



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

**2014/15 Distributed Learning Enrolment Audit**

**AUDIT REPORT**

**ANCHOR ACADEMY  
(083 96713)**

## **2014/15 DISTRIBUTED LEARNING ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT ANCHOR ACADEMY (083 96713)**

### **Background**

Distributed Learning (DL) programs and courses are alternatives to regular classroom-based instruction for students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 providing a method of instruction that relies primarily on indirect communication between learners and B.C. certified educators, including internet, other electronic-based delivery, teleconferencing, and correspondence. DL takes place when a student is primarily at a distance from the teacher.

The Ministry of Education funds Independent School Authorities based on the Authorities' reported DL enrolment in September, February and May each year. Independent School Authorities report students undertaking DL programs or courses to the Ministry on [\*Form 1701: Student Data Collection Completion Instructions for Independent Schools\*](#) (Form 1701).

The Knowledge Management & Accountability Division conducts DL Enrolment audits to verify enrolment reported on Form 1701. The outcomes of these audits could result in funding implications if adjustments are recommended. Funding recoveries are expanded to include full-time equivalents (FTEs) outside the audit sample where the auditors can make a clear link between the audit findings in the sample and those FTEs outside the sample.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the DL Enrolment audit is to provide assurance to the Ministry of Education and Independent School Authorities that Ministry directives and policies are being followed. The audits are based on *Form 1701: Student Data Collection, Completion Instructions for Independent Schools*, current Distributed Learning requirements and standards as well as related Ministry policies.

### **Description of the Audit Process**

A Distributed Learning audit was conducted at Anchor Academy March 10 to March 13, 2015. The total enrolment reported at October 17, 2014 was 457.5000 FTEs, of which 264 student files were reviewed.

An entry meeting was held with the Principal and the administrative 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 the administrators and the audit team discussed the procedures that would be followed to undertake the audit.

The audit team worked out of the administrative offices of Anchor Academy. The auditors sought evidence to determine that the courses claimed met the active criteria by the activation submission date and other related Ministry directives. Throughout the audit there were ongoing discussions with DL staff to ensure the audit team members had an understanding of all aspects of the program. All recommended adjustments were discussed with the staff during the course of the audit, providing them with every opportunity to locate the necessary evidence.

Exit meetings were held with the Principal and the administrative team at which time the audit team presented their preliminary results and clarified any outstanding issues.

Prior to the audit visit, the Lead Auditor undertook a verification of the school-assigned teachers' status with the Teacher Regulation Branch.

### **Description of the Program**

Anchor Academy is a Christian school providing a non-denominational Bible based curriculum. It offers three distinct programs: an Independent B.C. Home School Registered, an International Program, and a Distributed Learning Program. The audit team examined the Distributed Learning Program which is the only program reported on Form 1701 and funded by the Ministry of Education.

The School offers two options for K–9 students. The Teacher Designed Program uses Christian courses that have been designed by Anchor Academy teachers who are B.C. Teacher Regulation Branch (TRB) certified. These courses satisfy the B.C. Ministry of Education Prescribed Learning Outcomes. The Individualized Program allows parents, in consultation with an Anchor Academy teacher, to select curricular materials for their children. The teacher, the parent and the student have an interview and at this time the decision is made as to which courses the student will take and the curriculum materials they will require. Student Learning Plans, which are designed to meet the Prescribed Learning Outcomes, are developed collaboratively by the teacher and the parent, with the teacher writing the Student Learning Plan after input has been received from the parent either verbally or by email.

Students in Grades 10 through 12, including non-graduated adults, have access to a variety of courses to choose from in order to meet the graduation requirements. The pathways to graduation are clearly identified in their school handbook. All secondary courses recognized for graduation credit are either Ministry of Education courses or BAA courses. All cover the Ministry Prescribed Learning Outcomes.

### **Observations**

The auditors found that:

- All members of the teaching staff of the Anchor Academy are currently certified with the TRB. The staff includes two teachers with certification restrictions and neither were teaching outside of the areas stated in their restriction.
- The teachers lead the educational programs of their students.
- The teachers communicate with students in a variety of ways to support their learning.
- The teachers evaluate and assess their students on an on-going basis and for all progress reports and interim reports.
- The School is in accordance with the [Distributed Learning-Independent Schools](#) and [Distributed Learning-General Policy](#) regarding financial reimbursements to third party providers.
- The School follows the [Distributed Learning-B.C. Residency Policy](#).
- The School follows the Authority's policy and procedures for 'ordinarily' resident in B.C.
- The School follows the [Distributed Learning Active Policy](#).

- For a few claims the School did not follow the Distributed Learning Active Policy for the October 17, 2014 claim. The staff was incorrectly informed that students who were active as at October 24, 2014 could be included in that claim. This issue was discovered prior to the audit and the staff took steps to ameliorate this by collecting dated samples of student work which showed that the work was handed in and marked by October 17, 2014. In this instance only, the 0.3750 FTE were not recommended for adjustment as it was verified that the student claims did meet the active requirements by October 24, 2014.
- The staff did not appear to have a clear understanding of what was required to meet the active requirements for Grade 8 and 9 students. Staff were under the impression that they had to have an activation assignment for each subject in each the student's program.
- The Special Education staff stated they were unaware that students in Grades 10 to 12 had to become active in all the courses, including XSIAP blocks, at the activation date of October 17, 2014.
- The School has developed systems for tracking students from the time they register until they meet all the funding requirements including those found in the Distributed Learning-Active Policy. As a result of the audit staff were implementing changes to this system to ensure tracking of students was as accurate as possible.
- In a large number of cases there was little evidence of the supporting documentation to verify the requirement for substantive student activity/work, either paper-based or on-line, available on site. The staff worked diligently during the week to re-claim work from students and was successful in its efforts. The School has a system in place that will allow them to maintain this work on-line but not all staff are using it.
- The staff worked vigorously throughout the week to provide the auditors with the documentation required. They used email and phone calls to contact teachers and parents and their learning community responded in a positive manner.
- Staff members appear to have developed solid connections to their students and parents. Communication seen and heard by the auditors indicates this is a learning community that is caring and respectful of all parties.
- Communication amongst the teachers, parents and students is on-going using email, the phone, Skype and home visits.

### **Audit Sample Findings**

The auditors found that:

- 3.1250 Kindergarten to Grade 9 FTEs claimed on the Form 1701 were not active at the October claim date as required by the Distributed Learning-Active Policy and in accordance with Form 1701 Instructions.
- 0.7500 Grade 10-12 FTEs [consisting of 0.6250 school age and 0.1250 non-graduated adults] were not active in all courses as required by the Fall Data Collection Form 1701 Instructions and Distributed Learning-Active Policy.
- 1.0000 Grade 10–12 school age FTEs were claims the vice principal verified should not have been reported. 0.8750 FTE was for a student believed to be removed from Form 1701 reporting and 0.1250 FTE where the student was not enrolled. Both claims were confirmed by the School as reported in error.

## **Recommendations**

The auditors recommend that:

- The School report for funding only claims for those students who are active in accordance with the Form 1701 Instructions, and the Distributed Learning Funding and Active Policies.
- The administrative staff ensure that all staff are aware of the critical dates related to funding claims and know that they are expected to meet those requirements. The requirements are clearly laid out in the Form 1701 Student Data Completion Instructions for Independent Schools.
- The staff review the activation requirements for Grade 8 and 9 student claims as stated in the DL Active Policy and referenced in the Form 1701 Instructions.
- The School implement a process to effectively track student claims from the time of registration until they are reported to ensure that all claims are eligible for funding in accordance with the Form 1701 Instructions and related Distributed Learning policies.
- The School staff ensure that, before reporting students for a funding claim, all student files contain evidence that demonstrates the student has met all the active requirements, including evidence to support the substantive student course activity has been completed. These documents can be paper copies, on-line copies or documentation using grade books that shows the date the student work was completed and marked.
- The School staff implement practices to ensure all student work is identified by course and dated in accordance with the directives of the DL Active Policy.
- The School make a practice of ensuring that all student work, emails to and from parents and/or students and log entries are dated.

## **Auditors' Comments**

The auditors wish to express their appreciation to the school staff for their cooperation and hospitality during the audit.