



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

2014/15 Special Education Enrolment Audit

AUDIT REPORT

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 70 (Alberni)

2014/15 SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 70 (Alberni)

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. 70 (Alberni) reported 211 students in these supplemental special education funding categories as of October 17, 2014. For the purpose of this compliance audit, School District No. 70 (Alberni) reported one student in the Physically Dependent Category (Code A), 17 students in the Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability Category (Code C), 88 students in the Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment Category (Code D), three students in the Visual Impairment Category (Code E), nine in the Deaf or Hard of Hearing Category (Code F), 42 in the Autism Spectrum Disorder Category (Code G), and 72 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. 70 (Alberni) during the week of March 2, 2015.

An entry meeting was held on March 2, 2015, with the Superintendent of Schools, the Director of Student Services, the Director of Learning Services and the Special Education resource teacher. Daily meetings with the Director of Student Services and the Special Education resource teacher 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 detailed power point presentation on special education programs and practices in the district. This was offered within the context of a declining district enrollment. A handbook on Student Support Services provided a comprehensive listing of staff roles, their responsibilities and the service provided by the District.

A sample of one student file reported in the Physically Dependent category (Code A), 17 student files in Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disabilities (Code C), 88 student files in Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment (Code D), three students in the Visual Impairment Category (Code E), nine student files in Deaf or Hard of Hearing (Code F), 21 student files in Autism Spectrum Disorder (Code G), and 72 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.

The file review process encountered one issue requiring additional scrutiny on the part of the audit team. During the review of Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment (Code D), it was observed that 15 students were diagnosed with fetal alcohol syndrome disorder (FASD) by a local paediatrician and a school psychologist. The Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines provide that students with FASD may be claimed under this category if they are diagnosed through the Complex Developmental Behavioral Conditions (CDBC) Network. Qualified specialists may also diagnose but the assessment must include and integrate information from multiple sources and various professions. It must indicate that the student with FASD is exhibiting an array of complex needs, with two or more domains being impacted. Since the diagnosis for each of the 15 students had neither been done through the CDBC Network nor clearly used a multidisciplinary team, each file was carefully examined to determine that a complex array of need was established. The objective was to ensure that all directives in accordance with the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines were being met.

An exit meeting was held with the Superintendent of Schools and the Director of Student Services on March 6, 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 17 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code C.

Of the 88 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code D:

- Four students were recommended for reclassification to Regular Education.

Of the three student files reviewed by the auditors in Code E:

- One student was recommended for reclassification to Regular Education.

Of the nine student files reviewed by the auditors in Code F:

- One student was recommended for reclassification to Regular Education.

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

- One student was recommended for reclassification to Regular Education.

Of the 72 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code H:

- Two students were recommended for reclassification to Regular, three to Code R and two to Code D. Another student who has a mental health assessment pending will be maintained in the category this year but reconsidered in September 2015.

The auditors found that:

- Four student claims reported in Code D did not have any evidence that they were receiving special education services to support the claim in that category. In addition, two had no current IEPs in place, dated after September 30, 2013, and another was claimed in error.
- Of the 15 student claims in Code D, having been diagnosed with FASD by the school psychologist and the paediatrician, one is being recommended for adjustment in the group of four above. That student's file revealed that there was no current IEP in place, dated after September 10, 2013, and the Grade 12 student was not receiving any special education service. The diagnosis, completed in 2009, did not establish a complex array of need with two or more domains impacted.
- One student claim reported in Code E had considerable evidence in the file to support improvement in vision. An examination in July 2014, resulted in acuity of 20/30 in the best eye and 20/60 in the other. The threshold in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines is 20/70 in the best eye. This student's vision does not meet the criteria for the category.
- One student claim reported as Code F had no evidence to indicate they were receiving support services from the teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing. This student has not been receiving any special education support this year or last year.
- One student claim reported in Code G was without evidence that support services were provided. There was no evidence of a current IEP in place dated after September 30, 2013. The District staff verified that this claim was made in error.
- Seven student claims for Code H did not have evidence to meet the criteria for placement in the Intensive Behaviour Interventions/Serious Mental Illness Category. One student had no current IEP and was not receiving any special education support. Another, who was reported in error, also had no IEP and had not received any special education service. Three students had no evidence on file that there was coordinated, across agency and community planning (no integrated case management). Two other students had been diagnosed with Tourette's syndrome and met the criteria for placement in Code D.
- The student files were well organized, data readily available, documentation dated and current.

- The Code H student files reviewed from the VAST program contained a considerable amount of evidence to support the additional services being provided to students. Outside agency support and collaboration was well documented.

Recommendations:

The auditors recommend that:

- The District ensure each student claimed has a current IEP in place dated after September 30 of the previous school year.
- 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 ensure student claims in Code H must have planning that is coordinated, across agency and community (integrated case management/wraparound).
- The District ensure there must be documentation to support that the student has been appropriately assessed and identified as meeting the criteria of the special education category.
- The District ensure for those students suspected of having complex developmental behavioral conditions, including FASD, be referred to the CDBC Assessment Network or ensure an appropriate multidisciplinary assessment is completed.
- The Ministry of Education undertake a return audit to verify procedural and service requirements are being met in Code D.

Auditors' Comments

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