

3.5 Quebec (QC)

Population: 8,263,600

Number of K-12 Schools: 3,102

Number of K-12 Students: 1,003,322

Number of K-12 E-Learning Programs: 4

Number of K-12 E-Learning Students: ~47,900



Governance and Regulation

The *Education Act* in Quebec makes no reference to distance education and since 1995 school boards have held the primary responsibility for distance education policies and regulations. In fact, at present the *Loi sur l'éducation publique* stipulates students must be physically present and connected to a recognized school and school board, which prevents any formal full-time online learning (and relegates supplemental online learning programs to being a provider that must co-operate with the brick-and-mortar schools).

However, private schools are regulated by a different act (i.e., *Loi sur les établissements privés*) that does contain provisions pertaining to online education. Essentially, a private school can request a "derogation" allowing students to be "virtually attending," which would in theory allow for the formal creation of a virtual school. To date, the Ministry has yet to receive a request for an online initiative that meets the conditions stated in the *Loi sur les établissements privés* for them to approve.

Historically, the government provides school boards funding for distance education students based upon enrollment at a rate of 80% of the amount provided for a student enrolled in a brick-and-mortar setting. However, it is unclear whether this is still the case or not. The *Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport* does provide a block grant to the *Société de formation à distance des commissions scolaires du Québec* (SOFAD) to support their course development activities. Additionally, SOFAD also charged a fee for school boards to use their materials, money that was reinvested in the development of other learning materials. Similarly, the Leading English Education and Resource Network (LEARN) program is largely funded through the Canada-Quebec Entente on minority language education and second-language instruction, which is a funding program managed by the *Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport*.

K-12 Distance and Online Learning Activity

During the 2016-17 school year, there were an estimated three distance learning programs in Quebec. The largest distance education program was SOFAD, which primarily develops and produces correspondence distance learning materials that school boards utilize in their own district-based programs. SOFAD also provides an e-learning platform (i.e., EduSOFAD) that offers many of the courses

online for the students who prefer to work online. SOFAD served approximately 30,000 adult students who are 16 years or older, including approximately 3,200 course enrollments in EduSOFAD. While there was no data submitted for the 2016-17 school year, the *Centre d'apprentissage en ligne de la CSBE* – a distance education program offered by the Beauce-Etchemin School Board – had 1,041 students enrolled during the previous school year. Finally, LEARN provided a variety of distance learning opportunities to approximately 9,400 English-language students from all nine English-speaking school boards in the province.

K-12 Blended Learning Activity

At present, there are two formal programs that provide blended learning in Quebec. The first is LEARN, which provides its services and resources – such as tutoring, tailored pedagogical content, training, community learning centres' support, academic peer review articles, curated resources, and enrichment activities – to stakeholders across the province in a blended format. During the 2016-17 school year approximately 300 students accessed these blended learning services.

The second is the *Écoles en réseau* (i.e., Networked Schools), which began in 2002 as the *Écoles éloignées en réseau* or Remote Networked Schools initiative to focus on teacher professional development and technology integration projects (e.g., connecting two or more small rural classes together through the use of *Knowledge Forum* and various synchronous tools in a manner that blends face-to-face instruction with online tools and collaboration). During the 2016-17 school year, *Écoles en réseau* had approximately 350 teachers in 275 schools participating, representing more than 5,000 students.