

NEWS RELEASE

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SCÍĀNEW STĒLIT̄KĒL GIFTED TO SOOKE SCHOOL DISTRICT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

LANGFORD, BC – This morning, the Sooke School District Board of Education announced the name for its newest elementary school. Sc’ianew First Nation gifted SCÍĀNEW STĒLIT̄KĒL to the future elementary School on Latoria Road which is set to open in fall 2025 with 480 seats for students in kindergarten through grade five.

Halq'eméylem, həŋqəmiñəm, Hul'q'umi'num', Lkwungen, Malchosen, Nəx^wsłayəmúcən, Semiahmoo, SENĆOŦEN, T'Sou-ke languages are all spoken in Sc’ianew First Nation. SCÍĀNEW STĒLIT̄KĒL translates to “salmon children” in the SENĆOŦEN language.

SCÍĀNEW (pronounced schee-ay-nuh) translates to salmon. STĒLIT̄KĒL (pronounced ska-leetk-luth) translates to children. Link: [Pronunciation of SCÍĀNEW STĒLIT̄KĒL Elementary School - YouTube](#)

“We are extremely proud to gift this name to the Sooke School District,” said Russ Chipps, Chief of Sc’ianew First Nation. “Lavina Charles, a respected elder and knowledge keeper from Sc’ianew First Nation led the search for a name that reflected our culture and a place for learning. SCÍĀNEW represents the richness of the sea life in our region that sustains our land and people. STĒLIT̄KĒL is one of the most important words in SENĆOŦEN language because it means children and, in our culture, they are our most precious resource.” Chief Chipps acknowledged that learning how to pronounce the name may be challenging at first, but it’s a perfect metaphor for the learning that happens in our schools – a new concept is hard at first and becomes easier with practice and guidance.

This is more than just a name; it is a commitment from the Sooke School District that that the painful and ugly history of educational institutions will not be forgotten and that schools can and will be places of healing and hope. “When I went to school, I was taught that my own language was a sin, that it was wrong and I was punished when I spoke my language,” said Lavina Charles, Elder from Sc’ianew First Nation. “Together we are learning the language of this land that was forgotten by force and I hope a school name in our language makes it better for not only our children but all children.”

A gifted name from one of the Nations in the District was one of the top suggestions heard from the public during the naming consultation period held earlier this year. “Our Board of Education is committed to walking the path of reconciliation and one of the meaningful ways we can reflect and preserve local Indigenous culture and language is through visibility,” said Amanda Dowhy, Interim Board Chair. “Our students and families who make up the traditional territories of our District should see and feel their culture throughout our communities and it is equally important for those of us who



are visitors on these territories to take the time to learn more about the rich culture that has existed here for generations.”

Though this journey started while Ravi Parmar was still Chair of the Sooke School District Board of Education, he is pleased to see it come full circle as MLA for the Langford-Juan de Fuca region. “The naming of this school gifted from the Sc’ianew First Nation is a meaningful step for the school community, especially Indigenous students who will see their language in their learning environment,” said Ravi Parmar, MLA for Langford-Juan de Fuca. “As the former Board Chair of the Sooke School District, I am proud to have been a part of delivering this much needed investment in new schools for Langford and prioritizing reconciliation in all the work we do.”

As part of today’s announcement, Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation was on hand to offer remarks from the province. “A true and lasting reconciliation with Indigenous peoples is at the heart of everything we’re doing as a government,” said Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation. “We are grateful to the Sc’ianew First Nation for the meaningful gift of a name for this new school, using the traditional language of the lands. Once complete, the school will provide a safe, supportive learning space for local students and families for many years to come.”

Additional Resources

- Link to virtual tour and photos of SCÍANEW STEŁITKEL Elementary School: [New Schools | Sooke School District \(sd62.bc.ca\)](#)
- Link to video from Chief and Council of Sc’ianew First Nation on the naming of the school: [Behind the Naming of SCÍANEW STEŁITKEL Elementary School - YouTube](#)

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