Ministry of Education
Resource Management Division

2010/11 Distributed Learning Enrolment Audit

AUDIT REPORT

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 42 (Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows)

CONNECTED LEARNING COMMUNITY

2010/11 DISTRIBUTED LEARNING ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT
SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 42 (Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows)

Background

Distributed Learning programs are alternatives to regular classroom-based instruction for students in Kindergarten to Grade 12. They can be delivered using paper-based, on-line and web-based courses, instructional software, face-to-face learning, or any combination of delivery methods. Communication with students can take place face-to-face, either in person or through the use of interactive technology, or via email, telephone and/or paper.

The Resource Management Division annually conducts Distributed Learning Enrolment audits, in selected school districts, to verify enrolment reported on Form 1701. School districts are selected for audit based on a variety of factors, including the length of time since their last audit, enrolment size, and changes in enrolment.

Beginning in the 2009/10 school year, funding recoveries were expanded to include FTEs outside of the sample where the auditors can make a clear link between the audit findings in the sample and those FTEs outside the sample.

Purpose

The purpose of the Distributed Learning Enrolment audit is to provide assurance to the Ministry of Education and boards of education that Ministry policy, legislation and directions are being followed. The audits are based on *Form 1701: Student Data Collection, Completion Instructions for Public Schools,* current Distributed Learning Agreements, and related Ministry policies.

Description of the Audit Process

A segment of the students reported in the 2010/11 school year were selected for review. An entry meeting was held with the Deputy Superintendent, district staff, individuals responsible for specific sections of the Connected Learning Community, and the District Principal responsible for DL to discuss the purpose of the audit and the criteria for funding as outlined in the Form 1701 Instructions.

The audit team worked at the Riverview Centre to review student learning plans, substantive assignments, instructional related communication, course plans, and student registration documents. The auditors sought documentation to determine that the courses claimed met the active criteria by the activation submission date and other related Ministry directives. Throughout the audit there were ongoing discussions with DL staff to ensure the audit team members had an understanding of all aspects of the program. All recommended adjustments were discussed with the staff during the course of the audit, providing them with every opportunity to locate the necessary documentation.

Exit meetings were held with the school-based administrator responsible for one section of the DL program and the DL District Principal, as well as with the Deputy Superintendent and District staff. At each exit meeting the lead auditor presented the preliminary results and clarified any outstanding issues.

Prior to the audit visit, the auditors undertook a verification of the school-assigned teachers' status with the B.C. College of Teachers.

Description of the Program

The Connected Learning Community is divided into two components. Courses for school-age students are delivered through Thomas Haney Secondary School Online and adult students receive their programs through Connected Learning Community, Continuing Education in the Riverside Centre. Most of the students in these two programs are adding a course to their school program, or are working to upgrade a mark. Odyssey is an elementary distributed learning program which offers programs to students in grades K–9 and delivers Planning 10 to Grade 10 students.

Observations

The auditors found that:
- All members of the teaching staff of the Connected Learning Community are members of the B.C. College of Teachers.
- The teachers lead the educational programs of their students.
- The teachers communicate with students in a variety of ways to support their learning.
- The teachers evaluate and assess their students on an on-going basis and for all progress reports and interim reports.
- Learning resources used at Connected Learning Community comply with the *School Act* and related Ministry directives.
- The school is conducted on strictly secular and non-sectarian principles.
- The school is in accordance with the Distributed Learning-General Policy regarding financial reimbursements to parents.
- The school follows the Distributed Learning-BC Residency Policy.
- The school follows the District's draft policy and procedures for 'ordinarily' resident in B.C.
- A number of students who met the funding criteria on, or just prior to September 30, 2010 were not claimed until February 2011. As the school was changing location and moving more than one District program to a new site at the beginning of September, clerical staff did not have sufficient time to enter those students who became active at the end of September. Due to the relocation and renovations impacting staff, the administration decided not to report, in the September claim period, students who met the active criteria during the last few days of September.
- Some teachers have not made the necessary adjustments to meet the current directives of the Distributed Learning Active Policy (September 30, 2010 version) in the areas of student/teacher instructional communication and the impact of the substantive assignment on the student's school mark. Further, teachers continue to use the term 'activation assignment'.
- A number of the forms, such as registration forms, course enrolment forms, student learning plan forms, and some course outlines were those used in the Continuing Education program which gave the appearance that the two programs were somehow melded.
- A number of the substantive assignments and student/teacher instructional communications were not dated.
- It was noted that 'I' and 'W' letter grades were used frequently on Student Progress Reports.

Audit Sample Findings

The auditors found that:
- 2.0000 Kindergarten to Grade 9 school-age student FTEs were claimed in September. Evidence identified these students were not provided with a complete educational program. By claiming these students for provincial funding the school must meet all the educational program learning outcomes identified in Ministerial Order 295.95 – Required Areas of Study in an Educational Program.
- 3.3750 FTEs (consisting of 1.6250 Grade 10 to 12 school-age and 1.7500 adult students) reported in February did not meet the active criteria in accordance with the Distributed Learning Active Policy's substantive assignment requirement that the substantive assignment will "*impact the final percentage of the student's school mark by at least five percent*".
- 0.2500 FTEs (consisting of 0.1250 Grade 10 to 12 school-age and 0.1250 adult students) reported in September were active in fewer courses than claimed.
- 3.6250 FTEs (consisting of 1.8750 Grade 10 to 12 school-age and 1.7500 adult students) reported in February were active in fewer courses than claimed.
- 0.2500 FTEs (consisting of 0.1250 Grade 10 to 12 school-age and 0.1250 adult students) were reported for funding in the February 2011 claim period. Evidence verified that these students were continuing their learning in the same course.
- 1.5000 FTEs (consisting of 1.3750 Grade 10 to 12 school-age and 0.1250 adult students) reported in September were claimed in both September and February due to a data entry error. September claims were duplicated in February with evidence identifying active requirement was met in February.
- 2.1250 FTEs (consisting of 0.8750 Grade 10 to 12 school-age and 1.2500 adult students) reported in February were found to have no additional courses in this funding period, only those courses the student was active in and funded for in the September reporting period.
- 0.6250 Grade 10 to 12 school-age FTEs were not active within the February activation submission period. The Form 1701 Instructions state: "*For the February 2011 data collection, report all courses in which the Grade 10-12 student has become active since October 1, 2010...*and, "*reported by the education facility with which they are enrolled and in attendance (active for CE and DL students) as at February 18, 2011.*"

Recommendations

The auditors recommend that:
- The District ensure that Ministerial Order 295/95 "Required Areas of Study in an Educational Program Order" are adhered to for all students including those reported for funding in K-9 programs.
- The District report for funding only those student claims that are active in accordance with the Form 1701 Instructions, and the Distributed Learning Policies. The Distributed Learning Funding Policy states : "*Boards or authorities will report to the Ministry when students enrol and when they become active participants in a distributed learning program. The Ministry will not fund students who enrol but do not become active in the DL school or program*".
- The District implement a process to effectively track student claims from the time of registration until they are reported and to ensure the Form 1701 claims are eligible for

funding in accordance with the Form 1701 Instructions and related Distributed Learning policies.
- The DL staff ensure course claims reported on Form 1701 correspond to the appropriate funding period during which the Distributed Learning Active criteria and the reporting directives of the Form 1701 Instructions are met.
- The District ensure that all DL staff members are aware of, and complying with the current version of the Distributed Learning Active Policy.
- All student files contain evidence, including a copy of the substantive assignment for each course claimed, that demonstrates the student has met all the active requirements before reporting funding claims.
- The DL staff implement practices to ensure all assignments, tests, projects and communications are appropriately identified by course and dated.
- The DL staff ensure when the learning outcomes of a course are taught over number of terms/years, the course is reported for funding once regardless of the number of terms/years the student takes to complete all the outcomes.
- The DL staff follow the directives of M192/94 "Provincial Letter Grades Order" including requirements for the use of 'I' and W' letter grades.
- The Ministry of Education audit the District's Continuing Education (CE) to confirm student claims for CE and DL are two separate and distinct programs.

Auditors' Comments

The auditors wish to express their appreciation to the District staff for their cooperation and hospitality during the audit.

Funding & Compliance Branch
Resource Management Division
Ministry of Education
May 15, 2011