

# January 20, 2026, Superintendent's Report



## COMPETENCY:

### 1. Nakusp Secondary School Writers Club:

The Writers Workshop Club is a literary enrichment opportunity for students that meets twice per month, offering writing challenges, skill-building, and travel opportunities to learn from professionals. The Creative Writing course is a supplement to this program, and the core group of students continues to grow. It is available to students in all grades, with feedback circles, performances, final chapbooks, and ongoing support applying to writing contests outside the district.

The club attended the Vancouver Writers Festival again this year. Eight students attended from grades 9-12. We were the only school district to send students for most of the festival. Students attended 2-3 sessions a day, plus group writing practice in the evenings, a trip to the Bloedel Conservatory for sensory writing and feedback circles, and daily review of literary devices and team building. These students and those who attended last year have since been leaders in our Creative Writing course, modelling vulnerability, constructive feedback, and culture. Special thanks to the sponsor teachers Naomi Smedbol, Ben Gehrels, Lisa Bjarnason, and Jaime Sing for their ongoing support.

### 2. Arrow Lakes Distributed Learning School and Rural Education Academy for Cooperative and Hands-On Learning:

Both the ALDL and the REACH program have had excellent starts to this year. There are 33 students enrolled in DL courses, with 2 more joining in February. Some are full-time DL, and others are cross-enrolled from NSS. Over 100 courses are being taken within our DL student community. Multiple students come to the DL classroom to work/get support 2-3 days a week, and some students also receive home visits. There is also outreach support in Lucerne and in the Southern Zone. With the closure of the Selkirk Nakusp campus, the DL program has moved to the portable at NSS.





The REACH program has grown significantly this year, and the students are thriving in it. There are 17 students in the program, predominantly in grades 8-9. So far this year, we have done activities such as: Indigenous bracelet beading, sledding and snowshoeing in Sandon, Mindful walking in nature with Chelsea Hanet, ice skating, curling, baking, yoga/sound bowl meditation, intergenerational programming with senior citizens, a tour of the fire hall in New Denver, a first aid certification course and many more. Students have been connecting with local community leaders and members to engage in a hands-on, experiential form of education. Many students have expressed that REACH has supported their academic learning and their ability to attend school.

## **COLLABORATION**

### **3. District Shared Professional Development Day**

The annual District Shared Professional Development Day will take place on January 23<sup>rd</sup>. This day is collaboratively planned between the Arrow Lakes Teachers Association and the District. This year, the themes will be around Artificial Intelligence and Technology in Education, as well as our strategic plan priorities. We will be joined by SD8 Director of Instruction Ben Eaton, who will present on AI in Education, along with District Learning Technology Teacher Erin Collison and District Vice-Principal Jaime Sing. In the afternoon, teachers will facilitate learning sessions on outdoor education, art, career education, and social-emotional learning that align with the strategic plan's priorities.

