

The Secretary's Award for Excellent Service

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What's new in 2025

- At least 1 award will be presented to a school leader (Assistant Principal, Deputy Principal or Principal); at least 1 award will be presented to an early childhood educator; and at least 1 award will be presented to a SASS
- Department values should be referenced when addressing the criteria for this award.
- Nominations for this category will be entered via the [Award Force platform](#). Visit the [Public Education Awards](#) intranet page for more information, or the [Public Education Foundation](#) website if you are a parent/guardian.

About this Category

The Secretary's Award for Excellent Service is a prestigious award presented to individuals who have shown outstanding effort in improving the quality of teaching and/or learning outcomes in the NSW public education sector. It recognises an individual's achievements in providing excellent service and their contributions to their professional communities.

Up to 15 awards and commendations may be presented this year, including:

- at least 1 award for an early childhood educator;
- at least 1 award for school administrative support staff;
- and at least 1 award for a school leader (Assistant Principal, Deputy Principal or Principal).

The selection panel reserves the right to award fewer than 15 awards if nomination quality is not sufficiently high, or if applicants do not provide adequate evidence of achievements and outcomes.

A school may submit a maximum of 2 nominations per year for this award.

Who can be nominated?

For a nominee to be eligible for the award, they must be:

- Current employees in NSW government preschools or schools.
- Casual, temporary staff and contractors in schools who will still be employed by the Department of Education when the awards ceremony is held.
- Current employees who will not retire or otherwise leave the service before the end of 2025.

To be nominated for a Teaching award, the nominee must be a current Teacher, Principal or Counsellor.

To be nominated for a School Operations award, the nominee must be a current Teacher's aide, School Learning Support Officer, Aboriginal Education Officer, Home School Liaison Officer, Community Liaison Officer, School Administrative Manager, School Administrative Officer, Technical Support Officer, General Assistant, Farm Assistant, Early Childhood Educator or Business Manager.

Who can nominate?

Members of preschool or school communities may nominate an individual for this Award.

Nominators can include, but are not limited to school principals, head teachers, directors, parents and/or guardians.

Roles in Nomination Process

Nominator - an individual who has knowledge of the nominee's professional work and can provide details of the nominee's achievements in providing excellent service and their contributions to their professional communities.

Referee – either the Deputy Principal, Principal or Director, Educational Leadership.

Endorser - All nominations must be endorsed by the school Principal (or Director, Educational Leadership (DEL) in the case of a DP or Principal nomination). The Principal/DEL is also asked to provide a citation to be used in the Award's program should the nomination be successful.

The reference must be provided by a person who is not the nominator or the endorser of the nomination.

Does the nominee know they are nominated?

Yes. Nominees will receive an email once the nomination has been submitted, so nominators are asked to discuss the nomination with them before proceeding.

Award Criteria

The Award recognises the achievements in providing excellent service and contributions to the professional education communities. Nominations must clearly state how the nominee goes **above and beyond** in their role and should include explicit evidence/examples.

Individuals who are nominated must demonstrate:

- Excellence in teaching or administrative practice that has made a significant and measurable contribution to improved learner outcomes in learning environments and school operations;
- Initiation or contribution to identify and implement improvements in school and administrative operations;
- Strong support for the professional development and wellbeing of other colleagues; and
- Maintaining and developing a strong connection between the school and community.

Nomination Questions

Refer to the nomination questions below in preparation for writing your entry for a Secretary's Award for Excellent Service.

1. **Describe how the nominee has shown excellence in teaching practice or school service that has made a significant and measurable contribution to improved student outcomes through supporting and implementing improvements in learning environments, administrative and school operations, wellbeing, and/or community relationships. (max 200 words)**
 - Highlight the behaviours, actions and outcomes of the nominee in line with the [department values](#) and the [Plan for NSW Public Education](#).
 - Particular attention should be given to illustrating how the nominee delivers above and beyond their role.
 - Refer to the [Public Education Awards Writing Guide](#) for examples and tips to write your nomination.
2. **Please give an example of how, through identifying needs and applying effective practices, the nominee initiated, or contributed to, improvements in student learning, administrative and school operations, wellbeing, and/or community relationships. (max 200 words)**
 - Outline the situation, task, action, and result for your example.
 - Use an example that highlights the behaviours, actions and outcomes of the nominee in line with the [department values](#) and the [Plan for NSW Public Education](#).
 - Particular attention should be given to illustrating how the nominee delivers above and beyond their role.
 - Refer to the [Public Education Awards Writing Guide](#) for examples and tips to write your nomination
3. **Explain how the nominee is actively involved in collaborating and sharing knowledge with other educators/colleagues which results in tangible improvements across classrooms and/or the school. (max 200 words)**
 - Particular attention should be given to illustrating how the nominee delivers above and beyond their usual role, using examples that highlight the behaviours, actions and outcomes of the nominee in line with [department values](#) and the [Plan for NSW Public Education](#).
4. **Upload a reference from the nominee's Deputy Principal or DEL confirming the nominee's commitment to delivering high quality education to students and their contributions to their professional community (uploaded pdf – maximum 300 words)**
 - Note – if the nominee is the DP, the reference should be provided by the Principal and the endorsement and citation provided by the DEL. Where the nomination is for a teaching Principal, the reference can be from the DP or another Principal, with the endorsement and citation provided by the DEL.

5. Endorsement by the school Principal with a citation.

- School principals will need to provide a 100-word citation of how the nominee has demonstrated excellence.
- **This citation will be used during the award ceremony should the nomination be successful.**
- Refer to the [Public Education Awards Writing Guide](#) for examples and tips to write your nomination.

6. Upload a recent head and shoulders photo of the nominee which will be used in the awards program should the nomination be successful.

Closing Date

Nominations close at 5:00pm on Friday 9 May 2025. No late nominations will be considered.