



February 25, 2026

### ***Board Announces New Middle School to be named statl̓w Middle School***

Langley, BC – On Tuesday, February 24, 2026, the Langley Board of Education announced that the new middle school in the Smith neighbourhood of the Willoughby Slope will be named statl̓w Middle School.

statl̓w is a word that means ‘little river’ or ‘little creek’ in the hən̓q̓əmiṇəm language. hən̓q̓əmiṇəm is a dialect that is unique to the geographic area on which the Langley School District resides and is the traditional language spoken by the people from sxwqwanAan7a+ (current Fort Langley) to sxwxwmaekweyam7a+ (mouth of the Fraser River). As told in local Indigenous stories of creation, statl̓w is a waterway that is vital to bringing salmon people home. The name statl̓w signifies an acknowledgment of the land, the preservation of the hən̓q̓əmiṇəm language, and a renewed commitment to truth and reconciliation.

“We want to recognize and build on relationships with the original stewards of the land, help promote the language and history of local First Nations, as well as take a meaningful step forward in our collective journey of truth and reconciliation,” said Langley Board of Education chair Candy Ashdown. “The name statl̓w for the new middle school reflects this.”

As many Canadians are aware, residential schools contributed to the loss of Indigenous languages and culture. Naming the school in hən̓q̓əmiṇəm supports the language and culture portion of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 94 Calls to Action, which states “Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society and there is an urgency to preserve them.”

Students across the District have been learning hən̓q̓əmiṇəm thanks to the teachings of staff from the District’s Aboriginal Education department. This name serves to revitalize the language, nurture cultural representation, and create a safe space for students.

“As a District, we continue to work on actions that demonstrate every child matters,” said Colleen Hannah, Director of Instruction, Indigenous Education. “Our hope is for Indigenous learners, and all learners, to feel welcome and a sense of belonging when they walk into statl̓w Middle School.”

Please join the Langley Board of Education and District in celebrating this milestone in the Langley community.

For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

Joanne Abshire  
Communications Director  
jabshire@sd35.bc.ca  
604-363-1671