



## Ontario (ON)

Population: 15,109,416

Number of K-12 Schools: 4,850

Number of K-12 Students: 2,080,488

Number of K-12 Distance Learning Programs: ~450

Number of K-12 Distance Learning Students: ~195,231

## Governance and Regulation

There is no reference to distance education and/or online learning in the *Education Act R.S.O., 1990*. However, the *Education Act, 1990* does make a reference to “equivalent learning,” which is defined as a learning situation that falls outside the instruction traditionally provided by a board, that is approved under paragraph 3.0.1 of subsection 8(1) and for which a pupil’s success can be reasonably evaluated.

Since 2006, the Ministry of Education has provided school boards with various supports necessary to provide students with online and blended learning opportunities. The Ministry provides school boards with access to a learning management system and other tools for the delivery of online learning, asynchronous course content for a wide range of English- and French-language courses and a variety of multimedia learning objects, along with a variety of other technical and human resource supports (including a “Technology Enabled Learning and Teaching Contact” or “*Personne-ressource en apprentissage et enseignement par la technologie*” in each school board). School boards delivering either online or blended learning must sign a “Master User Agreement” to access all of these services.

Ontario publicly funded schools must report student enrollments in online learning classes to the Ontario Student Information System. This includes students who are enrolled in online learning courses as part of their regular day school, continuing education, and summer school programs.

In English-language schools, students may enroll in an online course offered by another school board provided they do so through their home school. In such a situation, the applicability of provincially established fees for students taking online learning courses are worked out locally between the two school boards. The fee for the 2024-25 school year was \$660 per credit course. It should be noted that most English-language school boards share access to online courses with other boards (without charging the fee) through the Ontario e-Learning Consortium (OeLC) using software provided by the consortium. In French-language schools, students remain with their home school board and take online courses offered by the Consortium d’apprentissage virtuel de langue française de l’Ontario (CAVLFO), a consortium funded and managed by all twelve francophone school boards.

Private schools operate as businesses or non-profit organizations in accordance with the legal requirements established by the *Education Act* and receive no public funding or other financial support from the Ministry. The Ministry only inspects the standard of instruction at private schools seeking to grant credits toward the Ontario Secondary School Diploma to determine

whether they can be granted this authority. In the case of online private schools, Ministry inspectors look for evidence of ongoing interactions between the teacher and students in the online learning environment, and for a direct link between the specific and overall curriculum expectations being taught and assessed in compliance with Ministry policy and observed practices. Inspectors review online courses, public websites, school course calendars, and community involvement, along with attendance policies, assignment timelines, student learning logs, examination procedures, etc. The Ministry does not regulate, license, accredit or otherwise oversee the operation of private schools. Private schools in Ontario can operate onsite, online, or offer a combination of online and onsite classes/instruction.

On November 21, 2019, the Ministry of Education announced that Ontario students would be required to earn two online credits to graduate from secondary school beginning with students graduating in 2023-24, and that courses would begin counting toward this requirement in September 2020 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2019). With this announcement, Ontario became the only jurisdiction in Canada with an online learning graduation requirement. The first cohort of students held to the online learning requirement graduated in June 2024 (Ministry of Education, 2022).

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

Each of the publicly-funded 60 English-speaking and 12 French-speaking school boards has the ability to offer some form of online learning using the provincial learning management system combined with the online curricular materials provided or their own. In the 2023-24 school year 150,900 students participated in online learning programs offered by publicly-funded district school boards (preliminary data as of June 6, 2025).

Additionally, TVO's Independent Learning Centre (ILC) serves Ontario youth 14+ and adults seeking to earn high school credits or an Ontario Secondary School Diploma. In the 2023-24 school year 22,592 students participated in online learning offered by the ILC.

Finally, in the 2023-24 school year, 388 private schools offered online learning, 98 of which were fully online. A total of 21,739 students were enrolled in private online schools.

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

The Ministry of Education describes blended learning as instruction and student learning that incorporates digital resources within the face-to-face classroom.

The Ministry does not track the wide variety of digital tools that may be used to support blended learning that takes place in Ontario schools. The Ministry does provide licenses for a provincial learning management system and digital tools for school boards to use for blended and online learning opportunities with their students. As such, all educators in Ontario have the opportunity to use digital tools to provide a blended learning experience that meets their students' needs. In the 2024-25 school year, there were approximately 1,188,352 unique student logins in the learning management system.

## Remote Learning

The Ministry continues to maintain measures to support schools that may need to transition to remote learning to ensure that students across Ontario receive a consistent approach to remote learning in times of extended interruption to conventional in-person learning. Policy/Program Memorandum 164, first introduced in 2020, continues to be in effect (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2023). This memorandum outlines requirements for school boards when brick-and-mortar schools must pivot to remote learning during extended interruptions, such as public health emergencies, pandemics, natural disasters, or other unplanned events that force the closure of classrooms or schools. Key requirements include:

- minimum standards for student engagement and synchronous learning;
- protocols for remote learning delivery and exemptions from synchronous learning;
- access to devices and Internet connectivity;
- use of standardized synchronous learning platforms; and
- cybersecurity, privacy, and online safety measures.

Effective with the 2023-24 school year, school boards offer remote learning instruction directly, partnered with another school board to provide remote learning instruction on their behalf, or work with other school boards to deliver remote learning collaboratively. While the ministry is responsible for developing policy, the implementation of policy, allocation of funding and the delivery of education programs and services to students is the responsibility of district school boards and local schools. This gives boards and schools the flexibility to make decisions about program delivery to best serve their students.

Per-pupil funding is provided to school boards offering remote learning to support administration costs (i.e., salary and benefits of principals, vice-principals, school office support, and information technology staff). During the 2023-24 school year, 15,109 students participated in remote learning offered by a publicly funded district school board.

## References

- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2019). *Ontario brings learning into the digital age: Province announces plan to enhance online learning, become global leader*. Queen's Printer for Ontario. <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/54695/ontario-brings-learning-into-the-digital-age>
- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2022). *Policy/Program Memorandum 167 – Online learning graduation requirement*. <https://www.ontario.ca/document/education-ontario-policy-and-program-direction/policyprogram-memorandum-167>
- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2023). *Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 164 – Requirements for remote learning*. <https://www.ontario.ca/document/education-ontario-policy-and-program-direction/policyprogram-memorandum-164>