

## 3.41 Federal

*Population: 1,400,685 (2011 Census)*

*Number of K-12 Schools: 414*

*Number of K-12 Students: 106,500*

*Number of K-12 Distance Education Programs: 4*

*Number of K-12 Distance Education Students: ~1,800*



### K-12 Distance Programs

At present there are four K-12 distance education programs designated as First Nations, Metis and/or Inuit programs. Two of these are located in Ontario (Keewaytinook Internet High School and Gai hon nya ni: the Amos Key Jr. E~Learning Institute), one in Manitoba (Wapaskwa Virtual Collegiate), and one in Alberta (SCcyber E-learning Community). There are other First Nations, Metis and Inuit organizations that have been exploring the adoption of K-12 distance education. However, for a variety of reasons – lack of bandwidth or connectivity, lack of community buy-in, lack of expertise for implementation and others—they have not yet established distance education programs. It should be noted that one program, Credenda Virtual High School in Saskatchewan, ceased operations following the 2012-13 school year due to a lack of funding.

### Governance and Regulation

Approximately 60% of First Nations students attend schools on reserve. In support of these students Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) provides funding support directly to Band Councils and First Nations education organizations. First Nations or their respective regional organizations have the responsibility for managing and delivering education programs and services in band-operated schools on reserve. For students who live on reserve but attend provincial schools off-reserve AANDC pays the tuition that the applicable province charges for non-Aboriginal students. This is paid to the First Nation in question or directly to the provincial Ministry of Education depending on the agreement in place.

In 2013 the decision was made to no longer enter into service agreements directly with e-learning programs. Instead funding would be provided to the regional authorities (i.e., First Nations) to make the decisions on the nature of educational opportunities that should be funded within their jurisdiction. This change, which began to be phased in over the 2013-14 school year, will come into full effect following the 2014-15 school year.

Regardless of the funding agreement, AANDC requires that each of the K-12 distance education programs work with the individual Ministry of Education in the province or territory in which they operate in order to gain accreditation. The accreditation process involves a validation that the K-12

distance education program is using provincial curriculum, which allows the program to grant provincial credit. As Ministries cannot fund enrolment in federal education programs, the First Nations K-12 distance education programs must also enter into agreements with individual school districts/divisions to serve off-reserve students.