



Alberta (AB)

Population: 5,029,346

Number of K-12 Schools: 2,531

Number of K-12 Students: 813,064

Number of K-12 Distance Learning Programs: 47

Number of K-12 Distance Learning Students: 23,028

Governance and Regulation

While the Minister does have the authority to make regulations, there are none pertaining to distance education programs at this time. The Ministry defines online learning as:

a structured learning environment in which students engage with their teachers in one or more online courses. Alberta certificated teachers employed by a school authority are responsible for instruction. (Government of Alberta, 2025, para. 1)

Further, the *Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12* defines an online course as:

one in which the majority of instruction and assessment takes place over the Internet, using a learning management system (LMS). The LMS provides students with access to course content, teachers and other students. Students may access the LMS from multiple settings (in school and/or out of school buildings) and engage in both synchronous and asynchronous instruction. (Government of Alberta, 2024a, para. 23)

The Ministry also identifies specific distance and online learning programs/schools through the Ministry's online learning directory (see <https://www.alberta.ca/online-learning.aspx>).

Enrolment in these programs is tracked through the use of specific codes in the Provincial Approach to Student Information systems. At present, there are currently three specific coding mechanisms for tracking online enrolments.

1. Schools may indicate that they offer an online learning program by entering this information in the Provincial Education Directory.
2. Course and course enrolments may be identified as virtual (online learning) and print based distance education in provincial student information systems.
3. Students who are completing the majority of their courses online can be identified as such using the online learning student enrolment code.

Alberta Education and Childcare is aware that some schools and school authorities may not use the appropriate coding for distance and online courses and is working with school authorities to increase awareness and improve accuracy in the assignment of student and program codes for online and distance learning programs.

Distance and online learning are also funded differently than brick-and-mortar education. The *Funding Manual for School Authorities: 2024/25 School Year* brought changes to several areas of funding for the Distance Education Grant, applicable to both distance and online learning, which were limited to the Distance Education Non-Primary Registration section of this grant (Alberta Education, 2024b). The Ministry of Education described these changes as:

Section C1.5.C.1, D.1.4.C.1 - Non-Primary Registration Out of District Allocation

- Funding is now limited to grades 10-12, whereas no limitation had been in place previously.
- Rather than receiving a flat per-student allocation, funding is calculated based on the number of completed distance education credits, to a maximum of ten credits at each school authority and a per-credit rate.
- Criteria are clarified to include the following:
 - The majority of instruction must be provided either online or at a distance using a learning management system.
 - Non-primary authorities must share digital resources and courses at no cost when permitted under copyright.
 - Remedial, enrichment, and/or extra-curricular courses are not eligible for this grant.

Section C1.5.C.3, D1.4.C.3 - Application Based for Online / Distance Education Learning Providers Allocation

- Funding is now limited to grades 10-12
- Funding is calculated based on completed credits

More specifically, funding was not allocated based on the number of students, but on a weighted moving average (WMA) using the following formula:

Full-time online students: WMA Enrolment Online Students (35 online credits completed or higher for high school students) x Base Instruction Rate

Part-time online students: Number of WMA completed credits x Applicable WMA Per Credit Rate (p. 30)

Alberta’s funding model uses the concept of a weighted moving average (WMA) of student enrolment. The calculation of the WMA is based on:

School Year	Weighted Factor	Enrolment Count
2022/23	20%	Actual
2023/24	30%	Estimate
2024/25	50%	Projection

The funding for full-time and part-time online students with primary registration continues to be based on a calculation of the relevant WMA and the assigned rate for the grant.

The WMA is based on enrollment data from the previous school year. In addition to the WMA funding of students from within the boundary of the school authority, the funding manual added

a section related to funding for students from other school authorities throughout the province. Funding for these students was provided based on the number of non-primary registrations by out of district students as of the September count day multiplied by the distance education non-primary rate. Finally, the funding manual provided for a grant program that school authorities can apply to support new online education programs that focused on students from outside of that school authority.

Finally, during the 2017-18 school year Alberta Education and Childcare changed the terminology for a program that consists of two parts (i.e., where the school-authority is responsible for the student's education program, and where the parent is responsible for their child's education program) from blended program to "shared responsibility" program. This change allowed the province to become more aligned with the current e-learning nomenclature. At present, Alberta Education does not have an official definition for blended learning.

K-12 Distance and Online Learning Activity

At present, Alberta Education and Childcare (2025) lists 47 different distance and/or online learning programs as a part of their website directory. According to Alberta Education, there were approximately 23,028 students engaged in distance and/or online learning during the 2024-25 school year.

K-12 Blended Learning Activity

Blended learning occurs in various forms across the province, but Alberta Education currently does not track this activity. School authorities are flexible in their support of blended teaching and learning to better meet the learning needs of students.

K-12 Remote Learning Activity

In urgent situations, the Government of Alberta (2025) has an "In Person Learning Regulation" that outlines the circumstances and procedures for school authorities to shift to emergency remote learning for a short period of time during the emergency.

References

Alberta Education and Childcare. (2024a). *Guide to education: ECS to grade 12, 2024-2025*. <https://manuals.alberta.ca/guide-to-education/>

Alberta Education and Childcare. (2024b). *Funding manual for school authorities 2024/25 school year*. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/8f3b4972-4c47-4009-a090-5b470e68d633/resource/a0ff4c6e-5f33-4293-a98d-3939eb9680b5/download/educ-funding-manual-2024-2025-school-year.pdf>

Alberta Education and Childcare. (2025). *Online learning*. <https://www.alberta.ca/online-learning>

Government of Alberta. (2025). *In-person learning regulation*.
https://open.alberta.ca/publications/2025_013