

Naming of School Submission
K-8 School
5337 Tyson Rd. Chilliwack BC

Addressed to: Willow Reichelt (Secretary Treasurer's Office SD#33)

Name of Person(s) submitting suggestion:

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Suggested Name:

Stitó:s
Lá:lém totí:lt (House of Learning)

Stee-tahs (Lah-lem tot-ilt)

Rationale/Background:

Stitó:s – “Place of Crossing,” place name referring to a site near where the Chilliwack River breaks through between Promontory and Vedder Mountains to meet the Vedder River. It was at this site that the Ts’elxwéyeqw people constructed a tall tower to serve as a lookout for coastal raiders (Being Ts’elxwéyeqw, 2017). The lookout symbolizes the community responsibility to take care of, and protect one another. A tower also provided people with the ability to know in advance when friends and relatives were arriving from distant communities so that preparations could be made to host family who would arrive with knowledge and information from afar. In this way, the word Stitó:s represents not only a locally grounded placename that recalls an important aspect of Chilliwack history, but a symbolic commitment to both protecting children and providing them with opportunities to learn from those who carry knowledge.

In planning this submission, we were cognisant of all our community members spanning across Chilliwack. Through a lens of inclusion we wanted to submit a name that spoke to what would be occurring within the walls of this school. How will the name for this school represent the value of learning and the importance of taking care of one another? We asked ourselves, what kind of school community do we want children to belong to, and what elements of local history and culture can we draw from in order to highlight the philosophies that remain integral to the learning and development process. We know that schools are an important piece of our community, and they establish and maintain relationships across communities, families and territories. We also acknowledge the Chilliwack School District’s commitment to improving instruction through outdoor/environmental education opportunities; school culture and community by strengthening meaningful relationships within and across schools, and community; student social/emotional wellness through culture, climate and learning environment. We believe that this name encompasses many of these commitments to student success and achievement, and supports strengthening meaningful relationships. The multiplicity of the name we chose to submit for this school, speaks to the responsibility to teach, learn, and share knowledge across generations and communities. We believe that within the walls of our schools we will be taking care of and protecting the students through transformative learning opportunities where students will be provided with local outdoor/environmental learning opportunities.

Stitó:s in Ts’elxwéyeqw (Chilliwack) communities provided people with advanced warning of dangerous coastal raiders and of the arrival of friends and family. It allowed people to take care of, and protect those communities situated along the Vedder and Chilliwack Rivers, and to coordinate the flow of new information carried to Chilliwack from afar that youth and others needed in order to become fully informed members of their community and to develop the skills they needed to succeed in the world.

The building site for this school is located within Stitó:s and therefore naming this educational site Stitó:s would be indicative of the territory in which it is located. *Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential and relational (focused on connectedness, reciprocal relationships and a sense of place).* For generations, and still today; these communities grew and thrived along these river banks. Stitó:s remains a powerful reminder of the responsibility that was placed upon our communities to watch over, and take care of all that is around us. Today,

Chilliwack community members come together and walk and recreate on the banks of this river, forming an important piece of our community health. This community connection promotes localized and authentic outdoor/environmental learning opportunities, while honoring a variety of the First Peoples Principle of learning.

Furthermore, in the spirit of this territory *Lá:lém totí:lt* directly translates to “house of learning.” This values the importance of learning “in” place, “from” place, and “about” place. *Learning is embedded in memory, history and story.* *Lá:lém totí:lt* or “House of Learning” is holistic, inclusive and representative of the traditional culture of how Stó:lō people learn as a community versus the traditional titles of elementary-middle school designations. This educational site will form a learning space/common for the community. For these reasons, we propose the use of *Lá:lém totí:lt* to designate the purpose of this educational site. The three components of place-based education supplement and enhance the vision of outdoor education and this place. Outdoor and place-based education not only provides significant learning opportunities to students, it also strengthens the relationship between communities and the territory that they live, work and play on. *Lá:lém totí:lt* embodies these values.

In light of the athletic department, and school community and culture. *Learning involves the exploration of one's identity.* With this principle in mind, we encourage the school district to consider naming the school sports teams the Stitó:s Spá:th (Stitó:s Black Bears). *Spá:th* is the Halq'eméylem term that refers to *the black bear*. In 1993 Elder Andy Commodore of Soowahlie First Nation by Cultus Lake shared his oral history that described the original ancestor of the Ts'elxwéyeqw tribes as having been a black bear with a white spot on its chest. Versions of this story also appear in the book *The Chilliwack and Their Neighbours* and tell of the original three bear brothers and their descendants living along the Vedder and Chilliwack Rivers and becoming the Ts'elxwéyeqw tribe.

These considerations align with the Chilliwack School District's current Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement. These goals focus on increasing Aboriginal students, family, guardians belonging and engagement at school. As well, it increases the understanding and respect of language, culture, governance and history of Stó:lō and all Aboriginal peoples, for all partners in learning. With the name suggestion, *this ultimately supports the wellbeing of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.* A sense of belonging for all partners in learning is rooted in a meaningful connection with place.

Moving ahead with this name we recognize the barriers that exist with learning and experiencing another language. *Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledges.* The nature of *Lá:lém totí:lt* would be embraced in our process of bringing our community members alongside us in learning about the language, culture and history of *Stitó:s (Lá:lém totí:lt)*. The sharing of this language and these stories will strengthen the already existing relationships between all members of Ts'elxwéyeqw and help to build understanding and reconciliation between the Ts'elxwéyeqw and the newcomers who have settled in this territory and now consider it their home too.

There are many components to a school that create the inclusive culture, sense of belonging and community that education seeks to establish and develop within its walls for

students, families and staff. We propose that in naming this school *Stitó:s Elementary School – Lá:lém totí:lt*, we acknowledge the importance of student learning and success. Within school culture/community, we respect the diversity of all members of the community that will grow, learn and transform within and around this building. This building becomes more than a place, but an extension of the qualities of the place we all call home.

Yalh Yexw Kwas Hoy,

Tsandlia, David, Derek, Keith, & Donna