

	<h2 style="margin: 0;">Alberta</h2> <p style="margin: 0;">Population – 3,632,483 Total Area – 661,848 km² Population Density – 5.49 people/km² Capital (Population) – Edmonton (730,372) Number of K-12 Schools – 2,128 (2009-10) Number of K-12 Students – 585,397 (2009-10)</p>
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Alberta is the most western, most populated, and largest of the three Prairie Provinces. The metropolitan regions surrounding the cities of Edmonton and Calgary represent approximately 60% of the population. Alberta is the only province in Canada that has charter school legislation—although there are no cyber charter schools in operation at this time.

K-12 Online Learning

Category	Yes/No	Comments
Province-led programme	No	
Other online programmes	Yes	
Provincial-level policy	Yes	Changes currently under review.

Online Programmes

At present there are over 20 K-12 distributed learning programmes in Alberta. Distributed learning is a flexible approach to any learning that is purposefully designed to allow teachers, students, and learning and teaching resources in the regular classroom setting or in different, non-centralised locations, to interact while separated by time and/or place for some or all their learning activities. Distributed learning, therefore, encompasses all forms of K-12 distance education in Alberta. There is a single province-wide programme administered by the Pembina Hills Regional School Division, the Alberta Distance Learning Centre (ADLC). ADLC offers courses in a variety of formats (e.g., print, online, and blended formats), and manages the Vista Virtual School and *Centre francophone d'éducation à distance*. In 2008-09, the ADLC had 28,338 course enrolments at the secondary level and 6,320 enrolments at the elementary and junior high levels.

In addition to this province-wide programme, there is also a series of district-based programmes supported by the various public and Catholic school districts in the province (and note that Alberta is a province that has publicly funded Catholic school districts). These include Argyll Centre, Aspen View Virtual School, Battle River Online, Buffalo Trail Students Online, Golden Hills Virtual School, Holy Family Cyber High School, Innovative Learning Services, InterEd, Peace Academy of Virtual Education, Revelation Online, Rocky View Virtual School, School of Hope, St. Gabriel Cyber School, St. Paul's Academy Centre for Learning@Home, among others.

Finally, there is an aboriginal focused online school—SunChild E-Learning Community.

Governance and Regulation

At present, the *School Act* includes the following provisions related to distance education:

Division 4 – Section 39. (3) The Minister may make regulations:

- (e) providing for correspondence courses and the fees to be charged in connection with them;
- (f) governing registration in, the fees to be charged for registration in and the operation of private correspondence courses and private tutoring institutions that offer correspondence courses or tutoring in the same or substantially the same subjects as those offered in schools.

In addition, Alberta has sections in their annual *Guide to Education* related to distributed learning and online delivery that outline some specific requirements primarily related to the amount of required instructional time. It also advises school authorities that wish to undertake online programmes that they will need to consider:

how student attendance is to be defined; the role of parents in instruction, assessment and supervision of student work; staffing levels; time frames for student access to the instructional expertise of teachers; student evaluation practices; requirements for programme access by students living outside Alberta; programme decisions; e.g., self-paced or teacher controlled, synchronous or asynchronous; how to deliver all outcomes of Alberta programmes of study; provision for writing achievement tests and diploma examinations; programme and teacher evaluation; how to provide alternative forms of programme delivery for non-resident students who are experiencing difficulty in the online environment (Government of Alberta, 2010, p. 65).

In 2007, the Ministry of Education began a review of K-12 distance education in the province with the goal of developing a *Distributed Learning Strategy*. To date there has been a broad consultation process that has included 1774 responses to an online survey, 60 interviews, 28 focus groups, and 21 site visits. However, the development of this *Distributed Learning Strategy* was later subsumed by a larger initiative.

In June 2010, the Ministry of Education released the *Inspiring Action on Education* discussion paper. This document, among other things, called for a system of education where teachers were skilled in the design and delivery of instruction “face-to-face, online, and other non-traditional environments” (p. 24). Essentially, the vision outlined would create a school system where students, teachers and administrators were all comfortable with education being delivered with or without technology in a variety of delivery models. The public consultant process is still on-going, however, action on this vision is expected to occur in Spring 2011.