

## 3.8 Saskatchewan (SK)

*Population: 1,132,640*

*Number of K-12 Schools: 762*

*Number of K-12 Students: 172,205*

*Number of K-12 Distance Education Programs: 16*

*Number of K-12 Distance Education Students: ~10,000*



### K-12 Distance Programs

Currently 16 of the 28 school divisions in Saskatchewan operate or participate in some sort of distance education program. School divisions that do not offer their own distance learning courses work with other school divisions to provide their students with online learning options. During the 2013-14 school year there were 4,728 course enrollments involving 3,221 students. A total of 4,541 secondary credits were earned.

However, it should be noted that during the 2012-13 school year the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education indicated there were 2,611 students enrolled in one or more courses from the 14 programs listed in the Saskatchewan Distance Learning Course Repository. Yet research for that report found there were at least 21 programs or jurisdictions providing K-12 distance education opportunities. Further, based on the responses of only five of these 21 programs there appeared to be at least 5,665 students who had taken at least one distance education course in the Province of Saskatchewan. Researchers estimated there to be about 8,000 students engaged in K-12 distance education in Saskatchewan during the 2012-13 school year. As such, researchers estimate there were approximately 10,000 students engaged in K-12 distance education during the 2013-14 school year.

### Governance and Regulation

The delivery of distance education in the province is guided by the *Saskatchewan Technology in Education Framework* (TEF). The TEF outlines the roles and responsibilities of the education sector with regards to the use of technology in education. It contains a number of outcomes and indicators that guide the use of technology in the province in the areas of teaching and learning, administrative operations and infrastructure.

One outcome speaks directly to the use of distance education to support teaching and learning in the province:

TEF Outcome TL (TSL)1: Students have equitable access to high quality instruction through flexible approaches using technology that meet the diverse needs of students and teachers within their school division.

Indicators:

- a) Distance and online learning opportunities are available to students, as required.
- b) Intra- and inter-school division learning opportunities are available to students with local support provided.
- c) Distance learners have success rates that are equivalent to students in traditional classroom environments.
- d) Assistive technology and technical support is available to students with intensive needs and/or school personnel.

Currently, the Ministry is engaged in the process of developing a strategic plan on a number of education issues, including a plan to address graduation rates that speaks to the need for more learning options to students to ensure they graduate from Grade 12. These discussions have highlighted differences among school divisions and the Ministry as to how online learning should be delivered.

Finally, the adoption of *Saskatchewan's Action Plan to Address Bullying and Cyberbullying* in 2013 supported the implementation of digital citizenship education for all K-12 students. This has given Saskatchewan the opportunity to host online professional development opportunities for educators and other professionals in the form of a massive open online course (i.e., DCMOOC), modeling for everyone how to effectively deliver online learning opportunities. It has also created the opportunity to ensure all students develop and practice appropriate and responsible online behaviour supported by a policy guide and continuum scheduled for release in 2015.