



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

2014/15 Distributed Learning Enrolment Audit

AUDIT REPORT

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 37 (Delta)

Home Quest and Delta Access

2014/15 DISTRIBUTED LEARNING ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 37 (Delta)

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. Delta Access and Home Quest DL Schools at School District No. 37 (Delta) reported a total of 116.1250 FTEs on their October 17, 2014 enrolment and 50.8750 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 both Delta Access and Home Quest programs in School District No. 37 (Delta) during the week of May 4, 2015. The total enrolment reported at October 17, 2014 and February 13, 2015 was 167.0000 FTEs, of which 260 student files were reviewed.

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

The audit team worked out of both the Delta Access and Home Quest 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. All teachers held current certification.

Description of the Programs

The Delta Access Program offers Grade 10 to 12 courses mainly to students cross-enrolled in the District's secondary schools although there are some students from other school districts and adults. The program primarily uses Open School courses and Content Connections (for Math courses), as well as two teacher-developed courses: PE 10 and Planification 10 (French Immersion). DL teachers are often located in local secondary schools in order for students to have access to support. In general, students are enrolled in one or two courses.

The Principal and Program Coordinator provided the auditors with training for the three online systems used to retain student files and information. Almost all evidence was available online with the exception of completed final marks for courses provided during the summer months.

The Home Quest program offers full time Kindergarten to Grade 7 programs. These programs rely heavily on the leadership and commitment from the parents. The students have the option of attending classes and events weekly. There are also a number of arranged field trips. The parents are relied on to cover the content-related learning outcomes and the classes focus on student interaction, cooperation and group activities. Teachers have three annual one hour meetings with the student and parent(s) to review a portfolio of work which has been collected throughout the term. This information is used to produce term and final report cards. Student work is not collected on a regular basis and there is no requirement for students or parents to bring in evidence of learning activities at the weekly classes.

In general, the Delta School District does not offer Grade 8 and 9 DL programs. An exception was made for one student claimed for funding in Grade 8 at Home Quest, who had been a student previously, and was travelling with the parents during the current school year.

Observations

The auditors found that:

- All members of the teaching staff of the Delta Access and Home Quest Programs are currently certified with the Teacher Regulation Branch.
- It was very difficult to determine what role the teacher played at each step of the educational program as required by the DL Policies.

- For Kindergarten to Grade 7 students Student Learning Plans (SLPs) were not in a consistent format nor complete for all subject areas. The SLPs did not contain all required elements and were usually unsigned and undated. This occurs as a result of the parents creating the draft SLP then the teacher meets or speaks with the parent to confirm the content. The commitment to the SLP was indicated on the Program Agreement Form, not on the SLP itself.
- For Kindergarten to Grade 7 students the samples of student learning gathered for the audit came from the portfolios presented in the Fall at the term meeting. The evidence was usually not dated nor clearly associated with the learning outcomes for the program.
- The Kindergarten to Grade 7 teachers do not evaluate and assess their students on an on-going basis but rely on evidence presented three times in the year for all progress reports. There was no evidence presented to the auditors of a teacher gradebook or ongoing record of student achievement. The report cards were the only evidence of assessment.
- Records of ongoing progress in relationship to the provincial learning outcomes was provided to the auditors but these records were completed by the parents and copies were not kept by the teacher. The parent shows this information to the teacher at the portfolio meeting.
- 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 follows the District's policy and procedures for 'ordinarily' resident in B.C.
- The School did not follow the [Distributed Learning Active Policy](#) with respect to:
 - Ensuring that all courses that have been activated are claimed in the appropriate claim period
 - Claiming only courses that met the activation criteria
- Of the seven students the District claimed for Aboriginal Education Support, two of the students had not self-identified, five of the student files had no evidence that parents had been consulted, six of the files did not contain evidence that the students were receiving support in addition to any other program or services and no evidence of substantive learning or support throughout the school year. One student was receiving ongoing support from the Program Coordinator.

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 active at the reporting date as required by the Distributed Learning-Active Policy and in accordance with Form 1701 Instructions.
- 1.0000 Kindergarten to Grade 9 FTEs claimed in February were not active in the program. There was no evidence that the student was active at the reporting date as required by the Distributed Learning-Active Policy and in accordance with Form 1701 Instructions.
- Six students claimed for Aboriginal Education Supplementary had no evidence to meet the reporting requirements in accordance with the Form 1701 Instructions (P.9-10) specific to the provision of Aboriginal Education Programs and Services.

- 0.7500 FTEs (consisting of 0.6250 Grade 10 to 12 school-age and 0.1250 graduated adults) reported in February did not have evidence of substantive student course activity as required by the DL Active Policy and Form 1701 Instructions.
- 0.2500 graduated adult FTEs reported in February were for courses not on the list of Ministry tuition free courses.
- 0.2500 graduated adult FTEs reported in February had no evidence to meet the DL Active and in accordance with Form 1701 Instructions for the period claimed.

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 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 the role of the teacher is clear to the parents of all Kindergarten to Grade 9 students enrolled and funded for a DL educational program, not only in writing but in practice. In accordance with [posted DL requirements](#): *“DL program is directed and supervised by a British Columbia-certified teacher (parents may assist in facilitating the learning process, but are not the teachers)”*.
- The District ensure that the assessment of student learning by the teacher is ongoing throughout the school year and is in evidence. Placing the onus for Term Subject Summaries, progress according to the Prescribed Learning Outcomes, use of Performance Standards, and selection of content for the portfolio on the parents is not sufficient (Ref. “Home Quest Parent Handbook” pp. 15-20). In accordance with posted DL requirements: *“Students must receive on-going regular assessments, report cards, provincial letter grades and a permanent student record, as would students in a neighbourhood school”*.
- The District ensure that Student Learning Plans are developed for all K-9 students that meet the requirements of the DL Active Policy including learning outcomes, required areas of study, the teacher’s plan for providing learning activities, learning resources, and assessment strategies and standards of performance expected of the student. In accordance with the DL Active Policy and the related standards of the District’s DL Agreement *“Certified teachers lead distributed learning programs, verifiable by evidence such as course or student timetables, course selections forms, registration reports, or information gathered from records and through interviews with teachers and other staff”*.
- The District ensure that all the evidence requirements for a supplemental Aboriginal

Education program and/or supports are in place before claiming funding.

- 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 Ministry of Education undertake a return audit of the Home Quest Program to ensure that the role of the teacher is in evidence throughout the planning, delivery and assessment of the educational program and that students claimed for Aboriginal Education funding are receiving a program of support and services throughout the school year.

Auditors' Comments

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