



## **New Brunswick (NB)**

Population: 781,024

Number of K-12 Schools: 307

Number of K-12 Students: 98,906

Number of K-12 E-Learning Programs: 2

Number of K-12 E-Learning Students: ~14,000

### **Governance and Regulation**

While there is no specific legislative language concerning K-12 distance, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development defines distance learning as the delivery of a course where the teacher responsible for assessment and instruction is in a location physically remote from the student. Online teachers communicate with the school to relay information about student progress.

Both the Anglophone and Francophone sectors of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development manage their own K-12 distance learning programs. These programs are funded through the Department directly, and are provided at no cost to schools or districts. The Department has published policy handbooks and web resources, different for both the English and French programs, which outline who can take distance courses, list the courses offered, describe the registration process, and outline duties of each role in the process. Additionally, as of the 2019-20 school year, the organization of distance learning courses in the French-speaking sector had a new structure to allow school districts to be involved in decision making through a management committee.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development defines blended learning as the use of online and distance learning resources to support a teacher delivering a course onsite to students. Students continue to have access to the online material outside of class time for independent work.

### **K-12 Distance and Online Learning Activity**

The two distance learning programs service secondary students in New Brunswick in either of the province's two official languages. Both distance and blended courses use content created by the department and information is recorded in a learning portal, which records information about courses taken, school of origin and basic student demographic information. Some additional registrations, such as adults upgrading high school, are manually recorded, but not tracked with the same level of detail. During the 2020-21 school year, there were approximately 3,150 regular students enrolled in 55 different courses in the Anglophone program, while there 1,604 students enrolled in 28 different courses in the Francophone program.

Additionally, the Anglophone program offered a free online summer program that allowed interested high school students and recent graduates the opportunity to take a single course for

credit. There were 23 courses offered by 19 teachers. The experience was used as a paid professional learning opportunity for teachers to gain online teaching skills.

## **K-12 Blended Learning Activity**

The content that has been created for all of the distance learning courses is available to all teachers in the province as a professional learning resource. During the 2020-21 school year there were approximately 3,500 English face-to-face students registered in the learning management system using online courses in a more blended learning model under the direction of their local school's classroom teachers. The exact level of participation by French students was not reported, however, during the 2018-19 school year (i.e., the most recent data available) there were approximately 5,325 French face-to-face students registered in the learning management system. It should be noted that the Department only tracks participation in the blended learning courses it provides centrally. Other blended learning solutions implemented by teachers and schools are not tracked.

## **Remote Learning**

### *Spring 2020 Closure*

Schools in New Brunswick closed on March 13, 2020. The Department of Education launched their *Learning at Home* website for remote teaching support offering literacy, numeracy, and mental and physical health resources. Specific course materials for science, social science, history, technology, second language supports were posted for most grades. The technologies and digital tools to support remote learning were not specified, but devices such as 1,000 iPads, 500 laptops, and 300 mobile internet hubs were loaned to students. The expected attendance for remote learning was five hours per week for grades K-5, ten hours for grades 6-8, and 12.5 hours for grades 9-12. Students were also encouraged to spend at least 30 minutes per day engaged in physical activity. Final report cards were suspended and provincial standardized testing was cancelled. Between June 1-5, teachers were back in schools to complete school closing requirements and to start planning for the fall while students continued with remote learning (Nagle et al., 2020a).

### *Fall 2020 Reopening*

Elementary schools created cohort groupings or 'bubbles' for their students. In grades K-2, class sizes were a maximum of 15 students, in grades 3-5 a maximum of 22 students, and in grades 6-8 there were regular class sizes. Cohort groups in secondary students had alternate schedules for in-school attendance and in-home remote learning as well as staggered breaks between classes to maintain physical distancing. Masks were recommended in the classroom, but not required, however secondary students were required to mask when outside the classroom. Technology and resources, both paper and digital, were provided and most remote learning was asynchronous with regular live online teaching for grades 6-8. A blended model of learning for secondary students was announced by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development that relied on project-based and experiential learning opportunities (Nagle et al., 2020b).

## 2020-21 School Year

Schools were mostly open throughout the 2020-21 school year but shifted to remote learning based on areas of risk within specific communities and regions. During “orange and yellow zone” alerts, only students at-risk were shifted to remote learning, but during “red zone” alerts, high school students moved to the blended learning model. Absences throughout the K-12 system were high during red zone alerts, as remote learning was no longer mandated under this level of alert. Teachers were responsible for continued child learning if they needed to remain at home, and were asked to maintain a balance between synchronous and asynchronous learning to minimize screen time. Students were responsible for their own devices, but if in need, families could apply to the ‘Laptop Assistance Program’ to obtain any needed devices for their child’s learning (Nagle et al., 2021).

## References

- Nagle, J., Barbour, M. K., & LaBonte, R. (2020a). *Documenting triage: Detailing the response of provinces and territories to emergency remote teaching*. Canadian eLearning Network. <https://secureservercdn.net/198.71.233.227/sgf.292.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Documenting-Triage-canelearn-emergency-remote-teaching-report1.pdf>
- Nagle, J., Barbour, M. K., & LaBonte, R. (2021). *Toggling between lockdowns: Canadian responses for continuity of learning in the 2020-21 school year*. Canadian eLearning Network. <https://secureservercdn.net/198.71.233.153/sgf.292.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/canelearn-2020-21-school-year.pdf>
- Nagle, J., LaBonte, R., & Barbour, M. K. (2020b). *A fall like no other: Between basics and preparing for an extended transition during turmoil*. Canadian eLearning Network. <https://secureservercdn.net/198.71.233.227/sgf.292.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/A-Fall-Like-No-Other-canelearn-remote-teaching-report2.pdf>