



**Ministry of Education
Resource Management Division**

2012/13 Special Education Enrolment Audit

AUDIT REPORT

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 45 (West Vancouver)

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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).

In the 2012/13 school year, school boards reported 24,296 students enrolled in the Level 1, 2, and 3 supplemental special education funding categories at September 2012. School District No. 45 (West Vancouver) reported 156 students in the supplemental special education funding categories as of September 30, 2012. For the purpose of this compliance audit, School District No. 45 (West Vancouver) reported two students in the Physically Dependent Category (Code A); 12 students in the Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability Category (Code C); 26 students in the Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment Category (Code D); two students were reported in the Visual Impairment Category (Code E); nine students in the Deaf or Hard of Hearing Category (Code F); 80 students in the Autism Spectrum Disorder Category (Code G); and, 25 students in the Intensive Behaviour or Serious Mental Illness Category (Code H).

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

A Special Education enrolment audit was conducted in School District No. 45 (West Vancouver) during the week of January 28, 2013.

An entry meeting was held on January 28, 2013 with the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent, and two District Administrators of Student Support Services. Daily meetings with the two District Administrators of Student Support Services were held to present preliminary findings and to seek clarification related to the contents of files.

Prior to the file reviews, at the entry meeting, the auditors interviewed District staff to enquire about the District's policies, procedures and programs. The auditors were provided with a comprehensive Power Point Presentation that described the West Vancouver School District Special Education Processes and Procedures.

All 156 student files reported in the Codes A, C, D, E, G and H special needs categories were reviewed and evaluated to determine if the students in these categories were accurately reported on Form 1701.

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

An exit meeting was held with the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent, and two District Administrators of Student Support Services on February 1, 2013. The lead auditor reviewed the purpose of the audit and the audit criteria, explained the audit reporting process, reported the findings of the audit team, clarified any outstanding issues, and expressed appreciation for the assistance provided.

Observations

Of the two student files reviewed by the auditors in Code A, no students were recommended for reclassification.

Of the 12 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code C:

- one student was recommended for reclassification to Code G. The District Administrator of Student Support Services advised that "this is our error". This student had previously been diagnosed with "an Autism Spectrum Disorder" (April 14th, 2003). In addition to the original diagnosis, up to date evidence in the file, including the IEP planning and service provision provided support for classification in Code G.
- one student was recommended for reclassification to Code D. This student's diagnostic information is a combination of one from Britain and one from BC. This student should be reviewed for the 2013/2014 year and should not be renewed without confirmation of evidence of a medical diagnosis that meets the criteria for placement in Code D, as well as an IEP with goals that correspond to Code D.

Of the 12 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code D,

- two students were recommended for reclassification to regular education. The Administrator of Student Support Services was in agreement with these recommendations, as there was no evidence of special education services provided.

Of the two student files reviewed by the auditors in Code E, no students were recommended for reclassification.

Of the nine student files reviewed by the auditors in Code F, no students were recommended for reclassification.

Of the 80 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code G, no students were recommended for reclassification.

Of the 25 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code H:

- 4 students were recommended for reclassification to Code R.
 - One student had left the District by mid-October. There was insufficient documentation left in the file to support this student's placement in Category H.
 - One of the three remaining students had no documented evidence of interagency involvement in her file and should not be claimed in 2013/14 unless this evidence can be provided. The remaining two students should be reviewed for the 2013/14 school year and should not be reported without documented evidence of a behavioural assessment and/or a mental health assessment that indicates evidence of either antisocial extremely disruptive behaviour in most other environments and consistently/persistently over time and/or severe mental illness diagnosed by a mental health professional. Additionally, documented evidence is required to support that behaviour places the student or others at risk and/or interferes with his/her academic progress and that of other students; as well, that there is evidence documenting behaviour that is persistent over time and that planning is coordinated across-agency and community.

The auditors found that:

- All files were well organized and easy to access.
- The District staff promptly dealt with requests for additional evidence.
- The District appears to be utilizing the Ministry checklists in all the categories to do a yearly review of the students.
- Assessments presented in the files were complete and thorough.
- The IEPs for all categories were current.
- The IEPs contained strategies, with appropriate modifications and/or adaptations.
- Goals and objectives corresponded to the category in which the student was identified.
- The services were appropriate to the needs of the student.
- The level or amount of time for service provided at the school level was not always clearly identified in the IEP.
- The use of Domain sheets more clearly identified the degree and kind of needs for the student.
- When the Instructional Planning Tool was used, it provided clarity relative to the identified needs of the student.
- In three instances, two in Code G and one in Code H, a diagnosis was referred to, but the original diagnostic information was unavailable. All three students fully met the criteria, had been obtaining appropriate services and it was verified that the District staff had done their due diligence in attempting to obtain the appropriate documentation.
- The District files did not always contain supporting evidence (i.e. report cards, attendance records, anecdotal evidence of meetings, behaviour incidents); these were requested and acquired from the school files.
- Some students placed in Code H did not have a behavioural assessment that indicated antisocial, extremely disruptive behaviour, or a mental health assessment that diagnosed severe mental illness.

- In some cases, there was no documented evidence to indicate the student or others were at serious risk, or that the behaviour interfered with his/her academic progress for students reported in Code H.
- Inter-agency involvement for Code H claims were not well documented.
- There was no consistent indication that the school had exhausted its resources to warrant referral to Code H.

Recommendations

The auditors recommend that:

- The District ensure all student files have appropriate detailed assessments that support the recommendation of the student for the reported category in accordance with the criteria outlined in the Special Education Manual of Policy, Procedures and Guidelines.
- Documentation of the level and amount of service given to students be clearly recorded in the IEP.
- The District encourage consistent use of the Domain sheets and the Instructional Planning Tools.
- The District ensure all student files contain original or firsthand diagnostic evidence that supports the placement of a student in a category.
- The District ensure that copies of meeting minutes with participant involvement, copies of behavioural incidents etc., appropriate to each Category are available to support the reported placement.
- Code H reporting align with the Special Education Manual of Policy, Procedures and Guidelines:
 - ensuring all appropriate behaviour or mental health assessment documentation is in place and indicates extremely disruptive behaviour and/or severe mental illness; and
 - ensuring there is documented evidence to indicate the severity of need, inter-agency involvement, and that the school has exhausted its resources/capacity to manage.

Auditors' Comments

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