



**Ministry of Education
Knowledge Management and Accountability Division**

2013/14 Continuing Education Enrolment Audit

AUDIT REPORT

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 79 (Cowichan Valley)

2013/14 CONTINUING EDUCATION ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 79 (Cowichan Valley)

Background

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

The Ministry of Education annually conducts Continuing Education 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.

Continuing Education centres provide adults who have not graduated from secondary school the option of obtaining a BC Adult Graduation Diploma or a regular Dogwood Diploma by taking courses offered through school districts, and effective September 1, 2008 boards that have passed motions may offer graduated adults specific courses tuition-free. In certain situations, school-age students may also enrol in Continuing Education courses.

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.

In the 2013/14 school year, boards of education reported a total of 5,637.2737 full-time equivalent (FTE) students. School District No.79 (Cowichan Valley) reported 445 Continuing Education students or 88.6250 FTEs for the September and February reporting periods.

Purpose

The purpose of the Continuing Education 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](#) and related [Ministry policies](#).

Description of the Audit Process

A Continuing Education enrolment audit was conducted in School District No. 79 (Cowichan Valley) the week of March 31, 2014. The total enrolment reported at September 30, 2013 and February 14, 2014 was 82.8750 FTEs, of which 387 student files were reviewed.

An entry meeting was held with the Superintendent, Secretary-Treasurer, Senior Administration, the Cowichan Adult Learning Centre Principal, Vice-Principal, District Principal of Careers, and support 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

programs offered through Continuing Education was provided both prior to the audit and on site during the audit. District and school administrators and the audit team discussed the procedures that would be followed to undertake the audit.

The auditors worked in the Charles Hoey building, which houses the Cowichan Adult Learning Centre (CALC). The audit team followed a process that gave District and school staff the opportunity to locate and present additional evidence when the team found that such evidence was not available in the documentation presented by the school. To minimize the likelihood of missing relevant data, the staff were also given the opportunity to seek further information on all student claims when there was a discrepancy in the FTE calculation. Throughout the audit the Principal and Vice-Principal were kept apprised of any issues.

Exit meetings were held with the Cowichan Adult Learning Centre's Principal and Vice-Principal as well as with the Superintendent, Secretary Treasurer and some of the Senior Administration. At each 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 Programs

Adult and Continuing Education began in School District 79 (Cowichan Valley) in 1995 and was offered in five sites in the Cowichan Valley area. Over the years, the District has closed all but one centre (CALC), which now has a teaching/support staff of seven (3.5 FTE teaching staff). The remaining site is one of eight sites (seven Alternate Education Program sites and one Continuing Education) under the direction of Principal, Larry Mattin.

Classes are offered daily and two evenings a week. CALC offers a variety of options for students including scheduled classes, self-directed/self-paced courses, or a combination of both. While the majority of learners are returning to school to graduate, some are graduates who are upgrading, while others simply wish to improve their Math, English and Technology skills. Some course material is placed on-line for students.

Scheduled classes are offered in trimesters, or in a few cases semestered. The Centre does not offer summer learning.

47 students graduated in 2012 and 48 in 2013, the vast majority achieving their British Columbia Adult Graduation Diploma including 21 graduates of aboriginal ancestry. The Centre registers, on average, between 100 and 150 aboriginal students each year.

The school follows the demonstrated completion of 10% of the course requirements as the attendance requirement in accordance with the [Adult Funding Policy](#) attendance definition. The auditors found that the majority of student claims were reported after the students had completed more than 10% of the course requirements, and in many instances had completed the courses before funding was claimed.

Observations

The auditors found that:

- 0.6250 school age FTEs were claimed in February for four rather than three four-credit course claims. These post-secondary transition courses were reported in error due to a misinterpretation of data on a report submitted to the District from the post-secondary institution. The school recognized that the calculation of the instructional hours of the program of courses provided equated to three four-credit course claims, the claim entry was incorrectly entered based on the post-secondary institute's four course transcript. In accordance with the directives of the [Form 1701 Instructions](#) and per P.78 of the [Handbook of Procedures for the Graduation Program](#) which says, "A credit is a unit of measurement used to give weighting to the value, level, or time requirements of an academic course. **In BC, one credit equals approximately 30 hours of instruction. As a result, a four credit course has approximately 120 hours.**" The school identified this error prior to the audit.
- 1.2500 adult FTEs (0.8750 non-graduated and 0.3750 graduated) were claimed in February for courses where the student did not meet the attendance requirements. Students in these courses had not completed 10% of the course requirements. The [Adult Funding Policy](#) states that...*For all adult students enrolled in a continuing Education School, report according to the Adult Funding Policy*". The Adult Funding Policy's [definition of attendance](#) is defined to be over one reporting period AND either 1) a minimum of 10 hours of instruction in a classroom or learning centre for each course or a demonstrated completion of 10% of the course requirements OR 2) meets the Grade 10-12 active requirements as outlined in the [DL Active Policy](#).
- 0.5000 FTEs (0.1250 school-age reported in September, 0.2500 non-graduate adults and 0.1250 school-age reported in February) claimed for Work Experience did not meet the Work Experience requirements. Form 1701 Instructions (P.13) state that "*Work Experience 12A and 12B claims must meet the directives of the Elective Work Experience Courses and Workplace Safety Policy, the Work Experience Order MO237/11 and in accordance with the Program Guide for Ministry-Authorized Work Experience Courses.*". Before undertaking the work study program portion of the WEX course: *Students must have an in-school orientation; there must be a Signed Agreement Form; and evidence students are at sites where WorkSafeBC coverage is provided.* These student claims had no evidence of most or all of the requirements.
- 0.1250 non-graduated adult FTE was found to be a fee-paying International Students claimed in September for funding.
- 0.2500 graduated adult FTEs were reported in September for taking a self-paced course previously claimed for funding. Self-paced courses have an open-ended timeline but encompass one organized set of learning outcomes. The student proceeds through the course at their own pace as they work towards meeting all the learning outcomes. While the completion of the course's learning outcomes may have been over a number of terms only one course was undertaken.
- 0.3750 non -graduated adult FTEs were claimed in February for post-secondary transition courses. The Form 1701 Instructions and the [Recognition of Post-Secondary Transition Programs for Funding Purposes](#) policy both state that post-secondary transition courses are recognized for funding purposes if they are part of the school-age students' planned program of study leading to graduation. Adults are ineligible for these transition courses. In

accordance with the Adult Funding Policy, “*Adults may be charged fees for courses that are not eligible courses*”; these ineligible courses are not to be claimed for additional provincial funding.

- The District does not have established guidelines regarding conduct, supervision, evaluation and participation of students in all school-arranged work placements as required to meet the directives of the [Elective Work Experience Courses and Workplace Safety Policy](#), the [Work Experience Order MO237/11](#) and in accordance with the [Program Guide for Ministry-Authorized Work Experience Courses](#).”
- The District does not have a written policy/process in place in accordance with the [School Act](#) (Sec 82) and the [K-12 Funding General Policy](#) to ensure students with their parent/guardian (where applicable) are ordinarily resident in BC and therefore eligible for provincial funding.
- A number of students claimed as graduated adults appeared to be taking courses not on [Appendix 1](#) of the [Education Guarantee](#). Upon examination of the evidence provided, it was determined that these students at the time of enrolment were non-graduated adult students. Students started the courses after the May claim deadline and were reported in September when they had completed the course and graduated.
- All teachers were found to be certified by the Teacher Regulation Branch.

Recommendations

The auditors recommend that:

- The District ensure all schools accurately report credit values and the corresponding correct number of third-party provided transition courses, including those provided by Post Secondary Institutions, in accordance with the Form 1701 Instructions (P.12) and the related directives identified in the Handbook of Procedures for the Graduation Program.
- The District’s Continuing Education Centre ensure that self-paced courses are only claimed as one course regardless of the number of reporting periods the student requires to complete the learning outcomes for the course.
- The District ensure student FTEs claimed for WEX, are receiving an educational program and instructional components in accordance with Ministry directives, including the establishment of required District guidelines, and that there is evidence to verify those claims.
- International fee paying students are not to be claimed for funding.
- The District’s Continuing Education centre only claim for courses where the student claim meets the attendance requirements.
- The District follow the directives of the Recognition of Post Secondary Transition Programs for Funding Purposes Policy (Ref. Form 1701 Instructions, P.12) which identifies that Post-Secondary courses are only eligible for school-age students. Adults are not eligible for Post-Secondary transition options.
- The District establish a policy/process to ensure all students claimed for funding are ordinarily resident in BC to align with the requirements of the *School Act* (Sec.82) and per the K-12 Funding General Policy which says, “*To be eligible for provincial funding, Boards of Education must ensure that students are: ordinarily resident in BC (and where applicable for school-age students) with their parent/legal guardian*”.
- The Continuing Education Centre claim students based on their verified graduation status at the time of enrolment in the course and retain verification to support these category claims.

Auditors' Comments

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

**Education Sector Quality Assurance Branch
Knowledge Management and Accountability Division
Ministry of Education
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