

musicounts

2026/27 NOMINATION GUIDELINES

MusiCounts
Teacher of the Year

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Key Dates

- **November 23 2026:** Nomination Open
- **December 21 2026:** Nomination Deadline
- **February 2027:** Nominee Announced
- **April 2027:** Winner Announced

If you have any questions, please reach out to Nick Godsoe, Claire Leslie-Turnbull, or Tara Schell at applications@musicounts.ca, or use this link to schedule an appointment with a member of the Programs Team.

Program Overview

The MusiCounts Teacher of the Year Award was established in 2005 to recognize and honour an exceptional Canadian music teacher each year.

To date, this award has celebrated the accomplishments of **20** music educators across Canada who strive to preserve the livelihood of music education in their school and community.



Nomination Process

School administrators, colleagues, parents and students may nominate eligible educators (see below) for the MusiCounts Teacher of the Year Award.

The nominator is responsible for completing and submitting a completed Nomination Form via the MusiCounts Grant Portal by the deadline of **December 21, 2026**.

In addition to outlining some general information about the nominee, the nominator will need to provide the following to complete the Nomination Form:

1. **One letter of nomination**, prepared by the nominator. This may not exceed two pages in length, and must be submitted as a PDF.
2. **Two letters of recommendation**, prepared by others who are familiar with the nominee's teaching. Each letter of recommendation may not exceed one page in length, and must be submitted as a PDF. At least one of letter of recommendation must come from a teacher or administrator who the nominee has worked with.

To begin a Nomination Form, click here.

To log in to the MusiCounts Grant Portal and edit an existing Nomination Form, click here.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to receive the MusiCounts Teacher of the Year Award:

- Nominees must be a practicing music educator in Canada.
- Nominees must have at least five years of teaching experience.
- Nominees must have prepared and successfully received a MusiCounts School Music Funding Program grant on behalf of their current school, or a school they have taught at in the past.

Evaluation Criteria and Key Attributes

The MusiCounts Teacher of the Year (MTOY) should possess the following Key Attributes:

1. **Passion.** The MTOY should demonstrate an extraordinary commitment to teaching, and should have a demonstrated history of providing meaningful musical experiences for students.
2. **Advocacy.** The MTOY should be a strong advocate for preserving quality music education in Canadian schools through fundraising, and voicing their passion for music education on different committees and boards, etc.
3. **Experience.** The MTOY's teaching should reflect a prolonged dedication to music education and student impact.
4. **Inclusivity.** The MTOY should ensure students of varying backgrounds and skill levels have the opportunity to learn, experience, and appreciate music.
5. **Adaptability.** The MTOY should have a proven track record of adapting and diversifying their teaching practices to keep up with changing student needs.
6. **Recognition.** The MTOY should have the support, respect, and admiration of students, parents, administrators and colleagues. They should be regarded as a leader in their community and a mentor in their field.
7. **Inspirational.** The MTOY should make tangible and positive differences in the lives of students, with the ability to motivate, challenge, and encourage them to be more confident creators and appreciators of music.



Selection Process

From the initial pool of nominations received, a finalist pool of five nominees is determined by an adjudication committee. Adjudicators make their selection based on the nominees' alignment with the MusiCounts Teacher of the Year Key Attributes (see previous page).

All nominees and nominators are notified of the outcome of the first round of the adjudication process before the winter break.

Over the Winter break, the five finalist nominees are asked to submit additional materials which discuss their experience and approach to teaching music. These materials are typically due in January.

A committee of music education leaders from across the country review each of the finalist nominee's materials—along with the initial nomination materials—and makes their recommendation for who they believe should receive the award.

The recipient of the **2027 MusiCounts Teacher of the Year Award** will be announced during JUNO Week in **Winnipeg, MB this April**.

Teachers who are selected as one of the five Finalist Nominees for the 2026/27 MusiCounts Teacher of the Year Award will not be eligible to be nominated for the Award in 2027/28. Finalist Nominees who do not win the Award may be nominated for the MusiCounts Teacher of the Year Award again in Fall 2028.



Contact Info

If you have any questions, please reach out to Nick Godsoe, Claire Leslie-Turnbull, or Tara Schell at applications@musicounts.ca, or use this link to schedule an appointment with a member of the Programs Team.