# The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student and teacher well-being: Examining inequity, supports, and adaptation strategies for an intersectoral response

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The COVID-19 pandemic has led to school closures in 165 countries around the world, affecting approximately 63 million teachers and hundreds of millions of children worldwide (UNESCO, 2020). This has led to profound disruptions to school life, and students and teachers alike have had to adapt quickly to a new and evolving reality. This unexpected and drastic change to the organization of school and learning has come with many challenges, continued uncertainty, and stress for both students and teachers. Key decision-makers such as the BC Ministry of Education, are tasked with responding to an ever-evolving situation without a clear understanding of the degree of the impact on the well-being of students and teachers, their diverse needs, and importantly, the supports and effective strategies for adapting to the challenges faced over the course of the COVID-19 crisis and its aftermath. The aim of the proposed project is to form a collaborative research partnership between the BC Ministry of Education (MED) and the University of British Columbia's Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP), driven by the pressing need from the BC education system for greater knowledge related to the immediate and long-term impact of COVID-19 school disruptions and the well-being of students and teachers.

First, leveraging student data from an already-established population-level monitoring platform, we will investigate Objectives 1 and 2:

Objective 1: To examine changes in student well-being from prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (February, 2020) compared to post/late pandemic (February, 2021) and how changes in well-being may differ across students from diverse backgrounds (e.g., English Language Learners; students with behavioural/intellectual/physical exceptionalities; from varied socioeconomic backgrounds).

Objective 2: To gain a greater understanding of students' self-identified challenges and supports over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic and how these are associated with the well-being of students from diverse backgrounds.

Second, with a new COVID-19 teacher survey, we will investigate Objectives 3 and 4:

Objective 3: To gain a greater understanding of teachers' self-identified challenges and supports over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic and how they are associated with teacher well-being.

Objective 4: To gain a greater understanding of teachers' educational adaptation strategies used over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic that have been effective for meeting the needs of students from diverse backgrounds.

The outcome of this project will be timely, accessible knowledge that the MED can use to inform their own decision-making and that they can offer to the school districts, schools, teachers, and families under their purview. The MED - HELP research partnership is based upon the co-creation of knowledge and understanding, by making use of each partner's complementary and overlapping skills and expertise in research and policy work in BC, in addition to their combined strength in knowledge mobilization that will maximize dissemination and impact. The knowledge gained has the potential for immediate and long-term impact: Study findings will identify groups particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 challenges and therefore insights into how school funding, programming, and resources should be targeted. Findings on supports and educational adaptation strategies will help identify levers at the community and policy-level (e.g., supports/modifications) for improving the well-being of students and teachers. Finally, the findings will help to inform school planning for future crises beyond the current pandemic.

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