



Ontario (ON)

Population: 14,723,497

Number of K-12 Schools: 4850

Number of K-12 Students: 2,020,245

Number of K-12 E-Learning Programs: ~70

Number of K-12 E-Learning Students: ~1,402,850

e-Learning Updates

The demands of the pandemic and the necessity for all school boards in Ontario to utilize remote learning at different periods throughout the 2020-21 school year posed a challenge. The November 21, 2019 announcement established that Ontario students would be required to take two online credits to graduate from secondary school beginning with students graduating in the 2023-24 school year (Ministry of Education, 2019a), and that courses began counting toward this requirement beginning in September 2020. The previous announcement was for four mandatory courses (Ministry of Education, 2019b), which after responses from educators, teacher unions, and other affected organizations in the province was reduced to two courses. A similar government announcement was reported in March 2021 regarding legislation that would make synchronous remote learning a permanent option for students (Alphonso, 2021), and school boards would be required to use remote learning during disruptions and school closures (such as snow days). However following an initial response from a variety of groups opposing the idea, public discussion of this option ceased.

Based on data provided by the Ministry of Education, approximately 87,000 students earned 100,000 credits online through public district school boards during the 2019-20 school year (i.e., the most recent year for which data is available). In addition, approximately 18,000 credits were earned by students enrolled in online courses offered by inspected private schools. During the 2020-21 school year, there were more than 22,000 students enrolled in distance courses offered by the Independent Learning Centre. Additionally, there were 1,402,850 unique student logins in the provincial learning management system from classroom-based or online students.

Remote Learning Summary

Schools in Ontario closed on March 23, 2020. The Ministry of Education already provided a Virtual Learning Environment with digital courses and resources that also provided free webinars, resources, and training for teachers and resources for parents and the Ministry provided devices to school boards to distribute. Most school boards chose to delay the start of in-class learning by one week with staggered start dates by grade level. Remote learning was delayed two weeks to at the start of the 2020-21 school year. Elementary students had the option to attend class full-time or continue with remote learning while secondary students used cohort groupings to limit class size with students alternating between in-school and remote learning. Enhanced health measures were put in place, but on January 4, 2021, emergency remote learning began again due to a provincial lockdown. Various regions across Ontario reopened at different

times based on COVID-19 cases, but the March Break was postponed for all public schools until the week of April 12, 2021, with all provincial schools returning to remote learning on April 19 as schools remained closed for the rest of the school year.

The full provincial profile can be found at <https://k12sotn.ca/on/>

References

Alphonso, C. (2021, March 25). Ontario considers move to make remote learning permanent for all boards going forward. *The Globe and Mail*.

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Ministry of Education. (2019a). *Ontario brings learning into the digital age: Province announces plan to enhance online learning, become global leader*. Queen's Printer for Ontario. <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/54695/ontario-brings-learning-into-the-digital-age>

Ministry of Education. (2019b). Backgrounder – Education that works for you – Modernizing Classrooms: Province modernizing classrooms.

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