

	<h2>Nova Scotia</h2>
<p>Population – 939,531 Total Area – 55,283 km² Population Density – 16.99 people/km² Capital (Population) – Halifax (372,679) Number of K-12 Schools – 102 (2008-09) Number of K-12 Students – 133,134 (2008-09)</p>	

Nova Scotia is one of the four original provinces that formed Canada and has the second highest population density in Canada, approximately 40% of the province’s population living in the capital region.

K-12 Online Learning

Category	Yes/No	Comments
Province-led programme	Yes	
Other online programmes	Yes	
Provincial-level policy	No	Included in the Provincial Teachers’ Agreement

Online Programmes

Currently, there is a single province-wide online learning programme operated by the Government of Nova Scotia—the Nova Scotia Virtual School (NSVS). The NSVS is responsible for providing central course management platforms, while the eight school boards in the province are responsible for providing the individual course content and the teachers who teach those courses. Two of these school boards have created their own district-based online programmes (i.e., Strait Regional School Board Virtual School and Chignecto-Central Virtual School), although students from any of the school boards are able to enrol in courses offered by these two board-based programmes. A third school board, the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP)—the pan-provincial school board for French first language students, actually has the longest history with K-12 online learning in the province. CSAP uses both room-based video conferencing and the two online platforms used by English school boards. CSAP also has a sharing arrangement for online programming from the Province of New Brunswick. Over the past three years there have been approximately 650 students per year enrolled in the NSVS from the eight English-speaking school boards and the CSAP. Students enrolled in courses from the NSVS are usually also enrolled in a brick-and-mortar school.

There is also a correspondence study programme (CSP) that began in 1920 and continues to this day—although the Department of Education is currently in the process of transitioning these courses to an online delivery format. At present there are approximately 1800 students and 2200 course enrolments in CSP. Approximately half the students enrolled in CSP courses are also attending a public school; the other half are adult students or live outside of the province.

Governance and Regulation

Learning Resources and Technology Services, a Division of the Public Schools Branch of the Department of Education, manages the distance education programmes in Nova Scotia. The delivery of CSP courses is mostly self-funded from tuition fees, however, these fees are often paid for by school boards, Department of Community Services, Department of Justice, Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning, or other sources (as opposed to the students themselves). For the NSVS, the Department funds the online learning platforms (i.e., *Marratech*[®] and *Moodle*[®]). The individual student enrolment fees are typically provided as regular programme seats and are funded from the per student allocation attributed to each school board. In addition, the Department provides additional funding for 200 seats in online courses with a priority on students from small high schools.

There is currently no legislation specifically related to K-12 distance education in Nova Scotia, however, there are 11 provisions included in the agreement between the Government of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. As a contract between the Government and teachers' union, most of the provisions deal with teacher certification and workload issues. For example, all distance education teachers must have provincial certification and be employed by one of the eight school districts (49.01), must not infringe upon the teachers' "marking and preparation time, lunch periods, days pursuant to Article 25.05 [i.e., professional development, assessment, preparation, and personal days], School Year, or other such times provided to classroom teachers in the school" (49.02), and must be scheduled during the school day (49.08).

The agreement states that the school board is responsible for ensuring that there is a plan in place for student supervision, and that schools must appoint a distance education coordinator and that these responsibilities shall be included as a part of that teacher's overall teaching assignment (although without outlining the specific responsibilities of this coordinator), or the principal must assume these duties (49.03). The coordinator is responsible for ensuring that students have a physical space to complete their distance education courses, supervision and submission of assessments and assignments, maintenance of student records, communication with the distance education teachers, and tutoring (49.04).

There are provisions that limit the size of synchronous classes to a maximum size of 22 or 25 students from up to five different school sites. If new technologies are to be used, those involved in the distance education programme are required to meet to discuss updated maximum number of students and schools, along with other delivery issues (49.06). School boards are required to provide on-going professional development in distance education for all of those involved in the distance education programme (49.07).

Lastly, the two final provisions relate to the creation of a "standing Distance Education Committee consisting of two representatives from the Department of Education, two representatives from the Nova Scotia School Boards' Association and four representatives from the Union... to address issues surrounding distance education" that meets at least twice a year and provides annual written reports" (p. 100).