

Reducing Learning Gaps

Participants noted that some students experienced a substantial disruption in their learning behaviours that has since been observed as a result of the interruption of human interaction, collaboration, and participation. Students living in poverty, with disabilities, and with health issues, as well as those from communities with high mortality rates were the most affected by school closures. Some families also struggled with providing their children with the level of engagement and support that was needed for their learning and well-being throughout the pandemic. To reduce learning gaps, school divisions are employing different methods and practices including:

1. Supporting teachers so that they can meet students' needs and understand developmental milestones.
2. Enhancing collaboration within teaching teams to examine and evaluate classroom activities.
3. Offering education assistance, including summer and after-school programming, mentoring, tutoring, and technology hubs.
4. Focusing on positive and holistic approaches to build on students' strengths and competencies for success.



Theme 8: Staff Skills and Competencies

The pandemic illustrated the need for increased capacity and knowledge across the system. Participants highlighted that teachers and school staff need adequate training regarding mental health as well as increased knowledge of evidence-based strategies and approaches to collaborate with parents/caregivers in order to effectively support students' mental health needs. Variations on comfort with remote learning were further shared. Participants noted that while *Manitoba's Remote Learning Framework (2020)* was helpful to guide and inform remote teaching, many teachers and school staff would benefit from increased capacity building in their facilitation of remote learning. Suggested topics for future professional development included:

1. Technology and online learning platform training for teachers and support staff
2. Mental health and wellness
3. Land-based learning—incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing
4. Indigenous languages
5. Impacts of trauma on learning