

Teaching *and* Teacher Education *for Post-pandemic Canada*

A position paper of the
Association of Canadian Deans of Education

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ACDE

Association of Canadian Deans of Education

Purpose

The Association of Canadian Deans of Education (ACDE) is the association of deans, directors, or chairs of Canadian faculties, colleges, schools, or departments of education. We are committed to pan-Canadian leadership in professional education and teacher education, educational research, and policy in universities and university-colleges. We serve a broad, national education agenda that includes post-secondary education, school districts, school leaders, education professionals, education assistants, and counsellors. We believe the current disruption has changed education forever through a transformation and reimagining of education and teacher education. At the core of challenges and opportunities created by COVID-19 is how to reimagine a system of education based largely around physical schools, and how to prepare educators (both pre-service and in-service).¹

The purpose of this statement is to signal education priorities and where investment is needed in teacher education, teachers, and research as a recovery strategy.

Context

1

Despite education activities and initiatives being prioritized as part of the initial response to COVID-19, additional community and education needs and growing pressures are emerging for education professionals including school psychologists, education assistants, teachers, teacher education students, and teacher education providers.

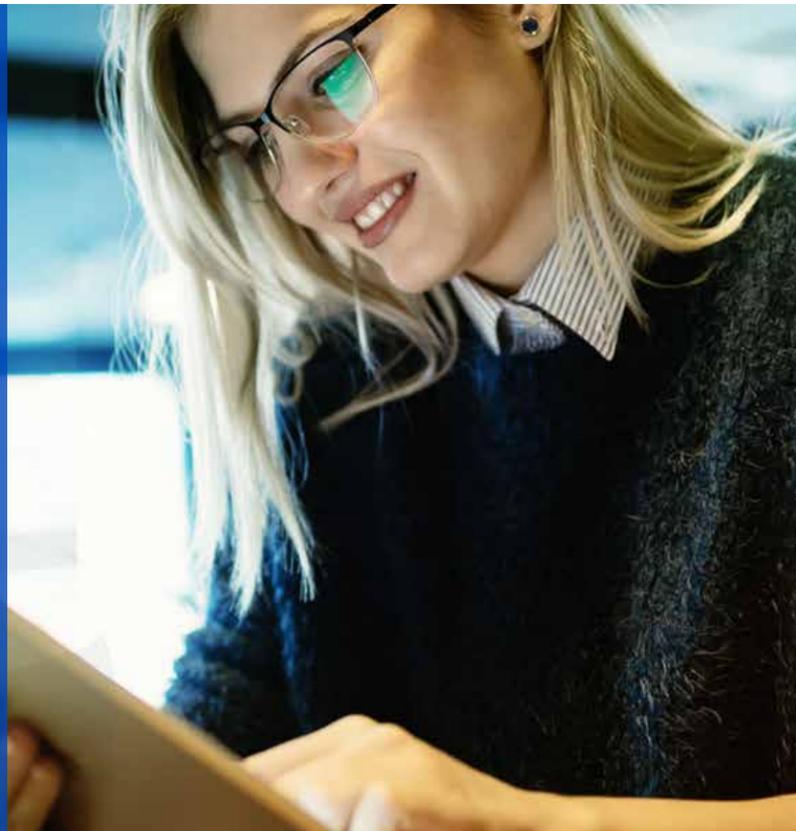
2

In Canada's K-12 sector alone, more than 5 million students are enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools.² Together with school and district leaders, Canada's teachers rapidly mobilised to facilitate quality learning for students in social isolation, with or without the use of digital technologies. Teachers play a key role in physical safety and mental health in returning to school; communicating measures that prevent the spread of the virus, and ensuring that learners are safe and supported. Challenges remain, including delivering on the right to francophone and minority-language education enshrined in S. 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, equitable access to computers and internet, parental and caregiver support, and ongoing systemic and structural inequities experienced by Indigenous communities, communities of colour and diverse learners.

3

The need for access to education through the use of education technology has amplified existing inequalities in access and quality of learning.³ Action is needed to ensure access to internet, sufficient bandwidth, technology, and learning supports by all, including rural and remote communities, and families with low incomes. The most vulnerable students are less likely to receive the support and extra services they need, and the gap between vulnerable and other students might widen. The inequity of the immediate, and likely longer-term effects, can be addressed in initial and in-service teacher education to help build strong social and economic futures for Canada.⁴

“We believe the current disruption has changed education forever.”



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The COVID 19 pandemic affects educators and in-service teachers worldwide, with women at the centre.⁵ Women are leading the education response, being for instance 84% of the education profession in elementary schools and kindergartens.⁶ Concomitant with women's contributions are a greater risk of infection due the higher frequency of teaching roles with children and youth, and of job and income loss. Concurrently, women carry much of the home responsibilities, intensified by school and child care facility closures and longstanding gender inequalities in unpaid work. Responses by government and post-secondary institutions must be relevant to women's concerns and capability to lead the education response.

4

The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting teacher candidates' ability to continue their studies and professional preparation. The pandemic has created extra financial burden on students, with exceptional impact on those from target equity, diversity and inclusion groups. Student associations and post-secondary education providers are concerned that many students are losing the part-time employment that they relied on to meet educational and living expenses, and are facing higher opportunity costs to continue their education.

5

6

Teacher candidates are facing unanticipated challenges. COVID-19 may create delays in students' ability to graduate under current field placement guidelines across Canada. There is uncertainty of delivery, notably for practicum-based learning. Teacher education programs have adapted programming where possible, including recognising that online teaching is teaching and a valued mode for practicum. Challenges remain that will impact teacher education program completion and teacher supply. Urgent action is needed to ensure Canada has enough teachers for employment needs in the present and post-pandemic. This is an opportunity to expand understandings of what is acceptable as 'practicum' and in particular to recognise supervised digital teaching experience.

7

There is substantial evidence internationally and domestically from previous pandemics and disasters that teachers are key to recovery, and yet they are also at additional risk.⁷ Both the extension of current initiatives and additional investments across the education sector are required to ensure risks and health needs of teachers and learners are met, and the potential of teachers to positively influence the recovery effort is optimised in the next phases of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We call on

CANADA'S GOVERNMENTS AND POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS TO:

- a* Prioritise mental health and well-being for students, teachers, and teacher candidates. This includes preparing current and future teachers for the resilience needed to provide for student learning in a time of pandemic crisis and recovery.
- b* Include teachers and teacher education providers in creating COVID-19 education responses. New and experienced teachers, along with their districts, will have a vital role in current and post-pandemic Canada. The research and professional expertise of teacher education providers informs a thriving post-pandemic Canada. Teachers and teacher education providers must be included in all steps of education policy-making and planning.
- c* Invest in research into effective and innovative practices: Immediate and relevant research must be conducted to support innovations in current and post-pandemic teaching and learning.

d Provide professional support and learning: Action is needed to ensure that teachers, teacher educators, and teacher candidates receive relevant, responsive, and timely professional education and skills-based learning to address the COVID-19-related changes occurring in schools.

e Ensure equity-centred education responses: The pandemic response in the education sector needs adequate funding where additional teacher education services are required to meet the needs of target equity groups, including Indigenous peoples, and those in remote areas, and in low-income or minority communities. Canada must both deepen its leading role in equitable access to learning empowered by technology, and ensure a lasting legacy of improved equity in education across the country.

f Invest in teachers as key for building current and post-pandemic Canada: Government investment to ensure schools, districts, and teacher education providers have needed resources to support the continued growth in the number of qualified teachers and teachers' access to professional development relevant to changes due to COVID-19. Such support is particularly urgent where Canada's regions have critical shortages of trained teachers.

g Build continuity for candidates in teacher education programs during the COVID-19 outbreak and recovery period, by:

- continuity in programs: provincial funding and institutional investments are needed in Canadian teacher education, as a priority both currently and in post-pandemic Canada.
- online practicum: provincial arrangements are needed to ensure the experiences of teacher education students can be expanded so that virtual and online technologies can be mobilized to complete all practicum-related program requirements and ensure graduation & certification requirements are met. Supervision and evaluation of practicum experiences also need to be flexible and adaptable to current and changing conditions in education.

h Accelerate innovation in education and teaching: This disruptive period can propel innovation, efficiency, equity, and responsiveness in our schools, and learning environments, building Canada's place as a leading, world-class education system.

Priorities

Outcomes

ACDE asserts that education and teachers are key to a post-pandemic Canada that flourishes.⁸ The key question is: How do education and teachers help our present- and post-pandemic Canada to flourish?

Five high-level markers of outcomes from investment in flourishing through education and teaching are proposed, with indicators that can be used to quantify “flourishing.”

Education and teachers are essential and at the leading edge for Canada to thrive and flourish in present and post-pandemic Canada. We call on governments and post-secondary institutions to invest in a national strategy for teacher education recovery post-COVID-19, to be externally funded and led by ACDE and comprising:

- a** Indicators: A range of real-time data will support this independent analysis and give policy makers and post-secondary providers a sense of the activity, outcomes, and needs across different parts of the teacher education system. Systems with established and tested information tools and response plans have been found by the World Bank to fare better in recovering from previous emergencies.⁹
- b** Exemplars: Strong practices in using alternate delivery modes will be shared to inform continuity for students in teacher education programs, and teachers’ professional education for a thriving, flourishing post-pandemic Canada.

Education and teachers are key to a post-pandemic Canada that flourishes

The Five Markers

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

COVID-19 in Canada is contained, and eliminated from education settings; teachers are supported through pre-service teacher education and professional education to respond directly to increasing health (including mental health) and other needs of their students and colleagues due to COVID-19; a teacher mental health and well-being COVID-19 communications campaign uses channels across teacher education-provider networks regionally and nationally. Interagency support addresses psycho-social impacts of COVID-19 on students and teachers anticipated to be felt over the long-term.

RESPECT, RECONCILIATION, AND RIGHTS

Teacher education and teachers ensure Indigenous education equity is prioritised in the COVID-19 regional and national response planning and implementation; targeted information, guidance, and support are provided to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities; and the teacher education sector delivers on the education calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

CAPACITIES AND CAPABILITIES

Ongoing professional learning that is meaningful and responsive for educators is available to ensure new and experienced teachers are supported to respond directly to the increasing learning, health, well-being, and other needs of their students due to COVID-19; a more diverse and numerous teaching profession (aligned with regional

demographics for Indigenous peoples and other underserved populations) is evident across all of Canada; expanded access to teacher education is facilitated through online delivery; teachers and researchers participate in policy- and decision-making; funding is provided to increase teaching capacity and capabilities in high-need areas of Canada; and Canada’s international standing is increased as a globally leading high-quality, high-equity education system.¹⁰

CONNECTEDNESS AND COHESION

Teachers participate in community-based post-pandemic initiatives; collaboration exists between teacher education providers and school district boards; community members participate in school activities and educational research; effective practices in teaching and education leadership are shared; and career planning is refreshed for post-pandemic Canada.

RESILIENCE AND TRANSFORMATION

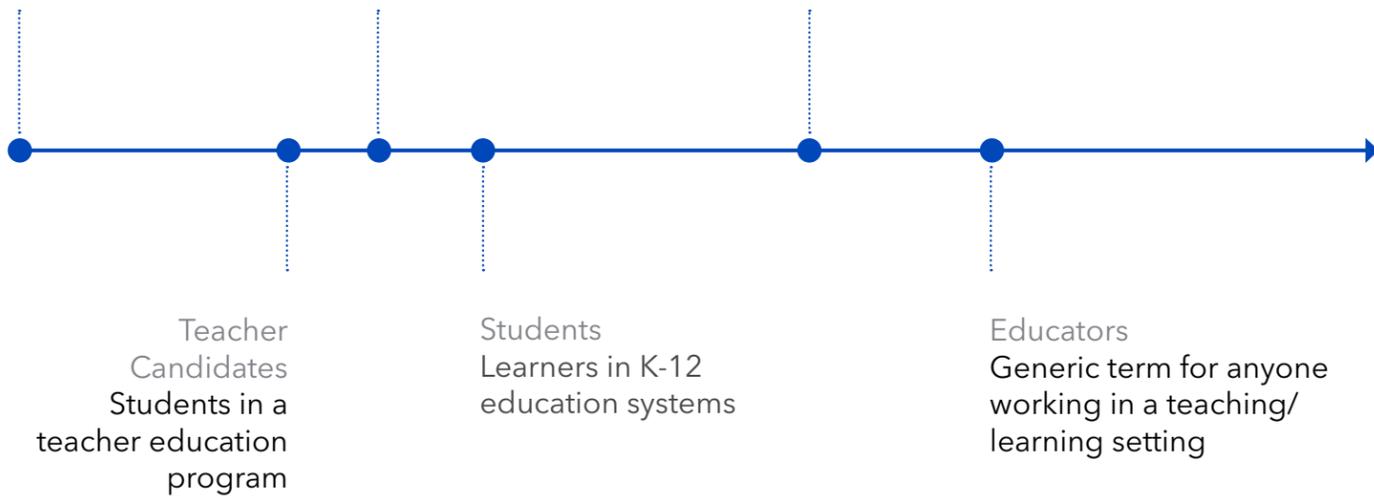
Education futures planning provides evidence of positive change over time in the education sectors; investment in educational research and development for the COVID-19 response is increased and accessible to teacher education providers; sustained improvement in education equity indicators across Canada; a capacity to embrace innovation is enhanced while retaining respect for the legacy of previous generations in Canada’s education sector; strong and adaptive leadership is evident in the education sector across Canada; and education positively impacts Canada’s post-pandemic economic performance through human capital, innovation, and knowledge transfer.

Glossary

Teacher Education
Initial or pre-service programs to provide teacher certification; and teacher education for in-service educators

Teacher Education Providers
Post-secondary faculties, colleges, schools, or departments with pre-service teacher education programs

Education Professionals
Educators who are education assistants, teachers, principals, vice-principals, district leadership, and professional non-teaching staff such as education psychologists, consultants and counselors; licensed by provincial and territorial departments or ministries of education



Teacher Candidates
Students in a teacher education program

Students
Learners in K-12 education systems

Educators
Generic term for anyone working in a teaching/learning setting

FURTHER READING

ACDE (Association of Canadian Deans of Education). (2016). *Effective Practica for Educators*. Vancouver, BC: ACDE.

ACDE (Association of Canadian Deans of Education). (2017). *Accord on Teacher Education*. Vancouver, BC: ACDE.

www.ACDEAccords.ca

ENDNOTES

- 1 <https://oecdedutoday.com/coronavirus-school-closures-student-equity-inclusion/>
- 2 https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/dai/smr08/2018/smr08_220_2018#a1
- 3 <https://oecdedutoday.com/coronavirus-education-digital-tools-for-learning/>
- 4 <https://oecdedutoday.com/coronavirus-school-closures-student-equity-inclusion/>
- 5 <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/women-at-the-core-of-the-fight-against-covid-19-crisis-553a8269/>
- 6 https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/dai/smr08/2014/smr08_190_2014
- 7 See for example: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000132305>; and <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2020/04/26/how-past-crises-changed-americas-public-schools-so-too-will-covid-19/>
- 8 There is growing interest internationally in 'flourishing', and the ways in which the term can be used to inform delivery, evaluation and measures of progress. Prof Mason Durie's research has directly influenced this section of the paper. See for example Borman, B., Cunningham, C., Ellison-Loschmann, L., Durie, M., Durie, M., Kingi, T. (2014). *Markers of Flourishing Whanau*. Palmerston North, New Zealand: Massey University
- 9 <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/450881585235950757/COVID19-Education-Sector-Guidance-Note-March26.pdf>
- 10 OECD. (2012). *Equity and Quality in Education: Supporting Disadvantaged Students and Schools*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264130852-en>

