

GUIDELINES

2 Gether > 1 (Together Is Greater Than One)

Please review the guidelines carefully as your submission may be rejected if incomplete.

OSSTF/FEESO invites secondary student writers and artists to submit creative work exploring 2026's Student Achievement Awards theme: **2 Gether > 1**.

'Together is Greater Than One' invites you to explore the power of unity and collective action. It's about recognizing that when we work together, we can overcome challenges, lift each other up, and create a stronger, more equitable society. Just like the Aristotle quote "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts", 'Together is Greater Than One' reminds us of the importance of supporting each other and the benefits of working collaboratively to accomplish a mutually agreed upon goal.

Get inspired by this year's theme of: **2 Gether > 1** and create a piece of writing or work of art that explores the theme. (This could include, but is not limited to, a poem, short story, essay, lyrics, painting, drawing, sculpture etc.) We even have a category for digital productions such as videos and music. Share your creative vision with the world!

A student, with the support of an OSSTF/FEESO member who has worked directly with the student, will submit an original piece of writing, visual art or digital media based on this year's theme, **2 Gether > 1**. The eight provincial winners will receive a cash award of \$1,000.00 and will be invited to the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation annual general meeting in Toronto to receive their award.

The Student Achievement Awards celebrate the work of OSSTF/FEESO members (teachers and education workers) and their students. Find out which of the eight categories you will enter at: www.osstf.on.ca/studentachievementawards.

IMPORTANT:

Entry procedures—see the infographic, student tips and student template letters on the website! Students and supporting staff do not submit work directly to the OSSTF/FEESO Provincial Office. Entries must first be judged at the school level, then be sent, by your staff member, to the District OSSTF/FEESO office for judging. Winning District entries will then be sent, by District office personnel, to the Provincial Office of OSSTF/FEESO for final judging.

1. Students

- Submit an entry, as well as the appropriate entry form, to your sponsoring teacher or education worker in one of the divisions and categories listed. Make sure you include your supporting staff Member endorsement letter.

2. Supporting OSSTF/FEESO Member

- Support students with their submission, select one entry per category, and submit it to your school/worksite OSSTF/FEESO staff representative, branch president, or school Student Achievement Awards coordinator. Please write a **detailed** endorsement letter of your role to submit with your student's work. Use the Supporting Member template to help create your detailed letter.

3. Sponsoring school

- Select one entry per category to submit to your LOCAL OSSTF/FEESO District office no later than **November 19, 2025**.

4. OSSTF/FEESO District office

- Select a local District winner in each category and forward the winning entries to the OSSTF/FEESO Provincial Office no later than **December 5, 2025**. **Please do not send an incomplete entry or entry without supporting staff Member letter to Provincial Office.**

Once submitted to the Provincial Office, District winners will be judged at a regional level with the possibility to move on to be judged at the provincial level.

Divisions and categories

Select Division A or B. On the entry form, check off one box only in the correct category. Please see specific criteria for each division and category. Adult learners are encouraged to participate at the level at which they are studying or can enter the non-credit category. Special education students can either enter at the level which they are studying or enter the non-credit category.

Division A - Prose and Poetry

There are four distinct categories in the Prose and Poetry Division:

- Category 1: Prose and Poetry, English Intermediate, 9–10
- Category 2: Prose and Poetry, English Senior, 11–12
- Category 3: Prose and Poetry, French, 9–12
- Category 4: Prose and Poetry, Non-Credit, 9–12 (Please see the entry form for additional information.)

Prose and Poetry Division submission guidelines

Please note that prose and poetry compete against each other in the judging. All entries must be reflective of this year's theme. To be eligible for judging, entries must:



Preferably word-processed.



Have a length of **750** words or less.



Include an original title on the entry form, not just the name of the contest.



Include a detailed written or recorded description, from your supporting staff member, of the role of the OSSTF/FEESO sponsoring staff Member (teacher or education worker) played in the development of your entry (this must be written by your supporting staff member – **max 125 words**).



Note: Submission will be disqualified if the role of staff member is not included.

Ensure that you have read the guidelines; your entry form will be **DISQUALIFIED** if not complete and attached to your submission.



Email entries are not accepted.



Each school may submit only one entry per category for a **total of four entries** in the Prose and Poetry Division.

Division B - Visual and Media

There are four distinct categories in the Visual and Media Division. Submissions can either be French or English for all categories in the Visual and Media Division:

- Category 1: Visual, Intermediate, 9–10
- Category 2: Visual, Senior, 11–12
- Category 3: Visual, Non-Credit, 9–12 (For more information on this category, see entry form.)
- Category 4: Media, French or English, 9–12

Visual entries may include painting, drawing, photography, printmaking, digital illustration, mixed media, sculpture, assemblage, installation, etc. For large entries, a picture or video may be submitted.

Media could include animation, original music, slam poetry and spoken word, podcast, and video submissions.

Visual Division submission guidelines

To be eligible for judging, entries must:



Include a detailed written or recorded description of how your art relates to the theme. (**Max 250 words or two-minute video or audio recording**)



Include a detailed written or recorded description, written by supporting staff member, of the role of the OSSTF/FEESO sponsoring staff member (teacher or education worker) played in the development of your entry (this must be written by your supporting staff member – **max 125 words or two-minute video/audio recording**). **Note: Submission will not be accepted if the role of staff member is not included.**



Photographs and works on paper should be properly matted and/or backed by cardboard/foam core for their protection.



Include an original title on the entry form, not just the name of the contest!



Heavy pencil, charcoal, pastel or other material that may smear should be treated with an art fixative prior to submission. Such pieces should also have a protective overlay.



Ensure that you have read the guidelines. Your entry form will be **DISQUALIFIED** if not complete and attached to your submission.



Email entries are **not accepted** for non-digital entries unless the sculpture or installation is too large to submit.



Media Division submission guidelines

To be eligible for judging, entries must:

Include a detailed written or recorded description of how your art relates to the theme. (**Max 250 words or two-minute video or audio recording**)



Include a detailed written or recorded description of the role of the OSSTF/FEESO sponsoring staff member (teacher or education worker) played in the development of your entry (this must be written by your supporting staff member – **max 125 words or two-minute video/audio recording**). **Note: Submission will not be accepted if the role of staff member is not included.**



An indication of the computer software required to view completed work. We would prefer your video/audio to be uploaded to **YouTube for ease of viewing or include a thumb drive with your entry**. Video length should be **no more than five minutes**. Music should be **no more than three minutes**. **NOTE: Thumb drives will NOT be returned to students.**



Include an original title on the entry form, not just the name of the contest!



Sourced/copyrighted material **must be credited. Do not use copyrighted material without permission**. Free music is available at freemusicarchive.org, bensound.com/royalty-free-music/2 or freeplaymusic.com



If an original song, please indicate whether you wrote the song, if you were accompanied or played the music.



Ensure that you have read the guidelines. Your entry form will be **DISQUALIFIED** if not complete and attached to your submission.



Each school may submit only one entry per category for **a maximum of four entries** in the Visual and Media Division.

OSSTF/FEESO reserves the right to use prose and poetry entries or portions thereof or to use photos or excerpts from visual and media entries in future Federation publications. Entries will be returned to local District offices following OSSTF/FEESO's annual meeting in March 2026.

If you have any further questions, please call Tracey Marshall, Executive Assistant at (416) 751-8300 or 1 (800) 267-7867 or contact her by email at student.achievement.awards@osstf.ca.