



## **New Brunswick (NB)**

Population: 781,024

Number of K-12 Schools: 307

Number of K-12 Students: 98,906

Number of K-12 Distance Learning Programs: 2

Number of K-12 Distance Learning Students: ~5,134

### **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 2021-22 school year, there were 2,800 regular students enrolled in 55 different courses in the Anglophone program, while there 1,584 students enrolled in 53 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. During the Summer 2022 there were 750 students enrolled in 21 different courses offered

by 24 teachers. The experience was used as a paid professional learning opportunity for teachers to gain online teaching skills.

Finally, a single school district began a pilot project to deliver Advanced Placement (AP) courses across a small network of schools. This pilot will enable smaller schools to offer these courses through a primarily synchronous delivery model.

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

All students are enrolled in *MS Teams* sites for each courses through the integration with the student information system. Additionally, 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. Teachers can request access to this content in the *Desire2Learn* environment to use in their classroom teaching. While the Ministry tracks the number of courses requested by teachers, it does not track the number of students enrolled therein.

### **Remote Learning**

#### *Fall 2021 Reopening*

Schools returned to in-person learning for the 2021-22 school year. Class size returned to full capacity for K-5 with no ‘bubbles’ or cohorts in grades 6-8. High school students returned with full time, in-person attendance, and music programs and extracurricular activities continued without restrictions, though masks were required indoors and assemblies were still not permitted. Should students return to remote learning due to an outbreak, K-8 students would engage in a mix of ‘virtual and paper-based learning’ or learning kits, while high school students would have a blend of synchronous and project-based learning (LaBonte et al., 2021).

#### *2021-22 School Year*

The Fall reopening plan remained in place and for the most part in-person learning continued, with the exceptions of a Canadian Union of Public Employees strike in November and/or local community outbreaks when students returned to remote learning. The reopening of schools after the December holidays was delayed until January 10, and schools returned to home learning due to increasing community spread of the Omicron variant of COVID-19. The return to in-person was further delayed until January 31 to allow time for purchase and installation of 2,000 portable HEPA filters for classrooms along with a supply of KN95 masks as all students were required to wear masks while in school as well as outdoors for grade 9-12 students. February saw the gradual release of community restrictions across Canada and the New Brunswick government lifted mandatory restrictions March 14 that included a return to full physical education and music classes and no requirement to wear a mask while in school (LaBonte et al. 2022).

## References

LaBonte, R., Barbour, M. K., & Mongrain, J. (2022). *Teaching during times of turmoil: Ensuring Continuity of learning during school closures*. Canadian eLearning Network.

<https://canelearn.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Teaching-During-Times-of-Turmoil.pdf>

LaBonte, R., Barbour, M. K., & Nagle, J. (2021). *Pandemic pedagogy in Canada: Lessons from the first 18 months*. Canadian eLearning Network.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gaNFXDCt44W9DaAC9iRAf33pDTKup2C8/view>