

# NLPS Island Connect Ed Program Review

## Review Team

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## Introduction

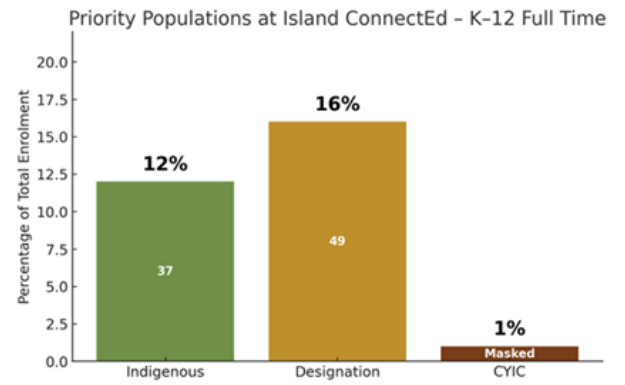
This review began in the spring of 2025 and was completed in the fall of 2025. It explores Island ConnectEd (ICE), the Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools (NLPS) online learning school, with a focus on equity, student engagement, outcomes, and sustainability. ICE offers flexible, hybrid learning – online and in person – meeting a wide range of student and family needs.

This review explored enrolment trends, achievement data, transitions, stakeholder input, and alignment with district and provincial goals. The result was reliable trends, patterns, and possible recommendations. All data presented is from the 2024/2025 school year.

## Context

Island ConnectEd first opened in 2002 with the K-7 program. In 2006, the Learn @ Home 8-12 school was opened. In fall 2016, both programs were merged and officially became Island ConnectEd K-12.

ICE enrolls students who learn at home, who travel out of country, who are dual enrolled with other high schools, and who enjoy working on-site in a self-paced environment. Priority populations are represented in the graph. (Note: district designations average is 10%) Currently, the programs at ICE are K-9 full time enrolled, 10-12 ICE as school of record, 10-12 dual enrolled, and adult and graduated learners.



The following charts highlight the features, strengths, and challenges of each program.

K-9 Programs			
Program	Features	Strengths	Challenges
<b>Elementary (K-7)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>138 enrolled in 2024/2025</li> <li>Full time, hybrid learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most K–7 students at ICE meet or exceed expectations in reading, writing, and numeracy (school-based assessment data).</li> <li>Strong parent involvement through PAC (planning learning activities in the community)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students in priority populations (19 Indigenous, 15 designated, 33 <b>Aligned Program</b>) may require more targeted supports</li> </ul>

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Program	Features	Strengths	Challenges
<b>Grade 8/9</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>52 enrolled in 2024/2025</li> <li>Full time enrolment, hybrid learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Builds independence while maintaining consistent support</li> <li>High level of engagement* in grade 8 (92%)</li> <li>67% of grade 8 students on track **</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased complexity*** in student profiles in grades 8 and 9</li> <li>Grade 9 reduced engagement (46%)</li> <li>54% of grade 9 students on track</li> <li>Students in priority populations (10 Indigenous, 16 designated) may require additional supports</li> </ul>
<p>* "engagement" refers to students engaging online or in person at least 3 times per week</p> <p>** "on track" refers to projected core course completion within the school year</p> <p>*** "complexity" refers to increased support for mental health, home circumstances or medical conditions</p>			

Grad Program (10 – 12+):			
Program	Features	Strengths	Challenges
<b>ICE as school of record</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>149 enrolled in 2024/2025 with ICE as school of record</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offers independence, flexibility</li> <li>Self-chosen by many learners for flexible learning options</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased complexity*** in student profiles</li> <li>44% engagement* in grade 10, 58% grade 11 and 42% grade 12</li> <li>42% of grade 10 students on track, 44% grade 11 and 49% grade 12</li> </ul>
<b>Dual-Enrolled Students</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2307 course enrollments in 2024/2025</li> <li>Students attend another school and take ICE courses</li> <li>ICE teachers spend 50% of their time at one of 4 local schools</li> <li>Computer Assisted Learning Tutors (CALT) full time at each of those 4 schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flexible pathways for students with scheduling concerns</li> <li>ICE can offer a course that the school of record does not have</li> <li>Provides relief for students from complexities without having to transfer schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notable withdraw/low completion rate (10-20% withdraw rate after course activation - <i>MyEd data 2024/2025</i>)</li> <li>School of record schedules and staffing can be disrupted when students choose a different path mid-semester</li> <li>Coordination between ICE and home school administration can be complicated</li> <li>Open registration complicates home school timetables and staffing and reduces personalized program advising from home school staff</li> <li>Grade 10s and 11s who enroll in ICE support block at school of record and finish early end up with "spares" in their timetables</li> <li>Ongoing enrolment in DL courses reduces the student FTE at the school</li> </ul>

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			of record, which reduces supports that can be offered in other ways at the school
<b>Adult and Graduated Learners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• age 19+ working toward graduation</li> <li>• graduated students upgrading courses for specific post-secondary goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• respectful, inclusive learning path that acknowledges realities of life</li> <li>• learning with dignity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gaps in access to technology or comfort with online platforms can be a barrier</li> <li>• less access to academic advising or counselling supports</li> </ul>
<p>* “engagement” refers to students engaging online or in person at least 3 times per week</p> <p>** “on track” refers to completing 6+ courses or 75% of scheduled courses</p> <p>*** “complexity” refers to mental health, home circumstances or medical conditions</p>			

### Additional K-7 Program:

ICE also hosts a community-driven program called Aligned, which emerged through advocacy from a group of families seeking an alternative learning model that reflects their personal values and preferred approaches to education. The program emphasizes outdoor, experiential, and family-directed learning, with strong parent involvement and a focus on land-based experiences. Currently, the ICE Vice-Principal teaches 0.8 FTE in the program.

While the Aligned programming did not meet the Ministry’s online learning audit criteria—specifically the requirement that students complete at least 50% of their learning online—in the fall of 2025, students enrolled in the Aligned program will continue to learn within the building, receiving direct teaching 60% of the time, with Mt. Benson Elementary School as their school of record.

### Recommendations

Upon analysis of trends, and in consultation with the [Ministry of Education and Child Care Online Learning Policy](#) and the [Online Learning Procedures Guide](#), the review team makes the following recommendations:

- Develop consistent district-wide criteria for schools to timetable students into ICE supported blocks within their school of record. Possible criteria could include:
  - The course is not offered in the school of record.
  - The student requires an alternate learning setting due to (documented) learning, health, or social-emotional needs, or extra-curricular activities.
- Develop a process to ensue guided registration (with a counsellor or administrator at their school of record) in ICE courses for dual enrolled students.
- Explore innovative ways for ICE to collaborate with high schools to offer courses not available in school timetables.
- Explore how a needs-based resource allocation model can respond to the documented needs of students in full-time ICE programs.

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- Internalize the recommendations of the [BC Online Programs Accountability and Quality Assurance \(AQA\)](#) review.
- Ensure course content, instruction and assessment aligns with provincial standards.
- Review graduation pathways and student programming for students in grades 10-12.

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### Next Steps

In relation to the recommendations, the following next steps will be taken:

1. Create registration protocols and procedures.
2. Investigate a needs-based resource allocation model.
3. Work with ICE staff to increase collaborative processes that build capacity and allow meaningful access to programs.
4. Ensure graduation pathways are reviewed and prioritized for all current and future students in grades 10-12.
5. Prioritize communication with families when adjustments to processes occur.