

**DATE:** April 9, 2024

**TO:** Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT:** Oliver School Renaming

**ORIGINATOR:** Cliff Richard, Chief Infrastructure and Technology Officer

**RESOURCE STAFF:** Kim Holowatuk, Carrie Rosa, Carla Stolte, Christopher Wright

**REFERENCE** [EA.BP – Infrastructure Planning Principles](#)  
[EF.AR – Naming of Schools](#)

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**ISSUE**

To formally acknowledge the new name for Oliver School.

**BACKGROUND**

On September 8, 2020, the Board of Trustees passed a motion:

“That the Division rename Dan Knott and Oliver schools following a process where it seeks input from the community, following a process similar to the naming of new schools.”

Following extensive engagement with students, staff, community members and Indigenous leaders, the name *kisêwâtisiwin* was announced as the new name for Dan Knott School on May 17, 2022.

The renaming of Oliver School was paused as the Oliver Community League had begun a process to rename the Oliver neighbourhood. The decision to pause was made to allow space for this community consultation process to reach its conclusion.

The Oliver Community League, led by Indigenous communities, initiated the #UncoverOliver campaign. The campaign ran from June 2020 to April 2023, educating the community as to who its namesake was, his recorded actions, and why the name came to be—uncovering the history of the community.

In the fall of 2021, the Oliver Community League began working with a team of consultants, Heartstage Consulting, to develop a public engagement process and to support the community league, the community members and other interested persons in deciding on the new name.

At the heart of this process was a Renaming Circle. The Circle began meeting in June 2022, and included Oliver community members and community leaders from Indigenous and other racialized groups that were directly impacted by Frank Oliver’s policies and legacies. The Renaming Circle supported the analysis of information gathered through engagement and helped co-create potential names.

From July to September 2022, the broader Oliver community was invited to share their ideas online and at two in-person engagements held at community events.

In November 2022, with the support of the Oliver School principal, students and staff were invited to share their ideas for a new neighbourhood name. A suggested script and activities were shared with teachers to assist in this process. The Oliver School principal indicated that the student process was meaningful and thorough and that the proposed community name reflects the values of the students and of the school.

## CURRENT SITUATION

The Oliver Community League completed their process in 2023, and presented it to the City Naming Committee on August 29, 2023. The City Naming Committee approved the following motion:

“In support of the request made by the Oliver Community League, the Naming Committee recommends that City Council support the request to rename the Oliver Neighbourhood to **wîhkwêntôwin**, in nêhiyawêwin, which translates in English to ‘Circle of Friends’. This request is in alignment with City Policy C509C, the Indigenous Framework and the City Plan”.

**wîhkwêntôwin** is pronounced *WEE-KWEN-TO-WIN*.

On January 23, 2024, the Caucus Committee approved the following:

**That Oliver School be renamed wîhkwêntôwin School.**

On February 21, 2024, Edmonton City Council approved a new name for the community of Oliver. The community will now be called **wîhkwêntôwin** in nêhiyawêwin. The syllabics are ᐃ·ᐱ·ᑦᐅᐅᐃ·ᑦ and in English translates to ‘Circle of Friends’.

## KEY POINTS

- Edmonton City Council approved the name **wîhkwêntôwin** to replace the neighbourhood name Oliver.
- **wîhkwêntôwin** in nêhiyawêwin translates to ‘Circle of Friends’.
- Students, staff and parents of Oliver School were engaged in a meaningful and thorough way and **wîhkwêntôwin** reflects the values of the students and of the school.
- Communications and Integrated Infrastructure Services will work collaboratively with the school to begin rebranding immediately.

KH:jl