



## **Newfoundland and Labrador (NL)**

Population: 521,875

Number of K-12 Schools: 252

Number of K-12 Students: 63,536

Number of K-12 Distance Learning Programs: 2

Number of K-12 Distance Learning: 936

### **Governance and Regulation**

There is no language in the Education Act related to K-12 distance education. Historically, distance education was delivered directly by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Beginning in 2001 this delivery was managed through the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI). The CDLI was transferred to be a division of the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLESD) in 2017. As a part of the 2021 budget, the Government of Newfoundland announced that the NLESD would be integrated into the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2021a). During the 2021-22 school year, an interim school board and a transition team were appointed as a part of the first phase of this transition (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2021b; 2021c). Phase two is scheduled to begin in Fall 2022. There has been no impact on the distance learning programming offered by the NLESD thus far.

In addition to its distance offerings for the NLESD, the district also has a memorandum of understanding with both the *Conseil scolaire francophone provincial de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador* and the school district representing the Mi'kmaq (i.e., a province-wide First Nations district) to deliver e-learning courses to their students through the CDLI.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development continues to track the method of delivery that students complete their studies through distance learning. Historically this data was available through the K-12 School Profile System. However, this system stopped reporting data related to distance learning as of the 2019-20 school year.

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

In addition to the CDLI, the NLESD began providing a variety of K-9 courses through ConnectED during the 2021-22 school year. Distance learning at the K-12 level is delivered using a combination of synchronous and asynchronous tools, with synchronous instruction being the primary method. ConnectED enrolled a total of 24 students who were engaged with 42 different courses (i.e., using the guide of grade 9 math being a single course, grade 6 social studies a single course, etc.) during the 2021-22 school year. Also, there were 912 students registered in 45 different courses through the CDLI.

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

The CDLI also offered online course reviews for students in both online and blended contexts for a variety of courses throughout the secondary level. The reviews utilized recorded instruction and solutions to sample questions related to provincial learning outcomes. The CDLI allows any provincial educator (i.e., including classroom teachers) to register in their portal and use the CDLI's asynchronous course materials with their face-to-face students. While the CDLI has tracked the number of educators that are registered in the portal, an account in the system does not necessarily mean that the person uses the resources in their classroom. No data on the number of educator accounts was provided for 2020-21.

## **Remote Learning**

### *Fall 2021 Reopening*

In this planning for the Fall 2021 re-opening, the government removed most of the restrictions that had been in place in schools (e.g., no vaccination requirement, masking mandate, no cohorts or physical distancing requirements, resumption of co-curricular and extracurricular activities, etc.). The goal was a return to full-time in-person learning, with remote learning as an option only for students who could not attend due to medical reasons. The Department of Education did offer teachers professional learning opportunities in the use of digital tools for online learning (e.g., *Google Docs*, *Google Meet*, and *Google Classroom*). The government planned that if the pandemic conditions changed schools could be determined as 'high-risk transmission' or 'scenario 2 or 3,' and stricter health restrictions would again be implemented. In scenario 2, blended or hybrid learning would begin, with a staggered schedule of in-person and remote learning. Scenario 3 would include fully remote learning. For fully remote learning, a sample schedule was released by the English School District which outlined the requirements for both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities. Students who needed digital devices were able to receive a Chromebook on loan from their school district (LaBonte et al., 2021).

### *2021-22 School Year*

As the new school year progressed, school closures for COVID outbreaks continued with scenario 2 and the teacher 's union began calling for community use reductions, increased cleaning, and a return to required masking. Schools remained open to in-person learning until the return to school from December holidays when, due to increasing community spread of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, schools were closed and students returned to remote learning. The return to in-person was delayed until January 25, 2022 to allow time for the distribution of rapid test kits. All school staff and students were required to take two tests at home approximately 72 hours apart and to self-isolate if they tested positive. Although some parents continued to demand an option for remote learning, all announced efforts were focused on a return to in-person learning with government citing poor past experiences with hybrid learning and challenges for teachers. Instead, the government announced the hiring of additional teachers to create new junior and senior high school resources to support learning during intermittent school closures. February saw the gradual release of community restrictions across Canada and the Newfoundland-Labrador government's gradual release included a return to team sports for

K-12 students in late February followed by a full relaxation of all restrictions through the remaining part of the school year (LaBonte et al., 2022).

## References

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Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (2021b, November 1). *Minister Osborne provides update on Newfoundland and Labrador English School District transition.*

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