



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

2014/15 Special Education Enrolment Audit

AUDIT REPORT

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 64 (Gulf Islands)

2014/15 SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 64 (Gulf Islands)

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. 64 (Gulf Islands) reported 85 students in the supplemental special education funding categories as of October 17, 2014. For the purpose of this compliance audit, School District No. 64 (Gulf Islands) reported one student in the Physically Dependent Category (Code A), two students in the Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability Category (Code C), 22 students in the Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment Category (Code D), two students in the Visual Impairment Category (Code E), three students in the Deaf or Hard of Hearing Category (Code F), 25 students in the Autism Spectrum Disorder Category (Code G), and 30 students 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. 64 (Gulf Islands) during the week of January 26, 2015.

An entry meeting was held on January 26, 2015 with the Superintendent, the Director of Instruction (Learning Services), the Secretary Treasurer, the District Integration Teacher and the School Psychologist. Daily meetings with the Superintendent, the Director of Instruction (Learning Services), the District Integration Teacher and the School Psychologist 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 presentation by the Director of Instruction (Learning Services) in regard to the Special Education Innovation Grant received from the Ministry of Education which has allowed the District to redefine the role of special education. Redefining the role has been signified by the transition from Student Support Services to Learning Services. The District Integration Teacher and the School Psychologist explained the new IEP software and some of the services provided in the District.

One student file reported in the Physically Dependent category (Code A), two student files in Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disabilities (Code C), 22 student files in Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment (Code D), two student files in Visual Impairment (Code E), three student files in Deaf or Hard of Hearing (Code F), 25 student files in Autism Spectrum Disorder (Code G), and 30 student file 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.

The file review process did not encounter issues requiring school visits. The School Psychologist was able to provide the audit team with evidence when clarification was required. One school audited is located in Metro Vancouver; however the files for the school all met the Ministry criteria for the categories claimed. Meeting daily with the Superintendent, the Director of Instruction (Learning Services), the District Integration Teacher and the School Psychologist enabled the audit team to keep the District staff apprised of the audit progress.

An exit meeting was held with the Superintendent, the Director of Instruction (Learning Services), the Administrative Assistant, the Secretary-Treasurer, the District Integration Teacher and the School Psychologist on January 29, 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 was no recommended reclassification for the one student file reviewed by the auditors in Code A.

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

Of the 21 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code D:

- One student was recommended for reclassification to Code F.
- Two students were recommended for reclassification to regular education.

There were no recommended reclassifications for the two 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 25 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code G.

Of the 30 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code H:

- Two students were recommended for reclassification to Code R.
- One student was recommended for reclassification to regular education.
- An additional two students are being recommended for reclassification to Code R in September 2015, if evidence in accordance with the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines aligning with Code H is not provided.

The auditors found that:

- For students recommended for reclassification, the evidence in their files lacked sufficient documentation to support that the student had been appropriately assessed and identified and/or the student had not been offered learning activities in accordance with his/her IEP. Five of the six students recommended for reclassification are secondary students. The two students being recommended for reclassification in September are also at the secondary level.
- One student reported in Code D whose assessment did not support placement in that category as outlined in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedure and Guidelines did support placement in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing category (Code F). Audiology reports and IEP goals met the criteria for this reclassification.
- One student reported in Code D did not have any evidence of a medical diagnosis to support the claim in that category. Nor was there an IEP or record of any special education service provided.
- One student claimed in Code D is not receiving any special education service. She is registered as a home student but the family has refused to cooperate with school personnel and will not share information or agree to any service.
- Five student claims for Code H did not have evidence to meet the criteria for placement in the Intensive Behaviour Interventions/Serious Mental Illness Category. Three of these students had no evidence to support that planning is coordinated across agency and community. There was no integrated case management. One other student's assessment showed moderate behavior only, while another's provided no mental health assessment.
- The student files were well organized, data readily available, documentation dated and current.
- The IEPs were consistently signed even though this is not a requirement of the Ministry.
- All the student files reviewed in Code G contained evidence of well defined services and programs as well as up to date assessments.
- The MultiPro software used to track critical IEP information provided comprehensive evidence.

Recommendations:

The auditors recommend that

- The District ensure there is documentation to support that the student has been appropriately assessed and identified as meeting the needs of the special education category.
- The District ensure there is a current IEP.
- The District ensure any student claimed in Code H has integrated case management.
- The District ensure there is evidence that the student is being offered learning activities in accordance with the IEP developed for the student.
- The District aid the Secondary School with the organization of their special education files, ensuring all relevant information and documentation reflects category placement criteria.

Auditors' Comments

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