



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

2013/14 Special Education Enrolment Audit

AUDIT REPORT

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 41 (Burnaby)

2013/14 SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT

School District No. 41 (Burnaby)

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 2013/14 school year, school boards reported 24,964 students enrolled in the Level 1, 2, and 3 supplemental special education funding categories at September 2013. School District No. 41 (Burnaby) reported 840 students in these supplemental special education funding categories as of September 30, 2013. For the purpose of this compliance audit, School District No. 41 (Burnaby) reported 29 students in the Physically Dependent Category (Code A), two students in the Deafblind Category (Code B), 56 students in the Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability Category (Code C), 215 students in the Physical Disability/Chronic Health Impairment Category (Code D), ten students in the Visual Impairment Category (Code E), 63 in the Deaf or Hard of Hearing Category (Code F), 335 in the Autism Spectrum Disorder Category (Code G), and 130 in the Students Requiring Intensive Behavior Intervention or Students with Serious Mental Illness Category (Code H).

The Ministry of Education 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 \(September 2013\)*](#).

Description of the Audit Process

A Special Education enrolment audit was conducted in School District No. 41 (Burnaby) during the week of February 3, 2014.

An entry meeting was held on February 3, 2014 with the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Secretary Treasurer, Director of Instruction and the Vice Principal Learning Support Services. Daily meetings with the Director of Instruction, Assistant Superintendent and/or the Vice Principal of Learning Support Services 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. Near the end of the week, the auditors were provided with a copy of the document "Learning Support Services Handbook" that listed the District's Special Education Services including the Framework for Service Delivery, Services and Programs, and Practices and Procedures.

A sample of 29 student files reported in the Physically Dependent category (Code A), 110 student files in Physical Disability/Chronic Health Impairment (Code D), 63 student files in Deaf or Hard of Hearing (Code F), 68 student files in Autism Spectrum Disorder (Code G), and 130 student files in Students Requiring Intensive Behavior Intervention or Students with Serious Mental Illness (Code 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 encountered one issue requiring a school visit. There was a student reported in Code A for whom the evidence in the file did not support that he was completely dependent on others for meeting all five daily living needs, nor that he required assistance at all times for mobility. A visit by one of the auditors to the school confirmed that the student was able to walk without assistance.

An exit meeting was held with the Superintendent, Deputy Assistant Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and Vice Principal Learning Support Services on February 7, 2014. The auditors reviewed the purpose of the audit and the audit criteria, explained the audit reporting process, reported their findings, clarified any outstanding issues, discussed reclassifications for the 2013/14 school year, and expressed appreciation for the assistance provided.

Observations

Of the 29 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code A:

- 1 student was recommended for reclassification to either Code C or D

Of the 110 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code D:

- 2 students were recommended for reclassification to regular education

Of the 63 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code F:

- 1 student was recommended for reclassification to regular education

Of the 68 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code G there were no recommended reclassifications.

Of the 130 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code H:

- 1 student was recommended for reclassification to Code R
- 1 student was recommended for reclassification to regular education

The auditors found that:

- One student reported in Code A had considerable evidence in the file to support his ability to walk independently and therefore did not support placement in the reported category to meet the requirements as outlined in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedure and Guidelines. There was an equal amount of evidence in the student file to support placement in Physical Disabilities Chronic Health (Code D) or Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disabilities (Code C).
- Evidence verified two students reported in Code D had not received any special education support services in the past two years. There was documentation the parents and students had refused services. Neither student file contained evidence that an IEP had been in place in the past two years. Based on the outcomes of these file reviews, the evidence verified these claims be reclassified to regular education until there is evidence that meets criteria for placement in a special education category as outlined in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines and Form 1701 Instructions.
- One student reported as Code F had no evidence to indicate he was receiving support services from the teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing, nor did the goals in the IEP correspond to Code F. The evidence verified that this claim be reclassified to regular education until there is evidence that meets criteria for placement in a special education category as outlined in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines and Form 1701 Instructions.
- Two student claims for Code H did not have evidence to meet the criteria for placement in the Intensive Behaviour Interventions/Serious Mental Illness Category. For one student, there was no evidence to support Intensive Behaviour or Serious Mental Illness, nor was there evidence of outside agency support. For this student claim, there was evidence to support placement in Code R. For the other student, there was no evidence in the file that there was an IEP in place after September 30, 2012, nor was there evidence this student had received any service prior to leaving the District. The District attempted to obtain an IEP for the 2012/13 school year from the previous school district he attended but the previous district was not able to provide it.
- While in the majority of cases the evidence required to support the various categories was available, it was not always identified in the file for the following reasons:
 - Each school organized their files in a different manner.
 - Forms were not consistently used and filled out.
 - There are a number of IEP formats used in the District and completed to different degrees of comprehensiveness.
 - Forms were not always dated.
 - Integrated Case Management forms often did not specify the role and responsibility of the person listed on the form.
- There were a number of forms, that when used, provided the evidence needed to confirm that the student claims met the criteria. These included:
 - Counsellor Running Records
 - Functional Behaviour Assessments
 - Behaviour Intervention Plan
- In reviewing the files, it was evident students were being offered services and learning activities in accordance with their IEP.

- The majority of Code F files contained readily available evidence. The evidence was current and confirmed that the students met criteria. One particularly useful form was “Relationship of Hearing Loss to Listening and Learning Needs”.

Recommendations

The auditors recommend that:

- The District ensure student claims in Code A contain assessment documentation verifying the student is completely dependent on others for meeting all major daily living needs and the student requires assistance at all times for feeding, dressing, toileting, mobility and personal hygiene, in accordance with the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines and Form 1701 Instructions.
- The District only claim students that meet the requisite reporting criteria in accordance with the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guideline and ensure processes are in place for delisting students when they no longer meet category placement.
- The District report only those student claims who meet the criteria for the category in which they are claimed and that they are receiving special education support services to address the needs identified in the assessment information that are beyond those offered to the general population.
- The District report only student claims in each category when there is documentation to verify criteria of the special education category has been met, and that a plan for the delivery of these special education services are in evidence at the time of the September 30th claim.
- 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 various in-house forms and tools.
- The District ensure that all student files contain dated evidence supporting 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, including the identification of the roles and responsibilities of the various service providers.

Auditors' Comments

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

**Education Sector Quality Assurance Branch
Knowledge Management and Accountability Division
Ministry of Education
February 11, 2014**