



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **New name symbolizes new direction for high school**

**SASKATOON, Jan. 23, 2007** – Oskāyak High School has been selected as the new name for Joe Duquette High School. Oskāyak means “young people” in Cree. It is felt this name captures the community belief that the school is for all young people.

“This happens as we continue to work on new and innovative programming for the school,” said Oskāyak principal Darryl Bazylak. “The name change provides students, parents, community and staff with the opportunity to reaffirm the school’s cultural foundation.”

Oskāyak was chosen from more than 30 suggestions submitted to school administration between September and December 2006. A committee representing school stakeholders discussed the submissions at a meeting earlier this month and Oskāyak emerged as the overwhelming choice. The Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools Board of Education approved the name change at its regular board meeting Monday evening.

The new name will be phased in over the next several months as the school finalizes plans to implement enhanced programming in areas such as mathematics and English language arts.

As well, Oskāyak will offer students the opportunity to participate in academies that allow them to focus on one or more specific areas, including cultural arts, Cree language, drama and hockey. Students participating in an academy spend two periods of each school day focusing on a specialized area of study, while the other three periods are spent in traditional classes. The new programming is scheduled to be implemented in August 2007.

School elders have discussed changing the name of the school with the family of Joe Duquette, who was the school’s first elder. (Please see attached background document.) Joe Duquette’s relatives agreed that the change would allow the spirit of their loved one to now rest peacefully. “His legacy does not end with the change of name,” said Bazylak. Joe Duquette will always be remembered and honoured during ceremony at the school.

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## **BACKGROUND:**

Oskāyak High School is an associate school within the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools school division. It was established in 1980 in an agreement between the provincial government, the school division and the Kitotiminawak Council, the school's parent advisory council.

The school was first known as the Saskatoon Native Survival School. The name was changed in 1989 to honour Joe Duquette, an elder from the Mistawasis First Nation who had worked with students and teachers at the school in the early 1980s. The school's parent council proposed the change to honour the influence Duquette had on the school's students and staff.

Oskāyak serves students of aboriginal ancestry. The school stresses personal growth and accomplishment. It also provides students with the opportunity to recapture their aboriginal identity through spiritual growth in a variety of activities that focus on historical and cultural aspects of Aboriginal people.