

3.7 Manitoba (MB)

Population: 1,272,000

Number of K-12 Schools: 794

Number of K-12 Students: 200,807

Number of K-12 Distance Education Programs: ~38

Number of K-12 Distance Education Students: ~12,000



K-12 Distance Programs

The Ministry of Education continued to support three distance learning options in 2013-2014: Independent Study Option (ISO), Teacher Mediated Option (TMO) and Web-Based Course (WBC) Option. Each school division in the province has participated in one or more of the Ministry's distance education program options, however participation varies from year to year depending on the changing needs of students and schools. Locally managed programs also exist outside of those directly supported or managed by the Ministry.

Ministry numbers for the 2013–14 school year indicate approximately 2,960 enrollments in the ISO, 379 in the TMO and 8,600 student enrollments in the WBC Option. Overall, there were about 12,000 distance education enrollments in programs directly supported by the Ministry, and students could be enrolled in more than one program.

Governance and Regulation

The only reference in the *Public Schools Act* regarding distance education is mention that the Minister of Education can approve courses of study, including correspondence and other courses. Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning has issued other regulatory and policy documents, along with handbooks for each of the three distance learning options.

The Ministry has created a framework that allows for a virtual collegiate to operate in Manitoba. It is anticipated that the creation of this virtual collegiate will provide greater educational opportunities and more equitable access to students from across the province.

The formation of the virtual collegiate occurred as part of a three-year pilot collaboration among educational entities already recognized and operating distance education programs in the province. A signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Province governs the collaboration. To date, the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC) has signed an MOU with the Province and was granted a Manitoba school code for Wapaskwa Virtual Collegiate effective September 2014. Discussions are still underway with another entity that has shown a similar interest.