



**Canadian School Boards Association
L'Association canadienne des commissions/conseils scolaires**

**The national voice of school boards * Le porte-parole national des commissions/conseils scolaires **

**NATIONAL RECONCILIATION PARTNERSHIP AWARD
NOMINATION**

Introduction

In 2015, following the conclusion of its historic process to record evidence and gather testimony regarding the Residential School experience throughout Canada, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada issued a total of 94 Calls to Action designed to achieve greater reconciliation among and between the peoples of our nation.

Several of these Calls to Action speak to the particular importance of education as a way forward for healing and reconciliation. Other Calls to Action speak to the realization of broader social commitments that are equally as important. For a comprehensive list of the Calls to Action in both English and French, please visit: <https://nctr.ca/records/reports/>

With this ongoing spirit of reconciliation in view, the Canadian School Boards Association (CSBA) with assistance from the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) has collaborated for the establishment of a National Reconciliation Partnership Award that will be conferred upon a Canadian publicly funded school board and a partner Indigenous organization(s).

The nominees must clearly demonstrate evidence of a significant and sustained commitment to achieving reconciliation for the benefit of their local communities. The behaviours, models or actions demonstrated by the collaborators will reflect great merit not only upon their own achievements but shall constitute a leading standard worthy of national emulation and admiration.

Eligibility

Nominations for consideration by the award selection committee can be submitted by either a publicly funded public school board¹ (i.e.: self-nomination); a peer from among the publicly funded school board community in Canada (third-party nomination); a school board association, or a national, provincial, territorial, or community-based Indigenous organization (self- or third-party nomination).

To be considered, the nomination must include a letter of support from each of the partners:

- 1) a member or trustee of a local school board (inclusive of a Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson of a school board or a formal school boards association) or a senior

¹ Which throughout this document shall be interpreted to include First Nations school boards and educational authorities.

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educational officer (Superintendent, Director-General or Chief Executive Officer) or a school system employee of the nominating publicly funded school board; and

2) a senior governing officer (e.g. Chief, Chief Executive Officer or Superintendent) or an employee of the nominating Indigenous organization (such as a Band Council, provincial or territorial Indigenous representative or political organization, a community-based entity, or an educational authority).

All publicly funded public school boards in Canada are eligible for consideration under this award, even if the publicly funded school board does not belong to an association that is a member of the Canadian School Boards Association.

The award may be considered for multilateral partnerships, where more than two entities are involved. However, at least one of these partners must be a publicly funded school board and one of these partners must be a national, provincial, territorial, or community-based Indigenous organization.

Selection Criteria

The nomination must include letters of support from each of the partners (required), which are independently prepared and written on the official letterhead of their organization, in accompaniment of the application dated during the nomination period (February 24 – April 7, 2025).

The letters of support should:

- attest that the description of the nominated partnership that has been provided is accurate;
- provide concrete evidence of how the partnership has served to advance reconciliation for the benefit of their local communities;
- include clear evidence of innovation, authenticity, relationship, capacity-building, and/or good stewardship; and
- demonstrate sustained community benefit based on the nominees' ongoing practices and partnership.

The application should include:

- the names and emails of the publicly funded school board and the Indigenous organization/community(ies);
- a brief yet comprehensive written description of the partnership (a description in general terms “what” has happened under the partnership, rather than why you believe it to be worthy of the award) and,
- any material evidence in support of the nomination (videos, photographs, written material).

Four general categories have been established for the award, even while it is acknowledged that nominees may meet several of these categories. Nominees must clearly demonstrate how they have advanced one or more of the following:

- Indigenous language and culture
- Indigenous representation (in terms of governance, workforce, or community linkages)

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- The practice of mutual accountability and responsibility (in terms of promoting excellence of outcomes and beneficial governing or administrative frameworks)
- Culturally appropriate learning and teaching practices (including emphasis on land and place-based learning).

Each nomination must describe how the partnership achievements correspond to specific Call(s) to Action issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in 2015 (include as many calls as necessary to describe the partnership).

In addition to how well each application aligns with the four established categories and Calls to Action, the selection committee will review how the above achievements reflect the general principles of innovation, authenticity, relationship, capacity-building, and good stewardship. Ultimately, the committee shall also consider the overall benefit(s) that the partnership and its achievements have provided to the local community(ies).

What this means in practical terms is that the selection committee will study whether the submitted application demonstrates one or more of the following:

- Whether structures, policies and procedures have been developed in collaboration with local Indigenous Nations/communities.
- Sustained priority focused on inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in the work of the publicly funded school board (where we have come from, where we are, where we are going).
- Whether there is evidence of applicants having sustained and meaningful collaboration and “walk the talk”.
- Whether there is evidence that the inclusion of Indigenous people has been incorporated directly into a school division or district’s strategic plan.
- Whether there is evidence of meaningful classroom practices that inculcate a genuine and authentic cultural learning experience – “beyond beads and bannock, drums and dreamcatchers” to land and place-based education that reflects the local Indigenous community.
- Whether there is evidence of professional development for educators to build capacity – beyond one day festivities to actual structural reforms.
- Whether there is evidence that a school system’s practices have resulted in students and staff fostering deep appreciation of Indigenous culture.
- Whether the application reflects the reality that the practices described are not “one initiative” but a sustained commitment to fostering relationships. This includes long-term investment of time and resources.
- Whether the application demonstrates that Indigenous Knowledge is alive and real in the classrooms of the school system, with curricula brought to life for the students without “teaching tools” that are static.
- Whether the actions of the partners, based on their partnership, represent communication of a strong and collective “voice” to institutions, through advocacy for meaningful reforms and inclusion, including initiation of programs and/or professional development throughout the system (e.g. for educational assistants, bus drivers, teachers, etc.)
- Whether the application supports Indigenous language and cultural revitalization.
- Whether the application demonstrates commitment to alliance and being allied by promoting inclusion, bringing parents/caregivers and local Indigenous communities into public education.
- Whether there is evidence that the applicants demonstrate appropriate treaty and legal awareness.

- Whether the application demonstrates meaningful mentorship, where applicable.

The Award

The Award takes the form of a physical award that can be displayed in the offices of each of the partners that have received the award. The CSBA has secured sponsorship to also provide a financial award of \$10,000 to be used to further the efforts of the partnership towards reconciliation.

Two award recipient representatives shall be invited to attend the annual CSBA National Trustees Gathering on Indigenous Education and Congress, to receive the award in person during the program. If a representative(s) cannot afford the expenses of travelling to the CSBA National Trustees Gathering on Indigenous Education and Congress, funding for travel may be provided.

The sponsor will be invited to present the award at the National Trustees Gathering on Indigenous Education and Congress and applicants shall accept such support without qualification or condition and with the understanding that the sponsor shall be publicly recognized for having provided support. In the event that a recipient cannot receive the award in person, the award will be presented via videoconference.

Selection Process / Deadlines

The final deadline to submit nominations for the award will be **April 7, 2025**.

During the month of April, the selection committee, which is comprised of AFN and CSBA appointed representatives, will review the nominations. Following consensus among the selection committee members, final recommendations will be submitted to the CSBA Board of Directors for ratification. Award winners will be notified by May 1, 2025.

All applications will be acknowledged for receipt, but only final award recipients will be contacted regarding the status of their award. Any nominator or nominee who wishes to obtain further information should consult the section below titled “For Further Information”.

How to Apply

Nominations must be submitted electronically in PDF format, with the subject line **CSBA National Reconciliation Partnership Award** by **April 7, 2025** to admin@saskschoolboards.ca.

The document should be limited to 8 pages. The selection committee may request additional information if necessary. Late nominations will not be considered.

For Further Information

If you have any questions related to the award, please contact admin@saskschoolboards.ca