



**Ministry of Education  
Resource Management Division**

**2010/11 Distributed Learning Enrolment Audit**

**AUDIT REPORT**

**SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 23 (Central Okanagan)**

**Distributed Learning School**

## **2010/11 DISTRIBUTED LEARNING ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 23 (Central Okanagan)**

### **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 Superintendent and District staff, and with the DL Principal and DL staff to review the purpose of the audit and the criteria for funding as outlined in the Form 1701 Instructions.

The audit team worked at the Central School building to review student learning plans, substantive assignments, instructional related communication, course plans, and student registration documents. The auditors sought documentation to determine 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 DL Principal and DL staff, and with the Assistant 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**

Central Programs and Services School is an umbrella program, which facilitates the delivery of a number of alternative programs for students including a distributed learning program. The Distributed Learning School has expanded from approximately 1,150 students in 2007 to over 3,000 in the 2010 school year.

There have been a number of changes to the program since the 2005/06 audit which includes:

- a change from WebCT to Moodle platform
- site based teachers at all five high schools in the district
- intervention teachers at all five high schools
- the creation of a video studio and video blogs
- an expansion of blended and synchronous learning programs
- a middle school tablet program
- the separation of DL from Alternate Education at the Central Programs and Services School
- no 'E-school' summer school courses
- the introduction of Math 60/70 for Adult Learners

The School provides programs for students from K-12. The majority of the Grade 10-12 students are cross-enrolled with a District secondary school. A number of adults are enrolled in DL to up-grade academic courses. The school provides comprehensive information in print form and on their web-site detailing: roles and responsibilities of staff, students and parents; assessment and evaluation policies; and, descriptions of course delivery models. The School does not reimburse parents or students for any goods or services.

The K-7 programs are individualized for each student based on the prescribed learning outcomes set out in the applicable educational program guide for that grade level. The DL Virtual Middle School serves only students who are not cross-enrolled and facilitates learning through daily synchronous on-line classes and blended learning options. Each student has the use of a tablet, if requested. Primarily, the Grade 10-12 student courses use a Moodle platform and are academic in nature. The majority of the students are cross-enrolled and most of the DL teachers also teach within the District's high schools. The DL school also employs intervention teachers located at each of the District high schools to provide on-going monitoring and support to the cross-enrolled DL students.

### **Observations**

The auditors found that:

- All members of the teaching staff for the Distributed Learning School 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 the Distributed Learning School 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. No reimbursements for any goods or services are made to either parents or students.
- The School follows the Distributed Learning-BC Residency Policy.
- The School follows the District's policy and procedures for 'ordinarily' resident in B.C.
- Student work and instructional communication was often not dated. Dates were verified at the request of the auditors.
- Instructional communication was, in some instances, not related to course content, instruction or learning outcomes.
- Claims for Aboriginal Education Supplemental funding did not have evidence to meet the funding criteria as required in accordance with the Form 1701 Instructions for some students.
- Students who were withdrawn from courses and had not completed the funded course were reclaimed for the same course prior to the elapse of two DL reporting periods. During this review process the DL School's records indicated that based on a total of 2,587 course enrolments, there were 1,338 course withdrawals for the 2009/10 school year – a 51.7% withdrawal rate.
- The School has a system for tracking students from the time they register until all funding requirements, including the Distributed Learning Active Policy requirements, are met. Despite the system of tracking, a number of courses were reported when there was no evidence of a substantive assignment and/or of instructional communication by the activation submission date.
- In some instances students were not active at the required activation submission date.
- Some students were claimed in error despite practices in place to mitigate incorrect reporting of funding claims.

### **Audit Sample Findings**

The auditors found that:

- 1.0000 Kindergarten to Grade 9 FTE claimed in September was not active in the program. There was no evidence the student was active at the activation date as required by the Distributed Learning Active Policy and in accordance with Form 1701 Instructions.
- 1.6250 FTEs (consisting of 0.5000 Grade 10 to 12 school-age and 1.1250 adult students) reported in September were active in fewer courses than claimed. 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*".
- 0.1250 FTEs Grade 10 to 12 school-age students reported in February were active in fewer courses than claimed.
- 0.3750 FTEs (consisting of 0.1250 Grade 10 to 12 school-age and 0.2500 adult students) reported in September were claimed by the School in error. These students were enrolled in fewer courses than claimed.
- 0.3750 FTEs Grade 10 to 12 school-age students reported in February were claimed by the School in error. These students were enrolled in fewer courses than claimed.

- 0.5000 FTEs (consisting of 0.2500 Grade 10-12 school-age FTEs and 0.2500 adult FTEs) were reported on the September Form 1701 had re-enrolled in courses from which they had withdrawn and in which they had been previously claimed without the elapse of two DL reporting periods. Per the September 20, 2007 Distributed Learning Administrators' withdrawal policy directives, *"for grades 10-12 students to be eligible for new funding in the same DL course or program in the same DL school, the following conditions must be met...the student must have been previously reported as failed or withdrawn in that course; there must be a record of two DL Achievement Reporting cycles of student inactivity along with a record of attempts made by the DL school to contact the student...Essentially, no new funding can be claimed until after a full calendar year for a student reported as active at a funding cycle, except for students reported as active in September who withdraw before February – those students can be claimed for funding the following September"* and the DL Funding Policy's requirement that *"If course was withdrawn from or not completed there must be a record of student inactivity for two DL enrolment counts along with a corresponding record of attempts made by the DL school to contact the student for that course."*
- 0.7500 FTEs Grade 10-12 school-age students were reported in September did not have evidence to meet the 'active' requirement at the activation submission date as required by the Distributed Learning Active Policy and in accordance with Form 1701 Instructions.
- 0.2500 FTEs Grade 10-12 school-age students were reported in February did not have evidence to meet the 'active' requirement at the activation submission date as required by the Distributed Learning Active Policy and in accordance with Form 1701 Instructions.
- 3 students claimed for Aboriginal Education funding did not have evidence to meet the criteria as outlined in Form 1701 Instructions.

### **Recommendations**

The auditors recommend that:

- The District report for funding only claims for those students who are active in accordance with the Form 1701 Instructions, and the Distributed Learning Funding and Active Policies.
- The District implement an effective process to track DL student claims from the time of registration until they are reported, to ensure all claims on Form 1701 are eligible for funding in accordance with the Form 1701 Instructions and related Distributed Learning policies.
- The DL staff ensure all student/school files contain all necessary evidence, including a copy of the substantive assignment and instructional communication 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 identified by course and dated.
- The DL staff ensure that student courses are claimed on Form 1701 for the funding period during which they meet the Distributed Learning 'active' criteria and in accordance with the reporting claim directives of the Form 1701 Instructions.
- The District and DL staff not report funding claims for Grade 10 to 12 students who are re-registering in a course previously claimed, prior to the elapsing of two DL claim periods since the initial claim.
- The DL staff claim Aboriginal Education supplemental funding only for those students who meet all the criteria as outlined in Form 1701 Instructions.

### **Auditors' Comments**

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