



**Ministry of Education
Resource Management Division
Funding and Financial Accountability Branch**

2018/19 Special Education Enrolment Audit

AUDIT REPORT

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 85 (Vancouver Island North)
REVISED JUNE 2019

2018/19 SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 85 (Vancouver Island North)

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 2018/19 school year, school boards reported 31,314 students enrolled in the low incidence supplemental special education funding categories at September 2018. School District No. 85 (Vancouver Island North) reported 274 students in the special education categories as of September 28, 2018. For the purpose of this compliance audit, School District No. 85 (Vancouver Island North) reported five student claims in the Physically Dependent Category (Code A), nine student claims in the Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability Category (Code C), 43 student claims in the Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment Category (Code D), one student claim in the Visual Impairment Category (Code E), one student claim in the Deaf or Hard of Hearing Category (Code F), 23 student claims in the Autism Spectrum Disorder Category (Code G), and 26 student claims 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 \(April 2016\)*](#).

Description of the Audit Process

A Special Education enrolment audit was conducted in School District No. 85 (Vancouver Island North) during the week of February 19, 2019.

An entry meeting was held on February 19, 2019 with the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and Secretary Treasurer. Daily meetings with the Assistant Superintendent were held to present preliminary findings and to seek clarification related to the contents of files.

In the low incidence categories, a sample of five student files reported in Physically Dependent (Code A), nine student files in Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disabilities (Code C), 43 student files in Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment (Code D), one student file in Visual Impairment (Code E), one student file in Deaf or Hard of Hearing (Code F), 23 student files in Autism Spectrum Disorder (Code G), and 26 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.

In the high incidence categories, there were 15 student files reported in Mild Intellectual Disability (Code K), one student file in Gifted (Code P), 50 student files in Learning Disabilities (Code Q) and 15 student files in Students Requiring Behaviour Support or Students with Mental Illness (Code R) special needs categories were reviewed and evaluated to determine if students in these categories were accurately reported on Form 1701.

The file review process encountered issues requiring school visits to Port Hardy Secondary and Eagle View Elementary. There were two students reported in Code A for whom the evidence in the file did not support that the students were completely dependent on others for meeting all five daily living needs, nor that they required assistance at all times for mobility. A visit by two of the auditors to the schools confirmed that the students were correctly classified in Code A.

An exit meeting was held with the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent on February 22, 2019. 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 2018/19 school year, and expressed appreciation for the assistance provided.

Observations

As an outcome of the District's appeal for a student initially reported as Code D and then reclassified to Code A, the District determined once the student was in a secondary school there would be necessary supports in place to revise the designation from A to D in the 2019/20 school year.

There were no recommended reclassifications for the student files in Code A, Code C, Code D, Code E, Code F, Code G, Code H, Code K, Code P and Code R.

Of the 50 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code Q:

- one student was recommended for reclassification to a different high incidence special need category.

The auditors found that:

- The student files were very comprehensive and the evidence needed to verify the criteria was available to the auditors.
- Documentation was current and dated.
- The diagnostic information was current and dated.
- The diagnostic information supported the category in which the student was claimed.

- There were a number of forms developed by the District which provided useful information. These included: Parent Acknowledgement of Designation, Review of Designation Form, ICM Notes, Behavior Plan, Support Schedule, Conduct History, IEP Implementation Accountability Form. These forms were used somewhat consistently throughout the District.
- There a fairly consistent use of the Instructional Support Planning Process tool throughout the District for the various categories.
- The IEP format used was consistent throughout the District.
- It was verified that in a number of the cases, the IEP goals minimally met criteria for the category claim.
- In a selection of the student files, the goals were academic only. The District staff explained that it was the parents' request to have academic goals on the IEP. The District staff were able to provide evidence of additional goals which reflected the category claim as well as verification of appropriate activities and services being provided.
- There was evidence in the student files that category designations were reviewed regularly and changes were made as needed.
- One student claim did not have evidence to meet criteria for placement in the Physically Dependent Category (Code A). The evidence verified the student did not require assistance at all times for all major daily living needs as outlined in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines.
 - Evidence indicated this student met all the criteria for a different low incidence special need category.
 - In this instance only for the current school year the determination through the appeal process was that this student remain in Code A. Further it was recognised by the District, for the 2019/20 school year the student would be moved to a secondary school with the ability to provide the necessary supports and revise the student's designation to a different low incidence special need category in September 2019.
- One student claim for Code Q did not have evidence to meet the Learning Disability category criteria. There was evidence to support a different high incidence special need category.

Recommendations:

The auditors recommend that:

- The District staff ensure student claims in Code A contain assessment documentation verifying the student is completely dependent on others for meeting all major daily living needs and that the student requires assistance at all times for feeding, dressing, toileting, mobility and personal hygiene, as outlined in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines.
- The District staff ensure that the evidence in the student file meets the criteria for a special education designation.
- The District staff continue their ongoing professional development with Learning Assistance Resource Teachers and Principals to ensure that IEP goals reflect the category in which the student is claimed and the services outlined in the IEP relate to the identified needs of the student.

Auditors' Comments

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