



NEWS RELEASE

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Rooted in Relationship: GSCS Receives National Recognition for Indigenous Partnerships

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS), and partners in education Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC) and Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. (CUMFI), received the 2025 Canadian School Boards Association (CSBA) National Reconciliation Partnership Award.

Presented November 17, 2025, in Regina, SK at the Saskatchewan School Boards' Association's (SSBA) annual banquet, the award recognizes meaningful, long-term partnerships between school divisions and Indigenous communities across Canada.

The award submission, titled *Living Reconciliation: A Commitment in Action*, highlighted the division's collaborative work with the STC and CUMFI. For more than two decades, GSCS has built relationships, walking alongside these organizations in the spirit of truth, responsibility, and healing. With the partnerships grounded in co-governance and mutual accountability, the organizations have built integrated networks of programs, practices, and policies that elevate Indigenous language and culture, prioritize student wellness, and embed community-led education into the heart of the school division.

The māmawohkamātowin partnership with STC guides Cree language and cultural learning. The most visible example of the partnership is the new awâsisak kâ-nîmîhtocik St. Francis School, Canada's largest Cree bilingual school. Extensive consultation with Elders, families, and Indigenous partners ensures the school reflects the shared vision or reclamation and revitalization of traditional language, culture and ceremony.

Other initiatives resulting from the partnership with STC include community health at St. Mary's Wellness and Education Centre, the miyo mâcihowin cultural mentorship program at E.D. Feehan Catholic High School, and Pathways Student Support Program.

The nâkatēyimitowin alliance with CUMFI has led to the creation of a Métis School of Excellence at St. Michael Community School, where Michif language and Métis culture are taught. Michif language instruction from kindergarten to Grade 4 is supported by Métis Nation–Saskatchewan. It is more than language instruction, it is a reclamation of identity, worldview, and community pride. GSCS staff

participate in and help organize CUMFI's annual Michif Language Camp at Batoche, where our staff come not as guests, but as relatives.

CUMFI President Shirley Isbister wrote a letter of support that stated, "Our partnership has grown from a foundation of mutual respect and shared responsibility to one that now models the very spirit of reconciliation in action. GSCS does not simply speak to the values of reconciliation, they live them through ongoing, tangible efforts that uplift our Métis community, language, and identity."

Relationships have accelerated the divisions work in responding the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. STC, CUMFI and the Office of the Treaty Commissioner have been integral in the year-long learning process that has led up to each school's Treaty 6 medal installation.

In a letter of support, STC Tribal Chief Mark Arcand noted, "When I see a Treaty 6 medal installed in a GSCS school, or at their board office, I see a visible sign of their commitment to that process. It gives me assurance that the students and staff have made a concerted effort to understand First Nations peoples, our customs and traditions; the history and context of treaties; the atrocities of residential schools; and the legacy of colonial practices. Events to demonstrate and celebrate student learning help communicate the importance of such learning, not only to students and staff, but to parents, caregivers, family members, and people in the broader community too."

"We are proud of the work our own staff and trustees have done to foster reconciliation, provide a safe environment for ongoing healing, and encourage Indigenous students to embrace their traditional language, customs and culture," said Diane Boyko, GSCS Board of Education Chair. "I must acknowledge that our progress has had a significant boost thanks to the many partnerships we are blessed to have, particularly those with STC and CUMFI."

- 30 -

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