



**Ministry of Education
Knowledge Management & Accountability Division**

2015/16 Special Education Enrolment Audit

AUDIT REPORT

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 61 (Greater Victoria)

2015/16 SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 61 (Greater Victoria)

Background

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

In the 2015/16 school year, school boards reported 26,633 students enrolled in the low incidence supplemental special education funding categories at September 2015. School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) reported 1,021 students in the supplemental special education funding categories as of September 30, 2015. For the purpose of this compliance audit, School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) reported 17 students in the Physically Dependent Category (Code A), three students reported in the Deafblind Category (Code B), 91 students in the Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability Category (Code C), 191 students in the Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment Category (Code D), 10 students in the Visual Impairment Category (Code E), 34 in the Deaf or Hard of Hearing Category (Code F), 363 in the Autism Spectrum Disorder Category (Code G), and 312 in the Intensive Behavior Intervention/Serious Mental Illness Category (Code H).

The Ministry of Education annually conducts Special Education enrolment audits, in selected school districts, to verify reported enrolment on Form 1701. School districts are selected for audit based on a variety of factors, including the length of time since their last audit, the district's incidence levels compared to the provincial incidence levels, and changes in enrolment.

Purpose

The purpose of the Special Education enrolment audit is to provide assurance to the Ministry of Education and boards of education that school districts are complying with the instructions contained in [*Form 1701: Student Data Collection, Completion Instructions for Public Schools*](#) and Ministry policies are being followed. The audit also provides assurance that the students reported are receiving the service and have been placed in the appropriate special education category, as per the [*Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines \(September 2013\)*](#).

Description of the Audit Process

A Special Education enrolment audit was conducted in School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) during the week of January 25, 2016.

An entry meeting was held on January 25, 2016, with the Superintendent of Schools, the Associate Superintendent of Schools, the Secretary Treasurer, the Associate Secretary Treasurer, and the two District Principals of Special Education. Daily meetings with the two District

Principals of Special Education were held to present preliminary findings and to seek clarification related to the contents of files.

Prior to the file reviews, the auditors interviewed District staff to enquire about the District's policies, procedures and programs. The auditors were provided with an overview of the special education services offered by the District during the entry meeting, as well as a copy of the Special Education Services Handbook (Supporting Diversity).

A sample of 17 student files reported in the Physically Dependent category (Code A), three student files in Deafblind (Code B), 30 student files in Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disabilities (Code C), 95 student files in Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment (Code D), five students in the Visual Impairment Category (Code E), five student files in Deaf or Hard of Hearing (Code F), 70 student files in Autism Spectrum Disorder (Code G), and 175 student files in Intensive Behavior Interventions/Serious Mental Illness (Code H) special needs categories were reviewed and evaluated to determine if the students in these categories were accurately reported on Form 1701.

The file review process did not encounter issues requiring school visits. The two District Principals of Special Education were able to provide the audit team with evidence when clarification was required.

An exit meeting was held with the Superintendent of Schools, the Associate Superintendent of Schools, the Associate Secretary Treasurer, and the two District Principals of Special Education on January 29, 2016. The auditors reviewed the purpose of the audit and the audit criteria, explained the audit reporting process, reported their findings, clarified any outstanding issues, discussed reclassifications for the 2015/16 school year, and expressed appreciation for the assistance provided.

Observations:

- There were no recommended reclassifications for the 17 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code A.
- There were no recommended reclassifications for the three student files reviewed by the auditors in Code B.
- Of the 30 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code C, two students were recommended for reclassification to Code D.
- There were no recommended reclassifications for the 95 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code D.
- There were no recommended reclassifications for the five student files reviewed by the auditors in Code E.

- There were no recommended reclassifications for the five student files reviewed by the auditors in Code F.
- There were no recommended reclassifications for the 70 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code G.
- There were no recommended reclassifications for the 175 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code H.

The auditors found that:

- Two students reported in Code C whose assessments did not support placement in that category as outlined in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, did support placement in the Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment category (Code D). One of the students had been assessed and diagnosed while in Elementary School as meeting the criteria for Code C. A recent intellectual assessment revealed the student was now functioning at Secondary School with a mild intellectual disability and has documented medical issues meeting the criteria for Code D. The other student did not have an intellectual assessment to support placement in Code C but did have a diagnosis from Queen Alexander Centre for microcephaly and cerebral palsy.
- Five students reported in Code D have a medical diagnosis pending. Three of these students have evidence of diabetes but no medical diagnosis. Each of their files contained a Diabetes Medication Administration Form signed by their doctor. In addition, each student is receiving support from Nursing Support Services which can only be provided by a direct referral from a physician to the Diabetic Clinic. Two other students have a diagnosis pending. One student with a diagnosis of diabetes is gaining his independence and will return to regular education in September. One student had recently enrolled and his medical report will come from out of province. The other student, who has a complex learning and medical profile, is in the process of receiving an updated medical diagnosis.
- Some secondary aged students have psycho educational assessments more than ten years old.
- Instructional planning tools were a helpful support in the placement and planning for some students.
- Student files were well organized, data was readily available, documentation was dated and current.
- The IEPs for students in all categories were consistently written to reflect the needs of individual students. The goals and strategies often reflected recommendations from various assessments or medical reports.
- Code H student files contained a considerable amount of evidence to support the additional services being provided to students. Outside agency support and collaboration was well documented.
- All the student files in Code G contained evidence of well defined services and programs. Many of the files contained up to date assessments.
- District support services staff worked well with staff at the school level to provide critical information necessary for clarification.

Recommendations:

The auditors recommend that:

- The District ensure that there is documentation to support that the students in Code C (Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability) have been appropriately assessed and identified as meeting the criteria listed in the Special Education Manual of Policies Procedures and Guidelines for the category.
- The District ensure that any student claims in Code D (Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment) meet the criteria listed in the Special Education Manual of Policies Procedures and Guidelines for the category. 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.
- The District consider that secondary students in Code C have a current psycho educational assessment to assist with the transition after leaving school to Community Living BC.
- The District encourage wide-spread use of instructional planning tools.

Auditors' Comments

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