

## 3.2 Nova Scotia (NS)

*Population: 942,926*

*Number of K-12 Schools: 395*

*Number of K-12 Students: 119,383*

*Number of K-12 E-Learning Programs: 2*

*Number of K-12 E-Learning Students: ~2,500*



### K-12 E-Learning Programs

There are two distance education programs in the province. First, the Nova Scotia Virtual School (NSVS) provided online courses to approximately 1300 students from the seven English-speaking school boards and the *Conseil scolaire acadien* provincial during the 2015-16 school year. Second, the correspondence studies program provided courses to approximately 1200 students enrolled in courses through the correspondence study program. Close to half of these 1200 students attend a public school, while the other half are adult students, home-schooled students or students living outside of Nova Scotia. Currently, work is ongoing to transition these correspondence courses to an online delivery format.

There were also a number of blended learning initiatives in Nova Scotia that are being implemented in the school system. There are increasing expectations that students at all grade levels will utilize technology and online resources to demonstrate achievement of curriculum outcomes. For example, *Google Apps for Education* is now available to all students, teachers, and administrators province-wide and at the end of the first year of implementation approximately 80% of students and teachers in the province have accounts. Further, the Department provides a blended learning platform through the learning management system *Moodle* that was extensively used in classrooms around the province to support instruction as well as to support professional learning communities for teachers.

Finally, the *2015 Nova Scotia Action Plan for Education* makes additional commitments to the growth of online and blended learning. Specifically, the Plan indicates that the Department will:

- continue to improve program delivery in the Nova Scotia Virtual School to provide students with even more flexible options and teaching support;
- provide students with varied learning opportunities with school technology, including the use of digital learning resources, completion of online course offered by the Nova Scotia Virtual School, participation in bring-your-own-device learning activities, and completion of blended learning projects; and
- offer online learning opportunities to middle school students to prepare them for online courses in high school.

## **Governance and Regulation**

The Learning Resources and Technology Services division of the Education Innovation, Programs and Services branch of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development manages distance education programs in Nova Scotia and works cooperatively with a Management Board representing all school boards in the province.

The provision of distance education through the Nova Scotia Virtual School continues to be governed by the 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 quality of life issues. For example, there are provisions related to defining the workday, professional development requirements, program oversight, and class size.

[Note that there is a new vignette from Nova Scotia available at the <http://k12sotn.ca/ns/> focused on Steven Van Zoost, Nova Scotia Virtual School. In this vignette, we explore how Steven uses synchronous eChats as a part of the instructional model he employs in his online English courses.]