

3.14 Federal

Population: 1,400,685

Number of K-12 Schools: 414

Number of K-12 Students: 106,500

Number of K-12 E-Learning Programs: 4

Number of K-12 E-Learning Students: ~2,000



K-12 E-Learning Programs

At present there is a total of four K-12 distance education programs designated as First Nations, Metis and/or Inuit programs. Two of these were located in Ontario (i.e., Keewaytinook Internet High School and Gai hon nya ni: the Amos Key Jr. E~Learning Institute), one in Manitoba (i.e., Wapaskwa Virtual Collegiate), and one in Alberta (i.e., 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

Governance and Regulation

Approximately 60% of First Nations students attend schools on reserve. In support of these students Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) provides funding support directly to Band Councils and First Nations education organizations. First Nations or their respective regional organizations have responsibility for managing and delivering education programs and services in band-operated schools on reserve. For students who live on reserves but attend provincial schools off-reserve, INAC 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 is provided to the regional authorities to make the decisions on the nature of educational opportunities that should be funded within their jurisdiction. This change came into effect following the 2014-15 school year.

Regardless of the funding agreement, INAC requires that each of the educational programs (including K-12 distance education) 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 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 education programs (including K-12 distance education programs) must also enter into agreements with individual school districts/divisions to serve off-reserve students.