



**Ministry of Education
Resource Management Division**

2010/11 Special Education Enrolment Audit

**AUDIT REPORT
*REVISED APRIL 11, 2011***

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith)

2010/11 SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith)

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).

The Resource Management Division 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 have been placed in the appropriate special education category, as per the *Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines* (September 2009).

Description of the Audit Process

An entry meeting was held on January 17, 2011, with the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Secretary-Treasurer, District Principal of Student Support Services and Coordinator of Low Incidence Programs. Daily meetings with the District Principal of Student Support Services and Coordinator of Low Incidence Programs 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 a copy of the District's Student Support Services Guidebook, a historical overview of Student Support Services since 1960, and an explanation of the present Student Support Services delivery model in School District No. 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith).

The file review process did not encounter issues requiring school visits.

An exit meeting was held with the Superintendent, the Secretary-Treasurer, the District Principal of Student Support Services, and the Coordinator of Low Incidence Programs on January 21, 2011. 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 2010/11 school year, and expressed appreciation for the assistance provided.

Observations

Of the 23 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code A:

- One student was recommended for reclassification to Code D.
- One student was recommended for reclassification to Regular Education.

Of the 260 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code D:

- Ten students were recommended for reclassification to Regular Education.
- One student was recommended for reclassification to Code G.
- Fifteen students were recommended for reclassification to Code H.
- Four students were recommended for reclassification to Code K.
- Four students were recommended for reclassification to Code C
- Three students were recommended for reclassification to Code R.
- Twenty-six of the 37 student files recommended for reclassification lacked adequate medical diagnosis.

Of the 72 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code H:

- Five students were recommended for reclassification to Code R.
- Three students were recommended for reclassification to Regular Education.
- Five of the eight student files recommended for reclassification lacked inter-agency involvement.

The auditors found that:

- Student files were consistently well organized across the categories audited.
- IEPs generally documented good evidence of parent consultation, assessment, goals and services.
- Evidence for major areas of daily living in Category A was not consistently reported.
- Documentation indicated a close working relationship with the medical community which is a positive benefit to assessment, diagnosis and student learning.
- Doctor's letters at times provided opinions rather than diagnoses.
- Evidence to establish that a diagnosed medical condition had significant impact on the student's education and functioning was not consistently found.
- Forms entitled "Eligibility for Removal" and "Additional Support Checklist" were helpful in evaluating student files.
- Designation of students through the use of the "Eligibility Evaluation" form, within the District's decentralized model, lacked consistent compliance with the required evidence to meet Ministry guidelines. As a result of this systemic issue, the District should be audited again.

Recommendations

The auditors recommend that the District:

- Documents all major areas of daily living for students in Category A.
- Continue to maintain a close working relationship with the medical community.
- Ensure that a medical diagnosis is in place for students in Category D.
- Continue to use the Physical Disabilities/Chronic Health Impairment Instructional Support Planning Process as evidence that the medical condition has significant educational impact.
- Ensure that for students in Category H, inter-agency support is in place.
- Review the decentralized designation process utilizing the “Eligibility Evaluation” form to ensure compliance with Ministry guidelines.
- Be scheduled for a return Special Education audit in Categories D and H.

Auditors’ Comments

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