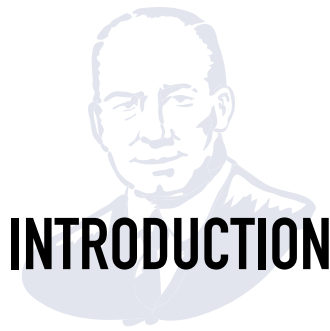




**ELBERT K. FRETWELL
OUTSTANDING
EDUCATOR AWARD
IMPLEMENTATION GUIDEBOOK**



The Elbert K. Fretwell Outstanding Educator Award has been developed by the Educational Relationships Subcommittee (ERSC) of the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America. Dr. Fretwell¹ was a professor of education at Columbia University, an early thinker in the Scouting movement, and the second Chief Scout Executive of the BSA (succeeding James E. West). The Fretwell Award is presented by local Scouters to teachers, educational support staff, and school administrators who stand out from their professional peers in instilling Scouting values in their students. Dr. Fretwell championed Scouting programs as extracurricular learning opportunities that promoted positive values and community service. Scouting benefits from easy access to schools for recruiting and from opportunities to serve schools. This program is designed to be implemented by the Scouting district² committee, through the membership chair and district membership committee. It may be adapted for use at the council, area, regional, and national levels as well.

As you review this guide, keep in mind that the Fretwell Award is an initiative to bring more youth into Scouting. Presenting the award is an act of service to schools and creates direct engagement with the school administration. The goodwill that results will open doors for Scouting to interact with students directly and to recruit them into our program.

Each local council and district has the freedom to tailor the Fretwell Award process to their local school situation. In that spirit, this guidebook provides guidelines, implementation options, presentation approaches, and suggestions.

You will need to understand some of the philosophy behind this award so you can make the best decisions on how to implement it. You should also be aware that while this program is intended to reach all levels of education from elementary up to the college level, this document is written from the perspective of working with elementary education organizations.

¹For more information about the life of Dr. Fretwell, see the biographical sketch provided in the appendix.

²In different locations, the administrative unit for a group of schools goes by different names. Even though the term “school district” is fairly common, to avoid confusion in this document, the term “school system” is used to refer to a group of centrally administrated schools and the term “district” refers exclusively to a Scouting district. In the rest of this document, a “school system” could be made up of public, private, charter, or religious schools.

WHO SHOULD RECEIVE THE FRETWELL OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR AWARD?

There are a number of organizations that recognize excellent classroom teachers. “The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.”³ For that reason, the Elbert K. Fretwell Outstanding Educator Award is presented to people who make their students better people by modeling and teaching Scouting values. Often that will go hand-in-hand with academic excellence, but the selection process should emphasize those that are proactive in teaching values.

The Fretwell Award is not exclusively for classroom teachers. Any school employee who is equipping students to make moral and ethical choices is eligible for this award. This could be a teacher, administrator, custodian, cafeteria worker, attendance clerk, resource officer, teacher’s aide, or any number of others.

For clarification, this award recognizes what a person does for students in their professional role within education and not for what the person does directly for Scouting. While a Scouting volunteer who works in education is eligible for the Fretwell Award, there are many awards to recognize the service of volunteers to Scouting.

HOW MANY AWARDS TO PRESENT

Unlike some other Scouting awards, there is no fixed quota of Fretwell Awards for a district to present because the educational organizations you interact with will vary widely in size, type, and organizational structure. Philosophically, these awards should be common enough that most local educators are aware of the award and aspire to receive it. It also needs to be rare enough to be prestigious. As a rule of thumb, plan to present one award per year on each

school campus, even if it is a small one. If a school campus has more than 500 students, you may consider presenting two awards per year when there are worthy candidates.

IDENTIFICATION OF CANDIDATES

Ideally, Fretwell Awards will become an annual celebration to look forward to in all schools. This includes private, charter, and religious schools as well as public schools. Introducing the Fretwell Award will be easier in schools where Scouting is already established, with a unit that meets at the school or a number of students who are already Scouts. In those campuses, Scouts and their parents can serve as a resource for nominations. However, a purpose of this award program is to get access to schools where the flame of Scouting is not burning. In those schools, you will probably begin with the school administrator to seek out nominees.

Understandably, you may not have the resources to be able to launch in every school in your district during the first few years of implementing the award. You should expect to build up the resources to expand this gradually. Your best outreach opportunities will likely be in underserved parts of your community, so consider pursuing diversity (economic, ethnic, and religious) in prioritizing schools for the Fretwell Award.

Continuity is vital to building good relationships with schools and to open doors for membership growth. Once you start presenting Fretwell Awards on a school campus, don’t skip them in subsequent years. It is vital to maintain momentum. Remember, you can pace yourself on the presentation of awards, because not all candidates need to be recognized during the first year of this program. Present a Fretwell Award to the best candidate and then keep track of the runners-up as potential recipients in future years.

³ Mission Statement of the Boy Scouts of America

NOMINATING CANDIDATES

There are many potential sources for nominations for the Fretwell Outstanding Educator Award.

These include:

- Students in the schools
- Student council of the school
- Parents
- Other educators in the school or school system
- Members of local civic groups, like Rotary, Lions, VFW, American Legion, etc.
- Members of local faith groups
- Customers at local businesses
- Current active Scouters

Depending on which strategy you choose, you may want to customize a nomination form for that audience. A sample nomination form is included in the appendix to this guidebook for you to use as a starting point.

It is important to keep the nomination process simple. Only ask for enough information on the form to get the review process started. You can always flesh out the details during your review and selection process.

Be careful to use ordinary language to describe the award. While we are all familiar with the meaning of the Scout Oath and Scout Law, it will need to be explained more directly for the community in general. Your nomination form is also an opportunity to polish the image of Scouting in your community and to make contact with families.

Remember that parents of elementary age children are often in their 30s and have a different relationship with technology than older

generations. Encourage email submittals and consider providing a way to text the information as well. A photo of the nomination form may be good enough.

REVIEWING AND SELECTING CANDIDATES

Nominees for the Fretwell Award should not be told they are being considered for the award to prevent them from being disappointed or embarrassed if they are not selected. The Fretwell Award is based on one's personal reputation, so discretion and due process are important. A bad selection could embarrass the recipient, the school, and local Scouting.

Form a search and selection committee of at least three people to get multiple viewpoints.

Some of your options are to:

- Use your standing district committee as the search and selection committee
- Create a temporary taskforce of Scouting volunteers for this specific purpose as you would for an Eagle Scout board of review
- Recruit local civic leaders to serve as the search and selection committee
- Create a panel of local educators to serve as the search and selection committee

The selection committee may include people who are not registered Scouters. A retired teacher or administrator, or a member of the school board could add valuable insight as you make selections. In fact, including some "outsiders" is another good way to form relationships to support Scouting membership.

Plan to interview at least three references who know the candidate in the candidate's professional capacity. A sample reference interview form has been provided in the appendix with questions you can use when you

are talking to references. It also serves as a place to collect notes from your research. Please do not ask the reference to prepare a reference letter or to fill out any forms. This often results in no information at all.

The first person to interview is the candidate's immediate supervisor. This is a relationship building opportunity as well as part of the award process. You need to get a copy of the candidate's professional resume from the supervisor. It is useful as source material for the letter of commendation and for the live presentation of the award.

Ideally, the second reference is a close colleague of the candidate. The third reference should be the person that nominated the candidate in the first place (or their parent if the nomination is from a student). Follow up with anyone else that the first set of references suggests you talk to. Once you have completed the interviews, you can score or rank the candidates to make a selection. Your evaluation needs to be based on the values of the Scout Oath and Law. The sample evaluation form provided in the appendix has a simple scoring system for comparing candidates.

There are no losers in this process. There is no minimum acceptable score on the evaluation form. That decision is left to the selection committee. After your selections are made for the year, archive your notes about the runners-up. Candidates you review in one year may be reconsidered in future years.

PREPARING LETTERS OF COMMENDATION AND CERTIFICATES

In the education community, a high award like the Elbert K. Fretwell Outstanding Educator Award forms part of a body of work that is reviewed for promotions, grants of tenure, and salary increases. A letter of commendation is the appropriate way to add the Fretwell Award to the personnel file. There is a sample letter of commendation in the appendix for you to use

as an example, but a bit more explanation is appropriate here.

The letter should have a maximum length of two pages, though one page is preferred. Print the letter on council letterhead.

The letter of commendation needs to be addressed to a person of authority above the recipient. In most situations, this will be the principal of the school, but in other settings, it could be a superintendent, headmaster, department chair, dean, president, or other institution official. The recipient needs to be copied on the letter.

Each letter needs to begin with a description of what the award is and what kind of people it recognizes. The next paragraph or two needs to describe the noteworthy contributions and actions taken by the recipient. This description needs to be as personal and specific as possible. Describe actual events when you can. The closing paragraph needs to "present" the award to the recipient and thank the recipient for her/his service. The opening and closing paragraphs in the sample letter may be used as is or may be edited for your local needs.

Letters of commendation should be signed by one or two high Scouting officials. These could be the council Scout executive, council president, council commissioner, or council membership chair. Others may be acceptable as well. What is important is that the Scouting title of the person signing the document conveys the importance of the award to the BSA.

A certificate is also provided online for your use. It is a fillable PDF document that will allow you to create a custom document with little effort for formatting. The titles of the BSA officials that will sign the certificate are left for you to enter. In choosing the signers, use the same principle as given above for letters of commendation.

PRESENTING AWARDS

Educators who receive the Elbert K. Fretwell Outstanding Educator Award need to be recognized publicly. There are four items that could be presented for the award.

These are the

- Fretwell Award medal
- Fretwell Award certificate (suitable for framing)
- Letter of commendation
- Personal item with the Fretwell Award logo

The medal is available from BSA Supply. You will produce the certificate and letter of commendation locally using council letterhead paper or other suitable paper. The personal item that carries the award logo can be obtained from BSA Supply, which offers a limited selection, or it can be a customized item purchased from a BSA licensed vendor. The personal item is an indirect way to publicize the award, and should be something the recipient would use or display at work. Depending on the taste of the recipient, a mug, water bottle, lapel pin, polo shirt, or plaque could be appropriate.

The Fretwell Award needs to be presented as publicly as possible to maximize the relationship benefits. A sample script for such a presentation is included in the appendix. Most opportunities will fall at the end of the school year.

Here are some ideas to consider:

- PTA/PTO meeting
- Professional development day assembly
- School board meeting
- End-of-year student awards ceremonies

Deliver a copy of the letter of commendation to the principal/chief administrator of the recipient's school for inclusion in the personnel file.

In addition to a public recognition in the education community, you may consider inviting the recipients as free guests to your annual District Awards Dinner for further recognition.

REPORTING

Each year, every council is asked to report the names of Fretwell Award recipients from their council. The councils will use the existing reporting system that is used for reporting Silver Beaver and lifesaving awards. As always, feedback is a gift, and your suggestions for improving this award program may be submitted to the Educational Relationships Subcommittee at education.relationships@scouting.org.

COUNCIL LEVEL AWARDS

While the preceding sections of this guide explain how to implement the Elbert K. Fretwell Outstanding Educator Award at the local district level, the local council may also present the Fretwell Award at the council level. The same principles can be applied. Council level awards serve various needs. In one approach, the council can recognize educators whose accomplishments have had an impact on a wider level, such as a school superintendent, head of a professional association, or a regional/state education official. Another approach is to use council awards to recognize the “best of the best” of the district recipients of the award. In this second version, district level recipients would form the pool of candidates for the council level awards. The council membership committee would determine the appropriate number of council level awards to present by considering the size of the council and number of districts participating.

Council level awards should be promoted through local news outlets and should be recognized with additional ceremonies, certificates, and citations. The recipients can be invited as guests to the Council Awards Dinner.

AREA, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL AWARDS

The Elbert K. Fretwell Outstanding Educator Award can also be presented at an area, region, or national level. At these levels, the Fretwell Award may be presented to worthy organizations as well as to worthy individuals. Awards at these levels must be approved by the National Council. Nomination forms and supporting documents can be submitted to *education.relationships@scouting.org*.