



**Ministry of Education
Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools**

2014/2015 Special Education Evaluation Committee Review

REPORT

Madrona School (039 96594)

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Background

The Ministry of Education funds Independent School Authorities based on the Authorities' reported enrolment as of September 30th each year and supplemental special needs classifications in September and February. Independent School Authorities report students with special needs to the Ministry on *Form 1701: Student Data Collection* (Form 1701).

In the 2014/15 school year, the Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools (OIIS) conducted Special Education Evaluation Committee (SEEC) reviews of school and student records to assist OIIS and the independent school system in developing best practices in the area of special education programming and service provision. The Ministry will also use these review processes to develop an independent school special education audit protocol to be used in the future.

Purpose

The purpose of the SEEC review is to provide assurance to the Ministry of Education and Independent School Authorities that schools are complying with the instructions contained in [*Form 1701: Student Data Collection, Completion Instructions for Independent Schools*](#) and Ministry policies are being followed. The review also provides assurance that the students reported have been placed in the appropriate special education category, as per the [*Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines \(March 2013\)*](#).

Description of the Audit Process

An SEEC review was conducted at Madrona School on March 3, 2015.

Prior to the file reviews, an entry meeting was held with school assigned staff and the SEEC interviewed school administrators and staff to enquire about the Independent School Authority's policies, procedures and programs. The entry meeting included the following school staff: Catherine Kirkness (Administrative Assistant), Maud Ichter (French Teacher) and Kelly Reynolds (Primary Principal). Maud and Kelly are the Special Education experts and Catherine looks after documentation.

Madrona School reported 28 students in special education categories at the Fall 2014 Form 1701 data submission. For the purposes of this SEEC review, seven student records were reviewed in the following low incidence special needs categories:

Student Claims	Category
2	Category D (Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment)
4	Category G (Autism Spectrum Disorder)
1	Category H (Intensive Behaviour Intervention or Serious Mental Illness)

The SEEC also reviewed 13 student records in the following high incidence special needs categories:

Student Claims	Category
9	Category P (Gifted)
4	Category Q (Learning Disability)

An exit meeting was held with Kelly Reynolds, Catherine Kirkness, Maud Ichter and Eric O'Donnell (Director) at the end of the review day to present preliminary findings, seek clarification related to the contents of files, and express appreciation for the assistance provided.

Observations:

Of the two student files reviewed in Code D there was insufficient evidence to support placement in this category.

Of the four student files reviewed in Code G the medical diagnosis meet criteria for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), but the IEPs were incomplete for this category.

The one student file reviewed for Code H was recommended for reclassification to Code R.

Of the four student files reviewed in Code Q two students were recommended for reclassification to Regular Education. There were no IEPs. For the other two student claims the IEPs did not support Learning Disabilities and were recommended for reclassification to Regular Education.

Of the nine student files reviewed in Code P, eight of the student files were incomplete and without evidence to support placement in Code P. One student had an out of date IEP. All student claims were recommended for reclassification to Regular Education.

The auditors found that:

- The two students reported in Code D did have evidence of medical diagnosis to support the claim in that category. However one student with a hearing impairment had no documentation in the file and the IEPs for both students were incomplete lacking evidence to support the criteria. Evidence verified the students reported in Code D had not received any special education support services. Based on the outcomes of these file reviews the evidence verified these claims be reclassified to regular education until there is evidence that meets criteria for placement in a special education category as outlined in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines and Form 1701 Instructions.
- The four students reported in Code G had evidence in the files that documentation of a diagnosis was made by appropriately qualified professionals but there was no evidence of special education services documented in the IEPs and the IEPs were incomplete. Documentation evidence is required for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
- The one student reported in Code H did not have evidence to meet the criteria for placement in the Intensive Behaviour Interventions/Serious Mental Illness category. For this student, there was evidence that he sees a psychiatrist to support Intensive Behaviour or Serious

Mental Illness but the IEP addresses only academics. The teacher reported that she wondered about his designation because he does very well with appropriate teaching. The evidence verified alignment with reclassification to Code R.

- All four of the student files reported as Code Q did not contain evidence to support the Learning Disability category. The IEP goals and services did not meet requirements for Code Q. Documentation supported placement in Regular Education.
- Of the nine student files reviewed in Code P there is insufficient documentation to support Code P. In accordance with the Special Education Manual of policies, procedures and Guidelines these students require IEPs. Without evidence aligned with the category criteria recommendation is for reclassification to Regular Education.
- The student files were disorganized and lacked evidence of support service over and above what other students were receiving.
- IEPs were limited in availability, and when available were incomplete, and progress monitoring as well as evaluation were not always evident.
- The Instructional Support Planning Document in Code D and Code H were not used although this tool provides useful evidence needed for these categories.
- The Code H student file reviewed did not contain evidence to support the additional services being provided to the student. Outside agency support and collaboration was not documented.
- There was no evidence of level of service in the files. The School stated that everyone receives a high level of individualization and care.
- During the review, the Director relayed a number of questions, statements and clarification specific to designation and service provision for the Gifted category. The Director was provided with the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedure and Guidelines as a mechanism to verify criteria and identify answers to many of the questions.

Recommendations:

The auditors recommend that:

- The School ensure that student claims in Code D meet the criteria listed in the Special Education Manual of Policies Procedure and Guidelines. There must be documentation of a medical diagnosis in one or more of the following areas: nervous system impairment that impacts movement or mobility, musculoskeletal condition, or chronic health impairment that seriously impacts student's education and achievement and that there is an IEP created that address all pertinent areas as outlined in the Special Education Manual of Policies Procedures and Guidelines.
- The School ensure any student claimed in Code H with a behavioural assessment have evidence to support the diagnosis was made by a qualified mental health clinicians as specified in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines. As well, there must be documented evidence that an IEP shows the service being provided.
- The School ensure student claims in Code G contain assessment documentation of ASD made by appropriately qualified professional verifying the student is ASD in accordance with the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines. There must be documented evidence that an IEP is in place that identifies the service over and above those offered to the general student population.

- The School ensure student claims in Code P contain assessment documentation made by an appropriately qualified professional verifying the student is gifted in accordance with the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines. There must be documented evidence that an IEP is in place that shows the service over and above those offered to the general student population.
- The School report only student claims in each category when there is documentation to verify criteria of the special education category has been met and that a plan for the delivery of these special education services are in evidence at the time of the required claim.
- The School report only those student claims who meet the criteria for the category in which they are claimed and are receiving special education support services to address the needs identified in the assessment information that are beyond those offered to the general population.
- The School ensure all student files have appropriate detailed assessments and that the IEP supports the recommendations for the reported category in accordance with the criteria outlined in the Special Education Manual of Policy, Procedures and Guidelines.
- Documentation of the level and amount of service given to students be clearly recorded in the IEP.
- The School encourage consistent use of the various in-house forms and tools. The Ministry of Education's Instructional Planning tool would be of assistance.
- Educational programs be determined and designed by qualified educators.
- The School ensure that all student files contain dated evidence supporting the placement of a student in a category.
- The School staff familiarize themselves with the [Special Education Resource Documents](#) and the [IEP Resource Guide for Teachers](#), including considerations for determining when an IEP is required in accordance with the [IEP Order M638/95](#). The Order indicates three circumstances where an IEP for a student with special needs is not necessary. Those instances are where:
 - the student with special needs requires no adaptation or only minor adaptations to educational materials, or instructional or assessment methods;
 - the expected learning outcomes established by the applicable educational program guide have not been modified for the student with special needs;
 - the student with special needs requires in a school year 25 hours or less remedial instruction by a person other than the classroom teacher, in order for the student to meet the expected learning outcomes.
- The School staff be required to undertake a workshop on the IEP purpose and process to ensure there is a documented plan developed for students with special needs that summarizes and records the individualization of a student's education program.
- The School undertake a return compliance review once a workshop has been undertaken to ensure student programing and service meets the Special Education Manual of Policy, Procedures and Guidelines.

Auditors' Comments

The auditors wish to express their appreciation to the school staff for their cooperation and hospitality during the SEEC review.