

MEDIA STATEMENT

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Prairie Spirit Educator Receives Prestigious Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence

Prairie Spirit School Division is very proud to congratulate Natasha Cochran, a Prairie Spirit principal/teacher for Willow Park Colony School, who was awarded a Certificate of Excellence as part of the annual Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence.



Natasha Cochran

Natasha is one of only eight educators across the country to receive this national recognition and the only educator from Saskatchewan to be honoured with a Certificate of Excellence this year, one of Canada's most prestigious honours for educators.

Natasha has been teaching at Willow Park Colony School near Delisle since 2023, where she serves as both principal and classroom teacher. Willow Park Colony School is part of Prairie Spirit School Division, the rural and urban school division that surrounds the City of Saskatoon.

In her Kindergarten to Grade 9 classroom, she navigates the complexities of teaching multiple grade levels while supporting students who are all learning English as an additional language. Her approach combines high expectations, responsive instruction and a deep commitment to helping every student experience success.

For Natasha, this national recognition is an opportunity to reflect on the educators and communities who have shaped her own journey.

"I receive this award with deep gratitude for the people who have shaped me, the families who trust me, and the opportunity to carry that influence forward. If I can help even a few students discover their abilities, develop a love of learning, and believe in what they might become, then I will have honoured the remarkable teachers who helped me discover those things for myself," she said.

"I want my students to know that their ideas matter, that their experiences and culture have a place in their education, and that learning can be challenging, meaningful, and joyful," Natasha added.

"We are incredibly proud of Natasha and thrilled to see her exceptional work recognized on a national stage," said Tracey Young, Director of Education for Prairie Spirit School Division. "Natasha demonstrates what is possible when a teacher knows their students deeply, understands the curriculum, and draws on a wide range of instructional strategies to ensure every student is challenged and supported in their learning. She creates a culture of academic rigour where students are encouraged to discover what they are capable of achieving. Her passion for her students, her community and the teaching profession is truly inspiring."

Prior to joining Prairie Spirit School Division, Natasha taught in Sun West School Division for 15 years. In addition to her work as a principal/teacher, Natasha teaches graduate and undergraduate courses at the University of Saskatchewan.

Full details about Natasha's nomination and award: [2026 Recipient biographies – Teaching Excellence](#)

The Prime Minister's Awards have recognized outstanding educators since 1994.

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Prairie Spirit School Division serves 11,400 students in 45 schools and 28 communities surrounding the City of Saskatoon.

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