



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

2014/15 Special Education Enrolment Audit

AUDIT REPORT

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 49 (Central Coast)

2014/15 SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 49 (Central Coast)

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 2014/15 school year, school boards reported 25,615 students enrolled in the low incidence supplemental special education funding categories at October 2014. School District No. 49 (Central Coast) reported ten students in the supplemental special education funding categories as of October 17, 2014. For the purpose of this compliance audit, School District No. 49 (Central Coast) reported seven students in the Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment Category (Code D), one in the Deaf or Hard of Hearing Category (Code F), and two 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. 49 (Central Coast) during the week of January 26, 2015.

An entry meeting was held on January 26, 2015 with the Superintendent and Lorna Dishkin, Resource Teacher-District Partner and Special Education. Daily meetings with the Lorna Dishkin and Merdith McIlwain, Junior Alternate Teacher-High School Resource 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 an overview of relevant program information.

A video was provided of the outer cove to identify how remote the area is and the Superintendent shared the following information:

- The District has difficulties getting services to the outlying schools such as Shear Water on Denny Island and Oweekeno.
- There is a District Care Team.
- In Bella Coola, the District has a challenge obtaining outside agency involvement for Intensive Behavior Interventions or Serious Mental Illness students.
- The District has difficulties getting professionals to work in these isolated areas.
- There are degrees of service provision inequalities throughout the District.
- First Nations students move back and forth between the Band School and the Public school system.
- District support service staff are looking for ways to improve as they utilize early intervention but this process is still not entirely successful for a segment of the student population.

A sample of seven student files reported in the Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment (Code D), one student file in Deaf or Hard of Hearing (Code F), and two student files in Intensive Behaviour Interventions/Serious Mental Illness (Code H) special needs categories were reviewed and evaluated to determine if the students in these categories were accurately reported on Form 1701.

The file review process did not encounter issues requiring school visits.

An exit meeting was held with the Superintendent and District staff members on January 28, 2015. The auditors reviewed the purpose of the audit and the audit criteria, explained the audit reporting process, reported their findings, clarified any outstanding issues, and expressed appreciation for the assistance provided.

Observations:

There were no recommended reclassifications for Code D student claims.

The one student file reviewed by the auditors in Code F contained the audiology report which supported the criteria for placement in Code F as outlined in the Special Education Policies, Procedures and Guidelines Manual.

Of the two student files reviewed by the auditors in Code H: One student had documentation of limited intervention and there was no evidence of inter-agency support as the area where the student lives has no resources. The student is in a school with four other students and a principal. The auditors recommended that the student retain the current classification until June 2015 ensuring service provision is maintained. It was also recommended that an updated behaviour assessment be undertaken and that the

student be assessed for FASD. The second student file reviewed by the auditors in Code H, contained evidence to support the category criteria.

The auditors found that:

- Student files were consistently well organized across the categories audited.
- IEPs generally documented supporting evidence of parent consultation, assessment, goals and services.
- Evidence to establish that a diagnosed medical condition had significant impact on the student's education and functioning was consistently found.
- Files clearly indicated medical documentation.
- Files showed a variety of methods that would be used to measure progress toward IEP goals and objectives.
- Goals met the category criteria.
- Children with hearing evaluation did not have the results of intervention done or any evidence of whether the student was still receiving service from the teacher of the hearing impaired in the student files. When the information was requested, the results were in some cases faxed to the school.
- While there were no transition plans in the files for the Grade 12 students, the auditors were given information to show that a meeting of professionals and parents, potentially involved in the planning stages, had been arranged.

Recommendations:

The auditors recommend that:

- The District ensure there is evidence to support that the student has been appropriately assessed and identified as meeting the needs of the special education category.
- The District ensure any student claimed in Code H has integrated case management.
- The District staff document all information regarding a student's hearing and maintain the information in the student's file as behaviours may be linked to hearing impairment. Audiology reports will provide information to aid in clarifying any related student challenges.
- Transition plans be developed for students with special needs moving into adulthood. As identified in the Special Education Policies, Procedures and Guidelines Manual - a key element of the IEPs is this planning which should include a statement of transition goals and, where appropriate, should identify inter-agency responsibilities or linkages that are to occur before the student leaves the school setting.

Auditors' Comments

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