

# Staff Report



September 21, 2021

**To** Board of Education Meeting (Public Meeting)  
**From** Ray Velestuk, Secretary-Treasurer/CFO  
**Re** **New School on Eagle Mountain - Naming Committee Submissions**

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## **BACKGROUND:**

As per Board of Education (“Board”) policy, the ad-hoc facilities naming committee for the new elementary school on Eagle Mountain will consist of two Trustees, the school Principal, the Communications Manager, and up to four community members. At the March 9<sup>th</sup> Public Board Meeting, the following community members were appointed: Chris Silver, Tim Folster, Jas Sidhu and Lexi Graugaard. Trustees Latham and Pauls agreed to also serve on the committee.

The role of this ad-hoc committee is to:

- Ensure schools and the community are informed of the opportunity, process and criteria (outlined in Policy), for the submission of names for consideration;
- Establish appropriate timelines for the collection of input; and
- Ensure there is broad based consultation.

## **SUBMISSION REVIEW PROCESS:**

The community contributed an overwhelming 756 naming submissions for the new school on Eagle Mountain in the spring of 2021, resulting in 79 unique names. Due to the volume of submissions received, the Naming Committee establishing additional guidelines, supplementary to the criteria listed in Board Policy 21, to help ensure a fair and equitable process is considered when finalizing three names to bring forward to the Board of Education for consideration.

- *Education Focus* – individuals or places that have a significant connection to education would be given greater consideration;
- *Indigenous Connection* – individuals or places connected to Indigenous culture would be given greater consideration;
- *Local* – individuals or places connected directly to Stó:lō territory and the Abbotsford community would be given greater consideration; and
- *Mascot* – individuals or places connected to the “Eagle” symbol would be given greater consideration.

The committee also considered names that might be a combination of one of the submissions with a Halq’eméylem “verb” that will add further meaning to what will take place in the building.

## **NAMING COMMITTEE SUBMISSIONS:**

After thoughtful review, the Naming Committee brings forward three submissions, ranked in order of preference, for the new school on Eagle Mountain.

### **1. Sp'óq'es Heights Elementary**

- a. "Sp'óq'es" (spah-cuss) is Halq'eméylem for Eagle and representative of the Stó:lō nation on which the new school stands. The Naming Committee agreed that having a school named in the Halq'eméylem language recognizes the Indigenous history of the area, the Stó:lō people, and the school district's commitment to Indigenous communities.

### **2. Irene Kelleher Elementary**

- a. Irene Kelleher was a strong contributor to public education in British Columbia and a respected community leader worthy of recognition. As the first known person of Indigenous heritage to receive BC Teacher Certification, Ms. Kelleher taught for a number of years in the interior before securing a teaching assignment back in her hometown of Abbotsford in 1939. She eventually retired as principal of Abbotsford Elementary School in 1964.

A detailed and lengthy nomination package was included with this submission, which the Naming Committee believed was worthy of Board review (see attached).

### **3. Kathleen Cooper Elementary**

- a. A long-time educator and principal in East Abbotsford, Kathleen Cooper was a local pioneer and icon. Ms. Cooper was an educator for over 44 years and served as one of the first female Principals in the Abbotsford School District. As a strong member of our community, she also resided at and managed the historic dairy farm with the "red barn" on McMillan Road and is a great example of hard work and industriousness.

The Naming Committee also brings forward two considerations and recommendations:

1. It is recommended that if the Board of Education decides to move forward with naming the school after an individual, a fulsome review process is undertaken to ensure the individual honours the mission, vision, and values of the school district and a firm understanding of their historical impact is understood.
2. It is recommended that if the Board of Education decides to move forward with naming the school after an individual, a Halq'eméylem amendment be added to the end of the name to include "Iwesatexw" (ee-wah-ous-tuk), which means "House of Learning".