



**Ministry of Education  
Resource Management Division**

**2012/13 Distributed Learning Enrolment Audit**

**AUDIT REPORT**

**SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 6 (Rocky Mountain)**

**Rocky Mountain Distributed Learning School**

## **2012/13 DISTRIBUTED LEARNING ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 6 (Rocky Mountain)**

### **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 Rocky Mountain Distributed Learning School (RMDLS) at School District No. 6 (Rocky Mountain) reported a total of 37.3750 FTEs on their September 30, 2012 enrolment and 15.2500 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 Kimberly in School District No. 6 (Rocky Mountain) during the week of April 29 to May 03, 2013.

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

the Form 1701 Instructions. The process of the audit was reviewed and information about the program offered by the Distributed Learning Department was provided. The administrators and the audit team discussed the procedures that would be followed to undertake the audit.

The audit team worked out of the Blarhmont Learning Centre which houses the Rocky Mountain Distributed Learning School in Kimberly. 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. The audit team found all the files to be readily available. The on-line evidence required by the audit team was more easily accessed by the staff and was made available to the audit team in a timely manner. The auditors found the 'Course Binder' helpful, especially the 'Activation Criteria', as most of the teachers required more than 5% of substantive course activity be completed to activate the course and enter a funding claim. Recommended adjustments were discussed with the staff during the course of the audit, providing them with every opportunity to locate the necessary documentation.

A combined exit meeting was held with the DL Principal, school staff 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**

Rocky Mountain Distributed Learning School (RMDLS) is a continuous enrolment DL school providing educational programs for Kindergarten to Grade 12. The school population includes both school-age and adult learners.

Staffing consists of 5.6 full time equivalents that are stationed in each of the three zones (Invermere, Golden, Kimberly) that comprise the Rocky Mountain School District, providing instruction and clerical support. Complete programs are offered to Kindergarten to Grade 9 students. For Grade 10 to 12 and adult students, students may take one or more of the 52 online courses.

RMDLS uses a combination of online and paper-based curriculum depending on the needs and grade level of individual students. For students in Grades 10, 11 and 12 curriculum is either from the British Columbia Learning Network or has been developed locally. The online options are the latest curriculum available in British Columbia, designed for delivery online. Course offerings range from the Ashley series of Math courses to the successful Equine Studies.

### **Observations**

The auditors found that:

- 0.1250 school-age FTE reported in September did not have evidence in accordance with the District's process and procedures for ordinarily resident in BC.

- All Kindergarten to Grade 9 FTEs claimed on the September Form 1701 were active in the program. There was evidence the students were active at the activation date as required by the Distributed Learning - Active Policy and in accordance with Form 1701 Instructions.
- There were a number of Student Learning Plans (more than 25) that were dated well after the September 28 claim date. These were primarily from one of the three zones that did not ensure the completion of the SLP at the time of registration. There were no recoveries recommended in this instance only as it was verified that the students were engaged in their learning prior to the funding claim date.
- There were many student files where several of the teachers did not consistently date the course activity “Feedback” section of Grades: View (the Gradebook). These dates were on the actual student’s course activity and were later provided as evidence of substantive course activity by the claim date.
- All members of the teaching staff of the Rocky Mountain Distributed Learning School are currently certified with 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 at Rocky Mountain 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 third party providers.
- The school follows the Distributed Learning-BC Residency Policy.
- The school follows the District’s process and procedures for ‘ordinarily’ resident in B.C.
- The school follows the Distributed Learning Active Policy.
- The school has a system for tracking students from the time they register until they meet all the funding requirements including those found in the Distributed Learning-Active Policy.

### **Recommendations**

The auditors recommend that:

- The District ensure only eligible ‘ordinarily resident’ students are claimed for funding. International and Out of Province individuals are non-resident, ineligible for a provincially funded education, and are not to be claimed for funding.
- The DL Centre staff ensure all relevant forms are appropriately and consistently dated as per the DL Active Policy requirements.

## **Auditors' Comments**

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