



**Ministry of Education  
Resource Management Division**

**2012/13 Special Education Enrolment Audit**

**AUDIT REPORT**

**SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 63 (Saanich)**

## **2012/13 SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 63 (Saanich)**

### **Background**

The Ministry of Education funds boards of education based on the boards' reported enrolment as of September 30<sup>th</sup> 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. 63 (Saanich) reported 419 students in the supplemental special education funding categories as of September 30, 2012. For the purpose of this compliance audit, School District No. 63 (Saanich) reported 14 students in the Physically Dependent/Multiple Needs Category (Code A); and 31 students were reported in the Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disabilities Category (Code C); 110 students in the Physical Disability/Chronic Health Category (Code D); four students were reported in Visual Impairment Category (Code E); 14 students were reported in Deaf or Hard of Hearing Category (Code F); 124 students were reported in Autism Spectrum Disorder (Code G); and, 122 students were reported in Students Requiring Intensive Behavior Intervention or Students with Serious Mental Illness (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. 63 (Saanich) during the week of February 18, 2013.

An entry meeting was held on February 18, 2013 with the Superintendent, both Assistant Superintendents, Secretary Treasurer, District Principal, District Instructional Support Teacher and BCCASE Observer. Daily meetings with the Assistant Superintendent, District Principal

and District Instructional Support Teacher–Low Incidence 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 several documents – Welcome to Student Services, Support Structures, Individual Learning Centre, and Transition to Adulthood (SIDES supporting Special Needs students 19 – 21). The District staff at the entry meeting shared information about the unique features of the District. These include: using the Principles of Learning and the Principles of Inclusion as important guides for the work done on behalf of students; a comprehensive model of classroom support; Integration Support Teachers in every school; ongoing communication both formal and informal between the Districts and the schools; IEPs on shared-drives in every school; and, staff relationships based on a sense of safety and trust.

A sample of nine student files reported in the Physically Dependent Category (Code A), 15 student files in the Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability Category (Code C), 52 student files in the Physical Disability or Chronic Health Category (Code D), two student files in the Visual Impairment Category (Code E), seven student files in the Deaf or Hard of Hearing Category (Code F), 62 student files in the Autism Spectrum Disorder Category (Code G) and 57 student files in the Intensive Behavior Interventions or Serious Mental Illness (Code H) were reviewed and evaluated to determine if the students in these categories were accurately reported on Form 1701.

As time permitted, the team had an opportunity to visit four schools to speak with staff about the support allocation to students and the service delivery that was indicated on the IEPs of several of the students from those schools. The schools visited were: Sidney Elementary, Kelset Elementary, Parklands Secondary and one of the Individual Learning Centers. The schools were chosen as each of them had attending students with complex learning needs identified and addressed on their IEPs.

At Sidney Elementary, the Vice Principal was the teacher of a student the team had identified for observation. It was clear from discussion with the Principal and the Instructional Support teacher that collaboration was ongoing regarding the allocation of support staff. The team observed a “Buddy Class” and were told of the positive outcomes in such a class.

At Parklands Secondary the team had an opportunity to observe the students they had identified as well as an opportunity to learn of how the Educational Assistant support was structured in the school.

Kelset Elementary is a new school. The team observed support occurring individually and in groups. Students and staff were partnered to ensure there was every opportunity for success.

The Individual Learning Center (where 68% of the students were reported as Code H) is an open area structure ensuring individual students are not singled out. The team observed the hairdressing salon, the teen mom program and the career program, as well as the interaction between Educational Assistants and students.

An exit meeting was held with the two Assistant Superintendents, Secretary Treasurer, District Principal and District Instructional Support Teacher-Low Incidence on February 22, 2013. The auditors reviewed the purpose of the audit and the audit criteria, explained the audit reporting process, reported their preliminary findings, clarified any outstanding issues, discussed reclassifications for the 2012/13 school year, and expressed appreciation for the assistance provided. . The Superintendent, unable to attend the exit meeting, attended the Daily Review Meeting the previous day.

### **Observations**

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

Of the 15 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code C, no student claims were recommended for reclassification.

Of the 52 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code D:

- one student claim was recommended for reclassification to Code C.
- one student claim was recommended for reclassification to Code G.
- one student claim was recommended for reclassification to Code Q.
- one student claim was recommended for reclassification to regular education.

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

Of the seven student files reviewed by the auditors in Code F:

- three student claims were recommended for reclassification to regular education.

Of the 62 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code G, no student claims were recommended for reclassification.

Of the 57 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code H, no student claims were recommended for reclassification.

The auditors found that:

- One student claimed in Code D had not had a seizure since 2010 and although had suffered a traumatic brain injury at three months of age, no longer met Code D criteria. Recent psycho-educational documentation did confirm the student met criteria for Code C.
- One student diagnosed as having Down Syndrome, whose parent did not allow any diagnostic report information to be included in the student's file, was claimed in Code D. As there was no documentation supporting Code D, the student's mother brought in a recent report from VICAN for the audit team to review indicating the student was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder meeting the classification for Code G.

- One student diagnosed as having Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) with no other co-morbid diagnosis was incorrectly reported in Code D and should have been reported in Code Q.
- One student with Speech Apraxia was claimed in Code D. This is a neurological disorder that should not be reported in Code D. The audit team were advised that this student had withdrawn from the school district and SIDES was moving to de-designate the student prior to withdrawal.
- Two students whose audiology report did not support the criteria for placement in Code F as outlined in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines were recommended to regular education. Both students were offered services by the Teacher of the Deaf. One student did not access the services; the other student received one hour of service per week from the Teacher of the Deaf but the services were not related to Code F.
- One student claimed in Code F had moved out of the District prior to the September claim period with no current school year files available to verify the category claim. The last Teacher of the Deaf report was 2005 and the last IEP was dated October 19, 2011 with no goals related to hearing loss. The Assistant Superintendent confirmed that this student should not have been claimed.
- Of the 204 files reviewed by the audit team, 56 were from the District's Distributed Learning (DL) program – SIDES – with two student claims recommended for reclassification. Overall, student files from the DL program were clear, thorough and comprehensive, and IEPs met the criteria. The support services were provided either at home or at a DL site with services appropriate to the category in which the student was claimed, and the level of service and amount of time for each of the service personnel clearly documented.
- All files were organized in such a manner that evidence needed was readily available.
- The files were clear, comprehensive and complete.
- The IEP format used ensured all IEP criteria areas were addressed.
- The goals and objectives addressed the category in which the student was claimed.
- The objectives were measurable.
- The strategies and services were appropriate to the categories claimed.
- Psycho-educational, speech language and occupational therapy assessments were complete and thorough.
- Information from psycho-educational, speech language and occupational therapy assessments were often incorporated into the IEPs.

## **Recommendations**

The auditors recommend that:

- The District only claim students who are enrolled and attending, and meet the requisite reporting criteria in accordance with the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines.
- The District report students in categories that meet the corresponding criteria as specified in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines.
- The District ensure the assessment data supports the criteria for placement in each category.

- The District continue with the processes in place to ensure students are screened into appropriate Special Education categories and maintain the processes in place for delisting students when they no longer meet category placement.
- The District continue the process of shared-drive student IEPs in every school enabling staff access to the latest dated version available.
- The District encourage consistent use of their in-house developed documents such as the Record of Communication (for Code H) and Weekly Tracking of Objectives.
- The District maintain the commendable level of service and documentation that was presented and identified during the audit.

### **Auditors' Comments**

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