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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 Canadian publicly funded school boards and Indigenous communities and organization(s). Together, in partnership with Indigenous nations and organizations, school boards can make a significant difference in our communities.

# Canadian School Board Association National Reconciliation Partnership Award

**2025**

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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.*





Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools:  
François Rivard (left), Director of Education and  
Diane Boyko (right), Board of Education Chair



Saskatoon Tribal Council:  
Candice Dwernychuk (left), Director of Education and  
Michelle Blackmon (right) Chief Operating Officer



Shirley Isbister, President of Central Urban  
Métis Federation Inc.

*On behalf of the  
Underwriters for the  
Saskatchewan School  
Boards Association General  
Insurance Plan, the award  
goes to Greater Saskatoon  
Catholic Schools Boards  
of Education, Saskatoon  
Tribal council, and Central  
Urban Métis Federation Inc.,  
co-presented by the  
Canadian School Boards  
Association. In addition  
to the award, the partners  
receive \$10,000 to further  
advance their collaborative  
efforts toward achieving  
their partnership goals.*

### PARTNERSHIP DESCRIPTION

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS) maintains long-standing, formalized partnerships with the Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC) and Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. (CUMFI), working collaboratively to advance reconciliation through community-led education. These relationships are rooted in ceremony, cultural resurgence, and shared governance.

Through the māmawohkamātowin partnership with STC and the nākatēyimitowin agreement with CUMFI, GSCS has co-developed initiatives that reflect Cree and Métis worldviews. These include the creation of awāsisak kā-nîmihtocik St. Francis School and the establishment of a Métis School of Excellence at St. Michael Community School.

Supported by ongoing collaboration with STC, CUMFI, and the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, GSCS has embedded Treaty education across the division, implemented culturally grounded mentorship models, and expanded integrated wellness services, including land-based learning, Elder engagement, and community health supports. These initiatives honour Indigenous knowledge systems and foster environments where Indigenous students experience belonging, visibility, and success.

The GSCS model of reconciliation is sustained, system wide, and rooted in relationship. It demonstrates how public education systems can engage in authentic, accountable reconciliation through long-term partnerships with Indigenous communities and organizations.

### 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](https://www.instagram.com/_giselegeorgebeads)

### BEADWORK DESCRIPTION

Gisele's beadwork features a striking depiction of a bison, a powerful symbol of resilience and strength. The figure is brought to life through intricate bead patterns. Each bead is carefully placed, forming a vibrant design that reflects traditional techniques while expressing a contemporary vision. The bison beadwork is a tribute to Indigenous artistry and a unique expression of Gisele's creative voice.

