

3.7 Manitoba (MB)

Population: 1,272,000

Number of K-12 Schools: 800

Number of K-12 Students: 182,073

Number of K-12 E-Learning Programs: ~38

Number of K-12 E-Learning Students: ~9500



K-12 E-Learning Programs

Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning continued to support three distance learning options in 2014-15: Independent Study Option (ISO), Teacher Mediated Option (TMO) and Web-Based Course (WBC) Option. The ISO (print) continued to offer 51 courses in English and 11 courses in French for grades 9-12 students. The TMO is managed by rural school divisions through the TMO Consortium in partnership with Manitoba Education. Students in grades K-12 and teachers communicate by audio teleconferencing several times per week. The WBC Option (online) provided access to 43 courses in English and 4 courses in French. Each school division in the province has participated in one or more of the above distance education program options; however, participation varies from year to year depending on the changing needs of students and schools. The numbers outlined for the 2014-15 school year indicate approximately 2,577 enrollments in the ISO, 389 in the TMO and 6,500 student enrollments in the WBC Option. Overall, there were approximately 9,500 distance education enrollments in programs directly supported by Manitoba Education and students could be enrolled in more than one program.

In terms of blended learning, Manitoba Education provides teachers with access to the provincial learning management system in order to support and supplement their classroom teaching practices. Teachers make requests for courses (and to add students to those courses) through an online Web-Based Course Request System. As such, school divisions and schools develop their own blended learning programs and determine how to infuse technology into their classrooms to best suit the needs of their learners. Additionally, Manitoba Education assists teachers in understanding the pedagogy of blended and online learning through training workshops and presentations.

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. 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.