

3.9 Alberta (AB)

Population: 4,025,074

Number of K-12 Schools: 2,152

Number of K-12 Students: 616,375

Number of K-12 E-Learning Programs: ~20

Number of K-12 E-Learning Students: ~70,000



K-12 E-Learning Programs

It is believed that approximately 20 school divisions in the province offer an assortment of online programs, catering mostly to students in their own geographic jurisdiction. Some manage students in other regions of the province, but at present there is only one single province-wide program (i.e., the Alberta Distance Learning Centre [ADLC]) that offers courses to any student in the province. ADLC provides services to over 40,000 students in 618 schools and offers over 250 courses. Courses are provided in print, online and in blended formats in partnership with local schools and authorities. The *Centre francophone d'éducation à distance* (CFÉD) formed in 2005 to provide senior level courses in French to Francophone students in the province, and today offers 65 secondary courses.

As the Ministry of Education does not collect distance education enrollment data, or online and blended learning delivery, there is no centralized data source to provide an accurate level of activity. Estimates have been derived from data received from individual programs and previous data collected and reported in this annual report. As such, these estimates may be inaccurate as they remain unconfirmed by the Ministry or any data it does collect.

Governance and Regulation

At present, the *School Act* grants the Minister of Education the authority to make regulations with respect to public and private distance education programs. The Ministry has yet to exert that authority beyond outlining some specific requirements primarily related to the amount of required instructional time as a part of its their annual *Guide to Education*.

The service agreement for the ADLC and the current conditional grant for *Centre francophone d'éducation à distance* have been extended for a period up to and including August 31, 2018. These extensions allow the Ministry to engage in work that will inform the next steps for the future of distance, online and blended learning in Alberta; and will enable the ministry to share more robust information in the future.

It should be noted that since 2007 there have been consultation initiatives related specifically to distributed learning policy, that was later included as a part of the consultations on the *2011 Inspiring*

Action in Education initiative. These consultations were followed by a two-year review of distance education programs and services offered in the province by an external consulting firm with the goal of recommending a provincial model for distance education delivery. To date these efforts have not resulted in policy from the Ministry.