

# Report to Provide Recommendations to Support the Manitoba Remote Learning Strategy



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Version: September 21, 2022



## Acknowledgements

As the cross-country scan and stakeholder focus groups were completed, it was evident to the IBM Consultants that Manitobans should be very proud of their successes in remote learning. The current virtual school offerings (i.e., InformNet, Teacher Mediated Option, Manitoba Remote Learning Centre and Wapaskwa Virtual Collegiate) are among the best in the country in terms of serving specific groups of students and providing, across these schools, different scheduling options (synchronous/asynchronous) and modalities for remote learning. As the province moves towards a comprehensive remote learning strategy, there are many lessons to be learned from these successes.

IBM K-12 Education Consultants are very appreciative of the guidance and insights provided by education stakeholders across Manitoba, and Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning staff.

We would like to sincerely thank the provincial remote learning strategy working group, made up of remote learning subject matter experts from the education field and department staff, that helped inform and advise the recommendations in the report.

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# Recommendations in Support of the Provincial Remote Learning Strategy

## Executive Summary

In February 2022, Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning (MEECL) engaged IBM Canada's K-12 Education Division to assist with the development of recommendations for a provincial remote learning strategy. Following a cross county scan of remote learning environments, the IBM consultants identified 11 critical components and corresponding leading practices within each component, that are essential to a successful remote learning strategy. These critical components are:

1. Remote Learning Vision and Priorities
2. Leadership, Governance, and Expectations
3. Vision and Priority - Virtual School
4. Learning Pedagogy: Instruction and Assessment Practices
5. Professional Learning
6. Role of Technology
7. Learning Resources
8. Mental Health, Well-Being, and Belonging
9. Communication
10. Funding
11. Monitoring & Continuous Improvement

After conducting 19 focus groups and interviews the IBM consultants created a current state assessment of remote learning in Manitoba against these 11 components. Based on this current state assessment, and stakeholder feedback, 20 recommendations are presented that will be used to develop the remote learning strategy and implementation plan and to eliminate or minimize the gaps identified in the assessment.

The recommendations are:

1. Remote Learning Vision and Priorities

### **Recommendation 1.1:** Vision Statement

The vision from Manitoba's Action Plan, published in April 2022, should be adopted as the foundational vision for the Remote Learning Strategy.

***All Manitoba students succeed, no matter where they live, their background or their individual circumstances***

### **Recommendation 1.2:** Why Statement

The Why Statement should be adopted and used to guide the work of the Remote Learning Strategy.

We are supporting remote learning in Manitoba to offer safe, caring, and inclusive remote learning communities that are accessible and responsive to meet the diverse needs of Manitoba students and their families.

### **Recommendation 1.3:** Goals and Priorities

The goals and priorities for the Remote Learning Strategy should clarify all aspects of the provincial virtual school, and articulate strategies, practices, and resources for remote learning.

**Recommendation 1.4:** All learners in Manitoba will have access to remote learning options  
All learners in Manitoba will have access to remote learning options to take one, some or all grade-level requirements remotely. However, it will be very important for students and caregivers to understand that not all students will thrive in this environment. Guidance and advice will be needed to help them make an informed choice.

**Recommendation 1.5:** Division Remote Learning Support  
Each school division should have a Remote Learning Liaison position funded through MEECL to support students/caregivers and staff with remote learning.

## 2. Leadership, Governance, and Expectations

**Recommendation 2.1:** Provincial Leadership and Advisory Board  
A provincial leadership team and advisory board, which specializes in remote learning, is established to provide oversight and support.

**Recommendation 2.2:** Provincial Policy – Criteria for Participation  
Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning will develop and approve a provincial policy that sets the criteria for a student to take one, some or all courses remotely at the provincial virtual school.

**Recommendation 2.3:** Provincial Policy – Crisis Situation  
Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning will develop and approve a provincial policy that clearly differentiates the role and responsibilities of MEECL and each school division and funded independent school in the case of an event/crisis situation.

## 3. Vision and Priority - Virtual School

**Recommendation 3.1:** Create a Provincial Virtual School  
The province should create a centrally-managed Provincial Virtual School as a phased approach, starting immediately with high school grades 9–12, with full recognition and funding that is capable of scaling to meet the demand for K to 12 remote learning. The Virtual School will meet existing demands for remote learning, including synchronous and asynchronous options in English, French, and French Immersion.

## 4. Learning Pedagogy: Instruction and Assessment Practices

**Recommendation 4.1:** Remote Learning Framework and Standards Documents  
Rebrand the Manitoba Remote Learning Framework document and introduce as a provincial resource document.

**Recommendation 4.2:** Pedagogical knowledge - *how content is being taught*  
There should be clear and consistent provincial guidelines and expectations for the effective use of technology in the delivery of remote learning instruction.

## 5. Professional Learning

**Recommendation 5.1:** Build Educator Capacity  
Build expertise to ensure all educators instructing remotely have the required pedagogical knowledge and skills to implement high quality learning.

## 6. Role of Technology

### **Recommendation 6.1:** Standard Digital Toolkit

Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning should develop a standard digital toolkit with tools appropriate to each grade level to support leading instructional and assessment practices and fund the appropriate tools to support all school divisions and funded independent schools which includes:

- Learning Management System(s) (LMS) to support remote learning
- digital portfolio tools
- a digital learning resource repository
- a productivity suite which enables collaboration, communication, and other global competencies

### **Recommendation 6.2:** Low Tech Options

Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning will ensure that low or no technology options (examples include package delivery, use of telephone or radio) are specifically planned and provided.

## 7. Learning Resources

### **Recommendation 7.1:** Centrally Managed Resource Repository

One centrally managed Manitoba Resource Repository should provide resources for all subjects/grade levels.

## 8. Mental Health, Well-Being, and Belonging

### **Recommendation 8.1:** Create Community

Ensure structures are in place, as outlined in the Manitoba Framework for Remote Learning, to build a sense of community for all stakeholders, students, staff, and caregivers.

## 9. Communication

### **Recommendation 9.1:** Create a communication plan

Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning should develop a communication plan which includes a high-level overview of the Remote Learning Strategy and implementation plan.

## 10. Funding

### **Recommendation 10.1:** Funding – Remote Learning Strategy

A funding model to support all requirements of the Manitoba Remote Learning Strategy and Virtual School will be developed to meet the recommendations found within this report. This funding should be independent of current funding to school divisions.

### **Recommendation 10.2:** Funding – Infrastructure and Resources

Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning will ensure the approved funding model provides the appropriate infrastructure and resources to meet the needs of all students.

## 11. Monitoring & Continuous Improvement

### **Recommendation 11.1:** Success Criteria will be measured

Ensure that clearly defined Success Criteria are created for each of the Remote Learning Strategy components to measure achievement of goals.

# Introduction

In February 2022, Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning (MEECL) engaged IBM Canada's K-12 Education Division to assist them with the development of recommendations for a provincial remote learning strategy. The objective was for the initial information gathering and stakeholder feedback stages of the remote learning strategy development. Based on findings from the information and feedback gathering stages, IBM was asked to develop recommendations upon which the remote learning strategy will be based.

This report is the deliverable of this engagement.

For consistent application of the remote learning strategy and readers of this report, it is important to establish a common understanding of terms used when discussing remote learning. Following are a few of the key terms that are foundational in this report. A more complete glossary can be found in

[Appendix A: Remote Learning Glossary, V1.](#)

- 1. Remote Learning**

Remote learning takes place off-site and includes synchronous and/or asynchronous delivery (delivery examples may include video call, phone call, hard-copy packages, etc.).

- 2. Online Learning**

A method of learning that relies primarily on communication between students and teachers by means of the internet.

- 3. Blended Learning**

Blended learning is a combination of traditional face-to-face classroom learning and remote learning. See the Distance Learning Blended Learning website [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/dl/blended\\_learning.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/dl/blended_learning.html) for more information.

- 4. Synchronous Learning**

Synchronous learning is learning that involves a teacher and their student(s) interacting in real time.

- 5. Asynchronous Learning**

Asynchronous learning is independent learning that does not require real time communication between a teacher and their student(s).

- 6. Hybrid Learning**

An approach to education delivery that combines face-to-face teaching (educator to student) with remote instruction at the same time. Hybrid learning can involve both synchronous and asynchronous content delivery, addressing barriers related to space or place. This is recommended only in response to emergency measures.

This engagement officially launched at the end of March 2022 and involved three main phases:

## **Phase 1: Identification and Assessment of Critical Components of a Remote Learning Strategy**

The IBM consultants conducted a national scan of remote learning models in Canada and two systems in the United States. A summary of this scan can be found in [Appendix B: Remote Learning National Scan Summary Report](#). From the scan, the IBM K-12 Education Consultants identified the critical components that are required to ensure the development and sustainability of a Provincial Remote Learning Strategy that successfully supports all students and staff.



The Remote Learning Strategy's critical components were further informed by:

1. IBM's *K-12 Learning Framework for Leveraging Digital*;
2. the *Toolkit for Designing a Comprehensive Distance Learning Strategy* (USAID, 2021);
3. and key areas identified during discussions with 19 focus groups.

The Remote Learning Strategy's critical components were then used to create the Remote Learning Current State Assessment, see [Appendix C: Remote Learning Critical Components and Leading Practices, Current State Assessment](#). IBM K-12 Consultants assessed MEECL's current state on each component based on their understanding of leading practices within each component, their understanding of the current remote learning strategy and implementation in Manitoba, and the feedback from their stakeholder conversations.

## **Phase 2: Stakeholder Feedback**

IBM consultants conducted 19 interviews and/or focus groups with school divisions, funded independent schools and with members of the Online and Distributed Learning Unit within MEECL. The objective was to engage with the five provincial regions and ensure English Language, French and French Immersion and Funded Independent Schools were included. Additional focus groups with stakeholders from school divisions who had experience with remote learning were also conducted. Each group was asked to respond to the following questions:

- a. What is your/your staff's familiarity with:
  - i. Manitoba Standards for Remote Learning?
  - ii. Manitoba Remote Learning Strategy Framework?
- b. What is working well related to remote learning?
- c. What challenges do you see related to remote learning?
- d. What is your vision for how remote learning could better support the staff and students you serve?
- e. What additional support/assistance would you ask from the Department?

A list of the focus groups and a summary of their feedback is included in [Appendix D: Focus Group Summary Report](#).

## **Phase 3: Recommendations and Implementation Requirements**

IBM Consultants provided recommendations based on findings from Phases 1 and 2, to be used in the development of a Provincial Remote Learning Strategy. The recommendations included in this report will be the responsibility of Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning.

Remote learning programming will be available in:

- English
- Français
- French Immersion
- Technical Vocational, to the extent that it can be offered remotely

## Phase 1: Identification and Assessment of Critical Components of a Remote Learning Strategy

IBM K-12 consultants conducted a national scan of remote learning models. The scan included:

- A review of the State of the Nation K-12 e-Learning in Canada report (2020 edition and the recently released 2021 edition)
- A scan of 10 provinces' and 3 territories' ministry resources/websites for documents/models/information publicly available on remote learning
- A preliminary review of Miami-Dade Virtual School and Chicago Public Schools Remote Learning.

For a direct comparison of how Manitoba compares to other provinces and territories in Canada, readers are encouraged to review the most recent *CANeLearn State of the Nation Report*.

IBM K-12 Consultants, based on the review of the CANeLearn State of the Nation Report and the other school systems they considered, identified the critical components for a successful remote learning model and the leading practices that should be addressed within each of these components. The eleven critical components that were identified are:

1. Vision and Priorities
2. Leadership, Governance, and Expectations
3. Vision and Priority - Virtual School
4. Remote Learning Pedagogy - Instruction and Assessment Practices
5. Professional Learning
6. Role of Technology
7. Learning Resources
8. Mental Health, Well-Being and Belonging
9. Communication
10. Funding
11. Monitoring & Continuous Improvement

Once identified, the key components and leading practices were organized into the Remote Learning Current State Assessment. IBM K-12 Consultants, based on their understanding of leading practices within each component, their understanding of the current remote learning strategy and implementations in Manitoba and the feedback from their stakeholder conversations, scored each component as Dark Green, Light Green, or Pale Green.

Definitions of each colour are provided below based on evidence found in documentation and focus groups

- Strong Evidence (dark green)
- Some Evidence (light green)
- Limited/No Evidence (pale green)



The Remote Learning Current State Assessment can be found in [Appendix C: Remote Learning Critical Components and Leading Practices, Current State Assessment](#) and reflects where the province is currently positioned based on the key remote learning components identified.

It is expected that overtime, each component that is not currently scored with **dark green** will progress to the desired outcome.

This Remote Learning Current State Assessment was used to inform the third phase of this engagement, where the IBM Consultants presented recommendations to address the gaps that were identified. The recommendations presented in this report may be used by Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning to develop the Provincial Remote Learning Strategy and implementation plan.

The Remote Learning Current State Assessment can be used as a baseline to monitor the progress of the Remote Learning Strategy.

## Phase 2: Stakeholder Feedback

Focus groups were conducted with Manitoba Department of Education and Early Childhood Learning (MEECL) leadership and school division/funded independent school representatives. This feedback provided insights into the current state and a vision for the future of remote learning for the Province of Manitoba.

A summary report of the stakeholder feedback can be found in [Appendix D: Focus Group Summary Report](#).

Feedback from the summary report has been included in the appropriate sections of this report to give context for the recommendations.

### Stakeholder Participation

Focus Groups and interviews were conducted between March 28 and May 2, 2022. All sessions were conducted virtually and, where required, interpreters were available to support the facilitators with French Language translation. Superintendents from all School Divisions had the opportunity, and were invited with additional representation from their Division, to participate.

	<b>Name of Interview/Focus Group</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Number Invited</b>	<b>Number in Attendance</b>
1	1:1 Interview, MEECL	March 28	1	1
2	1:1 Interview, MEECL	March 29	1	1
3	Teacher Mediated Option (TMO) Focus Group (FG)	April 4	2	2
4	InformNet FG	April 4	2	2
5	Prairie Spirit School Division FG	April 6	2	2
6	Mountain View School Division FG	April 6	2	2
7	Winnipeg School Division FG	April 7	2	2
8	Louis Riel School Division FG	April 7	2	2
9	1:1 Interview, MEECL	April 7	1	1
10	Manitoba Remote Learning Support Centre FG	April 8	6	3
11	Wapaskwa Virtual Collegiate FG	April 8	3	3
12	Division Scolaire Franco-Manitobaine	April 8	4	4
13	French Immersion (FI), French FG	April 19	21	3
14	Northern/Remote Region FG	April 22	12	2
15	Central Region FG	April 25	12	8
16	Winnipeg Region FG	April 26	14	12
17	Funded Independent FG	April 28	16	11
18	Parkland/Westman Region FG	May 2	21	14
19	Southeast/Interlake FG	May 2	20	9
	<b>Total Invites/Attendees</b>		<b>144</b>	<b>84</b>

All focus groups were asked to respond to the following questions:

1. What is your/your staff's familiarity with:
  - a. Manitoba Standards for Remote Learning?
  - b. Manitoba Remote Learning Strategy Framework?
2. What is working well related to remote learning?
3. What challenges do you see related to remote learning?
4. What is your vision for how remote learning could better support the staff and students you serve?
5. What additional support/assistance would you ask from the Department?

For questions 2 through 4, the feedback is summarized in the following categories:

- Teaching and Learning Environment and Practices
- Resources
- Digital Toolkit
- Infrastructure/Technology
- Communication
- Professional Learning
- Funding
- Mental Health and Well Being

## Phase 3: Recommendations and Implementation Requirements

### Remote Learning - Current State Assessment and Recommendations by Critical Components

In this section, each of the critical components identified in the National Scan and IBM's experience supporting school districts in leveraging technology in the learning experience, remote learning is examined. A unique section is included for each component. In each section, the following structure is followed:

#### Critical Component Name: **Leading Practices and Assessment:**

For each critical component, a table is used to highlight the leading practices, for the critical component being examined, that should be present in a system with a strong Remote Learning Strategy. The colour-coded column indicates how the IBM Educational consultants have assessed the province on each leading practice. This assessment was based on documents reviewed, their conversations, and observations with stakeholders over the course of this engagement.

Leading Practice	Current Assessment
There is a clear, provincially accepted vision for remote learning	
Goals and priorities are well articulated to achieve the stated vision	
A "Why Statement" for remote learning is established	
The vision and why statement for remote learning align with existing government education policy, strategy, or planning frameworks	
The role of each school division in the provision of, or use of, remote learning options, is understood by all divisions and the Department of Education	
Key terms, related to remote learning, are clearly defined, and communicated to all stakeholders	
Various modalities of remote learning are available (see Fig.1: Distance Learning Basics)	
All learners in Manitoba are eligible to take one, some, or all grade-level requirements remotely	
Provides learning opportunities that are inclusive and designed to meet the needs of all learners	
With a Provincial Virtual School available, the provision to develop local-level remote learning options that are supported by Province, is clearly communicated to school divisions, and funded independent schools	
Articulated strategies, practices and resources exist in recognition of the potential need for remote learning for all learners in response to short term events or crises	

#### Feedback and Observations related to the Critical Component:

From the stakeholder discussions found in [Appendix D: Focus Group Summary Report](#), feedback and observations directly related to the critical component being examined are highlighted to provide context for the recommendations in the following section.

#### Recommendations:

Recommendations are provided to move the critical component leading practices to the desired outcome. Achievement of the identified outcomes is dependent upon a strong Remote Learning Strategy and a well-executed implementation and monitoring plan.

#### Implementation Requirements:

Implementation Requirements are provided to support the recommendations. The implementation requirements are integral to the success of the overall Remote Learning Strategy.

During the recommendations process, additional suggestions for specific recommendations were captured and are included in [Appendix E: Additional Considerations for the Remote Learning Strategy](#).

## 1.0 Remote Learning Vision and Priorities

### Vision and Priorities: Leading Practices & Current Assessment

There is a clear, provincially accepted vision for remote learning	
Goals and priorities are well articulated to achieve the stated vision	
A "Why Statement" for remote learning is established	
The vision and why statement for remote learning align with existing government education policy, strategy, or planning frameworks	
The role of each school division in the provision of, or use of, remote learning options, is understood by all divisions and the Department of Education	
Key terms, related to remote learning, are clearly defined, and communicated to all stakeholders	
Various modalities of remote learning are available	
All learners in Manitoba are eligible to take one, some, or all grade-level requirements remotely	
Provides learning opportunities that are inclusive and designed to meet the needs of all learners	
With a Provincial Virtual School available, the provision to develop local-level remote learning options that are supported by Province, is clearly communicated to school divisions, and funded independent schools	
Articulated strategies, practices and resources exist in recognition of the potential need for remote learning for all learners in response to short term events or crises	

### Feedback and Observations related to Vision and Priorities:

From the stakeholder discussions, the following feedback and observations are directly related to the current vision and priorities for remote learning in the province.

- Remote learning is offered, using a variety of modalities (synchronous, asynchronous, with computer technology and low or no technology (phone/paper packages)
- Three remote learning offerings are open to students across the province
  - Although enrollment in these increased over the past two years, these offerings are not currently scalable to meet the needs of a Provincial Virtual School given current funding and staffing
- Schools and school divisions individually offered remote learning options to their students over the past two years to meet the needs of their learners for a short period of time or an extended one
- Remote options for learners in remote areas and for some groups of students were not as robust as offerings in urban areas (i.e., meeting the cultural and languages needs of Français, French Immersion, Indigenous and marginalized students)
- There is a lack of consistency with respect to the terms used to describe remote learning and its various options and modalities
- There is a sense of uncertainty as to the future of existing remote learning options based on unclear budgets for the upcoming year(s) and a perceived lack of communications from the MEECL
- Although all stakeholders agreed remote learning should be available to all students, it was clear that some students were less likely to succeed. Examples included some students with disabilities and learning challenges, and students who had poor access to join in the learning remotely from home
- There is no clear understanding of how school divisions and funded independent schools and/or the province will meet the needs of learners to go to remote learning if an 'event' or crisis were to occur
  - It is not clear if funding and increased resources that were made available over the pandemic will continue

## Recommendations related to Remote Learning Vision and Priorities:

### Recommendation 1.1: Vision Statement

The vision from Manitoba's Action Plan, published in April 2022, should be adopted as the foundational vision for the Remote Learning Strategy.

***All Manitoba students succeed, no matter where they live, their background or their individual circumstances.***

### Recommendation 1.2: Why Statement

The Why Statement should be adopted and used to guide the work of the Remote Learning Strategy.

***We are supporting remote learning in Manitoba to offer safe, caring, and inclusive remote learning communities that are accessible and responsive to meet the diverse needs of Manitoba students and their families.***

### Recommendation 1.3: Goals and Priorities

The goals and priorities for the Remote Learning Strategy should clarify:

- All aspects of the Provincial Virtual School:
  - In the short term, it will need to describe what will be available for Grades 9–12
  - The plan should identify when Grades K–8 will be supported and what will be available to these learners
  - Identify the profile of a successful remote learner (consider the different profile for a student taking one or some courses versus all courses remotely)
  - Articulate the processes, guidelines, and funding/costs to enrol in this option
  - Identify the resources that are required for the educational staff (Admin, Educators) and students to be successful (human resources, curriculum resources, technology resources, etc.)
- Articulated strategies, practices and resources exist in recognition of the potential need for remote learning for all learners in response to short term events or crises
  - Staff and students will have access to the resources they would need to participate in short term remote learning.
  - Teachers who typically are face-to-face can transition to short term remote learning
  - Teacher can use the digital toolkit
  - Teachers can 'carry on' with the learning with minimal changes / disruptions
- Ability to have students in classroom and others join remotely, when they are away for a defined short period of time, more seamlessly with better tools would be ideal
- Remote learning options that school divisions and funded independent schools will be responsible for:
  - Resident school divisions and funded independent schools should provide local student success and engagement supports (i.e., clinical, guidance, clubs, teams) for students taking remote learning through the provincial system and be funded for this support
  - Schools and school divisions should have a plan to move to occasional/emergency remote learning in response to an event or crisis:
- Ensure staff, students and caregivers can shift to remote learning for all students as needed (weather/environmental/safety, etc.)
- Funding to build teacher and administrator capacity to provide effective remote / blended learning opportunities should be provided



**Recommendation 1.4:** All learners in Manitoba will have access to remote learning options

All learners in Manitoba will have access to remote learning options to take one, some or all grade-level requirements remotely. However, it will be very important for students and caregivers to understand that not all students will thrive in this environment. Guidance and advice will be needed to help them make an informed choice.

**Recommendation 1.5:** Division Remote Learning Support

Each school division should have a Remote Learning Liaison position funded through MEECL to support students/caregivers and staff with remote learning.

## 2.0 Leadership, Governance, and Expectations

### Leadership, Governance, and Expectations: Leading Practices & Current Assessment

Leading Practice	Current Assessment
Provincial policy is in place which outlines the role of the school and school division to provide remote learning for event or crisis situations	
Provincial policy is in place for remote learning, where a student takes one, some or all course(s) remotely at the provincial virtual school	
A provincial leadership team has been established to support, and that specializes in, remote learning	
There are clear expectations for how staff and students will participate in remote learning. These expectations would address professional learning, instructional and assessment practices, supports to be provided, attendance, use of a common digital toolkit, etc.	
All users of the digital toolkit sign and adhere to acceptable and responsible use policies on an annual basis	

### Feedback and Observations related to Leadership, Governance, and Expectations:

From the stakeholder discussions, the following feedback and observations are directly related to the commitment to remote learning in terms of leadership, governance, and expectations.

- French / French Immersion
  - The distance learning branch (Online and Distributed Learning Unit) currently has no bilingual staff
  - There are no courses being developed
  - There is no longer an Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) responsible for French Language education
- There is a need for increased coordination between the departments at MEECL
- The divide between federally funded schools and provincially funded causes inequities and inefficiencies
- MEECL needs to find a way to serve all students equitably and eliminate or minimize the divide that the funding causes
- There are no consistent guidelines and/or expectations surrounding the provision of remote learning from MEECL to school divisions and funded independent schools

### Recommendations related to Leadership, Governance, and Expectations:

#### **Recommendation 2.1:** Provincial Leadership and Advisory Board

A provincial leadership team and advisory board, which specializes in remote learning, is established to provide oversight and support.

#### **Recommendation 2.2:** Provincial Policy – Criteria for Participation

Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning will develop and approve a provincial policy that sets the criteria for a student to take one, some or all courses remotely at the provincial virtual school.

### Recommendation 2.3: Provincial Policy – Crisis Situation

Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning will develop and approve a provincial policy that clearly differentiates the role and responsibilities of MEECL and each school division and funded independent school in the case of an event/crisis situation.

## 3.0 Vision and Priority – Virtual School

### Vision and Priority: Virtual School - Leading Practices & Current Assessment

Leading Practice	Current Assessment
Comprehensive guidelines to identify enrolment requirements and procedures including who can enroll how to enroll, an option for continuous intake, an optimal profile for a remote learner, what options are available	
Orientation and support for students / families to use the remote learning tools	
Orientation and support for students / families to maximize engagement, participation, and success in remote learning	
Programming is available to meet the needs of all K-12 learners	
Scalable to accept all students who identify a need / requirement to take one, some or all their course content remotely	
Programming addresses all components of the provincial curriculum, within the capacity of a remote learning environment (i.e., some courses may require some amount of in-person learning, such as technical vocational education)	
Student Success support structures, available in face-to-face schools, are available (i.e., clinical, guidance). These may be provided by the virtual school or through a reciprocal agreement with the resident school / division of the enrolled student	
Student Engagement and Community support structures, available in face-to-face schools are provided (i.e., clubs, teams, etc.). These may be provided by the virtual school or through a reciprocal agreement with the resident school / division of the enrolled student	
Summer School options are provided	

### Feedback and Observations related to Vision and Priority – Virtual School:

From the stakeholder discussions, the following feedback and observations are directly related to the current vision and priorities for the Provincial Virtual School.

- Those who participated in or were responsible for remote learning schools highlighted the importance of creating a strong sense of community
  - Remote learning schools had staff responsible for ensuring connections to families stayed strong
  - Staff in divisions where remote learning was due to the pandemic found unique ways to build this community but challenges were encountered ensuring all students and their families stayed engaged and connected
  - Staff who worked with students synchronously indicated it was easier to create a sense of community and increase engagement
  - Smaller class sizes helped with the ability to create a sense of community and to get to know everyone. It was recommended that the teacher needs to be able to see everyone on one screen
- Programming, in a remote learning environment, was available to meet the needs of many learners but:

- There were disparities reported with respect to resources – i.e., time to find resources, costs of these resources, qualified teachers to support remote learning in Français, or French Immersion
- There were disparities reported in northern and remote areas as there were not always the same selection of course offerings, materials, and the stable infrastructure necessary to participate
- There are some courses that are challenging to fully deliver in a remote setting, i.e., physical education, technical vocational education
- There were limited remote learning summer offerings
- The need to have an at-home person provide support is increasingly important in younger grades
- Where there were multiple children learning from home, it was harder for students to be engaged:
  - In synchronous learning if they did not all have their own device
  - If more than one child required assistance from an adult in the home to participate in remote learning
- Some caregivers struggled with how to use the digital tools their children were expected to use in support of their learning. This struggle increased if the toolkit was not the same from grade to grade, where a parent had multiple children learning at home
  - The remote learning schools typically provide limited support to help the caregivers with how to use the digital toolkit
  - Not all divisions offered technical support on the digital toolkit to their caregivers. Formal support of students' use of the toolkit was also not necessarily provided
- Remote learning schools have established communication tools, messaging, and processes to help families understand the remote learning options offered, and how to enroll. Divisions who were offering remote learning in reaction to the pandemic were not as equipped to communicate these options to their families
- Although enrolment at the remote learning schools increased significantly because of the pandemic, the schools are not currently designed to scale based on current funding models
- All stakeholders interviewed indicated a strong desire to have a clear, supported, and sustainable remote learning plan. If a provincial virtual school is to replace the offerings that are currently available, it will need to:
  - Offer learning in a variety of ways, support all learners
  - Form a relationship between resident school divisions, funded independent schools and the provincial remote learning school to ensure they are supportive of each other and operate in the most efficient and effective ways to promote the success of all students
- All stakeholders were able to articulate their vision for a successful remote learning strategy and virtual school. This feedback has informed the recommendations below:
  - Clearly define who will use it, when and why and communicate well to parents and students
  - Operate as school division with full recognition and consistent funding
  - Offer traditional supports such as clinical support, speech and language, guidance counsellors, etc.

## Recommendations related to Vision and Priority - Virtual School:

### **Recommendation 3.1:** Create a Provincial Virtual School

The province should create a centrally-managed Provincial Virtual School as a phased approach, starting immediately with high school grades 9-12, with full recognition and funding that is capable of scaling to meet the demand for K to 12 remote learning. The Virtual School will meet existing demands for remote learning, including synchronous and asynchronous options in English, French, and French Immersion.

## 4.0 Remote Learning Pedagogy - Instruction and Assessment Practices

### Remote Learning Pedagogy - Instruction and Assessment Practices: Leading Practices & Current Assessment

Leading Practice	Current Assessment
Teachers are aware of and supported in the use of the Manitoba Remote Learning Framework Guiding Principles and Strategies	
Teachers are informed and supported with curriculum and content knowledge - what is being taught	
Teachers, delivering remote learning, are informed, and supported with pedagogical knowledge - how content is being taught	
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) – Teachers use a variety of teaching methods that give all students equal opportunities to succeed	
Teachers customize and personalize the learning experience through differentiation, scaffolding, etc., based on individual learning needs in a remote learning setting	
A clear explanation about how learning will be structured and delivered is communicated to students and caregivers. Mechanisms for regular checking in with caregivers and students for feedback are established	
Students and caregivers have access to a variety of supports as needed (curriculum supports to assist with remote learning through an online resource repository, a support / call centre, access to staff outside of classroom hours, etc.)	
Teachers are informed and supported in leading practices for assessment and evaluation when teaching remotely	
School leaders use observation and conversation to evaluate teachers and provide feedback, similar to the processes used in face-to-face classrooms	
There are processes in place to engage students in regular formative assessments	
The processes for summative assessments are clearly communicated to students and caregivers	

## Feedback and Observations related to Instruction and Assessment Practices:

From the stakeholder discussions, the following feedback and observations are directly related to the assessment and instructional practices that support remote learning.

- The framework, created for the Manitoba Remote Learning Support Centre (MRLSC), may not be viewed as a provincial document, but it does provide excellent strategies for teaching and learning whether teachers are remote or face-to-face
- Teachers that used the framework reported high satisfaction with the components and felt, if they had been doing remote learning, the framework provided affirmation to the practices that they had put in place
- Teachers, in the transition to remote learning, were forced to review their instruction and assessment practices and some school divisions and funded independent schools reported the rich pedagogical discussions that resulted
- Teachers grew in their assessment practices (Assessment For Learning) and developed options to use this in remote learning situations
- Teachers made use of inquiry projects to provide choice and drive engagement and small group instruction
- Those who participated in, or were responsible for, remote learning schools highlighted:
  - they were able to create a sense of community and referenced the importance of it
  - their success with synchronous programming and stressed the importance of engaging students
- The Manitoba Remote Learning Support Centre (MRLSC), created in response to the pandemic for K-8 reported:
  - Some successes within K-8 and French Immersion programming
  - Staff were able to serve so many young students with various needs (medical, mental health, safety, location)
  - Professional learning provided for their teaching staff was intense and effective
  - Utilizing asynchronous sessions, two afternoons per week, enabled teachers to collaborate and reach out to caregivers
- Divisions reported satisfaction with the supports received from the MRLSC, pointing to online access to resources and high yield strategies
- Smaller class sizes, which were often the case for remote learning classes taking place at the remote learning schools, were successful and it was reported to be easier to develop a sense of community and get to know each other
- Offering blended and hybrid options where the teacher may not have been on-site presented challenges with monitoring in terms of attendance, offering support, and assessment of student work
- For French Immersion students involved in remote learning, finding how to give them enough talk time was a challenge. Talk time is critical to their oral language development
- More teachers need help to build their capacity with respect to sound instructional and assessment practices to be used in remote learning
- Remote learning was especially challenging for the early years and was not always the best option for all students based on how they learned and the supports they needed
- There was a lack of consistency with how the tools were used to support learning and engagement
- Many teachers were not sure how to instruct in a synchronous environment. Asynchronous environments were often cited as unsuccessful due to poor student engagement and lack of completion of work
- Differentiation was extremely challenging in a remote learning environment
- Teachers engaged in rich discussion related to assessment and re-examined their practices and questioned the validity of certain types of summative assessments that they had relied on for years

- For assessment, the use of online assessment software (i.e., Crowdmark) enhanced teachers' confidence in assessment results
- Higher success was reported when teachers that were involved in blended learning were selected, based on their previous experience in remote/blended learning and technological skills
- In blended learning, success was also attributed both to consistent timetables across schools that were participating in these courses and when a consistent digital toolkit was used

## Recommendations related to Remote Learning Pedagogy - Instruction and Assessment Practices:

### **Recommendation 4.1: Remote Learning Framework and Standards Documents**

Rebrand the Manitoba Remote Learning Framework document and introduce as a provincial resource document:

- Ensure the development of an online course, hosted in a learning management system (LMS), to support all Manitoba teachers in the use of the Manitoba Remote Learning Framework Guiding Principles and Strategies
- Review and update the Manitoba Education Standards for Remote Learning
- Include the revised standards in a Provincial Guide for Effective Instruction and Assessment for Remote Learning

### **Recommendation 4.2: Pedagogical knowledge - *how content is being taught***

There should be clear and consistent provincial guidelines and expectations for the effective use of technology in the delivery of remote learning instruction:

- The practice of all educators delivering instruction in a remote learning environment is guided by a consistent set of guidelines and expectations
- Develop a Provincial Guide for Effective Instruction and Assessment for Remote Learning anchored in the Manitoba Remote Learning Framework Document
- Build expertise to ensure all educators instructing remotely have the required pedagogical knowledge and expertise to implement high quality learning

## 5.0 Professional Learning

### Professional Learning: Leading Practices & Current Assessment

Leading Practice	Current Assessment
Faculties of education build capacity with all pre-service teachers on effective remote learning tools, strategies, and skills	Out of scope
Faculties of education provide a pathway for pre-service teachers who choose to specialize in remote learning as this is the environment that they intend to teach in	Out of scope
Responsive "just in time" professional learning on leading instructional and assessment practices is available for all staff, no matter what environment (remote or face- to -face) they teach in	
Teachers receive professional learning and supports to acquire needed content knowledge	
Teachers are provided with the professional learning and ongoing capacity building to know how to use the digital toolkit	
Professional learning on leading instructional and assessment practices for remote learning is offered to all staff who support students in remote learning	
Teachers are provided with the professional learning and ongoing capacity building to use the digital toolkit in support of the leading instructional and assessment practices that they are using	
Professional learning with staff models and embeds this digital toolkit in the context of the content, instructional and/or assessment practices being focused on	
The digital toolkit is used to deliver professional learning to staff both synchronously and asynchronously to enable "just in time" learning	
Specific funding for professional learning is included in the remote learning funding model	
Professional learning, offered to staff in face-to-face schools, should be offered to staff of the virtual schools, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manitoba curriculum</li> <li>• Instruction and assessment practices</li> <li>• Digital toolkit 'how to'</li> <li>• Health and safety</li> <li>• Mental health and well-being</li> <li>• Digital citizenship</li> </ul>	
Participation in a professional learning community, to build and develop ongoing capacity, is an expectation of all staff who support students in remote learning	

### Feedback and Observations related to Professional Learning

From the stakeholder discussions, the following feedback and observations are directly related to the professional learning that is provided to teachers to support the role they play in remote learning.

#### Remote Learning Instruction and Assessment

- Faculties of Education need to build capacity around instructional and assessment practices that will work in remote learning
  - The skills for teaching face-to-face are different than those for teaching remotely
  - Teachers should be selected for remote teaching and provided with specialized training
  - They must be intentional in this capacity building



- Teachers received support and professional learning in their use of blended learning and are able now, more than before, to use these new skills in the classroom as well
- More teachers need help to build their capacity with respect to sound instructional and assessment practices to be used in remote learning
- Teachers took risks, tried new things, reached out to each other to be successful in remote learning
- Staff require more professional learning to intentionally develop their skills to become proficient with instructional and assessment practices that support remote learning (leading practices regardless of where the learner is)
- Differentiation was extremely challenging in a remote learning environment

### Technological Knowledge

- Almost all teachers increased their comfort, ability, and capacity to use technology and the digital toolkit to support their students
- The entire experience provided accelerated learning for teachers – they had to learn to continue to support their students
- Teachers worked together and demonstrated innovation
- Teacher efficacy and collaboration increased
- Staff require more professional learning to intentionally develop their skills to become proficient with the digital tools (how, when to use them)

### Professional Learning Format

- Divisions have 're-imagined' what professional learning can look like
- The use of the technologies that enabled virtual professional learning was excellent modelling of how technology can be used in the learning experience with students
- Virtual professional learning allowed people to participate virtually, especially those from outside urban areas and created authentic and very effective learning communities
- Some divisions moved to online mini-professional learning sessions that were recorded and could be used for anytime, just-in-time professional learning
- Divisions adjusted schedules and timetables to enable teachers to have planning and collaboration time together
- As teachers were forced to meet online for professional learning and use the same toolkit, there was significant financial and time saving (reduced travel, etc.)
- Use virtual format to foster communities of learnings within and beyond a specific division
- Professional Learning Communities should be integral to the plan

## Recommendations Related to the Professional Learning – All Schools and School Divisions:

### **Recommendation 5.1:** Build Educator Capacity

Build expertise to ensure all educators instructing remotely have the required pedagogical knowledge and skills to implement high quality learning:

- to ensure high quality remote learning program design and content
- to understand and use the principles of universal design for learning (UDL) to prioritize and meet the needs of diverse learners
- to implement high quality remote learning experiences

## 6.0 Role of Technology

### Role of Technology: Leading Practices & Current Assessment

Leading Practice	Current Assessment
A clear vision of how technology will be used is established in support of remote learning	
Staff and students participate together in learning activities and facilitated conversations to build their understanding of digital citizenship and media literacy	
The province, resident school divisions and funded independent schools, community partners and families, to the best of their ability, should provide equitable access to infrastructure for all stakeholders who participate in remote learning, including all students from northern, rural, and remote communities.	
Where infrastructure is not available, alternate modalities, low bandwidth requirements, or partnership solutions are explored	
Where students or families choose not to use technology in support of their learning, low or no technology options are available	
Appropriate devices, to support remote learning, are provided, as needed, to students. This will likely need the cooperation of the province, resident school divisions and funded independent schools, community partners and families.	
Appropriate devices, to support remote learning, are provided to all educational staff who participate in, and support remote learning, along with necessary peripherals such as a second display and microphone	
<p>A standard, system-wide approved digital application /software toolkit is available for stakeholder use which would include at a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a Learning Management System (LMS) to support remote learning</li> <li>• a digital portfolio tool</li> <li>• a digital learning resource repository</li> <li>• a productivity suite which enables collaboration, communication, and other global competencies</li> </ul>	
For innovators and early adopters or unique course requirements, options to go beyond the basic toolkit are provided if supportable, affordable, secure, and helpful for informing or enhancing the teaching practice and/or learning experience	
There is a clearly articulated “toolkit legend” that details what tools are available, which grades/subjects they are suitable for; and what functions they will be used to perform (i.e., collaboration, communication, learning management, digital resources, etc.)	
The digital toolkit supports the leading instructional and assessment practices for remote learning	
Capacity building and support should be available to caregivers and students on how to use the tools in the digital toolkit	
The digital toolkit should be modeled in, and used to support, staff meetings, student support meetings, professional learning community meetings, etc.	
A help desk should be made available to all stakeholders (students, caregivers, staff) participating in remote learning	
Security of personal information and data is protected for all stakeholders participating in remote learning (i.e., digital tools have passed privacy impact assessments, student data is only stored on Canadian based servers, student data is not transferred via USB keys, etc.)	

## Feedback and Observations related to the Role of Technology:

From the stakeholder discussions, the following feedback and observations are directly related to the role of technology in remote learning.

- There is a standard digital toolkit provided by MEECL:
  - Learning management system (LMS) is Brightspace and is provincially licensed and available to all staff and students to support in-class, remote, blended or hybrid learning
  - Office 365 is provincially licensed as the collaborative office suite and MS Teams, through Manitoba Education Research and Learning Information Networks (MERLIN)
    - Short 'how to videos' on how to use O365 are available; MEECL provided professional learning upon request
  - Grades K-8 Brightspace courses purchased by MEECL are based on Ontario curriculum, so teachers were less likely to use/adopt them
- Funded Independent schools and school divisions indicated they each had a selected set of digital tools to support collaboration, learning management and basic office-type tasks (word processing, spreadsheet, etc.). These toolkits varied by division and many divisions were using tools not funded by the province (i.e., Google Suite, Google Classroom, SeeSaw, etc.). Divisions reported success in the use of the toolkit they had selected. Increased capacity in the use of the toolkit by their staff and students was achieved over the past two years
- Provincial procurement services for licensing of software i.e., DreamBox, were provided
- There is a lack of consistency with respect to tools in the toolkit:
  - Individual school divisions and funded independent schools reported various digital tools being used:
    - LMS functionality is delivered through SeeSaw, Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, Brightspace
    - The inability to integrate tools with Brightspace is one reason that was reported as to why divisions may choose to use something other than Brightspace for their LMS. An example is that MS Teams does not integrate into Brightspace
    - The Brightspace environment is provided. Although MEECL provides some add-ons to Brightspace, divisions cited that not all add-ons have been purchased (i.e., plagiarism checker) that they would appreciate
  - Caregivers struggled with the technology toolkit that their student(s) needed to participate in remote learning
    - Teachers spent a lot of time supporting students and caregivers on getting the technology to work and knowing how to use it which meant reduced time to focus on the learning
- Increase the functionality of the digital toolkit (i.e., there are more functions in Brightspace that would be beneficial) and clearly communicate which tools should be used for which purpose
- More choice in platforms should be provided OR if it is a consistent toolkit, be clear as to why a platform was chosen (i.e., efficiencies and effectiveness of narrowing the toolkit)
  - Google / Microsoft Teams
  - Edwin
  - Compass

- One platform, with a consistent set of tools used provincially, is needed to build familiarity for teachers, students, and caregivers
  - The toolkit is used to connect students together remotely (i.e., Teams, Zoom, etc. must provide a call-in option)
- Some teachers were faced with many different tools (software, peripherals, etc.) that were new and caused stress
- For staff engaged in remote learning, ensure they have the peripherals they need (second screen, phone, speakers, microphone, etc.)
- Caregivers became aware of tools that are used to support their students in their learning (i.e., text to speech, immersive readers)
- Some school divisions reported soaring usage (1000-fold increase) in the use of their Microsoft environment
- In some areas where homes had limited connectivity, community hotspots were used to provide access to the internet
- For urban school divisions, infrastructure issues were typically minimal and were likely due to affordability and not availability. This was not the case in rural and remote school divisions
  - The issues related to access to technology and infrastructure have shone a light on the question of equity and participants felt that this is a success - we can no longer ignore the inequity felt by students in remote areas or due to socioeconomic reasons
- School devices were loaned to homes in many school divisions and funded independent schools for use during remote learning periods
  - Using creativity and funds from various sources, divisions were able to meet many of the student needs for devices
  - This was not always the case, and in families with multiple children, this was sometimes a challenge
- Connectivity and bandwidth were the biggest challenges to participating in remote learning
- Northern and remote school divisions were at a much greater disadvantage in terms of being able to participate in learning
  - There are students in many of these communities who have not participated in learning for two years due to lack of access when schools were not open (and their schools remained closed longer than urban/suburban schools) and others that participated but not as fully as those in other areas
  - The long-term impact of this learning loss will need to be addressed for several years
- Some school divisions tried to fund access for students that did not have internet access at home
- There was, and still is, a need to provide paper packages to students whose families could not, or would not, use technology
- In some cases, limited bandwidth caused scheduling hurdles for blended and hybrid offerings
- Poor power grids and/or weather can result in power failures
- Although Starlink is available to provide internet access in some communities, it was typically only at the school site, not in homes and there were some privacy concerns that kept some people from adopting it
- There is a need for increased connectivity province wide – this should be a provincially owned and driven initiative and not the responsibility of each school division
- Lack of consistency of devices within a classroom and in remote learning added unnecessary complexities
- Some caregivers are not open to the use of technology in the learning experience

- Privacy issues, related to the use of cameras, were reported. Examples of these issues were caregivers walking through the camera partially clothed, students being on camera without permission, and the recording of students without permission
- Awareness of security issues rose from using unsupported tools, cameras, recording of lessons, etc.
- Lack of equity was reported with respect to:
  - Access to student devices – any student learning remotely must have their own device
  - Access to devices in the northern and remote areas was difficult
  - Internet access, bandwidth, speed, and reliability
    - There are communities with no access to cellular or the Internet
    - Remote and rural communities have greater challenges than metro and urban communities
- Delivery of technology to students was not fast enough initially to give students access
- A help desk/support protocol is needed for staff, caregivers, and students for assistance with the digital toolkit as well as learning related questions
- Consideration is needed to provide connectivity and devices for some families
  - All students must have the ability to participate with the technology assuming it is not a cultural or religious reason for not being able to participate
    - If a family has multiple children, each must have a device to fully participate in the learning
    - Increased access to devices is needed for students to use at home, province-wide
  - Consistency of devices, by grade levels (i.e., K-3 iPad, 4-8 Chromebook, 9-12 full function laptop) is recommended for ease of support
- Caregivers will need to understand what their commitment/expectation is to provide adequate infrastructure and/or devices to enable the learning, and what the typical 'usage' demands are with the tools being used

## Recommendations Related to the Role of Technology – All Schools and School Divisions

### Recommendation 6.1: Standard Digital Toolkit

Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning should develop a standard digital toolkit with tools appropriate to each grade level to support leading instructional and assessment practices and fund the appropriate tools to support all school divisions and funded independent schools which includes:

- Learning Management System(s) (LMS) to support remote learning
- digital portfolio tools
- a digital learning resource repository
- a productivity suite which enables collaboration, communication, and other global competencies

### Recommendation 6.2: Low Tech Options

Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning will ensure that low or no technology options (examples include package delivery, use of telephone or radio) are specifically planned and provided.

## 7.0 Learning Resources

### Learning Resources: Leading Practices & Current Assessment

Leading Practices	Current Assessment
A robust K-12 learning object repository, aligned to Manitoba curriculum, is available for staff, students, and caregivers to access	
Content in the learning repository is submitted by educators or approved contributors (i.e., community partner) and peer reviewed before going 'public'	
Content in the learning repository is kept current	
Categories in the learning repository include resources for students, resources for caregivers, resources for teachers: to support learning to use with their students; resources for planning; professional learning resources	
Resources, in the learning repository for teachers, are supportive of the leading instructional and assessment practices for remote learning	
Fully developed courses should be easily accessible through a learning management system that will support implementation, communication, and assessment	
Course materials that are developed for online delivery should be done with leading online/remote learning design principles	
There is access to meaningful, high-quality, culturally relevant supporting resources	

### Feedback and Observations related to the Learning Resources:

From the stakeholder discussions, the following feedback and observations are directly related to learning resources available to support remote learning.

- Unique courses, aligned to the Manitoba curriculum, could be easily created in Brightspace which enables unique cultures to be represented
- In Brightspace, there are web-based courses that are available from Grades 9-12
- Grades 1-8 courses have been purchased from D2L (Brightspace) but are based on Ontario curriculum and need to be aligned to Manitoba's curriculum
- Resources in French were available through Direction des ressources éducatives françaises (DREF), TFO (coordinates licenses); Bureau de l'éducation française (BEF) provides French library resources
- Some divisions published digital remote learning resources for the community
- The Manitoba Remote Learning Support Centre (MRLSC) was created in response to the pandemic for K-8 to support remote learning in these grades. Although it was able to provide some resources for these grades, funding and resources were limited supporting the need for a more formal remote learning strategy, K-12, post pandemic
- The Distance Learning Unit that used to create distributed learning print-based courses was disbanded
  - This team created independent print-based courses for Grades 9-12 in the past, but these have not been maintained or updated and have become very dated
  - Gaps were experienced for home schooled students when the distance learning unit was closed
  - The Online and Distributed Learning Units' teacher-mediated web-based courses are still available but not updated regularly

- Appropriate resources for remote learning were not easy to find regardless of subject/grade, and this is exacerbated for French resources:
  - Resources available in French are much more limited than in English and more costly; teachers had to find their own resources
  - French Immersion resources were available, but it took time to search and vet them. For 'pay' resources, once the free trial was done, they were typically more expensive to purchase than English resources
  - Although there are repositories (i.e., MRLSC repository, Maple), at least one is reported to have content that is limited in some subject areas with a lack of consistency as to how the content is monitored/maintained
- Online courses were not necessarily developed with the appropriate design and remote pedagogical practices embedded. Often it was simply conversion of print materials to digital and delivered online
- Targeted resources, by grade level, should be provided for caregiver, students, and staff
- Courses should be developed by a central body with appropriate skills for online learning (design, pedagogy, content, culturally inclusive)
- Caregivers and students will need access to support resources, such as:
  - a number/person to contact to answer questions, navigate issues
  - assistance, as needed, to use the digital tools in support of the learning
  - opportunities to meet with each other in support of a 'virtual school community'
- A fully functional and 'loaded' resource repository would be available to serve all teachers and students from K-12, in both languages with culturally appropriate resources

## Recommendations related to Learning Resources – All Schools and School Divisions:

### **Recommendation 7.1:** Centrally Managed Resource Repository

One centrally managed Manitoba Resource Repository should provide resources for all subjects/grade levels. Courses should be supported and expanded by MEECL based upon the Manitoba curriculum and accessible to educators. Resources should be available for teachers to use with students in support of their learning; for planning, for professional learning; and to support students and caregivers. All resources should be made available in French and English.

## 8.0 Mental Health, Well-Being and Belonging

### Mental Health and Well-Being and Belonging: Leading Practices & Current Assessment

Leading Practice	Current Assessment
Supports are in place for remote teachers, students and caregivers' mental health and well-being	
All stakeholders know how to access mental health and wellness supports	
Structures are in place to build a sense of community: teacher to teacher; teacher to students; student to student; teacher to caregiver; teacher to caregiver/student (Framework Guiding Principles)	
All stakeholders feel a sense of belonging and are welcomed into their remote learning community	
For students attending the virtual school, there are opportunities for them to establish a sense of community in their resident school	

### Feedback and Observations related to the Mental Health and Well-Being and Belonging:

From the stakeholder discussions, the following feedback and observations are directly related to the mental health, well-being, and sense of belonging of staff and students involved in remote learning.

Impact on the mental health and well-being of staff and students:

- The last two years has created long-terms needs for staff and students that must be addressed
- Mental health and well-being were not initially acknowledged or addressed
- The feeling of 'always-on' by teachers was extremely stressful and took a toll over the two years
- Leaders reported a sense of exhaustion from their teachers, especially if they were expected to support students in both a remote and face-to-face setting
- Mental health issues persist; some students and staff are more reluctant to return to the classroom

### Supports for Mental Health and Well-Being

- Divisions attempted to provide mental health supports to staff, students, and families where possible
- There were more opportunities for mental health and wellness conversations
- *Project 11* – True North Youth Foundation was cited as providing a consistent mental health strategy and access to experts to support schools
- Teachers did not have the skills they needed to thrive in a remote learning environment, and this caused a lot of stress
- Some funding and programs are in place to support the mental health and well-being needs of students, families, and staff
- Mental health supports, such as clinical and guidance, could be provided by the resident school for students participating in the virtual school
- It is important to support the sense of community and increase the teacher's and school's ability to 'check-in' with their students



Recommendations related to the Mental Health and Well-Being and Belonging – All Schools:

**Recommendation 8.1** Create Community

Ensure structures are in place, as outlined in the Manitoba Framework for Remote Learning, to build a sense of community for all stakeholders, students, staff, and caregivers:

- Ensure all participants feel a sense of belonging and are welcomed into their remote learning community

**9.0 Communication**

Communication: Leading Practices & Current Assessment

Leading Practice	Current Assessment
An oversight committee is in place to ensure effective communication process are in place. These processes should include a 'feedback loop' ensuring stakeholders are confident that questions, concerns, and comments are received and attended to	
Common messaging and/or communication to all stakeholders using the medium(s) they are most likely to access	
The vision and goals for remote learning are clearly communicated to caregivers, students, and educational staff	
Caregivers, students, and educational staff understand who is eligible for remote learning and the processes to access and use remote learning	
The oversight committee will ensure stakeholders are aware of the success(es) of the virtual school	

Feedback and Observations related to Communication

From the stakeholder discussions, the following feedback and observations are directly related to the commitment to remote learning as demonstrated by the communication plan and channels to support it.

- All stakeholders expressed a need for clear, timely communications from Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning to school divisions and funded independent schools, and from the school divisions to their schools, caregivers, and students
- Many reported current challenges with the timeliness of communications and indicated not all messages, which may have gone from MEECL to the division, make it to the school communities
- Some schools and school division leaders were frustrated by the timing of information, especially related to funding information, that was critical to planning, resourcing, and scheduling for the upcoming school year
- Caregivers, students, and staff will need to understand the options and requirements for participating in remote learning

Recommendations related to Communications:

**Recommendation 9.1:** Create a communication plan

Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning should develop a communication plan which includes:

- A high-level overview of the Remote Learning Strategy and a link to the full strategy, including a description of the options available and the requirements to participate
- Critical timelines from the Implementation Requirement plan
- How caregivers, students, and staff can get additional information, support, and guidance
- How success of the remote learning strategy will be monitored and used to refine the plan

## 10.0 Funding

### Funding: Leading Practices & Current Assessment

Leading Practice	Current Assessment
Approved and committed multi-year funding model is in place to support all aspects of the virtual school system (HR, Resources, Technology and infrastructure, Professional Learning, Communication, Governance, HR, and Materials)	
Allocation of sufficient resources to ensure that there is relevant technological, content, and pedagogical knowledge for implementing remote learning	
There is an established budget that provides sustainability and growth for a robust remote learning environment	

### Feedback and Observations related to Sustainability – Funding

From the stakeholder discussions, the following feedback and observations are directly related to the funding of remote learning in the province.

- It was generally agreed that funding needs to be dedicated to any new remote learning strategy
- Although there was increased funding reported, in response to the pandemic for resources, staff, etc., divisions acknowledged:
  - it simply was not enough to meet all the demands
  - it is not expected to be sustained so for resources that were purchased that need to be sustained over time (i.e., technology), there are concerns as to how to maintain the ratios that are needed to participate in remote learning
- The funding model for InformNet and TMO changes yearly. This funding uncertainty impacts their ability to publish their offerings for the following year. This causes unnecessary workload, delays, and communication issues
- Students/families must pay a per course fee to attend virtual schools which can be challenging for some families
- The virtual school must be funded like all other schools
  - A virtual school may not need funds for bricks/mortar, but all aspects must be considered AND include connectivity, devices, and the software toolkit in the funding for any student participating in the virtual school
- There must be a commitment to a multi-year funding model to ensure sustainability
- If a student opts to take one, some or all courses/programming remotely, there should not be a cost to the resident school or school division
- The funding model will need to ensure school divisions and funded independent schools are not penalized if one of their students opts to take one, some or all courses remotely. If funding to the resident division is withheld, the division may not encourage the student to take courses remotely. Having the resident school continue to provide services, clubs, sports teams is a way to promote a strong sense of community and continue to provide funding for the student

## Recommendations related to Funding:

### **Recommendation 10.1:** Funding – Remote Learning Strategy

A funding model to support all requirements of the Manitoba Remote Learning Strategy and Virtual School will be developed to meet the recommendations found within this report. Funding requirements may include, but are not limited to:

- Staffing and Resource allocations
- Per course funding
- Professional Learning for staff
- Procurement and maintenance for the Digital Toolkit and Resource Repository
- Help Desk Support
- Device procurement

This funding should be independent of current funding to school divisions.

### **Recommendation 10.2:** Funding – Infrastructure and Resources

Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning will ensure the approved funding model provides the appropriate infrastructure and resources to meet the needs of all students.

## 11.0 Monitoring & Continuous Improvement

### Monitoring and Continuous Improvement: Leading Practices & Current Assessment

Clearly developed success criteria for monitoring remote learning are created	
For each success criteria, leading practices or expected evidence is identified	
Monitoring plan includes Monitoring of Adoption (how many students use remote learning, how often, what % of their programming) and Monitoring of Impact (impact on engagement, impact on achievement, impact on mental health and well-being, etc.)	
Feedback from all appropriate stakeholders is collected as part of the data collection process	
Observations, conversations (storytelling, images) and product should be included as evidence of the success criteria	
Data collection is centralized and part of regularly scheduled monitoring	
Feedback from regularly scheduled monitoring is reviewed and used to continuously refine the remote learning strategy	

#### Feedback and Observations related to Monitoring and Continuous Improvement:

Although there is no specific feedback from the stakeholder discussions related to monitoring and continuous improvement, for the purpose of this report, the development of an overarching monitoring plan is considered an essential component of the Remote Learning Strategy. A comprehensive monitoring plan defines what successful implementation of the components and corresponding recommendations should be. An effective monitoring plan is deliberately planned, implemented, and consistently reviewed and refined to guide the ongoing status and sustainability of the strategy. Monitoring informs and ensures successful implementation of the Remote Learning Strategy.

#### Recommendations related to Monitoring and Continuous Improvement:

##### **Recommendation 11.1:** Success Criteria will be measured

Ensure that clearly defined Success Criteria are created for each of the Remote Learning Strategy components to measure achievement of goals:

- Expected or leading practices are identified for each success criteria

## Implementation Requirements

In addition to the recommendations, the stakeholders' feedback identified implementation requirements related to the recommendations. These are summarized in the table below and should be used in the development of the implementation plan.

Critical Component	Implementation Requirements
<p><b>1. Remote Learning Vision and Priorities</b></p>	<p><b>1. Division Staff can access information on the Remote Learning Strategy</b> Professional learning should be provided to ensure educational staff, in all divisions, understand the Provincial Remote Learning Strategy and are able to explain to caregivers and students, the goals of the Remote Learning Strategy and describe the remote learning options that are available.</p> <p>Divisional leaders, resource or guidance teams should be able to articulate the components and strategies. Teaching and support staff should be familiar with the resources and where to find them.</p> <p><b>2. Virtual School must offer various modalities of learning</b> Students must have options to learn synchronously and asynchronously.</p> <p>In both synchronous and asynchronous options, some students can participate using technology-based tools. Others will require low or no technology options (paper-based packages, telephone supports, etc.).</p> <p>As the virtual learning school is developed, options related to different modalities (online, telephone, television, radio, paper-based packages) must be clearly articulated. It will not be possible to offer every course at every grade level using all modalities, especially in the short term. Attempts to clarify these options and explain to students and their caregivers the reasons for the availability of these options will be essential.</p> <p><b>3. Create and Maintain Glossary of Terms</b> A glossary of common terms related to remote learning has been created. This glossary should be maintained over time and will be used to create a common understanding of key terms, such as Remote Learning, Online Learning, and Blended Learning. The glossary should be accessible to all stakeholders and should be referenced as needed to ensure common understanding of these terms. See <a href="#">Appendix A: Remote Learning Glossary, V1</a>.</p> <p><b>4. Communication Plan</b> A strong communication plan should be developed by MEECL and executed provincially to ensure this vision is understood.</p> <p><b>5. Phased Implementation Requirement of the Remote Learning Strategy/Vision</b> It is expected that overtime, each component that is not currently scored with dark green will become 'greener' as the recommendations in the Remote Learning Strategy are adopted and implemented. To provide a sense of 'timing' or a target to drive to dark green, Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning should create a phased Implementation Requirement plan.</p>

<p><b>2. Leadership, Governance, and Expectations</b></p>	<p><b>1. Academic honesty/Integrity Policy</b> Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning will develop an academic honesty/integrity policy that sets out the expectations of academic achievement and individual study expectations which will be signed yearly by students and their caregivers who participate in remote learning.</p> <p><b>2. Student Ownership</b> Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning will define part-time and full-time students within the virtual school to allow for appropriate funding and reciprocal agreements for clinical supports at the student's resident school.</p> <p><b>Future Implementation Considerations:</b></p> <p>1. Provincial Leadership Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning will ensure continuity in the leadership team to support and specialize in remote learning.</p>
<p><b>3. Vision and Priority - Virtual School</b></p>	<p><b>1. Development of Virtual School will be a phased approach.</b> Development and establishment of the Virtual school will be in a phased approach, starting with providing services for grades 9–12. Once the initial phase is successfully operational, further exploration of K–8 Remote Learning options will commence.</p> <p><b>2. Existing demands for remote learning options remain to be supported</b> As part of the work of establishing a Provincial Virtual School, the needs of students that are currently met by existing remote learning programs in Manitoba will be requirements of the Virtual School or will continue to be supported until such time they become part of the Virtual School. For grades 9–12 this includes Synchronous and Asynchronous course offerings in English and French (including Immersion) with low and no technology solutions. For grades K–8 this includes Synchronous programming online in English and French (including Immersion).</p> <p><b>3. Implementation Requirement will take time</b> As the Remote Learning Strategy is created and the Implementation Requirement plan for the launch of the Provincial Virtual School is developed, a timeline will need to be established. This timeline will recognize that it will take multiple years to fully implement a virtual school that can meet the needs of all learners K–12. Compromises will need to be made based upon funding and specific learning needs.</p> <p><b>4. All students from Manitoba will be eligible to enroll and attend to take one, some, or all courses in a remote learning environment.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Courses will be offered synchronously, asynchronously or a combination of both</li> <li>• Continuous intake will be provided when possible</li> <li>• There will need to be an equity of offerings for English, Français, and French Immersion</li> <li>• Course offering should include enough variety to allow for students to achieve all graduation requirements</li> <li>• Programming for courses must include Indigenous perspectives</li> <li>• There should be no or limited out-of-pocket costs for a student to participate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ there should be no fee associated with enrolling</li> <li>○ any course specific costs that will be the responsibility of the student/caregiver/resident school must be clearly stated</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summer programming should be available and match summer school offerings that are available in face-to-face school systems</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Requires a clear definition of for whom, when and why remote learning is recommended</b></p> <p>Remote learning options will not meet the needs of all learners. Students and their caregivers must be guided through the selection of the best learning environment (remote or face-to-face) to meet their learning needs. Recommendations will be based on available supports and legislation.</p> <p><b>6. Clear definition of course/program/grade level offerings</b></p> <p>For the Provincial Virtual School, a communications package should be developed that states the requirements and resources necessary for each course/program/grade level offering.</p> <p><b>7. Create a system to support student success</b></p> <p>Create a student advocacy role to monitor each student’s progress by a ‘caring adult’ or mentor to ensure they are successful in the remote learning environment.</p> <p>A student advocacy group should be formed with students from the virtual school to encourage student voice.</p> <p><b>8. Resident school divisions and funded independent schools should collaborate with the provincial virtual school to provide student supports</b></p> <p>Formal processes and agreements should be in place to enable the resident school division to provide clinical and guidance supports for the virtual school students who live in their catchment area.</p> <p>Formal processes and agreements should be in place to enable the resident school division to provide opportunities for the virtual school students who live in their catchment area to engage in extra-curricular activities.</p> <p><b>9. Build a strong Virtual School Sense of Community</b></p> <p>It will be important to build a strong sense of belonging and community, not only for the students, but also for their caregivers and families.</p> <p><b>Future Implementation Considerations:</b></p> <p>1. A consistent province-wide timetable for Grades 9–12</p> <p>Consideration should be given to the creation of a consistent province-wide timetable for Grades 9–12. With common times for each period, students would have more opportunities to take a course remotely.</p>
<p><b>4. Learning Pedagogy: Instruction and Assessment Practices</b></p>	<p><b>1. Provincial Curriculum Framework of Outcomes -what is being taught</b></p> <p>Communicate that provincial curriculum outcomes and content remain consistent and unchanged in a remote learning environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a Provincial Guide for Effective Instruction and Assessment for Remote Learning anchored in the Manitoba Remote Learning Framework Document</li> <li>• Ensure that a designated remote learning environment curriculum remains as robust as a face-to-face learning experience</li> <li>• Consider that in an event/crisis situation, staff may address priority outcomes as defined by MEECL</li> </ul>

	<p><b>2. Universal Design for Learning (UDL)</b>  Teachers understand and implement a variety of teaching methods that give all students equal opportunities to succeed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructional design accommodates diverse groups of learners</li> <li>• Student centered learning fosters an inclusive, caring, and supportive learning environment</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Caregiver Involvement and Support</b>  Clear guidelines and explanations about how learning will be structured and delivered is communicated to students and caregivers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mechanisms for regular checking in with caregivers and students for feedback need to be established</li> <li>• Caregivers will need to understand how the learning will be structured and delivered</li> <li>• Processes are in place for caregivers of students with diverse learning needs to ensure there is consultation in the planning for remote learning for their child</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Assessment</b>  Build on the learning experiences of teachers and current resources to identify and share leading practices for assessment and evaluation when teaching remotely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a Provincial Guide for Effective Instruction and Assessment for Remote Learning</li> <li>• Refer to Manitoba Remote Learning Framework Guiding Principle #3 (Student learning and well-being are enhanced when students feel a sense of autonomy and responsibility fostered through student voice, self-regulation, and metacognition.)</li> <li>• Refer to Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind provincial resource document</li> <li>• Include assessment pedagogies designed for remote learning mediums</li> <li>• Focus on assessment for and as learning to inform feedback and instruction</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Professional Learning</b></p>	<p><b>1. Professional Learning Content</b>  Provide staff with professional learning to intentionally develop their skills to become proficient with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• digital tools</li> <li>• media literacy and digital citizenship</li> <li>• how to use devices and all supported modalities effectively</li> <li>• instructional and assessment practices that are designed to support remote learning</li> <li>• improve inclusivity of remote learning instruction and supports</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Access to Professional Learning</b>  Provide access to responsive “just in time” professional learning on leading instructional and assessment practices for all staff. When done virtually, participants from across the province can participate, forming intra-divisional communities of learning.</p> <p><b>3. Specific to the Virtual School: Recommended Competencies for Teaching and Developing a Remote Learning Program</b>  Confirm and regularly update the competencies for remote teaching as a starting point for designing a professional learning plan:</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify and address the areas where capacity needs to be built specific to the required remote learning competencies and characteristics</li> <li>• design a professional learning plan that addresses the identified needs</li> <li>• identify provincial capacity for developing and supporting a comprehensive professional learning plan</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Role of Technology</b></p>	<p><b>1. Digital Toolkit Review</b> The digital toolkit should be reviewed and updated annually to ensure best/promising practices, to ensure it meets educational needs, and to allow for new tools/technologies to be added.</p> <p><b>2. Create a Toolkit Legend</b> Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning needs to define and communicate which grades/subjects the tools in the digital toolkit are suitable for; and what functions they will be used to perform (i.e., collaboration, communication, learning management, digital resources, etc.).</p> <p><b>3. Model the Use of the Toolkit</b> Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning should model the use of the digital toolkit to support school divisions and funded independent schools; school divisions and funded independent schools will then model the toolkit's use for staff meetings, student support meetings, professional learning community meetings, etc., teachers will model its use for students to support the learning experience.</p> <p><b>4. Supporting Caregivers and Students in the Use of the Toolkit</b> Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning should develop a series of learning modules for caregivers and students to support the proper use of the tools within the digital toolkit.</p> <p><b>5. Privacy Impact Assessments</b> All tools, selected and supported in the digital toolkit should be subject to a privacy impact assessment. This assessment should be completed annually and/or as required.</p> <p><b>6. Acceptable and Responsible Use Agreement</b> Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning will provide a template of minimum standards with respect to acceptable and responsible use. MEECL will require an acceptable and responsible use agreement be signed once per year for students, staff and caregivers who use the provincial digital toolkit and resource repository.</p> <p>Specific to the Virtual School:</p> <p>a. <b>Access to devices</b> Collaboration is needed between the province, resident school divisions and funded independent schools, community partners and families to ensure that students have access to the technological devices they require for remote learning.</p> <p>Appropriate devices to be provided to all educational staff who participate in, and support remote learning, along with necessary peripherals.</p>

	<p>b. <b>Help Desk</b> Where remote learning is provided, technical/ICT support in the form of a ‘Help Desk’ needs to be made available to staff, students and caregivers.</p> <p><b>Future Implementation Considerations:</b></p> <p>1. <b>Digital Citizenship and Media Literacy</b> Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning should update the resources available on the Literacy with ICT Across the Curriculum: A Model for 21st Century Learning from K-12 website to include remote learning pedagogies. Once they are reviewed and updated, all stakeholders would use these resources to build their understanding of digital citizenship and media literacy and set an expectation that this is taught to all students.</p> <p>2. <b>Internet Access</b> The Province of Manitoba should work with Internet Service Providers to build the necessary infrastructure to provide equitable internet access to all geographies, including northern and remote areas. As this infrastructure is built, resident school divisions and funded independent schools and community partners should be encouraged to work together to provide access options for students learning remotely. This recommendation acknowledges the research compiled in the <i>Manitoba and a Digital – First Future: The Implications of Connectivity for Equity and Education</i>.</p>
<p><b>7. Learning Resources</b></p>	<p>1. <b>Resource Repository Resource Submission and Review</b> MEECL should invite the submission of resources from educators and approved contributors (i.e., community partners) across the province. The resources should be peer reviewed to ensure they uphold a high standard and adherence to the Manitoba curriculum. On an ongoing basis, educators would provide feedback on the relevance of the resources.</p> <p>2. <b>Resource requirements</b> Resources in the repository need to be meaningful, high-quality, culturally relevant, and supportive of the leading instructional and assessment practices for remote learning.</p> <p>3. <b>Resource Migration</b> Resources must be easily transferable from the repository into the provincially licensed learning management system (LMS).</p> <p>4. <b>Specific to the Virtual School:</b></p> <p>a. <b>Resource Planning</b> Resources within the repository that are provided to exclusively support remote learning should be developed using leading remote learning design principles.</p>

<p><b>8. Mental Health, Well-Being, and Belonging</b></p>	<p><b>1. Mental Health and Wellness Supports</b></p> <p>Ensure that a comprehensive Provincial Mental Health and Well-Being plan is in place to support students, staff and caregivers' mental health and well-being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage Implementation Requirement of Project 11, a K-12 student support resource or similar vetted resource across all divisions, schools, and classes (<a href="https://www.projecteleven.ca/">https://www.projecteleven.ca/</a>)</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Mental Health Strategy</b></p> <p>Ensure that the Manitoba Mental Health in Schools Strategy is clearly defined, effectively communicated and that ongoing supports are implemented across all school divisions and funded independent schools, impacting school wide strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish and communicate clear pathways to mental health and well-being supports for students and staff in all school divisions and funded independent schools</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Specific to the Virtual School:</b></p> <p>a. Connection to the resident school</p> <p>Establish protocols and procedures that allow students attending the virtual school to remain connected to student support services in their resident school.</p>
<p><b>9. Communication</b></p>	<p><b>1. Single Access Point (portal) for all Communications</b></p> <p>All communications regarding remote learning are placed on the MEECL website on a dedicated communications page.</p> <p><b>2. Communicate Key Messages</b></p> <p>The Remote Learning Strategy and related Implementation Requirement plan should be communicated to staff, students, caregivers, and other concerned stakeholders as soon as possible using all communication opportunities and vehicles that are available to reach caregivers, students, and staff. The medium and messages will need to be targeted to each unique group of stakeholders.</p> <p><b>3. Establish processes to support two-way communications</b></p> <p>To engage caregivers, students, and staff more fully, the plan should ensure stakeholders can provide feedback, ask questions, and engage actively in the Remote Learning Community.</p> <p><b>4. Improve the effectiveness of communications between MEECL and all school division and funded independent school leaders</b></p> <p>School division and funded independent school leaders, including the leader of the new Provincial Virtual School, should meet with MEECL on a regular basis throughout the year to ensure consistent, timely, effective, and efficient communications.</p> <p><b>5. Divisions and Funded Independent Schools will need to understand the role they will play to support remote learning</b></p> <p>MEECL must clearly communicate the role of the resident school division to support the remote learning of their students when they take one, some, or all courses through the Provincial Virtual School. Funding implications must also be clearly communicated.</p>

	<p>MEECL must also clearly communicate the role and expectations of resident school divisions and funded independent schools to deliver remote learning to their own students in an event or crisis situation.</p> <p><b>Future Implementation Considerations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve the effectiveness of communications within MEECL</li> </ol> <p>Branches within Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning must communicate well and work together to ensure alignment of the vision and roles to successfully deliver on the Provincial Remote Learning Strategy.</p>
<p><b>10. Funding</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Staffing Allocations</b> Funding for dedicated staff for the virtual school needs to be allocated based upon the staff funding formula within the Funding of Schools Program (FSP). Staffing allocation includes teaching, administrative, student services, and community connection personnel, as well as required infrastructure and resources.</li> <li>2. <b>Per course funding</b> When an individual student leaves their resident school to take one, some or all their courses at the virtual school, funding from MEECL should be provided to the virtual school per individual course to a maximum of full-time equivalent funding (base amount plus categorical support). Home school students taking one or some courses will receive the requisite per course funding. Courses should be provided to students without a fee.  There should be a semi-annual enrollment review for funding adjustments.</li> <li>3. <b>Professional Learning</b> The funding model must designate funding for professional learning of all staff who participates in remote learning and the virtual school.</li> <li>4. <b>Digital Toolkit and Resource Repository</b> Funding must be dedicated to the curation of a digital toolkit, including the provision of common provincial tools, and ongoing refinement of the digital toolkit. Funding must be dedicated to the creation, curation, and ongoing refinement of a digital resource repository.</li> <li>5. <b>Help Desk for Technical Support</b> Funding must be allocated to develop and maintain the structure of a help desk and provide proper levels of staffing to provide technical support to students, staff, and caregivers.</li> <li>6. <b>Devices</b> Funding must be provided for devices for the virtual school in collaboration with a student's resident school. Parameters to replace dedicated devices must be set to hold school divisions and funded independent schools accountable for the provision of devices for students who take one or more courses (less than a full-time schedule). Appropriate funding needs to be provided to the Virtual school for the provision of devices to students who are full-time students.</li> </ol>

	<p><b>Future Implementation Considerations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Extra-curricular activities</li> </ol> <p>Funding should be provided by MEECL to allow for reciprocal agreements between the virtual school, funded independent schools, and school divisions to support student inclusion in extra-curricular activities at their resident school.</p>
<p><b>11. Monitoring &amp; Continuous Improvement</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Monitoring tools and timelines</b>  Select corresponding monitoring tools and establish defined timelines for monitoring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Method for gathering qualitative and quantitative (subjective and objective) data is aligned to success criteria</li> <li>• Mixed methods for gathering data may promote greater participation</li> <li>• Timelines should correspond to the agreed upon monitoring cycle</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. <b>Data collection tools and modalities</b>  To accommodate all stakeholders, determine appropriate data collection tools and modalities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When possible, data should be collected in a digital format so that it can be efficiently utilized by staff on an ongoing basis</li> <li>• Data collection should be centralized and used to inform regularly scheduled monitoring</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. <b>Cycle of Continuous Improvement</b>  Regular and ongoing measures are taken and reviewed to measure progress of success criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback from regularly scheduled monitoring is reviewed by Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning, and used to continuously refine the Remote Learning Strategy</li> <li>• Measures are used to identify growth and areas of challenge and should inform necessary adjustments to the success criteria and leading practices</li> <li>• The Remote Learning Current State Assessment informs progress of each of the strategy components</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Remote Learning Glossary, V1

The following glossary of terms was developed within the context of the Manitoba Provincial Remote Learning Strategy.

The purpose of the glossary of terms is to establish a common understanding of the language used in a remote learning environment where students and teachers are learning and teaching outside of a traditional in-person school environment.

**Remote Learning:** Remote learning takes place off-site and includes synchronous and/or asynchronous delivery (delivery examples may include video call, phone call, hard-copy packages, etc.)

**Online Learning:** A method of learning that relies primarily on communication between students and teachers by means of the Internet.

**Blended Learning:** Blended learning is a combination of traditional face-to-face classroom learning and remote learning. See the Distance Blended Learning website ([www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/dl/blended\\_learning.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/dl/blended_learning.html)).

**Synchronous Learning:** Synchronous learning is learning that involves a teacher and their student(s) interacting in real time.

**Asynchronous Learning:** Asynchronous learning is independent learning that does not require real time communication between a teacher and their student(s).

**Hybrid Learning:** An approach to education delivery that combines face-to-face teaching (educator to student) with remote instruction at the same time. Hybrid learning can involve both synchronous and asynchronous content delivery, addressing barriers related to space or place. This is recommended only in response to emergency measures.

**Learning Management System:** A system used to manage and deliver course-related content, course-related communications, and administrative tasks (e.g., performance tracking and reporting). Learning management systems can be web based or locally operated applications.

**Learning Object Repository:** The Learning Object Repository (LOR) is an online collection where learning resources (learning objects) are shared, stored, and managed. (Definition adapted from: <https://d2lhelp.mghihp.edu/node/31>)

**Digital Portfolio:** A collection of digital artifacts that captures the process and products of student learning.

**Off-site:** Located outside of the school building.

**Learning Object:** A learning object can be a quiz, a presentation, an image, a video, or any other kind of document or file you use to supplement course content and learning materials for learning. (Definition adapted from: <https://d2lhelp.mghihp.edu/node/31>)

## Appendix B: Remote Learning National Scan Summary Report

### Introduction

#### Phase 1:

To inform the Remote Learning Strategy Report, the IBM consultants conducted a national scan of remote learning models in Canada and two systems in the United States. From the scan, the IBM K-12 Education Consultants identified the critical components that are required to ensure the development and sustainability of a provincial remote learning strategy to successfully support all students and staff. The remote learning strategy critical components were further informed by IBM's *K-12 Learning Framework for Leveraging Digital*, the *Toolkit for Designing a Comprehensive Distance Learning Strategy* (USAID, 2021) and key areas identified during discussions with 19 focus groups.

IBM K-12 consultants conducted a scan of remote learning models. The scan included:

- A review of the State of the Nation K-12 E-Learning in Canada report (2020 edition and the newly released 2021 edition)
- A Canadian scan of the 10 provinces and 3 territories ministry resources/websites for documents/models/information publicly available on remote learning
- A preliminary review of Miami-Dade Virtual School and Chicago Public Schools Remote Learning

This report is the deliverable for Item 2 and provides a summary and the critical components identified from this scan that should be incorporated in Manitoba's Remote Learning Strategy.

For a direct comparison of how Manitoba compares to other provinces and territories in Canada, readers are encouraged to review the most recent State of the Nation: K-12 E-Learning in Canada report.

#### Remote Learning National Scan Summary

The cross-country scan summary extracts key information and findings from the current *State of the Nation: K-12 E-Learning report*. The State of the Nation report referenced is a comprehensive and detailed document which reflects the current state of remote and online learning in Canada. The corresponding website provides a benchmark for educators and offers background, guidance, and ideas for the improvement of policy and practice in online and blended learning. [State of the Nation: K-12 E-Learning in Canada \(k12sotn.ca\)](https://k12sotn.ca)

**Shannon Magee & Chris Fredrickson** — Manitoba Education and Training, provided significant information used in the creation of the provincial, territorial, and federal profile for Manitoba.

The 2021 report covering the 2020-21 school year was released in April 2022 and includes data collection for the 10 provinces, 3 territories, and federal profiles.

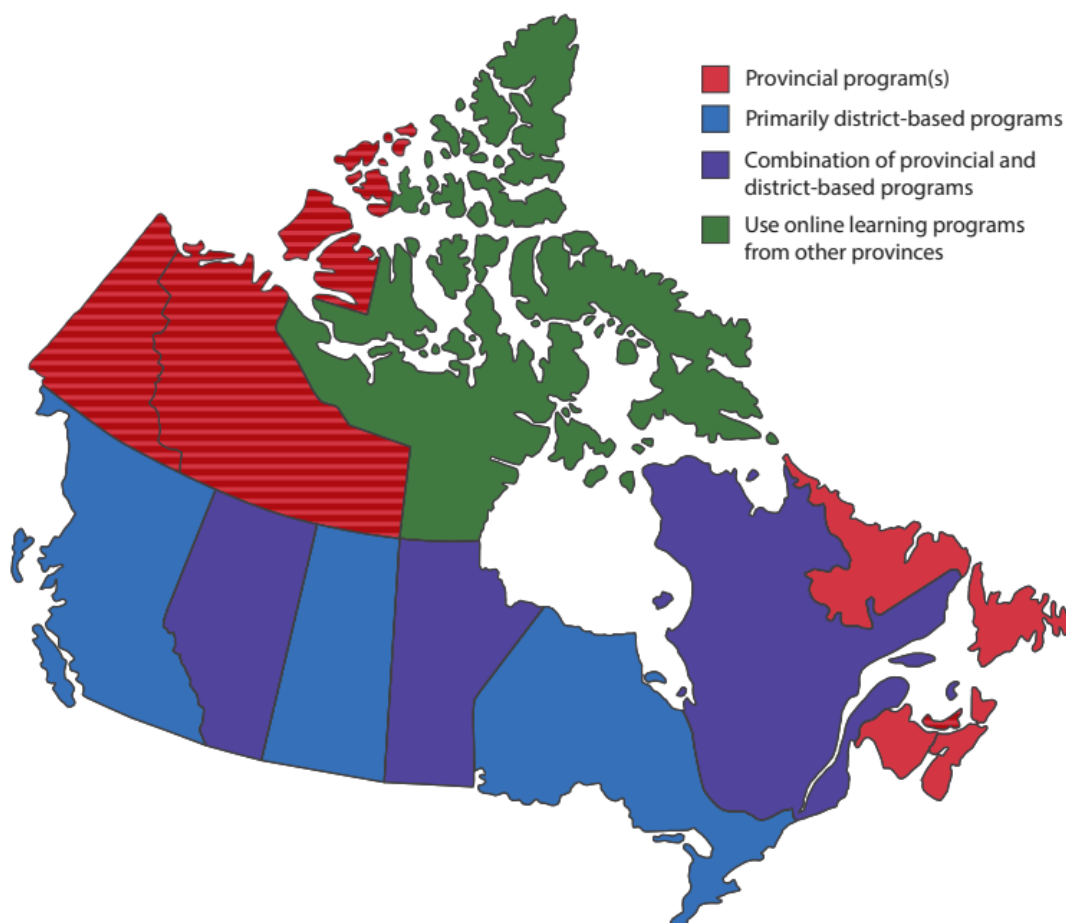
#### 2021-2022 Experience

In performing this scan, the "*Remote Learning Research Project Report*", from the Canadian eLearning Network, provided the most comprehensive and significant descriptions of the remote learning practices and environments that began at the start of the 2020-21 school year. This research project was designed to delineate how each jurisdiction managed their response to the pandemic and school closures. (Barbour, et al., 2021, p. IV) The report states, for the most part, the school year was dominated by the pandemic, school closures, and remote learning. Instead of benefiting from the experience of their online learning programs and educators, many jurisdictions scrambled to reinvent what had already existed in successful, existing e-Learning infrastructure. (Barbour, et al., 2021, p.16). In addition, what happened during the 2020-21 school year in most remote teaching contexts was an attempt to project a classroom instructional model to students

at a distance, with the 'bums in seats' delivery model. We must accept the reality that the need for flexibility is endemic in the K–12 education system (para 1). (Barbour et al., 2021, p.16).

The figure and tables that follow reflect a summary of the data collected. (Barbour, 2021)

**Figure 1. Types of K–12 distance and online learning programming across Canada**



As outlined in figure one, three provinces offered provincial distance learning programs. Distance education in Newfoundland and Labrador was delivered through a provincial site, the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI). The CDLI was transferred to be a division of the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLESD) in 2017. [Newfoundland and Labrador – State of the Nation: K-12 E-Learning in Canada \(k12sotn.ca\)](#). In the province of Nova Scotia, the Learning Resources and Technology Services division of the Education Innovation, Programs and Services branch of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development manages distance education programs in Nova Scotia and works cooperatively with a Management Board representing all Regional Centres for Education and *Conseil scolaire acadien provincial*. The provision of distributed learning (i.e., distance education and online learning) is through the Nova Scotia Virtual School (NSVS). [Nova Scotia – State of the Nation: K-12 E-Learning in Canada \(k12sotn.ca\)](#). In Prince Edward Island, beginning in February 2021, the Ministry piloted a virtual school that initially focused on French-language courses, and will eventually include the English-language courses as well. [Prince Edward Island – State of the Nation: K-12 E-Learning in Canada \(k12sotn.ca\)](#).



Table 1. Individual program survey responses for 2020-21

	Total Number of Programs	Number of Programs Responding	Response Rate
NL	2	2	100%
NS	2	0	0%
PE	1	0	0%
NB	2	1	50%
QC	5+	2	40%
ON	~70	6	9%
<b>MB</b>	<b>~38</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3%</b>
SK	27	1	4%
AB	36	10	28%
BC	68	13	19%
YT	2	0	0%
NT	1	0	0%
NU	0	-	-
Federal	4	2	50%
<b>Total</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>15%</b>

Data as of the time the printed report was submitted for publication (K-12 e-Learning programs can update their information at any time).

Table 2. Historic individual program survey responses

	Total Number of Programs	Number of Programs Responding	Response Rate
NL	2	2	100%
NS	2	2	100%
PE	1	0	-
NB	2	2	100%
QC	5+	5	100%
ON	~70	38	54%
<b>MB</b>	<b>~38</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>24%</b>
SK	27	14	52%
AB	36	22	61%
BC	69	50	72%
YT	2	2	100%
NT	1	1	100%
NU	0	-	-
Federal	5	5	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>42%</b>

Table 3. Summary of the K-12 distance and online learning regulation by jurisdiction

	Legislation	Policy Handbook	Agreements	Memorandum of Understanding
NL				
NS	✓			
PE	✓			
NB		✓		
QC	✓		✓	
ON		✓	✓	
<b>MB</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>✓</b>		<b>✓</b>
SK				
AB	✓	✓		
BC	✓		✓	
YT	✓			✓
NT	✓	✓		✓
NU	✓			✓
Federal	✓			

Table 4. Summary of K-12 distance and/or online learning activity by jurisdiction for 2019-20

	# of K-12 students	# enrolled in distance/online learning	Percent involvement
NL	63,510	1,029	1.6%
NS	125,124	3,319	2.7%
PE	20,131	~175	0.8%
NB	98,906	4,754	4.8%
QC	1,003,322	~39,400	3.9%
ON	2,056,055	~122,000	5.9%
<b>MB</b>	<b>186,372</b>	<b>~8,173</b>	<b>4.4%</b>
SK	184,472	22,510	12.2%
AB	733,599	97,527	13.3%
BC	~673,000	~85,000	12.6%
YT	5,456	389	7.1%
NT	8,700	92	1.1%
NU	10,902	~15	0.1%
Federal	~108,995	~3,000	2.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,278,544</b>	<b>387,385</b>	<b>7.3%</b>

Note: ~ symbol means that approximations were provided by one or more sources

Table 5. K-12 distance and/or online learning student enrolment in Canada

Year	# of distance education students	% of students engaged in distance education
1999-2000 <sup>1</sup>	~25,000	0.5%
2008-09	~140,000	2.7%
2009-10	150,000-175,000	2.9%-3.4%
2010-11	207,096	4.2%
2011-12	245,252	4.9%
2012-13	284,963	5.2%
2013-14	290,185	5.4%
2014-15	311,648	6.0%
2015-16	293,401	5.7%
2016-17	277,603	5.4%
2017-18	263,686	5.1%
2018-19	299,320	5.9%
2019-20	310,582	6.0%
<b>2020-21</b>	<b>387,385</b>	<b>7.3%</b>

<sup>1</sup> Canadian Teachers Federation (2000)

Table 6. Summary of K-12 distance and/or online learning activity over the past four years

	# students engaged in distance and/or online learning			
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
NL	1,233	1,140	1,092	1,029
NS	~2,700	2,381	2,241	3,319
PE	56	~100	133	~175
NB	~3,239	~3,270	~3,470	4,754
QC	30,366	~40,000	~35,000	~39,400
ON	~82,000	~89,000	~98,000	~122,000
<b>MB</b>	<b>~6,398</b>	<b>~11,875</b>	<b>~13,749</b>	<b>~8,173</b>
SK	7,738	8,378	12,456	22,510
AB	~63,000	75,806	82,857	97,527
BC	65,556	~65,000	~59,000	~85,000
YT	136	170	234	389
NT	93	130	131	92
NU	~40	~70	19	~15
Federal	1,131	~2,000	~2,200	~3,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>263,686</b>	<b>299,320</b>	<b>310,582</b>	<b>387,385</b>

Table 7. Summary of K-12 distance and/or online learning activity over the past four years

	% students engaged in distance and/or online learning			
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
NL	1.9%	1.8%	1.7%	1.6%
NS	2.3%	2.0%	1.8%	2.7%
PE	0.3%	0.5%	0.7%	0.8%
NB	3.4%	3.3%	3.5%	4.8%
QC	3.0%	4.0%	3.5%	3.9%
ON	4.1%	4.4%	4.8%	5.9%
<b>MB</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>
SK	4.2%	4.5%	6.7%	12.2%
AB	8.8%	10.6%	11.2%	13.3%
BC	10.3%	10.2%	10.8%	12.6%
YT	2.4%	3.1%	4.2%	7.1%
NT	1.1%	1.4%	1.5%	1.1%
NU	0.4%	0.6%	0.2%	0.1%
Federal	1.1%	1.9%	2.0%	2.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>

## **Miami Dade County and Chicago Public Schools Remote Learning Models**

A preliminary review was also conducted on Miami-Dade County Public Schools and Chicago Public Schools. Both systems provided, and are continuing provide, industry-leading examples of remote learning environments. Each has a comprehensive website, specific information regarding programming, virtual registration, instructions, and answers to frequently asked questions that could be considered and modelled for future reference.

### **Miami-Dade County Public Schools**

Miami-Dade County Public Schools has two virtual learning options. The Miami-Dade Online Academy (MDO) has been in operation since 2009. Approximately 350 students from K-12 take up to 6 courses per year. This is intended for students who are learning from home and whose caregiver acts as the Learning Coach with support from a Florida Certified teacher. This option is asynchronous in nature and caregivers and students schedule the learning when and where they choose.

<https://mdo.dadeschools.net/#!/fullWidth/4458>

Miami-Dade Virtual School (MDVS) operates as a franchise of the Florida Virtual School and provides an additional virtual learning option to complement their Miami-Dade Online Academy (MDO). MDVS provides virtual blended learning which includes synchronous and asynchronous modes of instruction.

It is offered to K-12 students from across the Miami-Dade County. Instruction is provided by Miami-Dade County Public School teachers. MDVS began in the fall of 2021.

<https://mdvs.dadeschools.net/#!/fullWidth/4340>

### **Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Remote Learning**

During the pandemic, CPS supported students in remote learning by providing a device to any student who needed one and working community partners created Chicago Connected, whose aim was to eliminate a key barrier to digital learning by providing “no-cost internet service that was expanded to nearly 228,000 students.” Families can access resources to advance their learning of digital skills through a website that provides workshops, self-paced learning, and technical support. <https://www.cps.edu/strategic-initiatives/chicago-connected/>

When schools were open, students and families could choose to continue learning fully remote or attend class a few days a week and learn from home the other days. Guidelines were provided to help families understand what learning would be like based on the option chosen.

As CPS prepares for the 2022-2023 school year, their CPS Virtual Academy will provide a “fully remote learning option that serves a limited number of students with a medical condition as documented in an IEP or 504 and would benefit from a virtual learning environment.” Enrolment in this Academy is for the academic year and reviewed annually. “All students not enrolled in the Virtual Academy will attend in person learning in 2022”.

<https://www.cps.edu/schools/virtual-academy/>. Readers are encouraged to explore this link to understand the application process and other program details.

### **Critical Components to Support a Successful Remote Learning Strategy**

As a response to the pandemic and the lessons learned, Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning’s intention is to develop a comprehensive Remote Learning Strategy. This strategy will proactively address the findings in the State of the Nation K-12 E-Learning in Canada 2021 Report. If successful, the observation from the report which was “sadly in far too many jurisdictions, the pandemic did not lead to creation of flexible learning opportunities that took advantage of multiple modalities and technologies as one would have hoped.” (p.16), will not apply to Manitoba in coming years.

To support the development of a successful Remote Learning Strategy, IBM K-12 Consultants, based on the review of this report and the other systems they reviewed, identified the critical components for a successful remote learning model and the leading practices that should be addressed within each of these components. The eleven critical components, and associated leading practices that were identified are:

**1. Overall Vision and Priorities:**

- There is a clear, provincially accepted vision for remote learning
- Goals and priorities are well articulated to achieve the stated vision
- A “Why Statement” for Remote Learning is established
- The vision and why statement for remote learning align with existing government education policy, strategy, or planning frameworks
- The role of each school division in the provision of, or use of remote learning options, is understood by all divisions and the Department of Education
- Key terms, related to remote learning, are clearly defined, and communicated to all stakeholders
- Various modalities of remote learning are available
- All learners in Manitoba are eligible to take one, some, or all grade-level requirements remotely
- Provides learning opportunities that are inclusive and designed to meet the needs of all learners
- With a provincial virtual school available, the provision to develop local-level remote learning options that are supported by the province, is clearly communicated to funded independent schools and school divisions
- Articulated strategies, practices and resources exist in recognition of the potential need for remote learning for all learners in response to short term events or crises

**2. Leading Practice for Leadership, Governance, and Expectations:**

- Provincial policy is in place which outlines the role of the school and school division to provide remote learning for event or crisis situations
- Provincial Policy is in place for remote learning, where a student takes one, some or all course(s) remotely at the provincial virtual school
- A provincial leadership team has been established to support, and that specializes in, remote learning
- There are clear expectations for how staff and students will participate in remote learning. These expectations would address professional learning, instructional and assessment practices, supports to be provided, attendance, use of a common digital toolkit, etc.
- All users of the digital toolkit sign and adhere to acceptable and responsible use policies on an annual basis

**3. Vision and Priorities Virtual School:**

- Comprehensive guidelines to identify enrollment requirements and procedures including who can enroll, how to enroll, an option for continuous intake, an optimal profile for a remote learner, what options are available
- Orientation and support for students / families to use the remote learning tools
- Orientation and support for students / families to maximize engagement, participation, and success in remote learning
- Programming is available to meet the needs of all K-12 learners
- Scalable to accept all students who identify a need / requirement to take one, some or all their course content remotely
- Programming addresses all components of the provincial curriculum, within the capacity of a remote learning environment (i.e., some courses may require some amount of in-person learning, such as technical vocational education)

- Student Success support structures, available in face-to-face schools, are available (i.e., clinical, guidance). These may be provided by the virtual school or through a reciprocal agreement with the resident school/division of the enrolled student
- Student Engagement and Community support structures, available in face-to-face schools, are provided (i.e., clubs, teams, etc.). These may be provided by the virtual school or through a reciprocal agreement with the resident school/division of the enrolled student
- Summer School options are provided

#### **4. Remote Learning Pedagogy - Instruction and Assessment Practices:**

- Teachers are aware of, and supported in the use of the Manitoba Remote Learning Framework Guiding principles and Strategies
- Teachers are informed and supported with curriculum and content knowledge - what is being taught
- Teachers, delivering remote learning, are informed, and supported with pedagogical knowledge - how content is being taught
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) – Teachers use a variety of teaching methods that give all students equal opportunities to succeed
- Teachers customize and personalize the learning experience, through differentiation, scaffolding, etc., based on individual learning needs in a remote learning setting
- A clear explanation about how learning will be structured and delivered is communicated to students and caregivers. Mechanisms for regular checking in with caregivers and students for feedback are established
- Students and caregivers have access to a variety of supports as needed (curriculum supports to assist with remote learning through an online resource repository, a support/call centre, access to staff outside of classroom hours, etc.)
- Teachers are informed and supported in leading practices for assessment and evaluation when teaching remotely
- School leaders use observation and conversation to evaluate teachers and provide feedback, like the processes used in face-to-face classrooms.
- There are processes in place to engage students in regular formative assessments
- The processes for summative assessments are clearly communicated to students and caregivers

#### **5. Professional Learning:**

- Faculties of education build capacity with all pre-service teachers on effective remote learning tools, strategies, and skills
- Faculties of education provide a pathway for pre-service teachers who choose to specialize in remote learning as this is the environment that they intend to teach in
- Responsive “just in time” professional learning on leading instructional and assessment practices is available for all staff, no matter what environment (remote or face-to-face) they teach in
- Teachers receive professional learning and supports to acquire needed content knowledge
- Teachers are provided with the professional learning and ongoing capacity building to know how to use the digital toolkit
- Professional learning on leading instructional and assessment practices for remote learning is offered to all staff who support students in remote learning
- Teachers are provided with the professional learning and ongoing capacity building to use the digital toolkit in support of the leading instructional and assessment practices that they are using
- Professional learning with staff models and embeds this digital toolkit in the context of the content, instructional and/or assessment practices being focused on

- The digital toolkit is used to deliver professional learning to staff both synchronously and asynchronously to enable “just in time” learning
- Specific funding for professional learning is included in the remote learning funding model
- Professional learning, offered to staff in face-to-face schools, should be offered to staff of the virtual schools, such as:
  - Manitoba curriculum
  - Instruction and assessment practices
  - Digital toolkit ‘how to’
  - Health and safety
  - Mental health and well-being
  - Digital citizenship
- Participation in a professional learning community, to build and develop ongoing capacity, is an expectation of all staff who support students in remote learning

## 6. Role of Technology:

- A clear vision of how technology will be used is established in support of remote learning
- Staff and students participate together in learning activities and facilitated conversations to build their understanding of digital citizenship and media literacy
- The province, resident funded independent schools and school divisions, community partners and families, to the best of their ability, should provide equitable access to infrastructure for all stakeholders who participate in remote learning, including all students from northern, rural, and remote communities.
- Where infrastructure is not available, alternate modalities, low bandwidth requirements, or partnership solutions are explored
- Where students or families choose not to use technology in support of their learning, low or no technology options are available
- Appropriate devices, to support remote learning, are provided, as needed, to students. This will likely need the cooperation of the province, resident funded independent schools and school divisions, community partners and families.
- Appropriate devices, to support remote learning, are provided to all educational staff who participate in, and support remote learning, along with necessary peripherals such as a second display and microphone
- A standard, system-wide approved digital application/software toolkit is available for stakeholder use which would include at a minimum:
  - a Learning Management System (LMS) to support remote learning
  - a digital portfolio tool
  - a digital learning resource repository
  - a productivity suite which enables collaboration, communication, and other global competencies
- For innovators and early adopters or unique course requirements, options to go beyond the basic toolkit are provided if supportable, affordable, secure, and helpful for informing or enhancing the teaching practice and/or learning experience
- There is a clearly articulated “toolkit legend” that details what tools are available, which grades/subjects they are suitable for; and what functions they will be used to perform (i.e., collaboration, communication, learning management, digital resources, etc.)
- The digital toolkit supports the leading instructional and assessment practices for remote learning
- Capacity building and support should be available to caregivers and students on how to use the tools in the digital toolkit
- The digital toolkit should be modeled in, and used to support, staff meetings, student support meetings, professional learning community meetings, etc.

- A help desk should be made available to all stakeholders (students, caregivers, staff) participating in remote learning
- Security of personal information and data is protected for all stakeholders participating in remote learning (i.e., digital tools have passed privacy impact assessments, student data is only stored on Canadian based servers, student data is not transferred via USB keys, etc.)

#### **7. Learning Resources:**

- A robust K-12 learning object repository, aligned to Manitoba curriculum, is available for staff, students, and caregivers to access
- Content in the learning repository is submitted by educators or approved contributors (i.e., community partner) and peer reviewed before going 'public'
- Content in the learning repository is kept current
- Categories in the learning repository includes resources for students, resources for caregivers, resources for teachers: to support learning to use with their students; resources for planning; professional learning resources
- Resources, in the learning repository for teachers, are supportive of the leading instructional and assessment practices for remote learning
- Fully developed courses should be easily accessible through a learning management system that will support implementation, communication, and assessment
- Course materials that are developed for online delivery should be done with leading online/remote learning design principles
- There is access to meaningful, high-quality, culturally relevant supporting resources

#### **8. Mental Health and Well-Being and Belonging:**

- Supports are in place for remote teachers, students and caregivers' mental health and well-being
- All stakeholders know how to access mental health and wellness supports
- Structures are in place to build a sense of community: teacher to teacher; teacher to students; student to student; teacher to caregiver; teacher to caregiver/student (Framework Guiding Principles)
- All stakeholders feel a sense of belonging and are welcomed into their remote learning community
- For students attending the virtual school, there are opportunities for them to establish a sense of community in their resident school

#### **9. Leading Practices for Commitment – Communication: Leading Practices & Current Assessment**

- An oversight committee is in place to ensure effective communication process are in place. These processes should include a 'feedback loop' ensuring stakeholders are confident that questions, concerns, and comments are received and attended to
- Common messaging and/or communication to all stakeholders using the medium(s) they are most likely to access
- The vision and goals for remote learning are clearly communicated to caregivers, students, and educational staff
- Caregivers, students, and educational staff understand who is eligible for remote learning and the processes to access and use remote learning
- The oversight committee will ensure stakeholders are aware of the success(es) of the virtual school

#### **10. Leading Practices for Sustainability – Monitoring and Continuous Improvement:**

- Clearly developed success criteria for monitoring remote learning are created
- For each success criteria, leading practices or expected evidence is identified

- Monitoring plan includes Monitoring of Adoption (how many students use remote learning, how often, what % of their programming) and Monitoring of Impact (impact on engagement, impact on achievement, impact on mental health and well-being, etc.)
- Feedback from all appropriate stakeholders is collected as part of the data collection process
- Observations, conversations (storytelling, images) and product should be included as evidence of the success criteria
- Data collection is centralized and part of regularly scheduled monitoring
- Feedback from regularly scheduled monitoring is reviewed and used to continuously refine the remote learning strategy

#### **11. Sustainability – Funding:**

- Approved and committed multi-year funding model is in place to support all aspects of the virtual school system (HR, Resources, Technology and infrastructure, Professional Learning, Communication, Governance, HR, and Materials)
- Allocation of sufficient resources to ensure that there is relevant technological, content, and pedagogical knowledge for implementing remote learning
- There is an established budget that provides sustainability and growth for a robust remote learning environment

The above identified components, and the leading practices that should be addressed within each of these, are critical for a successful remote learning model. As such, these were used by the IBM consultants to inform and create this Report.

## Appendix C: Remote Learning Critical Components and Leading Practices, Current State Assessment

### Environmental Scan – Manitoba Remote Learning Strategy Components – Current Assessment

This report has been developed in alignment with actions in response to Manitoba’s K to 12 Education Action Plan to develop a provincial remote learning strategy, including an online high school, and to enhance access to programming and learning across the province.

As we complete the cross-country scan and begin to look forward to the requirements for a Provincial Remote Learning Strategy, Manitobans should be very proud of their successes in this area. The current virtual school offerings (i.e., InformNet, Teacher Mediated Option (TMO), Manitoba Remote Learning Support Centre (MRLSC) and Wapaskwa Virtual Collegiate (WVC) are among the best in the country in terms of serving certain groups of students and providing, across these schools, different modalities for remote learning.

As the province moves towards a comprehensive remote learning strategy, there are many lessons to be learned from their success. In this Remote Learning Report Card, IBM K-12 Education Consultants have identified the critical components that are required to ensure the development and sustainability of a Provincial Remote Learning Strategy to successfully support all staff and students. These components were identified from an environmental scan of remote learning in Canada, including, a review of the *State of the Nation K-12 E-Learning in Canada 2021* report, provincial ministry of education websites, a preliminary review of the Miami-Dade Virtual School and Chicago Public Schools Remote Learning.

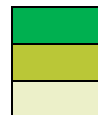
The remote learning strategy critical components, used in this report, are further informed by IBM’s *K-12 Learning Framework for Leveraging Digital*, the *Toolkit for Designing a Comprehensive Distance Learning Strategy* (USAID, 2021) and key areas identified through 19 focus groups.

Once the key components were assembled in the report card, IBM K-12 Consultants, based on their understanding of leading practices within each component, their understanding of the current remote learning strategy and implementations in Manitoba and the feedback from their stakeholder conversations, scored each component as variations of green – from pale green to a dark green.

The summary table reflects where the province is positioned currently based on the key remote learning components identified.

Definitions of each colour are provided below based on evidence found in documentation and focus groups

- **Strong Evidence (dark green)**
- **Some Evidence (light green)**
- **Limited/No Evidence (pale green)**



It is expected that, over time, each component that is not currently scored with the darkest green will become ‘greener’ as the recommendations in the Remote Learning Strategy are adopted and implemented.



## Remote Learning Current State Assessment – Baseline assessment, May 16, 2022

Component	Current Assessment
<b>1.0 Vision and Priorities</b>	
There is a clear, provincially accepted vision for remote learning	
Goals and priorities are well articulated to achieve the stated vision	
A “Why Statement” for Remote Learning is established	
The vision and why statement for remote learning align with existing government education policy, strategy, or planning frameworks	
The role of each school division in the provision of, or use of remote learning options, is understood by all divisions and the Department of Education	
Key terms, related to remote learning, are clearly defined, and communicated to all stakeholders	
Various modalities of remote learning are available	
All learners in Manitoba are eligible to take one, some, or all grade-level requirements remotely	
Provides learning opportunities that are inclusive and designed to meet the needs of all learners	
With a provincial virtual school available, the provision to develop local-level remote learning options that area supported by Province, is clearly communicated to school divisions	
Articulated strategies, practices and resources exist in recognition of the potential need for remote learning for all learners in response to short term events or crises	
<b>2.0 Leadership, Governance, and Expectations</b>	
Provincial policy is in place which outlines the role of the school and school division to provide remote learning for event or crisis situations	
Provincial policy is in place for remote learning where a student takes one, some or all course(s) remotely at the provincial virtual school	
A provincial leadership team has been established to support, and that specializes in, remote learning	
There are clear expectations for how staff and students will participate in remote learning. These expectations would address professional learning, instructional and assessment practices, supports to be provided, attendance, use of a common digital toolkit, etc.	
All users of the digital toolkit sign and adhere to acceptable and responsible use policies on an annual basis	
<b>3.0 Vision and Priorities – Virtual School</b>	
Comprehensive guidelines to identify enrollment requirements and procedures including who can enroll, how to enroll, an option for continuous intake, an optimal profile for a remote learner, what options are available	
Orientation and support for students / families to use the remote learning tools	
Orientation and support for students / families to maximize engagement, participation, and success in remote learning	
Programming is available to meet the diverse needs of all K-12 learners	
Scalable to accept all students who identify a need / requirement to take one, some or all of course content remotely	
Programming addresses all components of the provincial curriculum, within the capacity of a remote learning environment (i.e., some courses may require some amount of in-person learning, such as technical vocational education)	
Student Success support structures, available in face-to-face schools, are available (i.e., clinical, guidance). These may be provided by the virtual school or through a reciprocal agreement with the local school / division of the enrolled student	
Student engagement and community support structures, available in face-to-face schools, are available (i.e., clubs, teams, etc.). These may be provided by the virtual school or through a reciprocal agreement with the local school / division of the enrolled student	
Summer School options are provided	

<b>4.0 Learning Pedagogy: Instruction and Assessment Practices</b>	
Teachers are aware of, and supported in, the use of the Manitoba Remote Learning Framework Guiding Principles and Strategies	
Teachers are informed and supported with curriculum and content knowledge - what is being taught	
Teachers, delivering remote learning, are informed, and supported with pedagogical knowledge - how content is being taught	
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) – Teachers use a variety of teaching methods that give all students equal opportunities to succeed	
Teachers customize and personalize the learning experience, through differentiation, scaffolding, etc., based on individual learning needs in a remote learning setting	
A clear explanation about how learning will be structured and delivered is communicated to students and caregivers. Mechanisms for regular checking in with caregivers and students for feedback are established	
Students and caregivers have access to a variety of supports as needed (curriculum supports to assist with remote learning through an online resource repository, a support / call centre, access to staff outside of classroom hours, etc.)	
Teachers are informed and supported in leading practices for assessment and evaluation when teaching remotely	
School leaders use observation and conversation to evaluate teachers and provide feedback, like the processes used in face-to-face classrooms	
There are processes in place to engage students in regular formative assessments	
The processes for summative assessments are clearly communicated to students and caregivers	
<b>5.0 Professional Learning</b>	
Faculties of education build capacity with all pre-service teachers on effective remote learning tools, strategies, and skills	Out of scope
Faculties of education provide a pathway for pre-service teachers who choose to specialize in remote learning as this is the environment that they intend to teach in	Out of scope
Responsive “just in time” professional learning on leading instructional and assessment practices is available for all staff, no matter what environment (remote or face- to -face) they teach in	
Teachers receive professional learning and supports to acquire needed content knowledge	
Teachers are provided with the professional learning and ongoing capacity building to understand how to use the digital toolkit	
Professional learning on leading instructional and assessment practices for remote learning is offered to all staff who support students in remote learning	
Teachers are provided with the professional learning and ongoing capacity building to use the digital toolkit in support of the leading instructional and assessment practices that they are using	
Professional learning with staff models and embeds this digital toolkit in the context of the content, instructional and/or assessment practices being focused on	
The digital toolkit is used to deliver professional learning to staff both synchronously and asynchronously to enable “just in time” learning	
Specific funding for professional learning is included in the remote learning funding model	
Professional learning, offered to staff in face-to-face schools, should be offered to staff of the virtual schools, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manitoba curriculum</li> <li>• Instruction and assessment practices</li> <li>• Digital toolkit 'how to'</li> <li>• Health and safety</li> <li>• Mental health and well-being</li> <li>• Digital citizenship</li> </ul>	
Participation in a professional learning community, to build and develop ongoing capacity, is an expectation of all staff who support students in remote learning	

<b>6.0 Role of Technology</b>	
A clear vision of how technology will be used is established in support of remote learning	
Staff and students participate together in learning activities and facilitated conversations to build their understanding of digital citizenship and media literacy	
The province, local schools and school divisions, community partners and families, to the best of their ability, should provide equitable access to infrastructure for all stakeholders who participate in remote learning, including all students from northern, rural, and remote communities	
Where infrastructure is not available, alternate modalities, low bandwidth requirements, or partnership solutions are explored	
Where students or families choose not to use technology, or it is not available, in support of their learning, low or no technology options are available	
Appropriate devices, to support remote learning, are provided, as needed, to students. This will likely need the cooperation of the province, local school divisions, community partners and families	
Appropriate devices, to support remote learning, are provided to all educational staff who participate in, and support remote learning, along with necessary peripherals such as a second display and microphone	
A standard, system-wide approved digital application /software toolkit is available for stakeholder use which would include at a minimum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a Learning Management System (LMS) to support remote learning</li> <li>• a digital portfolio tool</li> <li>• a digital learning resource repository</li> </ul> a productivity suite which enables collaboration, communication, and other global competencies	
For innovators and early adopters or unique course requirements, options to go beyond the basic toolkit are provided if supportable, affordable, secure, and helpful for informing or enhancing the teaching practice and/or learning experience	
There is a clearly articulated “toolkit legend” that details what tools are available, which grades/subjects they are suitable for; and what functions they will be used to perform (i.e., collaboration, communication, learning management, digital resources, etc.)	
The digital toolkit supports the leading instructional and assessment practices for remote learning	
Capacity building and support should be available to caregivers and students on how to use the tools in the digital toolkit	
The digital toolkit should be modeled in, and used to support, staff meetings, student support meetings, professional learning community meetings, etc.	
A help desk should be made available to all stakeholders (students, caregivers, staff) participating in remote learning	
Security of personal information and data is protected for all stakeholders participating in remote learning (i.e., digital tools have passed privacy impact assessments, student data is only stored on Canadian based servers, student data is not transferred via USB keys, etc.)	
<b>7.0 Learning Resources</b>	
A robust K-12 learning object repository, aligned to Manitoba curriculum, is available for staff, students, and caregivers to access	
Content in the learning repository is submitted by educators or approved contributors (i.e., community partner) and is peer reviewed, before going ‘public’	
Content in the learning repository is kept current	
Categories in the learning repository includes resources for students, resources for caregivers, resources for teachers: to support learning and to use with their students; resources for planning; professional learning resources	
Resources, in the learning repository for teachers, are supportive of the leading instructional and assessment practices for remote learning	
Fully developed courses should be easily accessible through a learning management system that will support implementation, communication, and assessment	
Course materials that are developed for online delivery should be done with leading online/remote learning design principles	
There is access to meaningful, high-quality, culturally relevant supporting resources	

<b>8.0 Mental Health, Well-Being and Belonging</b>	
Supports are in place for remote teachers, students and caregivers' mental health and well-being	
All stakeholders know how to access mental health and wellness supports	
Structures are in place to build a sense of community: teacher to teacher; teacher to students; student to student; teacher to caregiver; teacher caregiver/student (Framework Guiding Principles)	
All stakeholders feel a sense of belonging and are welcomed into their remote learning community	
For students attending the virtual school, there are opportunities for them to establish a sense of community in their local school	
<b>9.0 Communication</b>	
An oversight committee is in place to ensure effective communication processes are in place. These processes should include a 'feedback loop' ensuring stakeholders are confident that questions, concerns, and comments are received and attended to	
Common messaging and/or communication is provided to all stakeholders using the medium(s) they are most likely to access	
The vision and goals for remote learning are clearly communicated to caregivers, students, and educational staff	
Caregivers, students, and educational staff understand who is eligible for remote learning and the processes to access and use remote learning	
The oversight committee will ensure stakeholders are aware of the success(es) of the virtual school	
<b>10.0 Funding</b>	
Approved and committed multi-year funding model is in place to support all aspects of the virtual school system (HR, Resources, Technology and Infrastructure, Professional Learning, Communication, Governance, HR, and Materials)	
Allocation of sufficient resources to ensure that there is relevant technological, content, and pedagogical knowledge for implementing remote learning	
There is an established budget that provides sustainability and growth for a robust remote learning environment	
<b>11.0 Monitoring &amp; Continuous Improvement</b>	
Clearly developed success criteria for monitoring remote learning are created	
For each success criteria, leading practices or expected evidence is identified	
Monitoring plan includes Monitoring of Adoption (how many students use remote learning, how often, what % of their programming) and Monitoring of Impact (impact on engagement, impact on achievement, impact on mental health and well-being, etc.)	
Feedback from all appropriate stakeholders is collected as part of the data collection process	
Observations, conversations (storytelling, images) and product should be included as evidence of the success criteria	
Data collection is centralized and part of regularly scheduled monitoring	
Feedback from regularly scheduled monitoring is reviewed and used to continuously refine the remote learning strategy	

## Appendix D: Focus Group Summary Report

This report summarizes feedback from the focus groups.

All focus groups were asked to respond to the following questions:

1. **What is your/your staff's familiarity with:**
  - Manitoba Standards for Remote Learning?
  - Manitoba Remote Learning Strategy Framework?
2. **What is working well related to remote learning?**
3. **What challenges do you see related to remote learning?**
4. **What is your vision for how remote learning could better support the staff and students you serve?**
5. **What additional support/assistance would you ask for from the Department?**

For questions 2 through 4, the feedback is summarized in the following categories:

- Teaching and Learning Environment and Practices
- Resources
- Digital Toolkit
- Infrastructure/technology
- Communication
- Professional Learning
- Funding
- Mental Health and Well Being

### **Question 1: What is your/your staffs' familiarity with:**

- Manitoba Standards for Remote Learning?
- The Manitoba Remote Learning Strategy Framework?
- If they worked with a remote learning school/program, they were more likely to report that they were familiar and knowledgeable about both documents.
- If remote learning was a part of a school division's 'regular programming', they were more likely to report awareness of both documents:
  - Teachers, if they were aware of them, were told about it through their administrators.
  - Perception is that most teachers were unaware of both documents.
  - Where there was awareness at the teacher level, feedback indicated they were not likely using it at a high level of implementation.
- The Standards for Remote Learning was to guide school divisions for periods of remote learning. Most people interact and see this document as more of a guide that was put in place to help school divisions during the pandemic.
- It provided a 'minimal starting point' for remote learning.
- The framework, created for the MRLSC, may not be viewed as a provincial document, but it does have excellent strategies for teaching and learning whether you are remote or face-to-face.
  - Staff from all school divisions were invited to attend professional learning on the framework and at least one teacher from each division did attend. Approximately 48% of all educators in Manitoba registered and attended virtually.
  - Those that used it reported high satisfaction with the components and felt, if they had already been doing remote learning, it provided affirmation to the practices that they had already put in place.

## Question 2: What is working well related to remote learning?

### Teaching and Learning Environment and Practices

- Teachers, when they had to go remote, had to review their instruction and assessment practices and some divisions reported the rich pedagogical discussions that resulted.
  - Teachers grew in their assessment practices (AFL) and developed options to use this in remote learning situations.
  - Teachers made use of inquiry projects to provide choice and drive engagement and small group instruction.
- Those who participated in or were responsible for remote learning schools highlighted:
  - The sense of community they were able to create and the importance of it.
  - Those that ran synchronous programming highlighted how successful and important it is to engage students.
- Some divisions created their own remote learning teams to assist schools/teachers with how to use their digital toolkit (i.e., Teams, SeeSaw, etc.).
  - These teams may be resourced from the division office.
  - Some reported identifying a school-based tech leader/network of them across the division to assist as well.
- InformNet and the TMO enrolment increased.
  - Both were available to students across Manitoba.
  - TMO is synchronous and reported high success rate as evidenced by their 92% completion rate.
  - Able to work with students with technology and with limited access – need at least a phone to participate in the Zoom platform that they use to host the synchronous sessions.
  - Less than 10% of their students rely on phone/paper resources.
  - For students with mental health issues, both reported that these can be a good option.
- Ability to build a sense of community was essential and extremely effective.
- The Manitoba Remote Learning Support Centre was created in response to the pandemic for K-8 to support remote learning in these grades.
  - MRLSC reported successes in K-8 and French Immersion.
  - Were able to serve so many young students with various needs (medical, mental health, safety, location). They provided support to students that could not attend their schools for various reasons.
  - The professional learning they provided for their teaching staff was intense and effective.
  - They used asynchronous sessions two afternoons per week to enable teachers to collaborate and reach out to parents.
  - Divisions reported satisfaction with the supports received from the MRLSC, pointing to online access to resources and high yield strategies.
- Smaller class sizes, which were often the case for remote learning classes taking place at the remote learning schools, were successful and it was reported to be easier to develop a sense of community and get to know each other.
- Some divisions reported that due to remoteness of schools and teacher availability, they very successfully ran courses from one school that was streamed to other schools in a video conferencing connected/blended classroom environment.
  - Higher success was reported when teachers that were involved in blended learning were selected intentionally, based on their previous experience in remote/blended learning and technological skills.
  - In blended learning, success was also attributed to consistent timetables across schools that were participating in these courses and when a consistent digital toolkit was used.

- Young and/or new teachers that were perhaps more comfortable with the technology had the opportunity to take on leadership roles.
- Staff were redeployed from division offices and other roles (i.e., teacher librarians) to cover increased number of classes due to reduced class sizes/cohorting or remote teaching requirements.
- In remote areas there were creative solutions to reach students through packages, the radio, etc.
- The understanding of the need to build a community became very apparent and was something many teachers, in a remote setting, worked hard to do.
- Unique courses, aligned to the Manitoba curriculum, could be easily created in Brightspace which enabled unique cultures to be represented.
- One system reported hiring a Student Support Facilitator to help teachers know how to better connect with students.
- Teachers engaged in rich discussion related to assessment and re-examined their practices and questioned the validity of certain types of summative assessments that they had relied on for years.
- For assessment, the use of an online assessment (i.e., Crowdmark) tool helped teachers to be confident in assessment results.
- One division was able to support students that typically come to them from abroad, in their home countries when they were unable to travel to Canada. This also applied to supporting students from any location in the world.
- As needed, teachers focused on essential standards to ensure foundational learning was accomplished.
- Divisions that had provided remote learning/virtual learning options for many years reported success throughout the pandemic in being prepared to meet the needs of their learners.
- Some regional consortiums worked with community partner (i.e., local university) to collaborate, research and document practices for remote learning.
- Some divisions offered a blended program as needed but allowed some students to always be face-to-face if they struggled with remote learning.
- More teachers than ever are better prepared to meet the next event/crisis that might demand all learners go remote.
- Some divisions, based on their ability to serve all students remotely, were able to continue the learning during the April 2022 snowstorm.

## Resources

- In Brightspace, there are web-based courses that are available from Grades 9–12.
- Grades 1–9 have been purchased from D2L (Brightspace) but are based on Ontario curriculum and need to be aligned to Manitoba’s curriculum.
- Resources in French were available through Direction des ressources éducatives françaises (DREF), TFO (coordinates licenses); Bureau de l’éducation française (BEF) provides French library resources.
- Some divisions published digital remote learning resources for the community.
- The Manitoba Remote Learning Support Centre (MRLSC) was created in response to the pandemic for K–8 to support remote learning in these grades. Although it was able to provide resources for these grades, dollars and resources were limited. It supports the need for a more formal remote learning strategy, K–12, post pandemic.
  - MRLSC has an online repository.
- Maple is another repository that was available.

## Digital toolkit

- There is a standard digital toolkit provided by MEECL:
  - Learning management system (LMS) is Brightspace and is provincially licensed and available to all staff and students to support in-class, remote, blended or hybrid learning.

- O365 is provincially licensed as the collaborative office suite and MS Teams through Manitoba Education Research and Learning Information Networks (MERLIN).
- Provided short 'how to videos' on how to use it; MEECL provided professional learning upon request.
- Parents became aware of tools that are used to support their students in their learning (i.e., text to speech, immersive readers).
- Some divisions reported soaring usage (1000-fold increase) in the use of their Microsoft environment.
- Divisions indicated they each had a selected set of digital tools to support collaboration, learning management and basic office-type tasks (word processing, spreadsheet, etc.). These toolkits varied by division and many divisions were using tools not funded by the province (i.e., Google Suite, Google Classroom, SeeSaw, etc.) and divisions reported success in the use of the toolkit they had selected. Increased capacity in the use of the toolkit by their staff and students was achieved over the past two years.

### **Infrastructure / technology**

- In areas where homes had limited connectivity, community hotspots were used to provide access to the Internet.
- School devices were loaned to homes in many divisions for use during remote learning periods.
- For urban boards, infrastructure issues were typically minimal and were likely due to affordability and not availability. This was not the case in rural and remote divisions.
  - The issues related to access to technology and infrastructure have shone a light on the question of equity and participants felt that this is a success - we can no longer ignore the inequity felt by students in remote areas or due to socioeconomic reasons.
- Using creativity and funds from various sources, divisions were able to meet many of the needs their students had for devices.
  - This was not always the case, and in families with multiple children this was sometimes a challenge.

### **Communications:**

- No specific successes related to communications were highlighted in the focus groups.

### **Professional Learning**

- Almost all teachers increased their comfort, ability, and capacity to use technology and the digital toolkit to support their students.
- Divisions have 'rethought' what professional learning can look like.
- Virtual professional learning allowed people to participate virtually, especially those from outside urban areas and create authentic and very effective learning communities.
- Teachers had support and professional learning to support their use of blended learning and are able now, more than before, to use these in the classroom as well.
- The use of the technologies that enabled virtual professional learning was excellent modelling of how it can be used in the learning experience with students.
- The entire experience provided accelerated learning for teachers – they had to learn to continue to support their students.
- Teachers worked together and demonstrated innovation.
- Increase in teacher efficacy and collaboration.
- Moved to online mini- professional learning sessions that were recorded and could be used for anytime, just in time professional learning.
- Divisions adjusted schedules and timetables to enable teachers to have planning and collaboration time together.



- Teachers took risks, tried new things, reached out to each other to be successful in remote learning.
- As teachers were forced to meet online for professional learning and use the same toolkit, there was significant time saved (reduced travel, etc.) and funds.

### **Funding**

- There was increased funding reported, in response to the pandemic for resources, staff, etc.  
Divisions acknowledged:
  - It was not enough.
  - It is not expected to be sustained. For resources that were purchased that need to be sustained over time (i.e., technology), there are concerns as to how to sustain some of the new device ratios.
- It was generally agreed that funding needs to be dedicated to any new Remote Learning Strategy.

### **Mental Health and Well-being**

- Divisions attempted to provide mental health supports to staff and students, and families where possible.
- There were more opportunities for mental health and wellness conversations.
- Project 11 – True North was cited as providing a consistent mental health strategy and access to experts to support schools.

### Question 3: What challenges do you see related to remote learning?

#### Teaching and Learning Environment and Practices

- It was a challenge for teachers to know what curriculum, when learning went remote, to focus on. They were unsure of how to select the priority areas. Some divisions defined the essential outcomes for educators while others left it to the teachers.
- This resulted in inconsistencies in what was covered/delivered as educators chose different outcomes as their focus.
- Time was a barrier as teachers needed to learn to use tools and find resources to support the instruction and assessment practices.
- Not all staff were able to effectively teach in a remote environment – weren't sure how to adjust instructional and assessment practices.
- Need to clearly understand instructional, assessment practices that work well in remote learning AND know how to use the digital toolkit in support of these practices.
- The lack of preparedness for remote learning led to low quality learning and assessment practices.
- Students, whose parents chose to have them join a remote learning classroom, part way into the year (i.e., January 2022), may have been at a different point in the curriculum than the class they were joining. Parents were typically aware of this challenge before they moved their student(s).
- Engagement of students, i.e., getting them to join the online learning sessions was a challenge reported by classrooms that went remote and this was also reported by InformNet and TMO.
- Divisions that reported offering blended and hybrid offerings where the teacher may not have been onsite indicated there were challenges with monitoring remote locations in terms of attendance, offering support, and monitoring assessment work.
- French Immersion (FI):
  - For French Immersion students involved in remote learning, finding how to give them enough talk time was a challenge and it is critical to their oral language development.
  - For FI students, now that their parents were more involved when they were learning remote, the teacher was forced to do some of the day in English as many parents do not speak French. This goes against the typical tenants of an FI classroom.
  - The stress of both parents and students – the impact on their well-being and ability to be present for the learning.
  - Resources were available but it took time to search, vet and for 'pay' resources, once the free trial was done, they were typically more expensive to purchase than English resources.
  - Shortage of FI teachers.
- More teachers need help to build their capacity with respect to sound instructional and assessment practices to be used in remote learning.
- The Distance Learning Unit that used to create distributed learning print-based courses was disbanded.
  - This team created print-based courses for grades 9-12 in the past, but these have not been maintained or updated and have become very dated.
  - Gaps were experienced for home schooled students when the distance learning unit was closed.
- The Online and Distributed Learning Unit's web-based courses are still available but not updated regularly.
  - Remote learning was especially challenging for the earlier years and was not always best for all students based on how they learn and the supports they need.
- The need for parental support was high for remote learning for K-3.

- Instruction is a challenge in the northern and remote areas due to access to a full range of course offerings, teaching materials, and access to a quality and stable internet connection—pre pandemic and during.
- It is more challenging to do remote learning in specific courses:
  - Industrial arts, Physical Education and Health, Music, etc.
- There was confusion reported with respect to the availability and continuity of services offered by MRLSC and InformNet.
  - MRLSC
    - Continuous intake was complex.
- There was a lack of consistency of how the tools were used to support learning and engagement. For example, the use of cameras was inconsistent and caused issues when used (inappropriate things in the background, parental consent for their image on screen not obtained, etc.) and is harder to know if your students are engaged when they are not used.
- Online exhaustion was experienced by both staff and students.
- One division reported that credit attainment declined in blended learning environments.
- Teachers really knowing how to instruct in a synchronous environment was challenging but asynchronous was often cited as unsuccessful related to student engagement and completion of work.
  - To enable effective synchronous learning, smaller class sizes are likely needed. Very difficult to do with 20+ students. If you can't see them all on your screen it is hard to keep them engaged.
  - Hard to timetable with synchronous courses.
- Students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or student specific plans may not have been supported as well remotely as they might be when in-school.
- Academic integrity was noted by many divisions as a struggle.
- Trying to do blended learning was very difficult – needed an additional person to assist as a monitor.
- Struggled to reengage some students and families that were disinterested or had disengaged.
- Remote learning does not work for all learners – need to be able to self-regulate, manage a schedule, etc.
- Differentiation was extremely challenging in a remote learning environment.

## Resources

- Human Resources are always in short supply and related funding is limited.
- Appropriate resources for remote learning were not easy to find regardless of subject/grade, but this is exacerbated for French resources:
  - Resources available in French are much more limited than in English, more costly; teachers had to find their own.
- Although there are repositories, at least one is reported to have content that is limited in some subject areas, with a lack of consistency as to how the content is monitored/maintained.
- Online courses were not necessarily developed with the appropriate design and remote pedagogical practices embedded. Often conversion of print materials to digital and delivered online. Needs a lot more work/rework to make these effective.
- Remote learning was extremely challenging when multiple children were learning from home and often the parent was working from home. Challenges were related to access to technology (devices), sharing bandwidth, supporting younger learners, etc.

## Communications

- MEECL has challenges with respect to communicating.
  - They communicate directly to Superintendents who pass messages onto staff.
  - There is no vehicle to communicate directly to principals and teachers.
  - Unable to use social media.
- Not necessarily easy access to information on remote learning options for parents and students.
- A few school systems felt that they were more excluded than 'school divisions' from direct communications (i.e., Funded/Independent schools, First Nations schools, InformNet, TMO).

## Digital toolkit

- Lack of consistency with respect to tools in the toolkit:
  - Individual divisions reported various digital tools being used:
    - LMS functionality delivered through SeeSaw, Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, Brightspace.
    - The inability to integrate tools with Brightspace is one reason that was reported as to why divisions may choose to use something other than Brightspace for their LMS. An example is you cannot integrate Teams into Brightspace.
    - The Brightspace environment is provided. Although MEECL provides some add-ons to Brightspace, divisions cited that not all add-ons have been purchased (i.e., plagiarism checker) that they would appreciate.
  - Parents struggled with the technology toolkit that their student(s) needed to participate in remote learning.
    - A lot of time was spent on supporting students and parents on getting the technology to work and knowing how to use it which meant reduced time to focus on the learning.
- Grades K-8 Brightspace courses purchased by MEECL are based on Ontario curriculum, so teachers were less likely to use/adopt.
- MS Teams was used by some divisions to connect with students during remote learning typically for middle years and up. SeeSaw was reported by several divisions as the communication tool for K-4 or K-5.
- Younger students were not as comfortable using MS Teams so divisions used SeeSaw instead.
- In an attempt to provide options for students, there was a lack of consistency in at least one division related to the tools being used.
- Northern and remote school divisions were at a much greater disadvantage in terms of being able to participate in learning.
  - There are students in many of these communities who have not participated in learning for two years due to lack of access when schools were not open (and their schools remained closed longer than urban/suburban schools) and others that participated but not as fully as those in other areas.
  - The long-term impact of this learning loss will need to be addressed for several years.
  - Some parents are not open to the use of technology in the learning experience.
- Some teachers were faced with a lot of different tools (software, peripherals, etc.) that were new and caused stress.
- Privacy issues, related to the use of cameras, were reported. Examples of these issues were parents walking through the camera partially clothed, students being on camera without permission, and the recording of students without permission.

## Infrastructure/technology

- Connectivity and bandwidth were the biggest challenges to participating in remote learning
- Lack of equity was reported with respect to:
  - Access to student devices – any student learning remotely must have their own device.
  - Access to devices in the northern and remote areas were difficult to get.
  - internet/bandwidth access, speed, and reliability.
    - There are communities with no access to cellular or the internet.
    - Remote and rural communities have greater challenges than metro and urban communities.
- Lack of consistency of devices within a classroom, in remote learning, added unnecessary complexities.
- Delivery of technology to students was not fast enough initially to give students access.
- Some divisions tried to fund access for students that did not have internet access at home.
- There was, and still is, a need to provide paper packages to students whose families could not, or would not, use technology.
- In some cases, limited bandwidth caused scheduling hurdles for blended and hybrid offerings.
- Poor power grids and/or weather can result in power failures.
- Although Starlink is available to provide internet access in some communities, it was typically only at the school site, not in homes and there were some privacy concerns that kept some people from adopting it.
- Awareness of security issues that can arise from using unsupported tools, cameras, recording of lessons, etc.

## Professional Learning

- There was an inequitable student learning experience in blended/remote environments as there is a continuum in the ability of teachers from very prepared to not as well-prepared.
- Some teachers required significant support in the use of digital tools as well as teaching and assessment practices during remote learning.
- Without face-to-face opportunities, the creation of connections and networks was negatively impacted.
- There was much time spent reacting to the pandemic and the disruptions, time to learn was limited.
- Limited planning for centralized learning in some systems/divisions.
- There is concern that the growth in the capacity to use digital tools to support the learning and a wider variety of rich assessment and instructional practices will not be maintained when the teachers and students return to 'in-class' learning.

## Funding

- Although there was increased funding reported, in response to the pandemic for resources, staff, etc., divisions acknowledged:
  - It simply was not enough to meet all the demands.
  - It is not expected to be sustained so for resources that were purchased that need to be sustained over time (i.e., technology), there are concerns as to how to maintain the ratios that are needed to participate in remote learning.
- Funding model for InformNet and TMO changes yearly. This uncertainty impacts their ability to publish their offerings for the following year until it is announced and causes unnecessary workload, delays, and communication issues.
- Students/families must pay a per course fee to attend virtual schools which can be challenging for some families.

## **Mental Health and Well-being**

- For many reasons, significant impact was seen on the mental health and well-being of staff and students, and it is believed this has created long-term needs that must be addressed.
- Mental health and well-being were not initially addressed.
- Teachers did not have the skills they need to thrive in a remote learning environment, and this caused a lot of stress.
- Feeling of 'always-on' was extremely stressful and took a toll over the two years. Leaders report a sense of exhaustion from their teachers, especially if they were expected to support students in both a remote and face-to-face setting.
- As students and staff return to school, mental health issues persist, some students and staff are more reluctant to return to the classroom. Continued support will be needed.

## Question 4: What is your vision for how remote learning could better support your staff and students?

### Teaching and Learning Environment and Practices

- A K-12 comprehensive Remote Learning/Virtual school system
  - Operate as school division with full recognition and consistent funding.
  - Clearly defined who will use it, when and why and well communicated to parents and students.
  - No out-of-pocket costs to students to participate.
  - Devices, internet access, and other costs would be covered.
  - Will need the ability to scale based on demand. The option should be open to all students in the province.
  - Provide synchronous and asynchronous options with flexible scheduling.
    - Asynchronous is needed for students/adults who have other daytime commitments.
    - Synchronous will be needed for a variety of reasons such as to accommodate young learners, English as an Additional Language (EAL) students, French Immersion students (for both groups oral language development is critical), students that cannot get a course offering in their resident school.
    - There should be the opportunity to participate in a fully remote online course.
  - Culturally relevant to all students across Manitoba.
  - Accessible to all.
    - Students can take one course, some courses or all their courses/learning through this option.
    - Equity of offerings for English, French Immersion, and French Language.
      - Ensure French-language and French immersion offerings are as robust as the English offerings.
        - For remote learners participating in French Immersion courses, they should be synchronous to provide as many opportunities as possible for the development of oral language skills.
    - Indigenous cultures are represented in the programming.
  - Guidance, clinicians, counsellors, coaches for students and family's needs would be part of this system.
  - Might have a reciprocal agreement so that these services are provided by the resident school. This would increase their connection to the local community and provide another way to ensure students are engaged in their local community.
  - A student should be able to stay in their community and receive their education – perhaps a mix of the resident school and remote. Must be a local connection for students learning remotely.
  - Students, involved in remote learning, especially when their entire program is remote, should have opportunities for join clubs, participate in sports/teams, attend field trips, etc. This might be done in agreement with their resident school.
  - Support students with low and no technology options.
  - Consideration to support home-schooled, international and students who are incarcerated.
  - Provide remote learning summer offerings.
  - Dedicated staff trained who specialize in remote learning.
  - There is accountability to ensure engagement and connection with students and families.
  - Clear standards on how to develop and maintain relationships with students and their families.

- Access to the internet, and devices, would be available to all communities in Manitoba to ensure they can participate in this Remote Learning Experience.
- A consistent timetable in the province – start and stop at same times, periods scheduled at same times, would enable a student to take a course at the remote school during an open period.
- Ensure there are opportunities for students to take courses, attend ‘classes’ when they are from smaller or remote areas that are unable to offer the breadth of course offerings that urban areas can provide.
- Provide opportunities for different platforms that best support the staff, students, and the learning.
- Provide all staff access to the same level of training and knowledge.
- Create consistent language with respect to remote learning terms.
- Development of a policy that outlines how students will be served. Face-to-face classrooms will still be in demand but so too will the demand for remote learning options.
- Continue to use the guiding principles in the remote Learning Framework.
- Provide ways for some in person collaborations.
- Continuous intake is accommodated.
- The toolkit should be a seamless part of the learning experience for teachers in face-to-face classrooms and remote classrooms.
- Ability to have students in classroom and others join remotely, more seamlessly with better tools would be ideal.
- Provide learning outside of the traditional ‘school day’ so students can develop their own learning path.
- Occasional/Emergency Remote Learning in response to an event or crisis will need to be planned for:
  - Strategies, resources are available to support occasional or emergency remote learning.
    - Teachers who typically are face-to-face can transition to short term remote learning. Can use the digital toolkit.
      - Are able to ‘carry on’ with the learning with minimal changes/disruptions.
  - Ability to have students in classroom and others join remotely, when they are away for a defined short period of time, more seamlessly with better tools would be ideal.
  - Ensure staff, students and parents/guardians can shift to remote learning for all students as needed (weather/environmental/safety, etc.).
  - Work to ensure the tools and practices are in place to allow seamless move from in-class to remote.

## Resources

- Provide targeted resources, by grade level for parent, students, and staff.
- Students and parents in the remote school will need someone to reach out for technology support as well as other supports.
- Need a way to deliver resources (books, packages, etc.) to students no matter where they are.
- Would meet the needs of the community – if paper packages are required, they would be up to date, effective.
- Courses should be developed by a central body with appropriate skills for online learning (design, pedagogy, content, culturally inclusive).
- Work with a student advocacy group to recommend optimal ways to drive student engagement and participation in remote learning.
- Parents and students will need access to support resources, i.e.:
  - a number/person to contact to answer questions, navigate issues.
  - assistance, as needed to use the digital tools in support of the learning.



- opportunities to meet with each other in support of a 'virtual school community'.
- Any virtual school will need to offer traditional supports such as clinical support, speech & language, guidance counsellors, etc.
- A fully functional and 'loaded' resource repository would be available to serve all teachers and students from K-12, in both languages with culturally appropriate resources.

### **Communications**

- Ongoing opportunities to encourage and support communities of learners within and beyond school walls, for both staff and students and parents/families.
- Parents and students will need to clearly understand the remote learning options available to them and be provided with guidance in the selection process.
- Focus on engaging parents authentically and building relationships.
- Communications between the province, divisions and the remote school are two way, consistent, and timely.

### **Digital toolkit**

- One platform, with a consistent set of tools used provincially to build familiarity for teachers, students, and parents.
  - The toolkit is used to connect students together remotely (i.e., Teams, Zoom, etc. must provide a call-in option).
- A help desk/support protocol would be available to staff, parents/guardians, and students for assistance with the digital toolkit as well as learning related questions.
- For staff of remote learning, ensure they have the peripherals they need (second screen, phone, speakers, microphone, etc.).

### **Infrastructure/technology**

- Consideration to provide connectivity and devices for some families as needed.
  - All students must have the ability to participate with the technology assuming it is not a cultural or religious reason for not being able to.
    - If a family has multiple children, each must have a device to fully participate in the learning.
    - Increased access to devices for students to use at home, province wide.
  - Consistency of devices, by grade levels (i.e., K-3 iPad, 4-8 Chromebook, 9-12 full function laptop) is recommended for ease of support.
- Increased connectivity province wide – this should be a provincially owned and driven initiative and not the responsibility of each school division to problem solve.
- Parents/families will need to understand what their commitment/expectation is to provide adequate infrastructure and/or devices to enable the learning, and what the typical 'usage' demands are with the tools being used.

### **Professional Learning**

- Provide staff with professional learning to intentionally develop their skills to become proficient with:
  - The digital tools (how, when to use them).
  - Instructional and assessment practices that support remote learning (leading practices regardless of where the learner is).
- Foster communities of learnings within and beyond a specific Division.
- Faculties of Education will build capacity around instructional and assessment practices that will work in remote learning.

- The skills for teaching face-to-face are different than those for teaching remotely. Teachers should be selected for remote teaching and provided with specialized training. Must be intentional in this capacity building.
- Just in time, meet the teacher where they are at; Micro lessons that can be taken when and where needed.
- Professional Learning Communities should be integral to the plan.
- Provide a consistent/common prep time for teachers to collaborate, network, co-create.

## Funding

- Must be funded like all other schools.
  - May not need funds for bricks/mortar but all aspects must be considered AND include connectivity, devices, and software toolkit in the funding for any student participating in the virtual school.
- Commitment to a multi-year funding model to ensure sustainability.
- If a student opts to take one, some or all their courses/programming remotely, there should not be a cost to the resident school division.
- The funding model will need to ensure divisions are not penalized if one of their students opts to take one, some or all their courses remotely. If funding to the resident school division is withheld, the division may not make it as easy for the student to take the courses remotely. Having the resident school continue to provide services, clubs, sports teams is a way to promote a strong sense of community and continue to provide funding for the student.

## Mental Health and Well-Being

- Funding and programs are in place to support the mental health and well-being needs of students, families, and staff.
- Mental health supports, like clinical and guidance, could be provided by the resident school for students participating in the virtual school. This will help to support the sense of community and increase the ability to 'check-in' with the students.

## Question 5: What additional support / assistance would you ask for from the Department?

- French / French Immersion.
- The distance learning branch (Online and Distributed Learning Unit) currently has no bilingual staff.
- There are no courses being developed.
- No longer an Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) responsible for French Language education.
- Increased coordination between the departments at MEECL
  - Need to improve communications.
  - More clarity to divisions with respect to the remote learning options and the costs associated with these options.
  - More communication between the remote learning options (TMO, InformNet and MEECL) and with each division.
  - Provide funding information as early as possible in the spring to decrease reactive measures that are taking place.
  - Clarity with respect to support, funding.
- Increase the functionality of the digital toolkit (i.e., there are more functions in Brightspace that would be beneficial) and clearly communicate which tools should be used for which purpose.
- Leverage existing successes and be ready to meet the unique needs of individual divisions by recognizing diversity and allowing for some levels of autonomy.

- Increased consultations with divisions who have developed deep skills in remote learning and the use of digital tools to support staff and students.
- Provide more choice in platforms OR if it is a consistent toolkit, be clear as to why a platform was chosen (i.e., efficiencies and effectiveness of narrowing the toolkit):
  - Google/Microsoft Teams
  - Edwin
  - Compass
- Provide provincial license brokering i.e., DreamBox.
- Clear assessment strategies that will work in remote learning.
- Clear guidelines for remote learning options.
- Remote Learning must be free to ALL.
- Challenges and needs of different systems/division are unique and must be considered as this strategy is developed.
- Province should ensure there is connectivity available in all communities.
- Need a more robust offering of online courses available.
  - i.e., Indigenous language.
- Universality of access, courses available in French and English, invite province to use remote learning to expand accessibility to French Immersion.
- The divide between federally funded schools and provincially funded causes inequities and inefficiencies.
- Need to find a way to serve all students and eliminate or minimize the divide this causes.
- Need to ensure we have an inclusive system – education is a human right.
- How will the ministry resource devices for all and a consistent digital toolkit and infrastructure? Is this possible? Need to ensure this is true for ALL students not just large urban centres. How will they deliver on the promise in the Framework for Remote Learning announcement of the week of April 18 where it speaks to all students. What is the standard of the learning that they will provide?
- Be aware that the closer you are to the United States (US) border, the more likely you will roam in the US and pay US charges. So, they struggle to use devices on cellular plans there.
- There will need to be focused professional learning time on the devices, the toolkit, the strategies to use to have the largest impact.
- Connecting with the MRLSC has been beneficial for especially middle years teachers to reach out. Would like to keep it.
- Must keep in mind the uniqueness of so many areas – one size fits all likely won't work and you will need local considerations and flexibility i.e., how many minutes of remote learning a day if students must share devices with family members.
- Small schools no longer can access independent studies course. The Remote Learning Centre will offer the chance to take courses you couldn't in the past. If it is a remote learning course though, it must be robust and the communication from the remote learning centre to the school must flow well and be clear for it to be successful.

## Appendix E: Additional Considerations for the Remote Learning Strategy

There were some details that education stakeholders wanted to ensure were captured and could be referred to as Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning develop the Remote Learning Strategy. These ideas are captured in this appendix.

### 1.0 Recommendations related to Vision and Priorities

Implementation Requirement	Additional Information
<p><a href="#">Implementation Requirement 1.2</a>: Provincial Virtual School must offer various modalities of learning</p> <p>Students must have options to learn synchronously and asynchronously.</p> <p>In both synchronous and asynchronous options, some students want/are able to participate using technology-based tools. Others will require low or no technology options (paper-based packages, telephone supports, etc.).</p> <p>As the virtual learning school is developed, options related to these modalities (online, telephone, television, radio, paper-based packages) must be clearly articulated.</p> <p>It will not be possible to offer every course at every grade level using all modalities, especially in the short term. Attempts to clarify these options and explain to students and their caregivers the reasons for the availability of these options will be essential.</p>	<p>Each of these offers benefits and greater opportunities of success depending upon the needs of the learner. For example, it has been reported that for the development of oral language skills, synchronous learning is critical. For students that have commitments during the day that would inhibit their ability to attend a synchronous course, asynchronous options are required.</p>

### 2.0 Leadership, Governance, and Expectations

Implementation Requirement	Additional Information
<p><a href="#">Implementation Requirement 2.2</a>: Student Ownership</p> <p>Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning (MEECL) will define part-time and full-time students within the virtual school to allow for appropriate funding and reciprocal agreements for clinical supports at the student's resident school.</p>	<p>Ensure this definition includes defining a full-time student as a student at a resident school for the purposes of clinical services and extra-curricular activities</p>

### 3.0 Recommendations related to Vision and Priorities, Virtual School

Implementation Requirement	Additional Information
<p><b>Implementation Requirement 3.1:</b> Development of Virtual School will be a phased approach.</p> <p>Development and establishment of the Virtual school will be in a phased approach, starting with setting up a special operating agency and providing services for grades 9–12. Once the initial phase is successfully operational, further exploration of K–8 Remote Learning options will commence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least twice a year, students/caregivers should be asked to indicate if they will participate in remote learning for the following semester or the following school year. This data should be used to build capacity to ensure the provincial virtual school can respond to these needs.</li> <li>• A buffer should be built in to respond to ‘just in time’ demand that may occur due to changing circumstances of students / caregivers. Initially at least a 5% buffer should be included in terms of funding / staffing. This should be monitored year over year to determine what the average is year over year.</li> <li>• Accommodate continuous intake, when possible.</li> <li>• The funding model will need to ensure school divisions continue to receive at least some of the funding if one of their students opts to take one, some or all courses remotely so the resident school division can provide supports such as clinical, guidance and engagement (clubs, teams, etc.), to their remote learners.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Implementation Requirement 3.5:</b> Clear definition of who, when and why remote learning is recommended</p> <p>Remote learning options will not meet the needs of all learners. Students and their caregivers must be guided through the selection of the best environment (remote or face-to-face) to meet their learning needs. Recommendations will be based on available supports and legislation.</p>	<p>The Provincial Virtual School communications package should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a profile of the attributes of a successful remote learner</li> <li>• a list of the reasons a student/family may seek remote learning options (why and when)</li> <li>• recognition of the need for someone to physically be available to support young learners when they are learning remotely.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Under The Child and Family Services Act in Manitoba, children under the age of 12 cannot be left on their own without adequate supervision.</li> <li>○ There are other students, given their learning needs, who will also need to have someone in the home to support their learning in a remote learning setting.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the advantages/challenges of synchronous and asynchronous remote learning options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Asynchronous is needed for students/adults who have other daytime commitments</li> <li>○ Synchronous will be needed for a variety of reasons such as to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ accommodate young learners</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ English as an Additional Language (EAL) students,</li> <li>○ French Immersion students (for both groups oral language development is critical)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Implementation Requirement 3.6:</b> Clear definition of course/program/grade level offerings</p> <p>For the Provincial Virtual School, a communications package should be developed that states the requirements and resources necessary for each course/program/grade level offering.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether it is synchronous, asynchronous, or a combination of both.</li> <li>• How students / families who are not able to / or do not want to use technology will be supported/participate.</li> <li>• If there are any face-to-face requirements (i.e., technical vocational course)</li> <li>• That resources will be provided to a student while they are participating in remote learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Device, digital tools, and where possible internet / Wi-Fi access</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>What, if anything, the student / caregivers will need to provide to participate in the remote learning (i.e., course fees, course unique supplies, technologies, specific internet / Wi-Fi / bandwidth considerations, etc.)</p>
<p><b>Implementation Requirement 3.7:</b> Create a system to support student success</p> <p>Create a student advocacy role to monitor each student’s progress by a ‘caring adult’ or mentor to ensure they are successful in the remote learning environment.</p> <p>A student advocacy group should be formed with students from the virtual school to encourage student voice.</p>	<p>For example, there might be a Student Success Advocate office and Student Success advocates are assigned to monitor the success of a specific group of students. Where challenges or concerns are identified, the student, parents/guardian and the assigned advocate will work together to resolve them.</p> <p>They will be involved in connecting with the virtual school’s student body, advising staff as to how to drive student engagement and participation in remote learning, etc.</p>
<p><b>Implementation Requirement 3.8:</b> Resident school divisions collaborate with the provincial virtual school to provide student supports</p> <p>Formal processes and agreements are in place to enable the resident school division to provide clinical and guidance supports for the virtual school students who live in their catchment area.</p>	<p>This, when combined with the Student Success Advocate role, will improve the likelihood of students succeeding in a remote learning environment.</p>

<p>Formal processes and agreements are in place to enable the resident school division to provide opportunities for the virtual school students who live in their catchment area to engage in extra-curricular activities.</p>	
<p><b>Implementation Requirement 3.9:</b> Build a strong Virtual School Sense of Community</p> <p>It will be important to build a strong sense of belonging and community, not only for the students, but also for their caregivers and families.</p>	<p>Both virtual, and when possible, face-to-face opportunities to meet, connect, share, and celebrate should be available throughout the school year. Like face-to-face schools, events might include curriculum nights, student/teacher/parent conferences, subject showcases, fund raising events, etc.</p> <p>In support of this recommendation, refer to Manitoba Remote Learning Framework Guiding Principles.</p>

**6.0 Recommendations related to the Role of Technology**

Recommendation/Implementation Requirement	Additional Information
<p><b>Recommendation 6.1:</b> Standard Digital Toolkit</p> <p>Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning (MEECL) should develop a standard digital toolkit with tools appropriate to each grade level to support leading instructional and assessment practices and fund the appropriate tools to support all school divisions and funded independent schools which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning Management System(s) (LMS) to support remote learning</li> <li>• digital portfolio tools</li> <li>• a digital learning resource repository</li> <li>• a productivity suite which enables collaboration, communication, and other global competencies</li> </ul>	<p>A provincial list where people can share should also include a column to indicate the required bandwidth speeds for the program to help make decisions across communities</p>
<p><b>Implementation Requirement 6.1:</b> Digital Toolkit Review</p> <p>The digital toolkit is reviewed and updated annually to ensure best/promising practices, to ensure it meets educational needs, and to allow for new tools/technologies to be added.</p>	<p>Teachers need to follow division policy and procedure to experiment with digital tools. Where these are deemed innovative to enhance teaching and assessment practices, a process is in place to add to the provincial digital toolkit.</p>
<p><b>Implementation Requirement 6.2:</b> Create a Toolkit Legend</p> <p>Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning define and communicate which grades/subjects the tools in the digital toolkit are suitable for; and what functions they will be used to perform (i.e., collaboration, communication, learning management, digital resources, etc.).</p>	<p>Use the existing continuum as a starting point to build the legend from:</p> <p><a href="https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/tech/lict/what/show_me/continuum.html">https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/tech/lict/what/show_me/continuum.html</a></p>

<p><b>Implementation Requirement 6.6:</b> Acceptable and Responsible Use Agreement</p> <p>Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning (MEECL) will provide a template of minimum standards and require an acceptable and responsible use agreement be signed once per year for students, staff and caregivers who use the provincial digital toolkit and resource repository.</p>	<p>Agreements that have been developed by the Manitoba Association of Educational Technology Leaders (MAETL) should be used as a starting point for the development of this agreement.</p>
<p><b>Implementation Requirement 6.6b.:</b> Help Desk</p> <p>Where remote learning is provided, technical/ICT support in the form of a 'Help Desk' need to be made available to staff, students and caregivers.</p>	<p>Needs to be available in all official languages</p>

**8.0 Recommendations related to Mental Health, Well-Being and Belonging**

Implementation Requirement	Additional Information
<p><b>Implementation Requirement 8.2:</b> Mental Health Strategy</p> <p>Ensure that the Manitoba Mental Health in Schools Strategy is clearly defined, effectively communicated and that ongoing supports are implemented across all school divisions and funded independent schools, impacting school wide strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish and communicate clear pathways to mental health and well-being supports for students and staff in all school divisions and funded independent schools.</li> </ul>	<p>The following resources should be referred to as this recommendation is considered:</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.mb.ca/healthyschools/docs/Mental_Health_Promotion.pdf">https://www.gov.mb.ca/healthyschools/docs/Mental_Health_Promotion.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="https://news.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/newslinks/2021/09/BG-Mental_Health_Schools-ED.pdf">https://news.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/newslinks/2021/09/BG-Mental_Health_Schools-ED.pdf</a></p>

**9.0 Recommendations related to Communication**

Implementation Requirement	Additional Information
<p><b>Implementation Requirement 9.5:</b> School Divisions and Funded Independent Schools will need to understand the role they will play to support remote learning</p> <p>MEECL must clearly communicate the role of the resident school division to support the remote learning of their students when they take one, some, or all courses through the Provincial Virtual School. Funding implications must also be clearly communicated.</p> <p>MEECL must also clearly communicate the role and expectations of resident school divisions and funded independent schools to deliver remote learning to their own students in an event or crisis situation.</p>	<p>As this recommendation is developed, must consider the implications for athletics (Manitoba High School Athletic Association (MHSAA)) and specialty programs (i.e., the arts)</p>



## 10.0 Recommendations related to Funding

Implementation Requirement/Consideration	Additional Information
<p><b>Implementation Requirement 10.1:</b> Funding – Staffing Allocations</p> <p>Funding for dedicated staff for the virtual school needs to be allocated based upon the staff funding formula within the FSP. Staffing allocation includes teaching, administrative, student services, and community connection personnel.</p>	<p>Community connection personnel include but are not limited to youth support workers, outreach workers and support the connection between resident school and remote school, and between remote school and caregivers.</p>
<p><b>Implementation Requirement 10.2:</b> Per course funding</p> <p>When an individual student leaves their resident school to take one, some or all their courses at the virtual school, funding from MEECL should be provided to the virtual school per individual course to a maximum of full-time equivalent funding (base amount plus categorical support). Home school students taking one or some courses will receive the requisite per course funding. Courses are provided to students without a fee.</p> <p>There should be a semi-annual enrollment review for funding adjustments.</p>	<p>When a student chooses to take one or some of their courses through the virtual school the per course funding will be provided from MEECL to the virtual school. The resident school retains this funding to assist with the provision of clinical supports for these students from their resident school. The funding is not deducted from the resident school.</p>
<p><b>Future Implementation Consideration 10.1:</b> Extra-curricular activities</p> <p>Funding is provided by MEECL to allow for reciprocal agreements between the virtual school, funded independent schools, and school divisions to support student inclusion in extra-curricular activities at their resident school.</p>	<p>As this recommendation is developed, must consider the implications for athletics (MHSAA) and specialty programs (i.e., the arts)</p>

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