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Created by the Indigenous Education Committee of the Canadian School Boards Association.

Rooted in the spirit of genuine reconciliation, this award is focused on recognizing excellence, demonstrated evidence of the principles of innovation, authenticity, relationship, capacity-building, good stewardship and supporting work of the Calls to Action, issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in 2015.

The award aims to recognize meaningful partnership, co-governance and collaboration between Indigenous nations and publicly funded school boards. Together, in partnership with Indigenous nations and organizations, school boards can make a significant difference in our communities.

# Inaugural Canadian School Board Association National Reconciliation Partnership Award

**JULY 2024**

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Presented on behalf of the  
Underwriters for the Saskatchewan  
School Boards Association General  
Insurance Plan



*The Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA) is a non-profit, voluntary membership organization, offering board development opportunities, advocacy, and services. The SSBA provides leadership and support for our members as a unified voice of Saskatchewan's 27 democratically elected public, Catholic and Francophone school boards.*





**LEFT TO RIGHT**  
 Carolyn Broady, Chair, CSBA Indigenous Education Committee  
 Darcy Hoff, Cowichan Valley School District  
 Chuck Seymour, Cowichan Tribes  
 Darren McKee, CSBA Indigenous Education Committee

Presentation of the inaugural **National Reconciliation Partnership Award** to Quw'utsun Syuw'entst Lelum/Cowichan Tribes and Cowichan School District.

*On behalf of the Underwriters for the Saskatchewan School Boards Association General Insurance Plan, the award goes to Cowichan Tribes and Cowichan Valley School District Board of Education co-presented by the Canadian School Boards Association. The partners receiving their award and \$10,000 to further support their partnership goals.*

### PARTNERSHIP DESCRIPTION

In the Cowichan Valley on Vancouver Island, the Cowichan Valley School District is privileged to enjoy a harmonious partnership with Cowichan Tribes, the largest single First Nation band in British Columbia. This partnership focuses on the xe'xe'smun'eem (sacred children), and many educational initiatives are examples of a relationship carefully cultivated over time.

The new Quw'utsun Secondary School, scheduled to open to students in January 2025, features a design that focuses on a place for children and families to feel connected to the culture, language and spirit of the land. This school is one example of the products of a valuable relationship that has worked steadfastly towards a future path of reconciliation.

As the partnership between Cowichan Tribes and the Cowichan Valley School District Board of Education continues to evolve, it is rooted in friendship and understanding. This partnership is a profound expression of love for xe'xe'smun'eem, respect for the land, and of reconciliation.

### ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Gisele George is a beadwork artist from the English River First Nation, situated on Treaty 10 territory. Currently residing in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan she balances her passion for beadwork with her role as a dedicated grade 1 teacher within the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools.

Gisele's journey into the world of beadwork began under the guidance of her late grandmother. Drawing inspiration from her ancestral roots, she describes her beadwork as traditional Dene style that is rich in intricate patterns and vibrant colors. She meticulously beads on traditionally tanned and smoked hide, a practice passed down through generations within her family and community. These traditional patterns, materials and techniques serve as the foundation upon which Gisele infuses her own artistic vision and style.

Gisele's artistry serves as a medium for storytelling and cultural expression. Through her beadwork, she channels the resilience, wisdom, and the spirit of past generations, ensuring that their legacy continues to thrive in contemporary times. [@\\_giseleGeorgebeads](#)

### BEADWORK DESCRIPTION

Gisele's beadwork pieces are reflections of her Dene heritage and artistic vision. Drawing inspiration from her late grandmother's traditional patterns, she skillfully weaves together vibrant florals and nature motifs with striking hues of orange, dark red, and green. Each bead meticulously placed captures the spirit of the natural world. These pieces not only pay homage past generations but also serve as a testament to Gisele's own creative journey. Through her artistic lens, she breathes new life into these timeless patterns, transforming them from adornments for moccasins or gauntlets into framed artworks that command attention and reverence. Gisele's beadwork is more than just art; it's a profound expression of identity and tradition.

