



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

2013/14 Special Education Enrolment Audit

AUDIT REPORT

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 69 (Qualicum)

2013/14 SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 69 (Qualicum)

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. 69 (Qualicum) reported 191 students in these supplemental special education funding categories as of September 30, 2013. For the purpose of this compliance audit, School District No. 69 (Qualicum) reported six students in the Physically Dependent Category (Code A), 18 students were reported in the Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability Category (Code C), 68 students in the Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment Category (Code D), four students in the Visual Impairment Category (Code E), six students in the Deaf or Hard of Hearing Category (Code F), 61 students in the Autism Spectrum Disorder Category (Code G), and 28 students in the Intensive Behavior Intervention/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.69 (Qualicum) during the week of February 17, 2014.

An entry meeting was held on February 17, 2014, with the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and District Principal of Student Support Services. Daily meetings with the District Principal 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, the auditors interviewed District staff to enquire about the District's policies, procedures and programs. The auditors were provided with a copy of a document that described the context of the District's Special Education Services, and an explanation of the Special Education Service Delivery model.

When the support services staff spoke to the audit team about the special education programs in the District, a binder of District information entitled "Compliance Audit Resource Binder" was given to the audit team. After the meeting the District Principal of Support Services drew attention to the Form 1701 student lists that were included in the binder. 23 students had notations beside their names which indicated a category change. The District Principal explained that a review had begun of student designations after the District had reported funded student categories at September 30, 2013 with the in-house student category review completed after the audit notification was sent to the District on November 14, 2013.

As the audit team began the process of reviewing each student file it became apparent that the students files, noted by the District for category change, had revised documentation (including new IEPs and related evidence supporting a reclassification) from that which was in place at the time of the September 30th funding claims. As the compliance audit process is based on the District's September 30th student claims, the District staff were thorough in their efforts to provide the audit team with the relevant evidence.

A sample consisting of six student files reported in the Physically Dependent category (Code A), 18 student files in the Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability Category (Code C), 68 student files in the Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment Category (Code D), 61 student files in the Autism Spectrum Disorder Category (Code G), and 28 student files in the Intensive Behavior Intervention/Serious Mental Illness Category (Code H) were reviewed and evaluated to determine if the students in these categories were accurately reported on Form 1701 at September 30, 2013.

The file review process prompted visits to two schools: Winchelsea Elementary and Ballenas Secondary. The purpose of the visits was to observe dependent handicapped students and to verify the special education services provided.

An exit meeting was held with the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and District Principal of Student Support Services on February 21, 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 six student files reviewed in code A, no students were recommended for reclassification.

Of the 18 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code C:

- One student was recommended for reclassification to Code D.

Of the 68 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code D:

- One student was recommended for reclassification to Code G.
- One student was recommended for reclassification to Code Q.
- Two students were recommended for reclassification to Code R
- Two students were recommended for reclassification to regular education.

Of the 61 student files reviewed in code G, no students were recommended for reclassification.

Of the 28 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code H:

- Two students were recommended for reclassification to Code R.
- One student was recommended for reclassification to regular education.

The auditors found that:

- One student reported in Code C for developmental delays, some dysmorphic features, severe motor apraxia, severe verbal apraxia, and global cognitive delays had been reassessed through the CDBC network and recommended for reclassification to Code D. The audit team supported these findings as more appropriately meeting the student's needs.
- Two students reported in Code D had not been offered any special education service or program. One of the students did not have a current IEP. Both students had withdrawn from school and were reclassified to regular education as there was no evidence that met the 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 students reported in Code D had no evidence to meet the criteria for placement in this category as outlined in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines. One student no longer required support to manage his diabetes, the other student had no adequate assessment or diagnosis in accordance with Ministry requirements. Both students did meet the criteria for Code R.
- One student reported in Code D had been reassessed through the CDBC Network with a new diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. Based on the evidence it was verified that this claim be reclassified to Code G.
- One student reported in Code D with a diagnosis of epilepsy originally had difficulty controlling seizures. As a result of adjusted medication there have been no seizures for more than two years. The documentation verified the student does have a learning disability and meets the category criteria for reclassification to Code Q.
- Two students claimed in Code H did not have a behavioral or mental health assessment in accordance with the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines. In addition, there was no evidence of a current IEP for one student claim. The evidence verified that these claims be reclassified to Code R.
- One student claimed in Code H had moved out of district after the September claim period (December). There was no documentation to verify a behavioral or mental health assessment in accordance with the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines. Although a current IEP was in place, attempts to obtain additional evidence from the receiving district were not successful. As no additional evidence was found, the student claim was reclassified regular education.
- The organization of the files was comprehensive and readily accessible. Requested evidence was provided in a timely manner.

- The IEPs were well written with the exception that typically there was no documentation of the opportunities parents had in the developmental process.

Recommendations:

The auditors recommend that the district:

- The District only claim students that meet the requisite reporting criteria in accordance with the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines and ensure processes are in place for delisting students when they no longer meet category placement.
- The District report only student claims in each category when there is documentation to verify criteria for 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.
- The District ensure there is evidence the student is being offered learning activities in accordance with their IEP.
- Documentation of the level and amount of service given to students be clearly recorded in the IEP and ensure the IEP is current.
- The District ensure that parent collaboration is recorded in the development of the IEP.
- The District ensure evidence is retained when a designated student moves out of the district.

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
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