



**Ministry of Education
Resource Management Division**

2010/11 Distributed Learning Enrolment Audit

AUDIT REPORT

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 62 (Sooke)

JUAN DE FUCA DISTRIBUTED LEARNING

2010/11 DISTRIBUTED LEARNING ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 62 (Sooke)

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 was selected for review. Entry meetings were held with the Superintendent and District staff as well as the DL Principal to discuss the purpose of the audit and the criteria for funding as outlined in the Form 1701 Instructions. The audit team worked at the Westshore Centre which houses the DL program 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 that 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. The review was extended to include all reported students for analysis when school-wide issues were identified by the audit team. Exit meetings were held with the DL Principal, as well as with the 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

The Juan de Fuca Distributed Learning school operates on a year-round basis which provides students with the opportunity to enrol at any time during the school year. The school offers secondary school courses (Grades 8-12) through the Open School BC Online Consortium. The curriculum is delivered through the use of electronic programs, paper-based print material, face-to-face communication, or a combination of the above. Electronic instruction includes online courses which use computer-based courses (Web CT), conferencing, virtual classrooms, email, seminars and group activities. Students are expected to complete each course within one year of the date of registration and are expected to maintain contact with their teachers on a regular basis, with a suggested minimum of once every two weeks. The school has processes in place to monitor students who are not meeting expectations for progress in their studies.

The school enrolls school-age students who are working toward graduation requirements; a few school-age graduates; adults who intend to complete either a BC Graduation Certificate or an Adult Graduation Certificate; and, adults who have Graduation Certificates but wish to further their academic qualifications. Students have the option of enrolling as full or part-time students but the auditors note that, with the exception of a few students enrolled in Grade 8 or 9 programs, the majority are part-time students, taking one to four courses. The majority of school-age non-graduates are cross-enrolled with this DL school and local secondary schools (the “schools of record” for these students). Most students enrolled in the school reside within the local geographic area, with a limited number educated ‘at a distance’.

The school has recently added a program, to its established Grade 10 to 12 curricula, for Grade 8 and 9 students. A “Grade 8 and 9 Foundations Program” is intended to build academic learning and tutorials to build skills, with an emphasis on literacy and numeracy. In addition to this service, the school offers cross-enrolled Grade 8 and 9 students with the opportunity for acceleration in the core academic subjects, upon approval from both program staff and the home school counsellor.

The Juan de Fuca Distributed Learning school operates out of the Westshore Centre, a facility leased by the School District. The District’s Continuing Education program and several Alternate programs are also administered from this facility. These programs are also administered by the DL program’s principal, a vice-principal and the Centre’s clerical staff.

Observations

The auditors found that:

- All members of the teaching staff of the Juan de Fuca Distributed Learning School are members of the B.C. College of Teachers.
- The teachers lead the educational programs of their students and assess their students on an on-going basis for all progress reports and interim reports.
- The teachers communicate with students in a variety of ways to support their learning.
- Learning resources used at the Juan de Fuca 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.

- The school follows the Distributed Learning-BC Residency Policy.
- The school follows a consistently applied policy and procedures for ‘ordinarily’ resident in B.C.
- Updates to Student Learning Plans were not always dated making it impossible to link the course claimed to that plan.
- Instructional communications between teacher and student were not always dated.
- In a few cases, student files, including Student Learning Plans and substantive assignments, were not available, due to an error in clerical processes.
- The school did not always claim students for funding for the funding period during which they became active.
- The Principal provided a list of funding claims for a Board Authorized and Approved course submitted in error as a four-credit course when the course was approved as a two-credit course and requested that the auditors make the appropriate funding adjustments.
- The Principal provided a list of funding claims which the school believed it had submitted correctly in keeping with instructions in a BCESIS Technical Update (September 17,2010) but which, the school advised were not funded after the reporting process for September 30, 2010 was finalized. The Principal requested the auditors consider recommending adjustments for the courses in question on the basis that a system error had resulted in a loss of funding which the school considered itself eligible.

Audit Sample Findings

The auditors found that:

- 2.3750 FTEs (consisting of 1.2500 Grade 10-12 school-age and 1.1250 adult students) claimed 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 (consisting of 0.1250 Grade 10-12 school-age and 0.1250 adult students) claimed 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.
- 5.0000 Grade 8 and 9 FTEs (consisting of 3.0000 in September and 2.0000 in February) did not become ‘active’ in the program. There was no evidence the student was ‘active’ at the activation submission date as required by the Distributed Learning Active Policy and in accordance with Form 1701 Instructions.
- 0.6250 Grade 10 to 12 school-age FTEs were enrolled in fewer courses than reported. The students reported in September were claimed as a result of a clerical error.
- 8.1875 FTEs (consisting of 7.7500 Grade 10-12 school-age and 0.4375 adult students) were adjusted to reflect two-credit courses reported for funding as four-credit courses. Form 1701 Instructions state that: *A course is defined by the Student Credentials Ministerial Order MO M164/96. For the purpose of completing this form, consider a four credit course (approximately 120 hours) as one course and a two credit course (approximately 60 hours) as a half course*”). This error was reported to the auditors by the school at the beginning of the audit.
- 4.5000 FTEs (consisting of 2.7500 Grade 10-12 school-age and 1.7500 adult students) were adjusted to reflect a four-credit Math 10 course claim reported for funding by the school.

The school advised no funding was generated due to a course code entry error. Each of the Math 10 claims were audited to verify the FTEs met the eligibility criteria for Distributed Learning.

- 0.2500 FTEs were adjusted as it was verified that the student was taking fewer courses in their Grade 8-9 program than reported on Form 1701.

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's DL Centre ensure all Student Learning Plans, including periodic "updates" to those plans, are dated.
- The District's DL Centre ensure all courses claimed for funding are recorded on the current Student Learning Plans.
- The District's DL Centre ensure that all student assignments submitted for assessment and all instructional communications are dated.
- The District's DL Centre ensure all evidence for claims reported for funding meet the Distributed Learning Policies' criteria, refrain from destroying criteria documentation of student activation, and retain required documentation to verify the reported FTE claims for at least the current school year in which the funding claim is made to substantiate reported funding.
- The District's DL Centre ensure all Form 1701 funding claims are reported only when then student becomes 'active' and only at the activation submission date as listed in the Form 1701 Instructions. 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*".
- The District verify funding claims are consistent with the credit value of the courses claimed before they are reported.
- The District ensure course code designators are verified before reporting and authenticate all course data entries before they are finalized.

Auditors' Comments

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

**Funding & Compliance Branch
Resource Management Division
Ministry of Education
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