



Theme 4: Funding and Other Resources

Participants noted that the pandemic revealed challenges with the current funding framework, with the bulk of funding gaps centring on geographic disparities. While the COVID-19 funding was well received, some divisions noted that surpluses were used to fill other gaps. Participants in rural areas noted that the resource gap was more apparent for them and that rural schools continue to face funding challenges. Despite these challenges, there is an opportunity to incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing; incorporate land-based learning; and capitalize on already-existing community-specific resources.

Guidance Counsellor Funding and Training

Some school divisions struggled to access mental health resources and to provide students with access to guidance counsellors. Certain school divisions are without guidance counsellors and have limited mental health supports in the community. This has exhausted and challenged the capacity of those working in the system.

Planning considerations shared to address these disparities include:

1. Ensuring all school divisions have access to guidance counsellors and mental health supports.
2. Providing training and resources for guidance counsellors to respond to the growing issues following the height of the pandemic.
3. Providing access to psychotherapists and other professionals to support guidance counsellors.

Access to Internet and Technology

Participants noted that, in some rural and northern communities, access to the internet is limited compared to urban areas, resulting in a profound inequity of access to education, especially throughout the remote learning periods. Some school divisions shared successes in extending internet access that was not there previously. Planning considerations shared to ensure equitable access to internet and technology for those in rural and northern communities include:

1. Investing in reliability and quality of internet connectivity in rural areas.
2. Engaging with rural and northern communities to understand gaps and challenges.
3. Implementing a renewed funding model to ensure equitable funding across the system.