



Saskatchewan (SK)

Population: 1,178,681

Number of K-12 Schools: 780

Number of K-12 Students: 184,472

Number of K-12 E-Learning Programs: 27

Number of K-12 E-Learning Students: 22,510

Governance and Regulation

At present, there is no reference to distance education, online learning, or blended education in *The Education Act, 1995*. In recent history, the delivery of distance education, online learning, and blended learning has been guided by the Saskatchewan Technology in Education Framework (TEF), which 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, in particular that school divisions ensure distance and online learning opportunities are available to students, that intra- and inter-school division learning opportunities are available to students with local support provided, that distance learners have success rates that are equivalent to students in traditional classroom environments, and that assistive technology and technical support is available to students with intensive needs and/or school personnel supporting them.

Beyond the legislative and regulatory environment, the Ministry of Education also tracks distance education/online learning registrations for Prekindergarten to Grade 12.

The Ministry is developing a policy for in-province distance learning, including provincial definitions for distance education, online learning, and blended learning. The Ministry will seek input from sector partners before finalizing the policy.

K-12 Distance and Online Learning Activity

As of 2020-21, there were currently 25 provincial schools in 19 school divisions, one independent school, and one First Nation educational authority are categorized as having online learning schools offering Prekindergarten to Grade 12 learning courses to Saskatchewan students. There were 22,510 unique students involved in K-12 distance education or online learning programs in 2020-21. This number is comprised of 8,696 students fully enrolled in a dedicated online school, 6,090 additional students experiencing schooling through distance learning facilitated by teachers in schools not dedicated to online learning, and 10,403 additional students who registered for at least one course delivered through distance learning.

K-12 Blended Learning Activity

Blended learning is a responsibility of school divisions, as such the Ministry does not monitor this activity.

Remote Learning

Spring 2020 Closure

Schools in Saskatchewan closed on March 20, 2020. The Ministry of Education did not mandate remote teaching during the spring of 2020 and any remote learning opportunities that teachers provided remained optional for students. The Ministry provided online resources that made curricular connections to health education, science, and social science as well as a resource page to support mental health and tips for remote teaching for parents and guardians. Teachers continued to create lessons to support individual students and the types of technologies used by teachers and students were listed as a school-by-school determination and no details were given as to what types were used. School divisions were encouraged by the Ministry to use multiple modes of delivery, which included delivering packets and books if needed for those students with limited online access. Grades for students were frozen from March 13, 2020, with the opportunity for students to improve their grades only. The mandate was to pass all students with at least a 50% grade, and no report cards were issued (Nagle et al., 2020a).

Fall 2020 Reopening

Saskatchewan schools had a one-week delayed start to the 2020-21 school year with enhanced health measures in place which included: classroom cohorts, physical distancing, and staggered start, end, and break times, dedicated entries and exits with signage to control student movement, outdoor activities whenever possible, no sharing of materials, spaced out desks, and alternatives to large assemblies (such as virtual gatherings). Technology was deployed to limit sharing and masks were not mandatory but recommended in grades 4-12, particularly where physical distancing was not possible. Grades K-8 used *Google Classroom* as their learning management system (LMS), grades 9-12 *Blackboard*. Remote learning consisted of both asynchronous and synchronous activities, and assessment and reporting continued as usual. For students working under a remote learning model, the *Online Learning Center* offered a curriculum for both English and French Immersion (Nagle et al., 2020b).

2020-21 School Year

The 2020-21 school year proceeded with in-person learning, but on November 12, 2020, Regina high schools moved to alternative days of learning to reduce their capacity by 50% and by mid-November several of Regina and Saskatoon high schools went partially online and in-person. By mid-December, all public schools in Regina closed until January 11, 2021, and other schools closed on a by-need basis. In March 2021, the province closed all public schools and students returned to remote learning, but no specific guidelines regarding synchronous and asynchronous learning, nor any remote learning supports, were found on Ministry of Education websites (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://seureservercdn.net/198.71.233.227/sgf.292.myftpupload.com/wp->

[content/uploads/2020/11/Documenting-Triage-canelearn-emergency-remote-teaching-report1.pdf](https://seureservercdn.net/198.71.233.153/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://seureservercdn.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://seureservercdn.net/198.71.233.227/sgf.292.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/A-Fall-Like-No-Other-canelearn-remote-teaching-report2.pdf>