



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

2014/15 Special Education Enrolment Audit

AUDIT REPORT

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 59 (Peace River South)

2014/15 SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 59 (Peace River South)

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 Level 1, 2, and 3 supplemental special education funding categories at October 2014. School District No. 59 (Peace River South) reported 141 students in these supplemental special education funding categories as of October 17, 2014. For the purpose of this compliance audit, School District No. 59 (Peace River South) reported four students in the Physically Dependent Category (Code A), one student reported in the Deafblind Category (Code B), 15 students in the Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability Category (Code C), 38 students in the Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment Category (Code D), five students in the Visual Impairment Category (Code E), 5 in the Deaf or Hard of Hearing Category (Code F), 19 in the Autism Spectrum Disorder Category (Code G), and 54 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. 59 (Peace River South) during the week of February 23, 2015.

An entry meeting was held on February 23, 2015 with the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Director of Instruction, District Principal of Student Support Services and Secretary-Treasurer. Daily meetings with the Assistant Superintendent 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 a Student Support Services Handbook of Guidelines and Procedures. A factsheet provided information on educational staffing, budget, learning services funding levels and funds to schools from learning services. The information on students who may be designated is collected at the school level and then forwarded to the Assistant Superintendent who makes a decision on their designation. Designation of Code H students is decided at the school level.

Four student files reported in the Physically Dependent (Code A), one student file in the DeafBlind (Code B), 10 student files in Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disabilities (Code C), 38 student files in Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment (Code D), three student files in Visually Impaired (Code E), three student files in Deaf or Hard of Hearing (Code F), 12 student files in Autism Spectrum Disorder (Code G), and 54 student files in Intensive Behavior 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.

An exit meeting was held with the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent, the Director of Instruction, the District Principal of Student Support Services and the Secretary Treasurer on February 25, 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, discussed reclassifications for the 2014/15 school year, and expressed appreciation for the assistance provided.

Observations:

There were no recommended reclassifications for the four student files reviewed by the auditors in Code A.

There was no recommended reclassification for the one student file reviewed by the auditors in Code B.

There were no recommended reclassifications for the ten student files reviewed by the auditors in Code C.

There were no recommended reclassifications for the 38 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code D.

There were no recommended reclassifications for the three student files reviewed by the auditors in Code E.

There were no recommended reclassifications for the three student files reviewed by the auditors in Code F.

There were no recommended reclassifications for the 12 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code G.

Of the 54 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code H

- five students were recommended for reclassification to Regular Education

The auditors found that:

- There was one student reported in Code H for whom there was no file available.
- Two students claimed in Code H whose assessment on the Instructional Support Planning Tool indicated that they are in the mild level of complexity. There was no other information to indicate more severity.
- For one student claimed in Code H there was no evidence of receiving special education services above those offered to the general student population.
- One student claimed in Code H had no evidence of a behaviour goal and for whom the District confirmed there was no specific behavioural intervention in place for the student.
- In the majority of files, the evidence required to support the various categories was available. However it in the majority of instances evidence was not always easily identified in the file, especially for Code H, for the following reasons:
 - each school organized their files in a different manner;
 - forms were not consistently used and/or filled out; and,
 - forms were not always dated.
- The auditors observed that the goals developed through the Instructional Support Planning Tool process were not always incorporated into the student's IEP.
- The format of the IEP made it challenging to determine goals, objectives and strategies of the IEP.
- Many of the objectives listed in the IEPs, particularly in Code H, were not measurable and strategies were not listed.
- There was no consistency in the documentation and service delivery information for students reported in Code H.
- The Student Profile Form, which initially was not in the student file, was produced later in the week. This documentation contained pertinent information to provide evidence to verify criteria was being met in Code H.

Recommendations:

The auditors recommend that:

- The District ensure prior to claiming a student in a special education category, that the criteria listed in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines specific to the category are being met.
- There must be evidence to indicate extremely disruptive behaviour or severe mental health diagnosis to support placement in Code H as per the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines.
- There must be evidence the student is receiving services to address the identified needs and that the student is receiving services that are beyond those offered to the general student population.
- There must be evidence to support all the criteria for placement in Code H as listed in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedure and Guidelines.

- The District and schools ensure files are organized in a manner that is consistent across the District and the required information is readily accessible, particularly in Code H.
- The District and schools ensure required forms are included in student files.
- The District and schools ensure that all forms are dated.
- The District utilize the information derived from the Instructional Support Planning Tool to develop goals and objectives that address the student needs.
- The District review other IEP formats available and adopt a District-wide format in which the goals, objectives and strategies are clearly laid out to address student need.
- The District ensure that the IEP has measurable objectives with adaptations and/or strategies to support the student in attaining the objectives.
- The District develop consistency in the documentation and service delivery for students reported in Code H by changing the responsibility for the category from school-based management to a District responsibility.
- The District ensure that any documentation containing relevant information aligning the student with a classification, be available in the student file.

Auditors' Comments

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