



Quebec (QC)

Population: 9,058,297

Number of K-12 Schools: 2,770

Number of K-12 Students: 1,193,793

Number of K-12 Distance Learning Programs: 135+

Number of K-12 Distance Learning Students: ~41,000+

Governance and Regulation

Historically, school boards have held the primary responsibility for distance education policies and regulations. However, the *Loi sur l'instruction publique* prevented any formal full-time online learning (and relegated supplemental online learning programs to providers that must cooperate with the brick-and-mortar schools). A 2017 amendment to the *Loi sur l'instruction publique* (i.e., Bill 144) allowed the Minister to authorize distance learning pilot projects (see Government of Quebec [2023] for more information). As part of measure 19 of the *Digital Action Plan for Education and Higher Education* (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2018), and as provided for in section 459.5.3 of the *Loi sur l'instruction publique* (Government of Quebec, 2017), the innovation component of the distance learning pilot project was implemented at the start of the 2021 school year and continues until June 2026. The objectives of the pilot project are to experiment or innovate in distance learning and to document the process in order to enrich practices. The delivery model for these distance learning pilot projects was described as:

Comodal – This mode involves one or more students face-to-face and at a distance. The remote student follows the course simultaneously with the students of the class with the consent of all persons concerned, if applicable.

Comodal asynchronous alternation – This mode offers the possibility of following online courses offline (asynchronous) and sometimes take lessons simultaneously with their class (comodal) with the consent of all persons concerned, if applicable. (Government of Quebec, 2022, p. 3)

On December 7, 2023, the *Projet de loi n° 23, Loi modifiant principalement la Loi sur l'instruction publique et édictant la Loi sur l'Institut national d'excellence en éducation* was adopted, which made distance education services possible, by regulation, in two contexts: (1) exceptional or unforeseeable situations and (2) special home or hospital teaching services. Since the regulation is not currently in force, the corresponding legal provision does not apply. Therefore, reference must be made to section 459.5.3 of the applicable legislation.

Private schools are regulated by the *Loi sur l'enseignement privé*, but section 459.5.3 of the *Loi sur l'instruction publique* also includes private institutions: Under such a project, it may: (1) offer distance education services, authorize a school service centre or an educational institution

governed by the Loi sur l'enseignement privé (chapter E-9.1) to offer such services, or authorize a person to receive them according to standards different from those set out in the Loi sur l'instruction publique and the Loi sur l'enseignement privé, while ensuring respect for the right to free educational services.

K-12 Distance and Online Learning Activity

During the 2024-25 school year, there were 130 distance learning pilot projects, spread over 72 educational establishments and organizations. The Ministry of Education did not include how many students were involved in these 130 distance learning pilot projects, but data from the 2023-24 school year indicated that there were 117 distance learning pilot projects, spread over 63 educational establishments and organizations involving 3,012 students. Additionally, the Ministry of Education reported there was only a single pilot project (Innovation) approved that focused on distance education approved during the 2024-2025 school years, and data from the annual reports for 2025 would provide a more accurate picture of the number of students involved, and if they were still being analyzed.

Beyond these pilot projects, there were three known distance learning programs in Quebec. The largest distance education program was Société de formation à distance (SOFAD), which primarily develops and produces correspondence distance learning materials that school boards utilize in their own district-based programs. **The most recent enrollment data is five years old, but at the time SOFAD was serving approximately 38,000 pupils in approximately 85,000 individual course.** Additionally, during the 2024-25 school year LEARN provided administrative and technical support to the Western Quebec School Board Virtual Campus, which enrolled 77 students (and was one of the pilot projects referenced above). Finally, there are two additional distance learning programs that were in operation during the 2024-25 school year: the Quebec Online School and the *Centre d'apprentissage en ligne de la CSSBE* (operated by the Beauce-Etchemin School Board). **However, no enrollment data was provided by either program.**

K-12 Blended Learning Activity

It should be noted that the “distance learning pilot projects” described above include both online learning and blended learning activities (and the data were not separated between the two modalities). These distance learning pilot projects were classified under the following distinct categories:

- 29 projects were designed to help students maintain their learning while participating in sports or cultural activities that cause frequent absences;
- 12 projects focused on supporting a defined group of students with specific needs;
- 20 projects provided access to specific courses for selected students;
- 42 allowed students who are unable to attend school for medical reasons to continue their learning; and
- 27 projects supported learning during extreme weather or unexpected events.

Based on the descriptions provided in these categories, it is assumed that the majority of the 130 projects were focused on distance or online learning.

There are potentially two programs that provide blended learning in Quebec. In addition to their distance offerings, LEARN provides its services and resources – such as tutoring, tailored pedagogical content, training, community learning centres’ support, academic peer review articles, curated resources, and enrichment activities – to stakeholders across the province in a blended format. During the 2024-25 school year, LEARN registered 3,115 students who attended 39,453 appointments. Finally, the *Écoles en réseau* (i.e., Networked Schools) was a blended learning program that was active for over a decade. However, reference to the program can no longer be found to it online, and there has been no contact from the program with the research team in several years – so it is assumed the program has ceased.

References

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