

	<h2 style="margin: 0;">Ontario</h2> <p style="margin: 0;">Population – 12,986,857 Total Area – 1,076,395 km² Population Density – 12.07 people/km² Capital (Population) – Toronto (2,503,281) Number of K–12 Schools – 4,931 (2009-10) Number of K–12 Students – 2,061,390 (2009-10) Number of K–12 Distance Education Programmes – 75 Number of K–12 Distance Education Students – ~50,000</p>
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Category	Yes/No	Comments
Province-led programme	No	
Other distance programmes	Yes	Both public and private
Provincial-level policy	Yes	

Distance Programmes

At present, all 60 English-speaking and 12 French-speaking school boards offer some form of K–12 distance education. Many of these school boards have come together to form consortium, designed to allow its school board members to work together to maximise their online offerings by sharing course offerings, resources, and students. The first consortium among the English-speaking school boards was the Ontario eLearning Consortium (OeLC) formed in 2001, which currently has 20 member school boards. The Ontario Catholic eLearning Consortium (OCeLC) was formed in 2009–10 and includes all 29 Catholic school boards in the province. In 2010, the Northern e-Learning Consortium (NeLC) was created to allow the school boards in Northern Ontario to work together on shared challenges. It currently has four members. Since 2001, the 12 French-language school boards in the province have also cooperated, and in 2009, they created the *Consortium d'apprentissage virtuel de langue française de l'Ontario*.

Along with the distance education offered by these public school boards, Television Ontario (TVO) manages the Independent Learning Centre (ILC). The ILC is a mandated Government of Ontario distance education provider of high school credit courses, high school diploma and GED High School Equivalency Certificate opportunities to adolescent and adult students throughout the province. At present, the ILC has approximately 18,500 students enrolled in courses. However, school boards are responsible for the delivery of e-learning, including programme direction, hiring staff, registering students, teaching students, and granting credits.

In addition to the public school offerings, there are three private K–12 online learning programmes: Virtual High School (Ontario), Ottawa Carleton e-School, and Keewatinoook Internet High School. The most recent data available indicated that there were approximately 5,000 students enrolled in private online schools (i.e., VHS(O) = 3,334; OCeS = 1,340; and KiHS = 170).

Governance and Regulation

There is no mention of distance education or online learning in the *Education Act* in Ontario. However, based on the feedback that the Ontario Ministry of Education received from school boards, the *Provincial E-Learning Strategy* was launched in February 2006, with 11 pilot school boards, and has grown to include all 72 of Ontario's school boards. The French component of the strategy, *Apprentissage électronique Ontario*, was launched in September 2007. The strategy was guided by the vision of an Ontario where students have unlimited opportunities to learn and achieve at a high level within an ever-changing digital world.

As part of this vision, the Ministry is responsible for providing school boards with the various supports (e.g., LMS, course/resource development, professional development, policies and guidelines) necessary to provide students with e-learning opportunities. The Ministry is also responsible for providing e-learning leadership within the provincially funded school system in such areas as blended learning, online pedagogy, and development of digital content. School boards are responsible for the delivery of e-learning, including programme direction, hiring staff, registering students, teaching students, and granting credits.

School boards participating in the provincial e-learning strategy have access to:

- Provincially licensed LMS: an online learning environment
- Ontario Educational Resource Bank (OERB): an online learning object repository
- E-Community Ontario: an online community of practice to be used by members of the provincially funded educational community
- Seat Reservation System (SRS): an online system that enables school boards to share seats in online courses across the province

All components of the strategy are available in English and French, with the exception of the SRS (which is provided to French-language students through the *Consortium d'apprentissage virtuel de langue française de l'Ontario*).

In June 2011, the Ministry announced additional support for the provincial e-learning strategy, including the ability of school boards to use the LMS tools for blended learning. The Ministry's e-Learning Ontario unit will be working with school boards in the fall to plan the roll out of blended learning. It is anticipated that over the next three years, students from Kindergarten to grade 12 will be able to access the LMS.

Also starting in the fall of 2011, all 600,000 English-language math students in grades 7 to 10 have access to live, interactive online math help through the expansion of a pilot project funded by the Ministry of Education. Homework Help is offered through TVO's Independent Learning Centre and features free, real-time math tutoring by certified Ontario teachers. Homework Help began as a pilot programme at Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB and Hamilton-Wentworth DSB in 2007–08. It has now expanded to all 60 English-language school boards across Ontario.

The French-language equivalent of Homework Help is *SOS DEVOIRS*, which was introduced in 2000 by the *Conseil scolaire Centre-Sud-Ouest* (now called *Conseil scolaire Viamonde*) and is hosted by TFO. *SOS DEVOIRS* offers tutoring services to students in French-language schools in grades

1 through 12. A website and online library, online chatting and call centre staffed by qualified teachers, and additional resources are available through *SOS DEVOIRS*. Through service purchase agreements, other provinces working in Francophone minority settings also have access to the *SOS DEVOIRS* services (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut). Since its establishment, demand has continually increased. Currently, 15,000 users are registered with the website.

To support English-language school boards with the implementation of programmes like Homework Help and blended learning, as well as the use of Ministry-provided digital resources, the ministry will also provide funding for one eLearning Contact (eLC) per school board for the 2011–12 school year. The purpose of the eLC position will be to ensure that there is coordination and leadership in school boards for the implementation of the provincial e-learning strategy, blended learning, Homework Help, and the distribution of digital resources and tools provided by the Ministry. The French-language school boards also receive funding to support implementation of blended learning, the use of *SOS DEVOIRS*, and Ministry-provided digital resources.

As part of the provincial e-learning strategy, students may enrol in an e-learning course that is offered by another school board, provided they do so through their home school. In such a situation, the applicability of provincially established fees for students taking e-learning courses from a school in another school board shall be worked out locally between the two school boards. Where it is agreed that fees are appropriate, the fee is the amount established by the Ministry. This fee will be posted on the e-Learning Ontario website. For 2011–12, the fee is \$725. Students enrolled in e-learning courses will not be charged any fees, including fees for registration, materials, or administration. The students' costs are covered by the Ministry when the school board places these students on the appropriate funding register.