



What is sound evidence?

The Schools First Awards aim to promote excellence in school and community partnerships for the purpose of improving outcomes for young people. For each award category - Impact or Seed - there are five evidence-based criteria. Wherever possible, you need to provide **sound evidence** to support your case for an award. In order to show what your program has achieved or hopes to achieve, providing **sound evidence** is important.

Impact Award applications

Impact Awards are for school-community partnerships already in existence. Your application should show evidence of the need or opportunity that led to your partnership or program being set up in the first place. You need to refer to research that has been carried out in this area of need. You must also provide evidence of improved student outcomes associated with the program.

Your Impact Award application should:

- identify a need or opportunity in your school
- show very clearly the difference the program has made to students
- show how the program has contributed to this difference

Seed Award applications

Seed Awards are for school-community partnerships that are either in the process of being set up or in the early stages of one. Your application should show evidence of an identified need or opportunity. You need to refer to research that has been carried out in this area of need. You must also provide evidence of anticipated improved student outcomes associated with the program.

Your Seed Award application should:

- identify a need or opportunity in your school
- show clearly the difference your program is *expected* to make to students
- show how the program *will* contribute to this difference

Some examples of sound evidence:

Identification of a need or opportunity.

Evidence could be:

- Needs analysis documents and processes
- Data collection (e.g. surveys, school performance data, parent feedback, observations)
- Reference to contemporary research in identifying the need and how to address it, reading and other professional activities
- Analysis of existing or similar programs/practices – externally or internally
- Documentation of early communication between partners
- Measures of student performance/behaviour/results/attendance/attitudes
- Outcomes data from which change/progress can be tracked

Planning and setting up your partnership.

Evidence could be:

- School and community partner strategic/business plan, other strategic documents
- A communications strategy
- A timeline for achieving the goals
- An outline of a budget
- Risk identification matrix/table
- Community consultation
- Details of teamwork and task allocation, collaborative decision making





Describe the program/project that was set up and how each partner contributed.

Evidence could be:

- A written account of the partnership's activities
- Examples of communication between partners (e.g. newsletters)
- Record of members of the leadership team/s
- Employee release time to meet and work on partnership-related activities
- Documents showing management structure
- Records of meetings
- Information sessions held by and for partners
- Inventory of partnership activities
- Student involvement in the partnership activities
- Feedback from parents, students, review meetings
- Regular reflection/evaluation procedures
- Showing clear links between activities and the need/goal

The program has been or will be mutually beneficial to the students and the partner and has resulted or will result in improved student outcomes.

Evidence could be:

- Improved student outcomes such as changes in attendance, graduation, performance on pre and post tests, classroom behaviour, student engagement
- Increased teacher/employee participation in professional learning opportunities
- Increased opportunities for students to take an active role in decision making
- Greater parent involvement in school activities
- Improved school resources, finances
- A higher profile in the community

The partnership can be sustained.

Evidence could be:

- Planning documents and budget estimates
- Detailed marketing plan for the future
- Documentation of the sharing of expertise and physical resources
- Reciprocal web links, newsletters, publications
- The continuing commitment by the school and the partner – in the form of staff resources, financial commitment, timetabling, school improvement plan
- Mentoring and succession planning

