

## COVID-19 Reflections for Kindergarten to Grade 12 Schools in Manitoba

Over the past two school years, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought many challenges and caused unprecedented disruption. Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning and public health and education stakeholders worked closely to develop and implement the provincial COVID-19 response for the Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system. This partnership was of critical importance to the success of the response. All education stakeholders, school leaders and school staff have been integral to ensuring the continuity of learning and planning for individual circumstances as needed.

### Response Planning Team

- The COVID-19 Response Planning Team was created in March 2020 and met for the first time on April 3, 2020.
- They met regularly (42 times from April 2020 to March 2022) to address emerging issues related to COVID-19. A collaborative approach facilitated information sharing to resolve complex or urgent matters related to policy direction and guidance protocols.
- Coordination and planning focused on four priority areas: health and safety measures, mental health and well-being, assessing and addressing learning impacts, and vaccination outreach.
- The Response Planning Team, as described here, completed much of its work in spring 2022, and has shifted to monitoring, evaluating and ensuring long term preparedness. The Team's working structure will be kept and meetings will take place as needed.

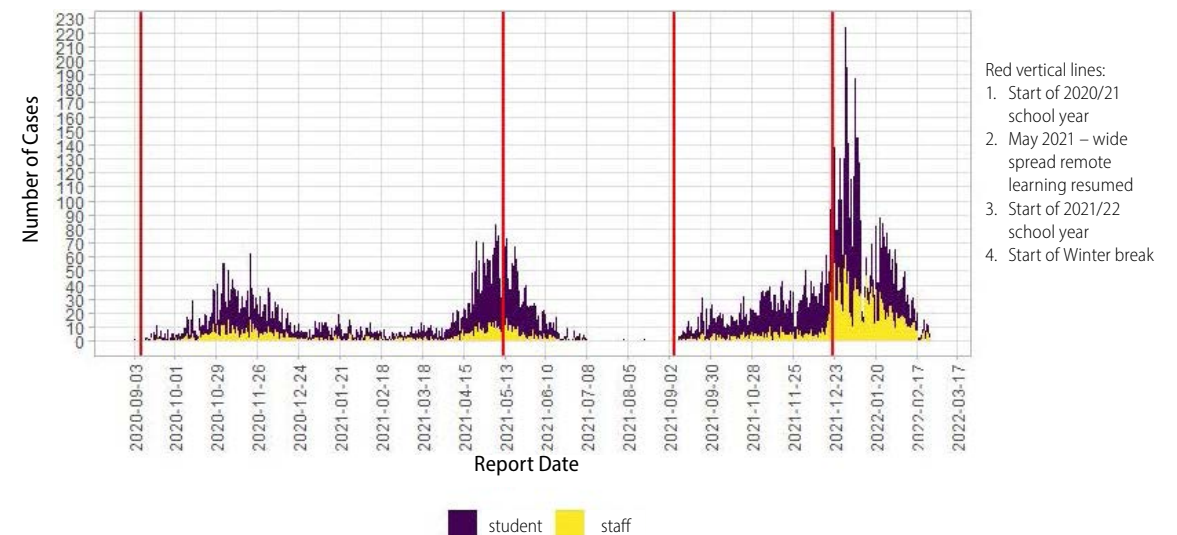
### COVID-19 Response Planning Principles

1. Primary focus on health and safety and following public health advice.
2. Importance of continuity of learning for all students and need to assess and address short and longer term learning impacts, along with a focus on mental health and well-being.
3. In-class learning is best for students and is the priority with remote learning supports for educators and students when and where needed.
4. Collaborative planning with families, students, schools, school divisions, education partners and Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning to ensure student achievement and success, and planning for individual student needs and circumstances as needed.
5. Resources redirected to ensure that students actively engage in learning during the suspension of classroom learning and throughout the pandemic.
6. Responsive supports for students with special learning needs, students at risk and those whose parents/caregivers are critical service workers.

### Cases in Schools

- The Notification Support Team was created in November 2020 to support school leaders with the notification of cases associated to schools. This team was available from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days per week, to support schools with complex cases. At the height of the pandemic, the Notification Support Team received an average of 540 emails and phone calls per week during the month of May 2021.
- Less than five per cent (4.3%) of schools had an outbreak declared by public health officials.
- Less than five per cent of students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 reported a school-associated COVID-19 case.

COVID-19 among Students and Staff of K–12 Schools (Sept. 2020 – March 2022)



# Summary from 2020 to 2022

## Learning Impacts

- Manitoba provided guidelines and expectations for schools during the suspension of classes in Spring 2020.
- In the 2020/2021 school year, the department added three professional development days to provide additional time to plan for learning.
- Since April 2020, My Learning at Home: Parent and Caregiver Portal has been supporting meaningful family-centred learning for students in preschool and Kindergarten to Grade 12.
- In March 2020, Manitoba developed protocols for Technical Vocational Education students to access facilities while in remote learning in order to work as well as for the High School Apprenticeship Program to ensure technical training requirements could be met.
- MAPLE, the online educators' professional learning platform, was a repository for a number of specialized groups and supports related to teaching and learning, assessment, and student well-being during the pandemic.
- Manitoba provided supports for assessing and reporting on student learning and planning for recovery learning when in-class learning resumed in September 2021.
- New literacy and numeracy resources were developed to support in-class, blended, and remote learning in 2020/2021. Mini-support guides and virtual professional learning sessions on various topics were offered to enhance teaching and learning.
- Since January 2021, the Manitoba Remote Learning Centre has been supporting learning for Kindergarten to Grade 8 students during the pandemic.
- A series of virtual workshops for novice teachers was provided in Fall 2021 to enhance their preparation for teaching in the pandemic.

## Remote Learning

- Standards for Remote Learning were released September 8, 2020 to support schools in delivering remote learning.
- Over three school years, there were a total of 53 days where all schools across the province were in remote learning.
- There were ten days where only Grades 7 to 12 across the province were in remote learning during the 2020/2021 school year.
- In May and June 2021, Public Health directed shifts to remote learning in the City of Winnipeg and the City of Brandon.
- There were periods of time where certain schools were in school-wide remote learning due to outbreaks or high case numbers in specific schools.

## Masks and Tests

- Manitoba has provided almost 27 million masks to schools since August 2020.
- Over 2.1 million rapid antigen tests have been distributed to schools since the Fall of 2021.

## Immunizations

- On September 15, 2021, the COVID-19 school immunization program campaign for 12 to 17-year olds was launched.
- On December 1, 2021, the COVID-19 school immunization program campaign for 5 to 11-year olds was launched.
- Overall, between September 15, 2021, and March 2, 2022, there were 27,153 doses administered in 755 schools.

## Mental Health and Well-being

- Manitoba provided additional mental health supports including clinical positions for the Remote Learning Support Centre. This provided direct individual support to students struggling with mental health needs.
- Manitoba built on existing partnerships with community organizations to further enhance mental wellness and student resilience.
- Over \$7.5 million dollars was invested in mental health supports for students, educators and staff.
- The Mental Health Steering Committee was established in 2021/2022 and includes two working groups focused on supports for the education workforce.
- The two lead working groups (one for the education workforce, one for student interventions) focus on ensuring appropriate mental health and well-being supports are in place and accessible to address needs that are assessed as students and teachers return to school full time in the fall of 2021.
- One of these groups, the Teacher Mental Health Working Group, was chaired by The Manitoba Teachers' Society and provided feedback to the department on the mental health needs of teachers and assisted with teacher engagement in the supports being provided.
- The two working groups oversee the development and implementation of a continuum of mental health and well-being supports for Kindergarten to Grade 12 schools in 2021/2022.

# COVID-19 Safe Schools Funding

## Key Facts

- Nearly **\$250 million dollars** has been allocated to support schools during the last two years of the pandemic.
- Funding has been allocated to support schools in key areas, including per pupil funding provided directly to school divisions and schools to ensure flexibility for pandemic-related operating costs such as increased staffing to accommodate physical distancing.
- Among provinces, Manitoba has one of the highest per pupil allocations for COVID-19 costs in 2021/2022.

## Safe Schools Funding

- In 2020/2021, **\$185 million** was allocated through the Safe School Fund of which **\$151 million** was spent based on actual costs submitted to the department. Funding was flowed based on cost projections submitted by school divisions and independent schools.
- Funding to support Safe Schools in 2020/2021 was allocated as follows:
  - **\$66.8 million:** Safe Schools per-pupil allocation
  - **\$10.5 million:** Safe Schools contingency fund
  - **\$7.3 million:** personal protective equipment (PPE)
  - **\$5.0 million:** Remote Learning Support Centre
  - **\$1.2 million:** other (includes InformNet, Teacher Mediated Option, expansion of summer school program, etc.)
  - **\$60.1 million:** school division savings resulting from the suspension of in-classroom learning from March to June 2020
- 2020/2021 Safe Schools funding provided was based on actual costs reflected in the final report from school divisions at June 30, 2021. School divisions that reported actual costs that were higher than their initial projection, received additional funding as part of the first 2021/2022 payment to cover their shortfall. Where amounts paid by the province were in excess of actual reported costs, the excess amount was treated as an advance towards the 2021/2022 Safe Schools allocation.
- In the 2021/2022 school year, **\$63 million** was allocated as follows:
  - **\$45 million:** per-pupil funding in support of mental health and well-being, safety of operations, addressing learning impacts, and vaccine promotion
  - **\$6.8 million:** ventilation improvements
  - **\$6 million:** personal protective equipment (PPE)
  - **\$5 million:** Remote Learning Support Centre

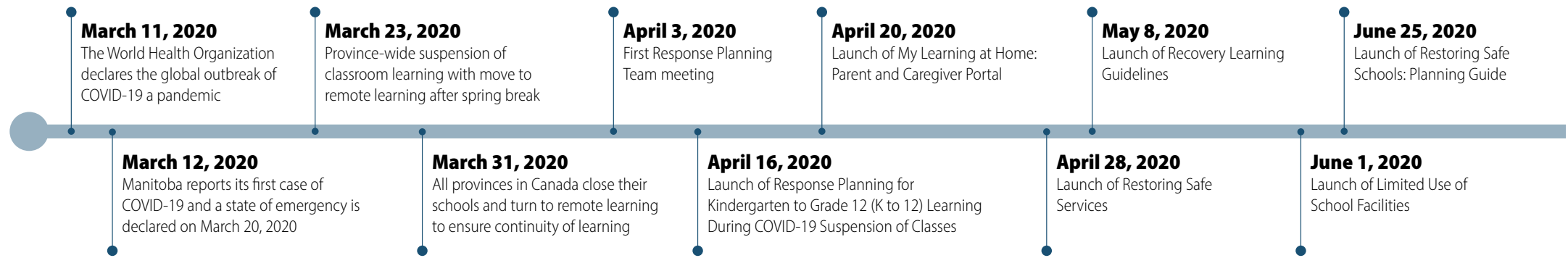
## Ventilation

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Manitoba's guidelines require schools to inspect their systems and seek solutions from qualified heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) experts as needed and to take actions as required.

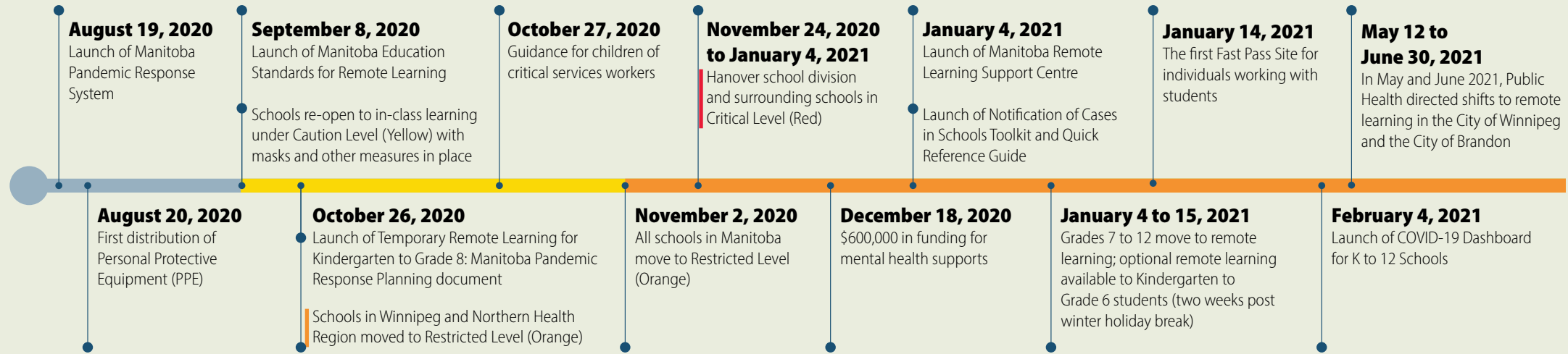
Over **\$42 million** was spent from April 2020 to February 2022.

- 21 divisions reported close to **\$2 million** in ventilation improvement projects using their safe schools funding
- a **\$6.8 million** ventilation fund was announced by Manitoba: funding was allocated to 27 school divisions with 257 projects in 274 schools
- nine school ventilation projects were completed in 2020/2021 with a total value of **\$18.1 million**, and eight additional ventilation projects totalling over **\$15 million** were approved with construction to begin summer of 2022

2019/2020  
School Year



2020/2021  
School Year



2021/2022  
School Year

