



Prince Edward Island (PE)

Population: 159,249

Number of K-12 Schools: 63

Number of K-12 Students: 20,131

Number of K-12 Distance Learning Programs: 1

Number of K-12 Distance Learning Students: ~175

The research team did not receive a response from officials in the Government of Prince Edward Island to our repeated requests for information. As such, updates to this profile for the 2022-23 school year are limited and based on data provided by key stakeholders and document analysis.

Governance and Regulation

While there is no reference to distance education in the *Education Act, 2016*, pursuant to section 8 of the *School Act, 1988*, there have been three Ministerial Directives concerning distance education (i.e., first *Ministerial Directive No. MD 2001-05*, which was superseded by *Ministerial Directive No. MD 2008-05*, and later *Ministerial Directive No. MD 2016-05*), the final of which indicated:

Distance Education Courses

12. An education authority may grant credit to a student for an educational activity provided through a distance education course or a correspondence course, during or outside of normal school hours, if

- a) the course is approved by the Department;
- b) the student's participation in the course is supervised by a teacher or a person who is registered as a teacher in another province or territory; and
- c) the course is approved by the principal of the student's school as being appropriate for the student's academic program prior to the commencement of the course.

13. The credit granted for the educational activity under section 12 shall not be for the equivalent course offered by an education authority unless it is approved as an equivalent credit by the Department. (Government of Prince Edward Island, 2022, p. 24)

Additionally, the *2022-2023 Senior High Program of Studies and List of Authorized Materials* included a section on "Distance Education" under a variety of "Flexible Learning" options that read:

Distance Education

Courses Distance education is a mode of instruction in which the student and the teacher are separated in either time or space, or both, and where two-way communication takes

place through non-traditional means for the most part. There is a broad range of both individualized and team instructional approaches and strategies used in distance education. Distance education communication may utilize various technologies and media, including but not limited to, print, computers and computer networks, telecommunications, and audio-visual equipment and resources.

Distance education is seen as a means to provide students with equitable access and/or a diversity of programs as approved by the PEI Department of Education and Lifelong Learning. Typically, this option is employed when a particular high school does not have the capacity to offer a particular course. All distance education requests must be approved by the PEI Department of Education and Lifelong Learning. (p. 18)

This language mirrored description of distance education that was previously outlined in Ministerial Directive No. MD 2008-05.

K-12 Distance and Online Learning Activity

Historically, the province had maintained a small K –12 distance education program using a video conferencing system primarily for the purpose of French-language courses, which ended at the conclusion of the 2010–11 school year. Beginning in February 2021, the Ministry piloted a new virtual school that again focused on French-language courses. The pilot program was modeled after the *Conseil scolaire acadien provincial* virtual school in Nova Scotia. After two semesters the Ministry handed it off to the *La Commission scolaire de langue française* to operate, although students from the Public School Branch were also able to enroll in its courses. As the research team did not receive a response from the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning, participation in this program for the 2022-23 is unknown. The *2022-2023 Senior High Program of Studies and List of Authorized Materials* did include in the “French Immersion” section of the document that:

The French immersion program at the senior high level has been planned to accommodate students coming from early, middle, and late French immersion programs. In addition to the French language courses offered at each level, six social studies courses, one career course, one science course, and one math course are available and offered at the discretion of individual schools **or through distance education.** (p. 73, emphasis added)

The most recent response indicated that there were approximately 40 students enrolled during the 2021-22 school year.

Finally, through an inter-provincial agreement students in Prince Edward Island are funded to take online courses from the New Brunswick Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. During the 2022-23 school year there were 125 students enrolled in online courses through this agreement.

K-12 Blended Learning Activity

According to the Department, there was no intentional blended learning (i.e., specific projects or initiatives) occurring in public schools.

K-12 Remote Learning

The *Department of Education and Lifelong Learning: Annual Report 2021-2022* indicated that:

COVID-19 Response to Distance Education

In order to support immunocompromised students, Department staff, in conjunction with Student Services at the PSB, sought virtual programming through the New Brunswick Virtual Learning Centre, Blyth Academy, and Ontario Virtual School. Students were enrolled in several PEI equivalent courses offered by these providers during both semesters. (Government of Prince Edward Island, 2023, p. 35)

Note that as of 01 December 2023, the annual report for the 2022-23 school year was not available.

References

Government of Prince Edward Island. (2022). *2022-2023 senior high program of studies and list of authorized materials*.

https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/senior_high_pos_2022-2023_final.pdf

Government of Prince Edward Island. (2023). *Department of Education and Lifelong Learning: annual report 2021-2022*.

https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/eeey_annual_report_2021-2022.pdf