding that the new process would be a balancing act of innovative technology, administrative training and pressured deadlines of such a significant and high profile award, Jonathan initiated a training site to instruct all departments, administrators and even committee members. During the four-month planning and implementation process, Jonathan also made many personal visits to principals and directors to acclimate them with the new process.

Through Jonathan's efforts a bar has been set, a process that the district can model to save time, money and introduce a more efficient approach through an innovative, the new on-line EOY submission and review process.