

	<h2 style="margin: 0;">4.6 Ontario</h2> <p>Population – 12,851,821 Total Area – 1,076,395 km² Population Density – 11.94 people/km² Capital (Population) – Toronto (2,615,060) Number of K–12 Schools – 4931 (2009–10)⁷ Number of K–12 Students – 2,061,390 (2009–10) Number of K–12 Distance Education Programs – up to 75 Number of K–12 Distance Education Students – ~49,500 K–12 Distance Education Policy – Provincial E-Learning Strategy</p>
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Distance Programs

At present, all 60 English-speaking and 12 French-speaking school boards have the ability to offer some form of K–12 distance education. Many of the school boards with more active programs have joined one or more of four consortiums:

- The Ontario eLearning Consortium (formed in 2001 and currently has 20 member school boards)
- The *Consortium d'apprentissage virtuel de langue française de l'Ontario* (created in 2009 and includes all 12 French-language schools)
- The Ontario Catholic eLearning Consortium (formed around 2009–2010 and includes all 29 Catholic school boards)
- The Northern e-Learning Consortium (formed around 2010 and currently has four members).

Additionally, TVO has the mandate from the Government of Ontario to manage the Independent Learning Centre (ILC) to provide high school credit courses, high school diploma and GED High School Equivalency Certificate opportunities to adolescent and adult students throughout the province. Finally, there are three private K–12 online learning programs: Virtual High School-Ontario, Ottawa Carleton e-School/Canada eSchool, and Keewaytinook Internet High School.

The Ministry of Education does not collect data on enrolment or completion for any of these programs. It is estimated there are approximately 25,000 students enrolled in one or more courses offered by the various distance education programs managed by the individual school boards. It is also estimated the ILC has 19,484 students enrolled in their correspondence courses. Finally, the most recent data available indicated there were approximately 5000 students enrolled in private online schools.

Governance and Regulation

There is no mention of distance education or online learning in the *Education Act* in Ontario. However, based on the feedback that the Ontario Ministry of Education received from school boards, the *Provincial E-Learning Strategy* was launched in February 2006. The French component of the *Stratégie, d'apprentissage électronique Ontario*, was launched in September 2007. As part of

⁸ Data on the total number of K–12 schools and K–12 students for the past two school years is unavailable.

this vision, the Ministry is responsible for providing school boards with various supports necessary to provide students with e-learning opportunities, as well as providing e-learning leadership within the provincially funded school system. School boards are responsible for the delivery of e-learning, including program direction, hiring staff, registering students, teaching students and granting credits. School boards participating in the provincial e-learning strategy have access to a provincially licensed learning management system (LMS), Ontario Educational Resource Bank, E-Community Ontario, and Seat Reservation System. In June 2011 the Ministry announced further supports for the provincial e-learning strategy, including the ability of school boards to use the LMS tools for blended learning. It is anticipated that over the next three years 500,000 students from kindergarten to grade 12 will be able to access the LMS.

To support school boards with the implementation of e-learning programs, as well as the use of Ministry-provided digital resources, the Ministry has provided funding for one e-Learning Contact (eLC) per board for the 2011–12 and 2012–13 school year school year. The purpose of the eLC position will be to ensure that there is coordination and leadership in boards for the implementation of the provincial e-learning strategy.

As part of the provincial e-learning strategy, students may enrol in an e-learning course that is offered by another board provided they do so through their home school. In such a situation, the applicability of provincially established fees for students taking e-learning courses from a school of another school board shall be worked out locally between the two boards. Where it is agreed that fees are appropriate, the fee is the amount established by the Ministry. For 2012–13 the fee is \$720. Students enrolled in e-learning courses will not be charged any fees, including fees for registration, materials, or administration. The Ministry covers the students' costs when the board places these students on the appropriate funding register.

Interprovincial and International

A student registered in an Ontario school who takes a course from an online program in another province, territory or country, is able to receive recognition for the learning through the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) challenge process. Under this policy, students have their skills and knowledge evaluated against the overall expectations outlined in the appropriate provincial curriculum policy document in order to earn a credit towards their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). PLAR procedures are carried out under the direction of the school principal, who grants the credit. Students may be granted a maximum of four credits through the PLAR challenge process.

Ontario's publicly funded school boards may offer online programs to students living outside of Ontario provided they do not use the provincial LMS. A credit is granted in recognition for the successful completion of a course that has been scheduled for a minimum of 110 hours. Credits are granted by a principal on behalf of the Minister of Education for courses that have been developed or approved by the ministry. For the purpose of granting a credit, scheduled time is defined as the time during which students participate in planned learning activities designed to lead to the achievement of the curriculum expectations of a course.