

3.4 New Brunswick (NB)

Population: 755,464

Number of K-12 Schools: 307

Number of K-12 Students: 98,906

Number of K-12 E-Learning Programs: 2

Number of K-12 E-Learning Students: 2527



K-12 E-Learning Programs

Both the Anglophone and Francophone sectors of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development manage K–12 distance learning programs. These programs service secondary students in New Brunswick in either of the province’s two official languages. During the 2015-16 school year there were approximately 1800 students enrolled in the Anglophone program and 727 students enrolled in the Francophone program. One area of particular growth has been in the First Nations language courses; and, as the Department adds the intermediate level courses online, grade 9 and 10 students are able to access the introductory level courses online. Interestingly, while the number of actual students engaged in distance learning has remained consistent in recent years, the demand for online courses for students wanting to work offsite has been increasing (with student anxiety being the most commonly cited reason).

The content that has been created for all of the distance learning courses is available to all teachers in the province as a professional learning resource. During the 2015-16 school year there were 1100 English and 3071 French face-to-face students registered in the learning management system using online courses in a more blended learning model under the direction of their local school’s classroom teachers.

Finally, the distance learning infrastructure continues to be used to support teacher professional learning. By the end of the 2015-16 school year over half of all educational assistants had completed an online Autism Spectrum Disorder course (which has been used by all four provinces in Atlantic Canada). The Healthy Learner Nurses program in schools also uses the provincial learning management system. The distance learning program also supports the up-grading of courses for a limited number of students from across the province.

Governance and Regulation

There remains no specific legislation that governs K-12 distance education in New Brunswick. The system continues to operate based on collaboration between the Ministry of Education and individual school districts. The Ministry has published a policy handbook, different for both the English and French systems, that outlines the responsibilities of a variety of individuals at the Ministry, district and

school level to ensure the orderly implementation of the distance education program. Interestingly, in addition to school officials such as a registrar and local site facilitator, there are specific responsibilities outlined for both distance education students and the parents of students who are enrolled in distance education programs.