



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

2014/15 Distributed Learning Enrolment Audit

AUDIT REPORT

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 35(Langley)

Lochiel U-Connect and Langley Online

2014/15 DISTRIBUTED LEARNING ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 35 (Langley)

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 Distributed Learning (DL) 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.

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.

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.

There are 60 centres reported as public Distributed Learning schools in the Province totalling 10,443.8470 FTEs as at February 2015 for the 2014/15 school year. The Lochiel U-Connect and Langley Online Schools at School District No.35 (Langley) reported a total of 195.6250 FTEs on their October 17, 2014 enrolment and 79.5000 FTEs on their February 2015 enrolment.

Purpose

The purpose of the Distributed Learning 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*, current Distributed Learning Agreements, and related Ministry policies.

Description of the Audit Process

A Distributed Learning audit was conducted at in School District No. 35 (Langley) during the week of April 13, 2015. The total enrolment reported at October 17, 2014 and February 13, 2015 was 411.3750 FTEs, of which 336 student files were reviewed.

An entry meeting was held with the Superintendent and the Distributed Learning Centres' Principals to review the purpose of the audit and the criteria for funding as outlined in the Form 1701 Instructions.

The parameters and process of the audit were reviewed. Copies of the District Ordinarily Resident Policy was provided. The District does not have a separate policy on reimbursements; they utilize the DL directives.

The audit team worked out of both the Lochiel U-Connect and Langley Online sites. The auditors sought documentation 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 documentation.

Exit meetings were held with the DL Principal and the Superintendent. 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

Langley School District has two Distributed Learning Programs:

- Lochiel U-Connect is a Kindergarten to Grade 10 program for students to participate in school-based learning activities and events, as well as working from home. Most students attend classes and activities at the School one day each week. The School also offers extracurricular activities including but not limited to volleyball and an annual school-wide drama production. This is the first year that Lochiel U-Connect has enrolled Grade 10 students. Approximately 25% of the student population has been designated with Special Needs. More than half of the Grade 10 students have designations and adapted educational programs. All designated students have IEPs and counselling support is provided.
- Langley Online is a program offered as part of a continuum of continuing education opportunities in the District. It is housed in the Langley Education Centre (LEC). The teachers for the distributed learning program also teach in other continuing education programs. LEC has three options for students: structured and blended courses for students wanting to maximize face-to-face and class time; on-site self-paced courses for students wanting to work at their own pace while still getting face-to-face support from their teacher once a week; and, online self-paced courses for those students who prefer to work in an online setting and are not able to attend LEC. Both the on-site self-paced and online self-paced options enroll their learners as distributed learning students.

Students in both Lochiel U-Connect and Langley Online have access to District level services.

Observations

The auditors found that:

- All members of the teaching staff of Lochiel U-Connect and Langley Online are currently certified with the Teacher Regulation Branch.
- The teachers lead the educational programs of their students.

- The teachers communicate with students in a variety of ways to support their learning.
- The Schools are in accordance with the [Distributed Learning-General Policy](#) regarding financial reimbursements to third party providers.
- The Schools follow the [Distributed Learning-BC Residency Policy](#).
- The Schools follow the District's policy and procedures for 'ordinarily' resident in B.C.
- Dates were not available in many situations including registration, submission of student work for marking, the date marked or evaluated, the date grades were entered into a teacher's records, and the date that the student was activated.
- The Schools did not follow the [Distributed Learning Active Policy](#) with respect to "active date", which is the earliest date, supportable with evidence, which satisfies the policy criteria. Often students could have been activated in an earlier funding period than was claimed. There were instances of significant time gaps between when the evidence was marked by the teacher and the student was activated for funding purposes.
- The new Grade 10 program at Lochiel U-Connect was not fully established. There were no course plans for each of the Grade 10 courses which would provide the links to the learning outcomes, performance standards, required resources and assessment strategies, and would provide evidence supporting the requirement that assigned work is meeting the learning outcomes.
- The DL Active Policy provides the description of evidence required for activation in a course or program. At both schools the requirement that, for Grade 10-12 course, the activity must represent a minimum of five percent of the course's learning activities was either not met or met to the minimum standard.
- A number of courses were reported when there was no evidence the substantive student course activity had been submitted by the activation date.
- Evidence in the student files included subjects taken in more than one school funding year.
- In one instance a Graduated Student was claimed for funding in a course which is not listed on the Ministry approved list of tuition free courses.

Audit Sample Findings

The auditors found that:

- 2.0000 Kindergarten to Grade 9 FTEs claimed in October were not active in the program. There was no evidence the students were actively participating in their program as required by the DL-Active Policy.
- 0.3750 Grade 10-12 school-age FTEs reported in October were active in fewer courses than claimed.
- 3.6250 Grade 10-12 school-age FTEs were reported in October did not have evidence of substantive student course activity.
- 0.2500 Grade 10-12 school-age FTEs were reported in February did not have evidence of substantive student course activity.
- 1.2500 Grade 10-12 school-age FTEs reported in October had no evidence to meet the DL Active requirements and in accordance with Form 1701 Instructions for the period claimed.
- 0.1250 Graduate Adult FTEs reported in October had no evidence to meet the DL Active requirements and in accordance with Form 1701 Instructions for the period claimed.
- 0.2500 Grade 10-12 school-age FTEs reported in February had no evidence to meet the DL Active requirements and in accordance with Form 1701 Instructions for the period claimed.

- 0.1250 Graduated Adult FTEs reported in October was for a course not on the list of Ministry approved tuition free courses.
- 0.3750 adult FTEs (0.2500 graduated adult reported in October and 0.1250 non-graduated adult reported in February) were claimed for the same course in two consecutive reporting periods contrary to the directives of the DL Funding Policy which says *For boards to be eligible for funding for the same DL course taken in the same DL school by Grade 10-12 students (including adults) the following conditions must be met:*
 - *The student must have been previously reported as failed (through course completion), or as course completed and wanting to improve their mark, or withdrawn from that course.*
 - *If a student has withdrawn from a course or did not complete a course, there must be a record of student inactivity for two DL enrolment counts, with a corresponding record of attempts made by the DL school to contact the student for that course.*
 - *All required areas of study in a course (contained in the corresponding Integrated Resource Package) must be provided to the student when a course is claimed for funding again.*
 - *Assessment of the student's past work must not be used to evaluate re-claimed course progress.*

Recommendations

The auditors recommend that:

- The District 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 District implement a process to effectively track student claims from the time of registration until they are reported to ensure the claims are eligible for funding in accordance with the Form 1701 Instructions and related Distributed Learning policies.
- The District ensure both DL centres offering Grade 10-12 learning options align their processes to confirm practices meet the DL Active Policy requirements and align with the District's DL Agreement and related Standards.
- All DL staff align and review the Grade 10-12 course plans to ensure both schools have course plans and these plans meet the following DL Active Policy requirements. *"A clear course plan must be on file for each course. This course plan must link to the course's learning outcomes, performance standards, required resources and assessment strategies. This course plan is the evidence supporting the requirement that assigned work is meeting the learning outcomes"*.
- The District ensure DL staff not report students as active in their courses and funding eligible until the requirements of the DL Active Policy have been met with regard to evidence of substantive student course activity. The DL Active Policy states *"For each eligible course reported for funding, substantive student course activity is submitted to the teacher. This course activity directly links to the curriculum outcomes required in each course...includes activity demonstrating that a minimum of five per cent of each course's learning activities have been covered. The following evidence must be readily available:*
 - *The gradebook or other tracking system must contain a dated record of the teacher's evaluation of the student's performance on the course activities. (Where gradebooks or tracking systems do not support dated entries, then alternative dated information is required, such as logs, copies of student's substantive course activity, or copies of teachers' dated observation, feedback and marking details.)*

- *The course or program instructions and materials associated with assignments or course work for these activities or assignments must be accessible. (These materials must include a sample of substantive student course activity for the course reported for funding and a copy of the teacher’s observations, feedback and marking details for the activity)”*.
- The Lochiel-U staff ensure that Grade 10 students are not claimed for funding upon enrolment. Only when each course claim meets all the requirements of the DL Active Policy are FTE claims eligible for funding.
- The DL staff ensure all student files contain evidence that demonstrates the student has met all the active requirements before reporting funding claims, including evidence to support the substantive student course activity.
- The DL staff implement practices to ensure all active requirements are identified by course and dated in accordance with the directives of the DL Active Policy.
- The DL staff ensure that student courses are claimed for the funding period during which they meet the Distributed Learning Active criteria and in accordance with the reporting claim directives of the Form 1701 Instructions. In instances where the timelines are not followed, there must be documentation to verify the course was not previously claimed along with an explanation of why Form 1701 directives were not followed.
- The District ensure that all schools enrolling adult students are aware of and adhering to the [Adult Funding Policy](#), including the course claim eligibility for Graduated Adults.
- The District strongly encourage DL staff to be regular participants in the Ministry of Education’s monthly Distributed Learning Administrators Collaboration sessions to ensure all related staff are informed of the eligibility requirements in a DL environment.
- The Ministry of Education consider a return audit of Lochiel U-Connect and Langley Online to ensure that the DL Active Policy Requirements for Grade 10-12 funding claims are being met.

Auditors’ Comments

The auditors wish to express their appreciation to the District staff for their cooperation during the audit.