

3.10 British Columbia (BC)

Population: 4,631,302

Number of K-12 Schools: 3,850

Number of K-12 Students: 633,428

Number of K-12 E-Learning Programs: 76

Number of K-12 E-Learning Students: 78,499



K-12 E-Learning Programs

In 2014-15 there were 60 district-level public distributed learning schools (distance education providers) and 16 independent (or private) distributed learning schools that enrolled approximately 78,500 unique students in one or more courses. LearnNowBC continues to serve as a Web portal and single point of entry to information about public distributed learning schools for students, parents and educators in the province. Additionally, Open School BC provides provincial content and online hosting services on a cost-recovery model to school districts lacking the capacity or desire to manage their own.

The Ministry of Education has not yet begun to gather data on blended learning programs, but can report anecdotally that blended learning is on the increase. At present, the BC Learning Network is embarking on a major content development plan over the next three years. One of their aims is to create online content and digital resources that can be used in all school learning environments.

Governance and Regulation

The distributed learning landscape in British Columbia has remained relatively stable over the past years. The legislative language in section 3.1 and section 75 (4.1) of the *School Act, 2006*, as well as section 8.1 of the *Independent School Act, 2006*, still govern the operation of distributed learning programs. Both pieces of legislation contain similar language concerning the establishment of distributed learning schools “only with the prior agreement of the Minister.” As such, these agreements between the Ministry and the school districts or independent schools serve as the main governance documents for distributed learning in British Columbia. In addition to these agreements, the Ministry also has a series of policy documents that outline the regulations that distributed learning schools must follow.

The current funding model in British Columbia does not differentiate between distributed learning and blended learning, or between face-to-face and blended learning. As there are different funding amounts for face-to-face courses and programs, as compared to distributed learning courses. Under the current policy, the delivery method is considered distributed learning as long as the student is at a distance from the teacher for the majority of the time. A “majority of the time” is not explicitly defined under the current regulations.