

3.6 Ontario (ON)

Population: 13,537,994

Number of K-12 Schools: 4,893

Number of K-12 Students: 2,003,253

Number of K-12 Distance Education Programs: ~81

Number of K-12 Distance Education Students: ~87,000



K-12 E-Learning Programs

Each of the 60 English-speaking and 12 French-speaking school boards have the ability to offer some form of online learning using the Ministry-sponsored learning management system and online curricular materials or their own. Many of these school boards also participate in one or more consortiums designed to allow its school board members to work together to maximize their online offerings by sharing course offerings, resources and students. Additionally, the Independent Learning Centre (ILC) continues to provide correspondence distance education opportunities to adolescent and adult students throughout the province. Finally, there are as many as eight different private or independent K-12 online learning programs, some of whom have formed their own consortium.

It is estimated that in 2014-15 there were approximately 60,000 students taking online courses from various school board e-learning programs. It is also estimated the ILC has approximately 20,000 students enrolled in their correspondence courses. Finally, the most recent data available indicated there were approximately 7,000 students enrolled in private online schools.

It should also be noted that in their response to the 2013-14 report, the Ministry of Education indicated that there were approximately 237,930 unique blended learning logins in their system. The Ministry did not respond to repeated requests to update this data.

Governance and Regulation

Since 2006, the Provincial e-Learning Strategy has guided the Ministry to provide school districts with various supports necessary to provide students with online and blended learning opportunities, as well as providing e-learning leadership within the provincially funded school system. School districts are responsible for the delivery of online learning.

Private online schools operate as a business in Ontario, independent of the Ministry of Education. Those schools offering credits towards the Ontario Secondary School Diploma require an inspection. Inspectors look for evidence of ongoing interactions between the teacher and students in the online learning environment, and for a direct link between the specific and overall curriculum expectations being taught and assessed in compliance with Ministry policy and observed practices. Inspectors review online courses for compliance with Growing Success, 2010.