



CSBA | ACCS

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, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released 94 Calls to Action following its historic work documenting the Residential School system and its impacts. These Calls to Action underscore the vital role of education – a broader social responsibility – in advancing healing and reconciliation across Canada.

In this spirit, the Canadian School Boards Association (CSBA), in collaboration with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), established the National Reconciliation Partnership Award. This award recognizes a publicly funded Canadian school board and a partner Indigenous organization(s) for exemplary, sustained efforts that advance reconciliation within their communities through innovation, shared or co-governance approaches, and the development of respectful relationships.

Nominees must clearly demonstrate evidence of a significant and sustained commitment to achieving reconciliation. Their collaborative actions, approaches, or models should reflect excellence, serve as a national exemplar, and inspiring learning and emulation across Canada.

Eligibility

Nominations may be submitted by:

- a publicly funded school board;
- a peer from the publicly funded school board community in Canada;
- a school board association; or
- a national, provincial, territorial, or community-based Indigenous organization.

Each nomination must include **two letters of support**, one from:

1. a public school board representative (trustee, chair or vice-chair, senior educational officer, or school board employee); and
2. an Indigenous partner representative (senior governing officer or employee of the nominating Indigenous organization).

All publicly funded school boards in Canada are eligible, including those that are not members of the Canadian School Boards Association.

Multilateral partnerships are eligible. At minimum, partnerships must include one publicly funded school board and one Indigenous organization.

Selection Criteria

Each nomination must include **letters of support from all partners** (required). Letters must be independently prepared and written on official organizational letterhead, and dated within the nomination period (February 1 – March 31, 2026).

The letters of support must:

- confirm the accuracy of the partnership description;
- provide concrete evidence of how the partnership advances reconciliation and benefits local communities;
- demonstrate innovation, authenticity, respectful relationships, capacity-building, and/or good stewardship; and
- show sustained community impact through ongoing practices and collaboration.

The application must also include:

- the names and contact emails of the publicly funded school board and the Indigenous organization/community(ies);
- a clear, concise description of the partnership outlining what has been undertaken (rather than why it merits the award); and,
- supporting materials, where available (e.g., videos, photographs, written material).

Award Categories and Assessment

The award recognizes excellence across four broad categories. While nominees may demonstrate achievement in more than one area, applicants must clearly show advancement in at least one or more of the following:

- **Indigenous languages and culture**
- **Indigenous representation**, including governance, workforce, and community connections
- **Mutual accountability and shared responsibility**, including the co-development of policies, governance structures or administrative frameworks that support strong and equitable outcomes
- **Culturally appropriate teaching and learning practices**, with an emphasis on land and place-based education.

Each nomination must describe how the partnership aligns with one or more Call(s) to Action issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in 2015. Applicants should reference all relevant Calls necessary to accurately reflect the partnership's scope and impact.

In addition to alignment with the categories and Calls to Action, the selection committee will assess how the partnerships reflect the principles of innovation, authenticity, respectful relationships, capacity-building, and good stewardship.

Practical Assessment Considerations

In practical terms, the selection committee will consider evidence of one or more of the following:

- Collaborative development of structures, policies and procedures with local Indigenous Nations or communities.

- Sustained integration of Indigenous perspectives in the public school board's work, reflecting past, present and future commitments, long-term, meaningful collaboration that demonstrates accountability and "walking the talk".
- Inclusion of Indigenous voices and priorities within the school board/district's strategic plan.
- Authentic classroom practices that move beyond symbolic activities to locally grounded, land and place-based learning that reflects the local Indigenous community.
- Ongoing professional learning that builds educator capacity and supports systemic change and structural reforms.
- Demonstrated impact on students' and staff's understanding and appreciation of Indigenous cultures.
- Evidence that initiatives represent sustained commitments rather than one-time projects, including long-term investment of time and resources.
- Living and dynamic use of local Indigenous Knowledge in classrooms, rather than static or tokenized materials.
- Collective advocacy by partners that advances inclusion and meaningful reform across the education system, including initiation of programs and/or professional development throughout the system (e.g. for educational assistants, bus drivers, teachers, etc.)
- Support for Indigenous languages and cultural revitalization.
- Active allyship that promotes inclusion and engages parents, caregivers and local Indigenous communities in public education.
- Demonstrate appropriate treaty and legal awareness.
- Meaningful mentorship practices, where relevant.

The Award

The Award consists of a physical recognition piece to be displayed in the offices of each of the partner organizations receiving the award. In addition, the CSBA has secured sponsorship to provide a financial award of \$10,000, to be used to advance the partnership's ongoing efforts towards reconciliation.

One representative from each partner organization within the recipient partnership will be invited to attend the annual 2026 Trustee Gathering on Education, Innovation and Reconciliation in July in Whistler, British Columbia, where the award will be formally presented during the program. Financial support may be provided to facilitate award acceptance. The Award sponsor will be invited to present the award and recipients shall agree to the public recognition of the sponsor's support, without qualification or condition.

Selection Process / Deadlines

The final deadline to submit nominations for the award will be **March 31, 2026**. Award winners will be notified by May 1, 2026.

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".

Submitted applications may be retained and posted on the CSBA website to showcase reconciliation initiatives from across Canada; applicants who do not wish their submission to be posted must clearly indicate this at the time of nomination.

How to Apply

Nominations must be submitted electronically in PDF format, with the subject line **CSBA National Reconciliation Partnership Award** by **March 31, 2026** 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