

# Application Guidelines 2025–26

Nova Scotia is committed to amplifying local voices, including those of families, students and Student Advisory Councils (SACs), by supporting ongoing initiatives like the SAC Innovation Fund this year.

## About The Fund

The SAC Innovation Fund includes \$250,000 in funding to provide grants of up to \$10,000 to SACs. The fund will encourage new and innovative ideas to support student achievement and well-being and address real problems experienced by students and schools. This funding is meant to provide SACs with the opportunity to test an idea.

Applications should be innovative and add value to the educational experience of students at the school. SACs are encouraged to consider novel approaches to address existing issues and identify opportunities to enhance student achievement and well-being. Where possible, ideas should be linked to the school's Student Success Plan and supported by data on student achievement and well-being.

Any SAC that supports a public school in Nova Scotia can apply. A joint SAC supporting multiple schools can submit one application per school. Funds are provided by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) and will be distributed through the Regional Centres for Education (RCEs) and Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) to the successful grant recipients. Funds are intended to be spent entirely in the 2025–26 school year.

The grant may be combined with other available funding to support a project. This includes but is not limited to the annual funding received by SACs and the Healthy Schools Grant. SACs should note in their application any additional sources of funding that will be used to support the proposed project.

Funds are provided for the use described in the application. No significant changes to the project can be made without approval of the RCE/CSAP. Changes to the project must be requested in writing and submitted to their Regional SAC representative.

SACs who are awarded grants must submit a final report detailing the outcome of their project. EECD hopes to identify ideas and create opportunities to improve student experience and inform decision making. There will be opportunities to share information about your project with other SACs at events such as the SAC provincial meeting.

## Application Process

The SAC Innovation Fund Application has been sent to SAC Chairs and Principals and is also available on: [SAC School Advisory Councils | Education and Early Childhood Development](#).

The SAC must complete an application using the **SAC Innovation Fund Application Form** and submit via email ([SACInnovationFund@novascotia.ca](mailto:SACInnovationFund@novascotia.ca)) by June 6th, 2025. SACs that require support to complete the application are encouraged to reach out to their Regional SAC representative.

Applications will be reviewed and scored by a committee.

## Evaluation Criteria

Application Section	Guiding question	Point Value
Objective	What are you trying to achieve?	10 points
Project Description	How will this project be implemented?	20 points
Impact	How will this project impact student achievement and well-being at your school?	25 points
Innovation	How is this project new, different, and innovative?	25 points
Evaluation	How will you know you have met your objective?	10 points
Budget	How will the funds be spent?	10 points
		<b>TOTAL: 100 Points</b>

## Funding Decisions

The two highest scoring applications in each RCE/CSAP will be funded, and the four highest scoring applications in HRCE will be funded. Applications must score above 50 to be funded. If a RCE/CSAP does not have enough applications that score above 50, those funds will be used to fund other high-ranking applications.

Remaining grant funds will be awarded based on scoring. All remaining grant applications from all RCEs/CSAP will be ranked collectively based on score, and applications will be funded starting with the highest scoring application until all remaining funds are spent or all applications scoring above 50 have been funded.

## Timeline

Guidelines and application forms released	April 2025
Application deadline	June 6, 2025
Notification of results	June 2025
Funds released to grant recipients	September 2025
Final report submitted by SAC	May 31, 2026

## Communication/Accountability

All applicants will receive communication to let them know the result of their application. Communication will be sent to the SAC Chair (or delegate) and school principal. EECD will announce SAC Innovation Fund recipients, including a brief description of each project. SACs that receive funding are responsible for communicating to their school community about their project.

All SACs that receive these funds must submit a final report to their Regional SAC representative by May 31, 2026. A report template will be provided. Any unspent funds must be returned to EECD when the final report is submitted.

## Application Form Sections

This section provides information to help SACs complete each section of the application form. Any questions should be directed to your Regional SAC representative.

### Applicant Information

The name and contact information of the SAC Chair and school principal should be provided. The SAC Chair may choose another SAC member as the main contact person. If there are questions related to the application, the SAC Chair (or delegate) will be contacted.

### Project Title And Summary

**Title:** a brief phrase that describes the project.

**Summary:** one or two sentences that describe the project.

### Objective – What are you trying to achieve?

What is the SAC hoping will happen because of this project? This should be the main outcome the SAC would like to see as a result of implementing this project. Describe how you intend to measure success.

#### Considerations:

- Have you been specific about how your project supports student achievement and well-being?
- Can you make connections between your project goals and community engagement, student success, sustainability, inclusive education, and/or accessibility, where applicable?
- Does student voice and/or student surveys and research support your project goals?

### Project Description – How will this project be implemented?

Describe what you intend to do and how you will do it. Please include a timeline of when key actions will take place, or when key milestones will be achieved. Projects must be completed within one school year.

#### Considerations:

- What are the key actions/activities that will be undertaken to achieve your objective?
- Who will be involved in supporting this work?
- What resources will be required?
- Have you outlined potential challenges you might face when implementing your project and stated how you would address these challenges?

### Impact – How will this project impact student achievement and well-being at your school?

Innovation fund projects should contribute to student success, achievement and well-being. How does this project do this?

#### Considerations:

- Why is this an important project for your school?
- What has your SAC observed in the Student Success Survey?
- What has your SAC noted in provincial/other achievement results?
- What other data describes your school?

- How will this project positively impact the school community?
- Are there any direct ways various demographics of students will benefit from the project?
- How does this link to the student success plan?
- Does this project address any concerns raised in the Student Success Survey?
- Does this project support inclusive education and align with guiding principles of the Inclusive Education Policy?

## **Innovation – How is this project new, different, and innovative?**

Innovation allows us to address real problems experienced by students and schools. SAC are encouraged describe the problem and how their project will address it in a new way. This funding provides an opportunity to test an idea.

### **Considerations:**

- How is your project innovative? (e.g. A new approach to an existing issue? Addressing a new issue? A proactive approach to an emerging issue?)
- Is it innovative in its focus, the way it is carried out, and/or in the resources it utilizes?
- How was this topic/issue addressed in the past?
- Is this idea building on a past success or failure?
- Has this idea been implemented in other schools or jurisdictions?
- How was this idea generated?
- Would expanding student/community engagement and inclusivity help demonstrate innovation in your application?

## **Evaluation – How will you know you have met your objective?**

Evaluation is an important component of any new project. Understanding successes and failures provides valuable information that can help shape future work. As part of the application process, SACs must consider how they will evaluate their project. SACs who receive funding will be required to submit a final report that includes a summary of the evaluation findings.

### **Considerations:**

- How will you know if you have achieved your objective?
- What data or information will be collected and when?
- How will you know the impact this project is having on students?

## Budget – How will the funds be spent?

Use of funds is governed by the procurement and financial guidelines of the RCE/CSAP. Funds can be used for any expense allowed under those guidelines. SACs may apply for up to \$10,000 in funding but can apply for lower amounts if their project can be completed with a smaller budget.

Category	Definition
Materials and Supplies	Any materials that are required to complete the project. Materials are generally consumables. If the cost of materials is included in a contract it does not need to be listed separately (for example, print outs or training manuals provided by a facilitator)). Any materials purchased with these funds are the property of the RCE/ CSAP.
Equipment	Any equipment purchased is the property of the RCE/CSAP after the project is complete. This includes any equipment, adaptive tools, and resources (books, learning materials) that will not be consumed during the project. All technology must be pre-approved by your RCE/CSAP.
Travel/Transportation	This should include all travel costs associated with the project including travel for consultants (if not included in consulting fees), presenters, and SAC members. Travel costs should align with provincial guidelines.
Contracts	Any agreements entered into to complete the project.
Consultants	Professional service agreements entered into to complete the project.
Honoraria	Any honoraria paid with project funds should be included.
Other (please describe)	Any costs not fitting the above categories can be included here. A heading and brief description should be included. Consider if there are any labour or training costs associated with the project.
<b>Innovation Fund Grant</b>	<b>The total request made to the SAC Innovation Fund. It should not exceed \$10,000.</b>
Funds from other sources	If funds from any other sources are required to complete the project they must be listed. Please indicate if the funds are secured or if an application is required to obtain them. For example, if the SAC plans to use the Healthy School Grant to provide additional project funding indicate this and whether the request has been approved.
<b>Total project cost</b>	<b>The total budget for the project including all funds needed to complete the work.</b>

## Budget Details

Please provide any additional information that will help the reviewers better understand how funds will be used to support your project. If the total project cost below exceeds the \$10,000 available through the Innovation Fund, clearly identify which specific elements of the project the Innovation Fund will be supporting.