



**Ministry of Education  
Resource Management Division**

**2012/13 Distributed Learning Enrolment Audit**

**AUDIT REPORT**

**SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 53 (Okanagan Similkameen)**

**YOULEARN.CA – DISTRIBUTED LEARNING**

## **2012/13 DISTRIBUTED LEARNING ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 53 (Okanagan Similkameen)**

### **Background**

The Ministry of Education funds boards of education based on the number of student full time equivalents (FTEs) reported by the school districts on Form 1701: Student Data Collection (Form 1701). The FTEs are calculated by factoring the number of qualifying programs and courses taken by students. A funding formula is used to allocate funds to boards based primarily on the calculated student FTE.

The Resource Management Division annually conducts Distributed Learning (DL) 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.

DL programs and courses are alternatives to regular classroom-based instruction for students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 providing a method of instruction that relies primarily on indirect communication between learners and BC certified educators, including internet, other electronic-based delivery, teleconferencing, and correspondence. DL takes place when a student is primarily at a distance from the teacher.

Currently the Ministry funds boards of education for their Distributed Learning programs and courses based on student full-time equivalents (FTE) reported on *Form 1701: Student Data Collection* (Form 1701). There are 56 centres reported as Distributed Learning schools in the Province totalling 12,960.6353 FTEs for the 2012/13 school year. The YouLearn.ca Distributed Learning Program at School District No.53 (Okanagan Similkameen) reported a total of 58.6250 FTEs on their September 30, 2012 enrolment and 17.7500 FTEs on their February 2013 enrolment.

Since 2009/10 funding recoveries are 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 Distributed Learning audit was conducted at YouLearn.ca-DL in School District No.53 (Okanagan Similkameen) during the week of April 15, 2013.

An entry meeting was held with the Superintendent and the Distributed Learning Centre's Principal to review the purpose of the audit and the criteria for funding as outlined in the Form

1701 Instructions. The processes and procedures of the audit were reviewed and information about the Distributed Learning programs offered by the District were provided.

The audit team worked out of a computer lab at the Board Office. The auditors sought documentation to determine that 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 the Distributed Learning 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 Distributed Learning Principal and the Superintendent. At the exit meeting the auditors presented their 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 Teacher Regulation Branch.

### **Description of the Program**

YouLearn.ca-DL operates out of the DL classroom in South Okanagan Secondary School. It provides service to the three main communities: Oliver, Osoyoos, and Keremeos, in the Okanagan Similkameen District. Staff members in the Distributed Learning Centre also teach in the District's Continuing Education Centre and are on site in the three communities at designated times each week. Distributed Learning programs and courses are offered to students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. A teacher or administrator meets with the Kindergarten to Grade 9 students and their parents to plan the student's program. Students in Grades 10 to 12 also meet with a teacher or administrator as part of the registration process regardless of the number courses they are taking. Information about the Centre, including brief outlines about the courses that are offered, is on the school's website.

### **Observations**

The auditors found that:

- 0.2500 school age FTEs were claimed in February for courses which were ineligible. The student, who was registered in Grade 9 in September, had two Grade 10 courses added after September 30<sup>th</sup>. The Distributed Learning–Funding Policy states that “*Students in Grades 8 and 9 will be funded at 0.5000 FTE plus 0.1250 FTE per eligible 4 credit course to a maximum of 1.0000 FTE per school year...Additional courses taken after the September enrolment data submission that are not included in the plan will not be included in the student's funding calculation.*” In addition, the Form 1701 Instructions (P.13) states “*Distributed Learning Programs report the student's annual plan of courses for active students in Grades 8-9*”.
- 0.1250 school age FTEs reported in February was claimed for a student who had not met the ‘active’ requirements. It was verified that the student completed only one of the two assignments the Centre assigned to support the substantive student activity requirement to become ‘active’ at the claim date.
- 0.1250 school age FTEs were claimed for a course which had been claimed in 2011. The

student had been progressing through the learning outcomes of the same course since the 2011 claim.

- 0.1250 non-graduated adult FTEs were claimed for a course which had been reported as active December 12, 2011, at that time the student completed approximately 20% of the course before withdrawing.
- The Distributed Learning Centre continues to use the term “Activation Assignment” to designate the work the student must complete prior to becoming ‘active’. To meet the ‘active’ attendance, the terminology must align with the directives of the DL Active Policy which states: “*Substantive student course activity must be submitted by the student to the teacher.*”
- For some student claims the tracking of the submission date and the ‘active’ date was unclear. There were a number of files where the date of the completion of the substantive student course activity was prior to the date the work was reported as submitted.
- Some students were not claimed in the funding periods in which they became ‘active’. According to staff most of these situations were due to clerical errors. Staff had missed claiming them in the period in which they became active. In this instance no recoveries were recommended as it was verified that the student was active prior to the funding claim date and had not been previously claimed for the course.
- All members of the teaching staff of the Distributed Learning program are currently certified by the Teacher Regulation Branch.
- 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 in the Distributed Learning Centre comply with the *School Act* and related Ministry directives.
- The Centre is conducted on strictly secular and non-sectarian principles.
- The Centre is in accordance with the Distributed Learning-General Policy regarding financial reimbursements to parents.
- The Centre follows the Distributed Learning-BC Residency Policy.
- The Centre follows the District’s policy and procedures for ‘ordinarily’ resident in BC.

### **Recommendations**

- The District report for funding only those course claims that are eligible in accordance with the Distributed Learning–Funding Policy.
- The District report for funding only those courses in which students have met the ‘active’ requirements in accordance with the Form 1701 timelines.
- The Centre’s staff immediately put into practice the attendance terminology in accordance with the DL Active Policy.
- The Centre’s staff ensure that all student work is properly identified with the student’s name and is dated.
- The District’s Distributed Learning Centre ensure that self-paced courses are only claimed once regardless of the number of reporting periods the student requires to complete the learning outcomes for the course.
- The District ensure that all students claimed for funding are ordinarily resident in BC.

## **Auditors' Comments**

The auditors wish to express their appreciation to the District and program staff.