



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

**2018/19 Special Education Enrolment Audit**

**AUDIT REPORT**

**SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 47 (Powell River)**

## **2018/19 SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 47 (Powell River)**

### **Background**

The Ministry of Education funds boards of education based on the boards' reported enrolment as of September 30<sup>th</sup> 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. 47 (Powell River) reported 389 students in the special education categories as of September 28, 2018. For the purpose of this compliance audit, School District No. 47 (Powell River) reported two student claims in the Physically Dependent Category (Code A), two student claims reported in the Deafblind Category (Code B), six student claims in the Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability Category (Code C), 91 student claims in the Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment Category (Code D), four student claims in the Visual Impairment Category (Code E), two student claims in the Deaf or Hard of Hearing Category (Code F), 49 student claims in the Autism Spectrum Disorder Category (Code G), and 106 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. 47 (Powell River) during the week of February 11, 2019.

An entry meeting was held on February 11, 2019 with the District Principal, the Director of Instruction, the Coordinator-Student Support Services, and the Superintendent. Daily meetings with the Coordinator-Student Support Services, the Director of Instruction, and the District

Principal were held to present preliminary findings and to seek clarification related to the contents of files.

A sample of two student files reported in Physically Dependent (Code A), two student files in Deafblind (Code B), five student files in Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disabilities (Code C), 50 student files in Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment (Code D), four student files in Visual Impairments, two student files in Deaf or Hard of Hearing (Code F), 25 student files in Autism Spectrum Disorder (Code G), and 100 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 Coordinator-Student Support Services and the District Principal were able to provide the audit team with evidence when clarification was required. Meeting daily with the Coordinator-Student Support Services, the District Principal and the Director of Instruction enabled the audit team to keep the District staff apprised of the audit progress.

An exit meeting was held with the Coordinator-Student Support Services, the District Principal and the Director of Instruction on February 15, 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:**

There were no recommended reclassifications for the student files reviewed by the auditors in Codes A, B, C, E, F, G and H,

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

- Two students were recommended for reclassification to a different low incidence special need category

The auditors found that:

- The IEP template used for all IEPs was clear and contained all the requirements of an IEP in accordance with Ministry directives.
- For the majority of student claims, there was evidence of goals corresponding to the category in which the student was reported and there was evidence that identified students received services beyond that of the general student population.
- The Interagency Coordination form was useful and contained: a description of environments, behaviour, or concerns impacting student learning as well as school staff providing support and interagency and community supports. The dates and actual names of service providers were often missing.
- In some instances, it was noted that parents have been reluctant to access services to support their children in school, particularly Occupational Therapy services.
- There was difficulty at times determining if regular reviews of student designations and impacts on learning was regularly monitored.

- It was noted at Westview Learning Centre that information in a student file included anecdotal observations of multiple students in the one file. This practice poses a possible breach of privacy and protection of information.
- The use of the Instructional Support Planning Tool was included in most student files to support placement in Code H. However, the form was not always completed in its entirety which resulted in difficulties identifying if students met criteria for Code H.
- The documentation for a student reported as Code D, indicated specialized service according to a 2017 report. However, there was no evidence of a medical diagnosis. The evidence and service provision did align with the criteria for a different low incidence special need category.
- One student reported in Code D had a diagnosis from 2010, but diagnosis does not meet the criteria for Code D. The most recent psychoeducational assessment from 2016 indicated the student met criteria for specific Learning Disabilities in reading, math and written expression. The recommendation at that time was referral for an assessment. There was no evidence that the assessment had taken place. The IEP and services provided addressed the needs of a student with Learning Disabilities and meet criteria for a different low incidence special need category.
- A student was reported as Code D following a diagnosis and treatment in 2009. The evidence identified that there were learning difficulties to be monitored. The student is taking grade appropriate courses online with the support of a tutor. There was no evidence the student was receiving Occupational or Physical Therapy services. It is recommended that this student's designation be reviewed following the updated Neuropsychological Assessment to determine if placement continues to meet the Code D criteria in subsequent school years.

### **Recommendations:**

The auditors recommend that:

- When reporting a student in Code D, there is a medical diagnosis to meet the criteria for the Physical Disability/Chronic Health Impairment category.
- The District ensure that Form 1701 reporting is verified prior to submission and that student files are updated and reviewed regularly to ensure the students meet the criteria in the category in which they are claimed for the reported school year.
- The District ensure student claims in Code D meet the criteria listed in the Special Education Manual of Policies Procedure and Guidelines for that category. There must be evidence 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 ensure that the diagnosis of DCD has the severity to support placement in Code D. A medical diagnosis, by itself, does not determine the need for special educational services by students with physical disabilities or chronic health impairments. Students are

only eligible for Districts to report for funding in this category if their functioning and education is significantly affected by their physical disabilities or chronic health impairments. The criteria specific to Code D requires that the complex development behaviour conditions are exhibited in an array of complex needs, with two or more domains being impacted.

- Although the Interagency Coordination form was in the file with other information from 2018/19, the names of service providers would provide verification and dating all forms would provide a clear determination that services provided are current.
- The District staff ensure that each student file contains only information that pertains to a student. To protect confidentiality, no information regarding other students should be included in that file.
- The District staff ensure that the Instructional Support Planning Tool is completed in its entirety when used to support student placement in Code H.

### **Auditors' Comments**

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