



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

**2014/15 K-12 Regular Enrolment Audit**

**AUDIT REPORT**

**SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 47 (Powell River)**

## **2014/15K-12 REGULAR ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 47 (Powell River)**

### **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 Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) Regular Enrolment 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.

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.

In the 2014/15 school year, boards of education reported a total of 522,939.4475 FTEs in Kindergarten through Grade 12. School District No. 47 (Powell River) reported a total of 1,719.1250 FTEs or 1,810 students, including 5 students for English Language Learners (ELL) and 98 students for Aboriginal Education.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the K-12 Regular 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* and related Ministry policies.

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

A K-12 Regular Enrolment audit was conducted in School District No. 47 (Powell River) during the week of January 19, 2015. The schools audited were:

- Brooks Secondary School
- Westview Education Centre

The total enrolment reported by these schools on October 17, 2014 was 732.1250 FTEs, of which 189 student files were reviewed.

An entry meeting was held with the Superintendent and each school's Principal to review the purpose of the audit and the criteria for funding as outlined in the Form 1701 Instructions. The audit team visited each school to review student files, interview staff, and conclude on its

observations. The audit team followed a process in each school which gave administrators and program staff opportunities to locate and present additional evidence when the team found that such evidence was not available in the documentation presented by the school. Exit meetings were held with each Principal and senior district staff. At each exit meeting the auditors presented their preliminary results and clarified any outstanding issues.

The audit included the enrolment reported in the 2014/15 school year. The areas audited were:

- October 17<sup>th</sup> enrolment and attendance
- Ordinarily Resident
- School-Age Grade 10-12 Course Claims
- Alternate Education Programs
- Adult Student Claims
- English Language Learners Supplemental Claims
- Aboriginal Education Supplemental Claims
- Reciprocal Exchanges

While Post-Secondary Transition Programs with Post-Secondary Institutions and Industry Association partners were not reported during the 2014/15 Fall Data Collection period by the schools selected for audit, the auditors did have the opportunity to review each of the District's post-secondary transition program options offered in conjunction with Vancouver Island University. The auditors engaged in discussions with instructors, the District's Career Coordinator and the University's administrator.

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

## **Observations**

The auditors found that:

- 0.8750 school-age Grade 10-12 FTEs were not enrolled and/or attending courses at October 17<sup>th</sup>. The [Form 1701 Instructions](#) state (P.2)...*“students are to be reported by the education facility with which they are enrolled and in attendance...as at October 17, 2014.”*
- 0.1250 school-age Grade 10-12 FTEs were claimed for a funded support block when it was verified that the student's annual combined program of courses consisted of courses plus a support block that exceeded a total of 8 full course claims. P.14 of the Form 1701 Instructions states: *“A support block is for non-special needs, school-aged, non- graduated students in grades 10-12 and SU engaged in their learning at structured times in addition to their annual academic or regular program courses provided in District schools and are taking fewer than 8 courses. The combined total number of support block and courses leading to graduation cannot exceed 8 for these students”.*
- 0.1250 school-age FTEs claimed for funding was for a course verified to have begun in the previous school year. Form 1701 Instructions state that: *While completion of the course's learning outcomes may be over a number of registration periods, only one course is undertaken and therefore eligible for only one funding claim.* The completion of the course's learning outcomes was ongoing but was only undertaken once by the student.

- 26 students were reported for supplementary Aboriginal Education Programs and Services funding. At the time of the audit there was no evidence these student had been provided with any services and/or support in accordance with the Form 1701 Data Collection Instructions and the K-12 Funding-Aboriginal Education policy. The Form 1701 Instructions (P.10) states: *“For a student to be reported as receiving an Aboriginal Education Program and/or Services, **all of the following must be met:** 1) evidence that the student has self-identified as being of Aboriginal Ancestry (First Nations, status and non-status, Métis, and Inuit); 2) evidence that the parent or guardian of the student has been consulted; 3) evidence that the Aboriginal Education Programs and Services have involved the Aboriginal communities in planning and delivery; 4) evidence that the Aboriginal Education Program is in addition to any other programs and services to which the student is eligible; 5) evidence that the Aboriginal Education Programs and services provide a continuum of substantive learning experiences and/or support services throughout the school year.*
  - Three of the students claimed as receiving aboriginal education programs and/or services were not enrolled or attending at October 17, 2014, nor was any program or service provided.
  - In an effort to identify any program or service component for the remaining 23 student claims, the lead auditor sat with the two Brooks Secondary support services staff and went over each student claim in the sample asking if there was any recollection or evidence of any contact either staff member had with each student. There was no evidence or recollection the students received any form of service and/or support as verified from the aboriginal education staff assigned to the school.
  - The students sampled had all self-identified as being of Aboriginal Ancestry at some point in time during their secondary school education but this was not verified annually to ensure the requirements verifying eligibility for supplemental support services or programs was in place or that it was the student’s intent to participate each school year. From the evidence reviewed at the time of the audit the school has records of students who have self-identified and these students are automatically claimed for funding. There did not appear to be any consideration of whether a program and/or service would be provided.
  - There was no consistent policy or practice to confirm annual self-identification before reporting the annual student claims, nor was there a mechanism for students to opt in/opt out of the programs and/or services each year.
  - Evidence of current consultation with parents regarding the provision of Aboriginal Education Programs and Services was found to be inconsistent and not aligned with the annual supplemental funding requirements. For the current school year there were parental contact records on file for some but not all students. There were instances where the records of parental contact went back several years, indicating a lack of annual parental communication. The available evidence indicated that if the parents approved participation in programs and/or service in previous years, they would continue to approve in subsequent school years.
  - A plan to deliver District/School Aboriginal Education Programs and/or Services to the eligible student cohort was not in evidence. The Form 1701 Instructions (P.10) state: *“A plan for the delivery of these Aboriginal Education Programs and/or Services must be in evidence at the time of the September 30, 2014 claim”.*
  - A current Enhancement Agreement between the District and the local Aboriginal community is in place and a process is underway to renew that agreement.
- Evidence required to verify the directives of the Alternate Education Program policy were not available to the audit team upon arrival at the Westview Learning Centre. Student Learning Plans (SLP) for each of the program’s eight designated Special Needs students and the two non-

designated students were included in student files. These plans, however, did not contain specific student objectives, identify additional services to be provided, record student progress, or describe plans for any transition. The staff advised that Individual Education Plans (IEPs) had been developed for the Special Needs students but did not know how to access those documents. It was stated further that documentation of additional supports for the non-designated students was available but not included in the SLP file. The team gave staff time to provide the necessary documentation. Detailed IEPs which did meet funding criteria for the eight designated Special Needs students were provided to the auditors prior to completion of the audit process. Some documentation of service to non-designated students by an outside agency was also provided. The Alternate Education Program policy states that each Alternate Education Program will have:

- *A regularly reviewed learning plan for each student, either an official Individual Education Plan (IEP) or a Student Learning Plan that clearly defines the objectives for the student, additional services provided as required, progress made, and any transition plans.*
- *An exit strategy to facilitate the student's transition back into regular school system, continuing education centre, graduation or to work or to post-secondary training and education.*
- *Evidence of additional services as required by the student population (i.e., youth workers, drug and Alcohol counsellors and/or sessions, etc.)*

Based on the directives of the Alternate Education Program policy, it is the observation of the auditors that learning plans for each student are intended to be working documents to be regularly reviewed as a tool used to monitor student progress and make adjustments where necessary to the instructional strategies and services provided to support the student. These documents must be readily available to the teacher and updated regularly to be used effectively.

Little evidence was found of the use of support services available from community agencies to support Westview Learning Centre students. The staff stated that a significant numbers of students resisted receiving services available from district resources or community agencies.

In this instance only there were no recommendations for recovery as the auditors were able to determine that all current policy requirements were met with the exception for provision of required service from outside agencies. The staff advised that records of such support were available but time was needed to find them. There was also access issues with the IEPs. Records were produced later in the day. The IEPs were very well done and, in great detail, identified support which was to be provided by district staff or appropriate outside agencies. The teachers were able to provide nominal documentation of service from community agencies for a small number of non-designated students. The outcome was that despite the unorganized records, criteria was minimally met.

- District and school staff stated that while there was no written policy describing the processes to ensure that students and their parents/guardians were “ordinarily resident” in B.C. that a consistent practice was followed District wide. The auditors found, however, that the practices followed were not consistent. Care Card numbers (a District chosen evidence mechanism) were entered into the student verification databases for some but not all students. The assumption by the secondary school and alternate program that residency of incoming students had been a verified by the District’s elementary schools was found not to be valid in all files reviewed. The K-12 Funding Policy states that: *“To be eligible for funding, Boards of Education must ensure that students are: Ordinarily resident in BC (and where applicable) with their parent/legal guardian”*.

- The Post-Secondary Transition Programs viewed by the auditors, with the assistance of the District's Career Program Coordinator and the Administrator of the Powell River Campus of Vancouver Island University, indicated seamless transition between secondary and post-secondary transition oriented education and provides a valuable service to students and the community.

### **Recommendations:**

The auditors recommend that:

- Schools claim for funding only those students who are enrolled and attending as at the Form 1701 cut-off date.
- Schools reporting support blocks ensure that only eligible support blocks are claimed for course funding; and, when reporting support blocks in a student's annual program of courses, the combined number of courses and support blocks do not exceed eight, as identified on P.14 of the Form 1701 Instructions.
- Schools do not report for funding those self-paced/self-directed courses where funding has been claimed during the previous registration period; the student has not completed the course; and, is continuing to work toward completion of the course's set of organized learning outcomes during the subsequent registration period.
- Schools clearly document the delivery and outcomes of Aboriginal Programs and Services for all students who are claimed for supplementary Aboriginal Education funding.
- Schools ensure that all five criteria for eligibility of supplementary Aboriginal Education funding are met prior to reporting each student for funding.
- The District review its policy and/or practice for ensuring that all Aboriginal students have self-identified as being of Aboriginal Ancestry and have the opportunity each year to affirm or opt out of that self-identification.
- The District review its practices for ensuring that the parents or guardians of students are consulted annually with respect to the provision of Aboriginal Education Programs and/or Services prior the annual reporting of students for funding.
- Schools ensure that a process is in place to ensure that programs and/or support services are provided to all students reported as receiving Aboriginal Education Programs and/or Services and that there is a plan in place for the delivery of these programs and/or services in place at the time of the Fall Data Collection reporting claim deadline.
- The District ensure that the Westview Learning Centre develop, for each enrolled school age non-graduate student, a detailed Student Learning Plan (SLP) or Individual Education Plan (IEP) which includes defined objectives for each student, the additional services to be provided as required, current records of student progress and future plans for each student which aligns with the directives of the Alternate Education Program policy requirements.
- The staff of the Westview Learning Centre regularly review the annual school year SLP and IEP documents as a tool for use in monitoring the current educational and social/emotional status of each student, so as to make adjustments in program designed to enhance student progress, well-being and a mechanism towards ensuring student success.
- The District review the relationship between the Westview Learning Centre and available community service agencies providing support to the Program's students with the aim towards making maximum use of available supports to meet student needs.

- The District comply with the requirements of the K-12 Funding General Policy by developing and adopting a policy and/or procedures by which schools can ensure all students (and where applicable with their parent/legal guardian) who are registering for enrolment are ordinarily resident in B.C. and therefore eligible for a provincially funded education.

### **Auditors' Comments**

The auditors extend their appreciation to the District and school-based staff.