



December 19, 2023, Superintendent's Report

1. Strong Start Programs Connect Families to Early Learning Opportunities:

StrongStart programs in SD10 provide rich learning environments designed for early learning development – language, physical, cognitive, social, and emotional. Qualified early childhood educators lead learning activities where children find opportunities to make friends and interact with others of similar ages. Parents and caregivers participate with their young children (aged birth to five) in play-based early learning activities – including stories, music and art. At no cost to families, this early learning drop-in program helps prepare children for success in Kindergarten. Our two StrongStart centres and three outreach programs provide families with rich and engaging opportunities to learn and connect with community services. Program highlights include:


- Edgewood program brings vibrancy to the building every Thursday, with students dancing and playing in the gym and having the ability to connect families to the school and community.
- Fauquier allows families to gather, and the program has been enhanced by volunteer Sheila McGinnes, who comes to read and do a bi-weekly book exchange.
- Burton has had to be creative with space challenges due to the new classroom and has incorporated the program with the kindergarten students, which has proven successful for all.
- Nakusp is very busy and sees eight families a session, and there is even a waiting list for morning sessions. The program includes crafts, physical activity, music, free play, and circle time.
- New Denver averages eight families per day with a morning and afternoon session. Families are visiting the K/1 classroom for "Exploration-time" and enjoy gym time with children from Goat Mountain childcare. Access to the school library to take out books has been helpful.

2. Childhood Experiences Questionnaire Provides Valuable Early Years Information:

The Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (CHEQ) is used to gather information on children's experiences in their early environments prior to kindergarten. Parents of kindergarten students fill out the questionnaire in the first few weeks of September. It focuses on experience in specific areas of development strongly linked to children's health and well-being, education, and social outcomes. The information from the CHEQ helps us understand variability in children's early experiences so that educators, school districts and communities can provide better support and services to children and families. Some highlights from this year's report are:

- 100% of respondents indicated that their child's overall health was either excellent or very good in the last 12 months before completing the survey.
- 100% of respondents indicated they were engaged in literacy activities most days or a few times a week in the past six months before the survey.
- 92% of respondents were engaged in music or dance most days or a few times a week in the past six months before the survey.
- In the six months before the survey, 17% of respondents indicated that their child played with other children a few times a month or less than once a month.
- 67% of respondents indicated their child was in a childcare arrangement, with most children in licensed care.
- 83% of respondents indicated that their child played outdoors 6 to 7 days a week.

3. Quick and Thoughtful Response to Nakusp Secondary School Evacuation:



On November 22, Nakusp Secondary School was evacuated due to an unfamiliar smell emitted while contractors worked on the school's HVAC system. As soon as the smell was detected, the school administration was notified, and the school went into a complete evacuation. Students and staff exited the school in three minutes. They were then diverted to Nakusp Elementary, where attendance was taken, and updated information was provided to staff, students, and parents. Nakusp emergency services were on the scene and provided guidance and direction. It was quickly determined that the smell was due to a heating system failure and was non-toxic. In an abundance of caution, the school remained closed for the day, flooded with fresh air, and classes resumed the next morning without incident. We are very grateful for the quick response of staff, students, contractors, and emergency services, and we were glad that we could come to a quick and safe resolution. We did take the opportunity to review our emergency response procedures at all the schools to ensure that we are appropriately prepared for any emergency situation.

4. Best Wishes for the Holidays:

I would like to extend my best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season. We have so much to be grateful for, and I want to acknowledge the students, staff, families, caregivers and the greater SD10 community for all their efforts, care, and concern. We are looking forward to a productive and enjoyable 2024!