

	<h2 style="margin: 0;">Quebec</h2> <p style="margin: 0;">Population – 7,782,561 Total Area – 1,542,056 km² Population Density – 5.63 people/km² Capital (Population) – Quebec City (715,515) Number of K-12 Schools – 2850 plus 48 CEGEPs (2005-06) Number of K-12 Students – 1,052,960 plus 157,748 in CEGEPs (2005-06)</p>
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The second largest province in Canada—both in terms of size and population, Quebec is the only French-speaking province in Canada. At present, approximately 80% of the population report French to be their first language. Quebec is also home to Canada’s second largest city, Montreal, which has a population of 3,814,738. Unlike the other provinces, secondary school in Quebec is from grade 7 to 11, after which students typically attend a two or three year *Collège d’enseignement général et professionnel* (CEGEP) to receive a Diploma of College Studies.

K-12 Online Learning

Category	Yes/No	Comments
Province-led programme	No	All three distance education programmes are provincial in scope
Other online programmes	Yes	
Provincial-level policy	No	

Online Programmes

The first distance education programme in Quebec was a correspondence school for vocational education in 1946. This programme was expanded several times, and when the responsibility for distance education was devolved from the Ministry to the school boards a joint effort between these two groups led to the creation of the *Société de formation à distance des commissions scolaires du Québec* (SOFAD) in April 1996. SOFAD is a not-for-profit organisation tasked with the development and production of distance-learning materials, that school boards utilise in their own district-based programmes for adult students (i.e., students who have reached the age of 16 before July 1 of the current school year). At present, there are:

- 40 school boards or consortia that offer only French-language distance education;
- 3 school boards that offers only English-language distance education; and
- 1 school board and 1 consortium that offer both French-language and English-language distance education.

These school boards and consortia operate a total of 57 centres with a total of 45,264 enrolments from 23,577 students in 2008-09; up from 38,450 enrolments in 2007-08, 37,217 enrolments in 2006-07, and 30,038 enrolments in 2005-06. A decade earlier, there were only 10,910 enrolments in programmes using SOFAD courses (Saucier, 2009).

In 1999-2000, three English-speaking school boards in Quebec initiated the Distance Education and Community Network. This distance education programme grew to include all nine English-speaking school boards and became Learn Quebec in 2006. Learn Quebec provides a variety of resources to any English-language students throughout the province. These resources include asynchronous course content tutorials, live tutors available four evenings each week, online professional development for teachers, and a synchronous distance education programme that uses *Wimba* as a synchronous tool and *SAKAI* as a learning management system. Learn Quebec reported approximately 300 students enrolled in their synchronous distance education programme for 2009-10 (although they have over 4,000 students who use their asynchronous tutorials).

As described earlier by Thérèse Laferrière in the Brief Issue Paper section, the Quebec Ministry of Education funded the *Écoles éloignées en réseau* or Remote Networked Schools (RNS) initiative in 2002. Administered by the Centre francophone d'informatisation des organisations (CEFRIO), one of the aims of the RNS initiative is to enhance the learning environments of small rural schools by transforming them into blended learning environments. Laferrière et al. (2004) described that:

“distance education has until now focused, above all, on an operating method with two features: the students are linked to teachers in a centre far from them and the teachers produce material to support independent learning on the part of students. The approach adopted by this pilot project is different in that it does not seek to compensate for the absence or closing of a school by allowing students to engage in distance education. Instead, it seeks to bolster the ability to intervene of existing schools by networking them with other schools and resources. In this project, the classroom and the school are inhabited by students and teachers. By networking certain of their learning activities, we wish to broaden the ability of students and teachers to achieve significant, quality learning.” (p. 10)

At present, there are more than twenty Francophone school boards representing approximately 70 schools and 90 teachers involved in the RNS initiative. The use of the initiative to connect schools where one school has a teacher with a background in a highly specialised area (e.g., chemistry or physics) to collaborate with a teacher in a rural school that is assigned to teach that course but is not trained in that area does not happen. While this was a goal for the initiative during its early years, issues such as organisational structure in the school system and the professional culture not being collaborative-oriented, have prevented this from occurring; although it is something that the project leaders are still open to exploring.

Governance and Regulation

The *Education Act* in Quebec makes no reference to distance education. As the school boards have held the primary responsibility for distance education since 1995, policies and regulations related to K-12 distance education also appear to be at the district level.