



Yukon (YT)

Population: 35,874

Number of K-12 Schools: 33

Number of K-12 Students: 5,456

Number of K-12 e-Learning Programs: 2

Number of K-12 e-Learning Students: ~850

Governance and Regulation

The *Education Act, 2002* allows the Minister of Education to provide distance education courses and charge fees for students to access those courses. Distance education is defined as a program of study or course taken by a student where the content and resources are sent to the student to work through independently of a school.

While Yukon Education is supportive of territorial-based online and blended learning programs, the Department is still engaged in several memorandums of understanding with distance learning providers in other jurisdictions. In these instances, these memorandums provide an additional layer of regulation for schools to follow.

For the most part, distance education is funded in the same manner as brick-and-mortar education. However, parents may be eligible for reimbursement of essential school resources related to distance education and/or online learning as determined by the Deputy Minister.

K-12 Distance and Online Learning Activity

Aurora Virtual School is the only English-language online school in the territory and during the 2020-21 school year it enrolled a total of 325 students. This enrollment included 180 supplemental students in its middle and secondary school programming, 75 students in its elementary blended program, and 70 students in their homeschool program. The only French-language online program is *École Nomade*, which enrolled 14 students during the 2020-21 school year.

In addition, the Yukon still accesses programming from four distance learning schools in British Columbia and Alberta for single courses or for full-time studies. The most recent data obtained was from 2019-20, when the four BC schools delivered courses to 35 grades 5-12 students. Finally, during the 2020-21 school year there were 12 students enrolled in 23 courses offered by *Centre francophone d'éducation à distance* and another 3 students enrolled in 3 courses offered by the *Conseil scolaire de la Colombie-Britannique*.

K-12 Blended Learning Activity

Yukon Education defines blended learning as a formal education program in which a student learns in part through digitally managed content, instruction and feedback and in part through

face-to-face group activities at a supervised physical location away from home and with some element(s) of student control over time, place, path and/or pace.

The Department funds a learning management system (i.e., *Moodle*) and digital content, which is made available to each of the territory's schools. The Department also funds a portion of a Curriculum Technology Consultant whose responsibilities are dedicated to supporting blended learning and the provision of various hardware, software, and other supports.

Yukon Education uses the data from *Moodle* to formally track the number of students who are enrolled in at least one blended learning course. During the 2019-20 school year, which is the most recent data obtained, there were approximately 15% of grades 5-12 students from the territory's 30 schools involved in K-12 blended learning.

Remote Learning

Spring 2020 Closure

Schools in the Yukon closed on March 18, 2020. The Ministry of Education added a webpage to their Ministry site that was dedicated to continuing student learning at home. This page offered resources for each grade level as well as for mental health and well-being. For students with limited internet access, printed resources were provided. Specific considerations for First Nations students were provided by the Ministry, in partnership with local communities. The Ministry provided educators with toolkits and advice on digital tools as well as offering online professional development. Teachers were responsible for providing students with learning materials, resources, and supports to complete the learning standards. Teachers were also required to maintain regular communication with students and families to assure learning needs were being met. Teachers assessed learning and report cards were delivered. The attendance expectation for students to engage in remote teaching included K-6 with five hours engaged in assigned work, grades 7-9 with 10 hours of assigned work, and grades 10-12 with three hours of work assigned per course per week (Nagle et al., 2020a).

Fall 2020 Reopening

Elementary schools re-opened as usual for grades K-8 and students in grade 9 continued with a fully in-class model of learning while grades 10-12 in Whitehorse used a blended learning model where students were half in-class and half online five days per week. Enhanced health measures ensuring physical distancing were implemented, including smaller classes and groups. Masks were recommended for ages 10 and older, but not mandatory. Digital tools that could be utilized were: *Moodle*, *Microsoft 365* with *Teams*, *Google Classroom*, and *FreshGrade*. A focus on literacy and numeracy as part of the core competencies continued, as well as a learning recovery model prioritizing formative and benchmarking assessments for both language arts and math (Nagle et al., 2020b).

2020-21 School Year

The 2020-21 school year proceeded with in-person learning but school closures occurred in larger cities and rural areas throughout the 2020-21 school year. The province used a low (i.e., fully in-school) to high (i.e., fully remote) scale, and between fully in-school and fully remote a flexible learning model was put in place. When moving from low to high, initially only essential groups (i.e., students with diverse needs) would attend in-school full-time, while the rest of the students would engage in a part-time rotating schedule with blended learning. Moving toward the high-end of the scale (i.e., before fully remote) only students with significant needs, such as students with disabilities and diverse learning needs attended in-school full-time while most of the students were remote learning. Digital tools were used at varying degrees dependent on grade level to support instruction and 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.

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