



British Columbia (BC)

Population: 5,719,961

Number of K-12 Schools: 1,926

Number of K-12 Students: 717,347

Number of K-12 Distance Learning Programs: 68

Number of K-12 Distance Learning Students: 84,223

Governance and Regulation

Based on updates to the *School Act* and the *Independent School Act*, online learning is governed by an *Online Learning Policy* that includes eight different sections from the two pieces of legislation, three regulatory documents, and three ministerial directives (British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care, 2025a). The policy defines online learning as:

A method of instruction that relies primarily on communication between Students and teachers by means of the internet. It may also include other types of instruction at a distance from the Learner, such as correspondence or teleconferencing, as well as in-person services. (British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care, 2025b, p. 3)

Under this policy, public school boards and independent school authorities have the ability to apply to become a provincial online learning school. Those entities selected as provincial online learning schools are required by the Ministry through the *Accountability and Quality Assurance (AQA)* framework and process to participate in continuous improvement to enhance student success and maximize equitable access and outcomes (Online Learning BC, n.d.). Through the *Online Learning BC* website students and families can find information on programs and courses offered at provincial online learning schools (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2023). Additionally, public online learning schools without Ministerial agreements to offer provincial services, are still able to operate as a district online learning school, which would be an online school that only serves students residing within their district boundaries.

Funding for online learning schools differs from traditional brick-and-mortar schools. In brick-and-mortar schools, full-time K-12 students are funded one time in September at 100% for a program of studies. For online learning programs, there are multiple opportunities for funding due to continuous enrolment and cross-enrolment. For Kindergarten to Grade 7 students and Grades 8 to 9 students enrolled in a single school, there are three funding opportunities, depending on when the student meets eligibility requirements:

- September (30th): online learning schools receive 100% of per pupil funding
- February: online learning schools receive 50% of per pupil funding
- May: online learning schools receive 33% of per pupil funding.

For Grades 8 to 9 students who are cross enrolled in a provincial online learning school, the student is funded per enrolled online course(s) in July of the following year at the per course

summer school rate. Grades 10 to 12 students are funded per enrolled course and can receive 100% funding in September, February, or May (British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care, 2025b).

During the 2024-25 school year, the basic allocation per student (i.e., full-time equivalent or FTE) attending a public brick-and-mortar school was \$8,915 vs. \$7,200 per public online learning student. The basic allocation for a cross-enrolled public online learning student was \$505. Independent schools fall into one of two groups. Group 1 independent schools received 50% of the public online learning per student amount, while Group 2 independent schools received 35% of the public online learning per student amount (British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care, 2025c). At present, all independent provincial online learning schools in the province have Group 1 Certification.

K-12 Distance and Online Learning Activity

The Ministry tracks student enrollment through the demographic data collections that occur in September, February, and May. These collections show the schools attended along with the demographic characteristics of students and programs provided to students. In 2024-25 there were a total of 68 online learning schools comprised of 21 public provincial online learning schools, 16 independent provincial online learning schools, and 31 district online learning schools that enrolled approximately 84,223 unique students in one or more courses.

K-12 Blended Learning Activity

As online learning is defined as primarily online and/or at a distance, there is implicit acknowledgement of the existence of blended learning in the province. Both online learning and in-person schools are able to offer blended programs. However, as these programs are not formally defined, the Ministry of Education and Child Care does not gather data on separate blended learning program enrolment.

References

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British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care. (2025b). *Interim online learning procedures guide for K–12 public and independent schools*.
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