



MEDIA RELEASE – October 16, 2024

RE: School District No. 83 Name Change

Background:

At the May 2024 Regular Board Meeting, Darrell Jones, Chair of the Quelmúcw Education Council, presented a briefing note requesting that the name of the North Okanagan-Shuswap School District be changed to a Secwépemctsín word or phrase. The Board unanimously supported the recommendation and asked the Quelmúcw Education Council to consult with their communities, Secwépemctsín language speakers, and Knowledge Keepers.

Following consultations, which included meetings with language speakers and Knowledge Keepers from all four Bands, and informing Chiefs and Councils of the process, consensus was reached at the Quelmúcw Education Council. This resulted in Mr. Jones returning to the Board during the September 24, 2024, meeting to present a new name as a gift to the Board. At that meeting, the School District No. 83 Board of Education voted to adopt the Secwépemctsín phrase "K̓wsaltktnéws ne Secwepemcúl'ecw," meaning "we are all connected (people, animals, sky, land, and water) on Secwépemc land." The phrase was considered especially fitting as it complements the symbolism of the District's newly adopted logo.

While the pronunciation may take time to master, the Board emphasized the importance of practicing and using the name respectfully, honouring the Rightsholders of this land.

Pronunciation Guide:

- **K̓wsaltktnéws: KWA-SEELT-K-NAWS**
- **ne Secwepemcúl'ecw: NAY SUH-KWEP-MUK-OO-LOO**

To assist students, staff, and the public with adopting the new name, there will be educational work that will include videos on District and school websites supporting the pronunciation of the Secwépemctsín words. QR codes will be placed at District sites which will take the user to a recorded pronunciation, written and digital print will be utilized to support the adoption of the name change along with messaging through radio and television.

In alignment with the District's Strategic Plan, under the priority of Effective Governance and Leadership, this decision reaffirms the Board's commitment to Truth and Reconciliation. The Board recognizes that the District operates on the ancestral lands of the Secwépemc people, who have been stewards of this land since time immemorial. While the school system, as a colonial structure, has caused significant harm to First Nations people, culture, and ways of life, it can also be a vehicle for building new relationships as partners with First Nations.

With most District staff and students being guests on this land, the new name reflects the principle of interconnectedness and encourages all who live on these ancestral lands to embrace harmony and unity. It acknowledges the rich culture, history, and voices of the Secwépemc people and serves as a

tangible representation of Reconciliation in action, particularly for the children in our schools. This name change marks an important step in the Board's ongoing commitment to advancing Truth and Reconciliation and implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Board is deeply humbled and honoured by the Secwépemc name, gifted by the four Nations—Adams Lake Indian Band, Sk'eEtsin, Skwlāx te Secwepemcúl'ecw, and Splatsin—on whose lands we work.

The Board acknowledges there will be a great deal of work ahead to ensure the name is shared and received in a good way by the public. Recognizing the name as a gift, trustees shared that their desire was to honour it without hesitation but asked that the rollout and release of the name be thoughtful, intentional, and gradual.

Board Chair Amanda Krebs expressed her gratitude, saying, "It's an honour to consider the name K'wsaltktnéws ne Secwepemcúl'ecw for our District. The meaning—that we are all connected (people, animals, sky, land, and water) on Secwépemc land—holds great significance for me personally. I encourage everyone to embrace this name as a gift, representing the deep ties we share with this place. I'm excited to learn how to pronounce it and to better understand the history and culture it reflects. Thank you for this meaningful gift."