



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

2015/16 Distributed Learning Enrolment Audit

AUDIT REPORT

**CHEK ABC
(00896749)**

2015/16 DISTRIBUTED LEARNING ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT
CHEK ABC
(00896749)

Background

Distributed Learning (DL) programs and courses are alternatives to regular classroom-based instruction for students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 providing a method of instruction that relies primarily on indirect communication between learners and British Columbia certified educators, including internet, other electronic-based delivery, teleconferencing, and correspondence. DL takes place when a student is primarily at a distance from the teacher.

The Ministry of Education funds Independent School Authorities based on the Authorities' reported DL enrolment in September, February and May each year. Independent School Authorities report students undertaking DL programs or courses to the Ministry on [Form 1701: Student Data Collection Completion Instructions for Independent Schools](#) (Form 1701).

The Knowledge Management and Accountability Division conducts DL Enrolment audits to verify enrolment reported on Form 1701. The outcomes of these audits could result in funding implications if adjustments are recommended. Funding recoveries are expanded to include full-time equivalents (FTEs) outside the audit sample where the auditors can make a clear link between the audit findings in the sample and those FTEs outside the sample.

Purpose

The purpose of the DL Enrolment audit is to provide assurance to the Ministry of Education and Independent School Authorities that Ministry directives and policies are being followed. The audits are based on *Form 1701: Student Data Collection, Completion Instructions for Independent Schools*, current Distributed Learning requirements and standards as well as related Ministry policies.

Description of the Audit Process

A DL audit was conducted at CHEK ABC May 9 and 10, 2016. The total enrolment reported at February 12, 2016 was 24.0000 FTEs, of which 35 student files were reviewed. The review was extended to include all reported students for analysis when the auditor identified school-wide issues.

An entry meeting was held with the Principal and the Program Registrar to review the purpose of the audit and the criteria for funding as outlined in the Form 1701 Instructions. The process of the audit was reviewed and information about the program offered by the Distributed Learning School was provided. The administrators and the auditor discussed the procedures that would be followed to undertake the audit.

The auditor worked out of the administrative offices at CHEK ABC in Nelson, British Columbia. The auditor sought documentation to determine that the courses claimed met the [DL Active Policy](#) criteria by the activation submission date and other related Ministry directives. Throughout the audit there were ongoing discussions with DL staff to ensure the auditor had an understanding of all aspects of the program. All recommended adjustments were discussed with

the staff during the course of the audit, providing them with every opportunity to locate the necessary evidence. The review was extended to include all reported students for analysis when the auditor identified a school-wide issue.

An exit meeting was held with the Principal, Superintendent and Program Registrar where the auditor presented the preliminary results and clarified any outstanding issues.

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

Description of the Program

CHEK ABC (Christian Home Educators of the Kootenays and Across BC) represents the DL school administered by the Nelson Christian School Society (NCSS). The NCSS oversees the administration of the local Christian school, Nelson Christian Community School (NCCS), as well as CHEK ABC. Both schools are housed in the same facility, and share administration offices. Local CHEK ABC students have the opportunity to attend some classes at NCCS.

CHEK ABC offers a faith based Christian educational program for families wishing to school their children at home. It originally serviced families local to the Kootenay region, but has grown to include students, staff, and local programming right across the entire province of BC. They have a growing and diverse community with Kindergarten to Grade 9 (K-9) programs, a flexible online high school, and a diverse Special Education program.

At the K-9 level, CHEK ABC is organized around a regional model with face to face service from teachers. Most students in the program are represented in the East Kootenay, West Kootenay, Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island, and Northern British Columbia regions. Local teachers are assigned to students and conduct intake interviews, make recommendations for enrolment, plan the educational programming (in collaboration with the parent), and assess and report on the student. Weekly contact is made to monitor progress throughout the year. Teachers gather together within a given region to plan group educational services that meet the unique needs of the region. Students have the option of participating in a variety of locally planned events, field trips and learning opportunities in each region.

The CHEK ABC High School Program offers courses to students across British Columbia that are mediated electronically. Upon enrolment (or cross-enrolment), the CHEK ABC High School Counsellor contacts the student and family and assists them with course selection(s), based on the individual graduation needs and goals of the student. Once a course plan has been confirmed by the parent, it is sent to the CHEK ABC office for processing, at which time a course teacher is notified and course materials are sent to the student.

Observations

The auditor found that:

- All members of the teaching staff of the CHEK ABC School are currently certified with the Teacher Regulation Branch.
- The teachers lead the educational programs of their students. The teachers communicate with

students in a variety of ways to support their learning. They use Skype, Face-Time, Illuminate, phone, face-to-face, emails and texting to accomplish this.

- The teachers evaluate and assess their students on an on-going basis and for all progress reports and interim reports.
- The School is generally in accordance with the Distributed Learning-Independent Schools and Distributed Learning-General Policy regarding financial reimbursements to third party providers. However, the Student/Parent Handbook does state that internet fees will be paid to a maximum of \$300.
- The School follows the Distributed Learning-BC Residency Policy.
- The School did not follow the Distributed Learning Active Policy with respect to:
 - Student claims must meet the active criteria on or before the active claim date. One student did not have a complete substantive activity assignment as identified by the school nor any other work subsequent to that assignment.
 - Submitting the substantive student course work based on prior learning and knowledge. One course had the substantive activity assignment based on prior learning and knowledge and was not graded.
- The School has a system for tracking students from the time they register until they meet all the eligibility requirements including those found in the Distributed Learning-Active Policy. This tracking sheet is up-dated as any additions or changes are made to the students' programs.
- The School uses a process to determine if students can gain course credit through the challenge process, however, one student was claimed for funding contrary to the Form 1701 Instructions which states that courses completed via challenge are not to be included in the 1701 data collection process. The [Earning Credit through Equivalency, Challenge, External Credentials, Post-secondary Credit and Independent Directed Studies Policy](#) outlines mechanisms for earning credits and identifies how schools are to report those students who completed eligible courses via challenge and directives around the required procedures for challenge.
 - *Prior to engaging in a challenge process, schools must review any documentation of prior learning that a student presents in order to determine if credit can be awarded through equivalency.*
 - *The Ministry will fund enrolling boards of education the equivalent per pupil funding of a 1-credit course for each successfully completed course challenge.*
 - *Ministry-developed or Board Authorized Grade 10, 11 or 12 courses (including courses with a Grade 10, 11 or 12 Graduation Program examination) must be available for challenge in the district one year after full implementation of the relevant education program guide or Board Authorized course description.*

Procedures for Challenge

 - *Schools must document the challenge assessment delivered to each student, including a pre-challenge equivalency review, and the documentation must be made available to Ministry auditors if requested.*
- In the previous school year there was one CHEK ABC Grade 9 student who was enrolled in an educational program that contained a Grade 10 course. The School was funded for the students' Grade 9 program, yet once the same student entered into Grade 10, the School chose to report the previously undertaken course once again when the student moved on to Grade 10. The course was not active or undertaken during the student's Grade 10 year. Contrary to the DL Active Policy requiring students to meet the stated activation

requirements before considered funding eligible; the DL Funding Policy “*Students in Grades 8 and 9 will be funded at 0.5 FTE plus 0.125 FTE per eligible four-credit course to a maximum of 1.0 FTE per school year*” ; and, Form 1701 Instructions “*report all new courses leading to graduation in which the Grade 10-12 student has become active*”.

It is only in the instance where students are cross enrolled that those in Grade 9 at one school could be reported for Grade 10 courses during the year in which the Grade 9 program is undertaken aligning with the DL Funding Policy’s statement: “*A student enrolling only in Grade 10 – 12 courses in a DL school, who is also enrolled in Grades K-9 in another school, is counted as a Grade 10 - 12 student for DL funding purposes.*”

- While Kindergarten to Grade 9 student learning plans included all areas of study for the appropriate grade, some students did not have evidence of learning activities in each of those subjects. The student learning plan activities did not always fulfill the full range of curricula for the grade level as required in accordance with the [Educational Standards for Independent Schools Policy](#).
- Much of the work submitted as representing substantive student course activity for activation in the course was not dated by the student, nor the teacher when marking that work.

Audit Sample Findings

The auditors found that:

- 0.1250 school-age Grade 10-12 FTEs reported in February had no evidence the student was active as required by the DL Active Policy and in accordance with Form 1701 Instructions.
- 0.1250 school-age Grade 10-12 FTEs reported in February were verified to be part of the educational program the student undertook while in Grade 9.
- 0.1250 school-age Grade 10-12 FTEs were reported for an ineligible claim in February. It was verified that the claim reflected a course challenge which is not eligible for funding through the Form 1701 data collection process.
- 0.1250 school-age Grade 10-12 FTEs were claimed for funding with work completed based on prior learning only with no other evidence the student was provided with an actual current educational program nor active at the February submission date as required by the DL Active Policy and Form 1701 reporting instructions.

Recommendations

The auditor recommends that:

- The School undertake a process aligning all documentation to clarify that the School is operating in accordance with the DL Learning-General Policy regarding reimbursements to third party service providers in addition to other related directives including the DL Agreement, the Standards for Delivery of K-12 Independent School Distributed learning in British Columbia, and the Independent School Act.
- The School refrain from reporting student claims based on prior learning. Eligible claims are only those where an actual educational program has been provided and meets the DL directives including alignment with the Form 1701 Data Collection Reporting Instructions.
- The School ensure that Grade 10-12 students meet the attendance requirements in each eligible course claimed for funding. As Grade 10-12 FTE reporting is based on per course funding, when an educational program of courses is reported, each individual course must

meet the 'active' attendance requirements in accordance with the Form 1701 reporting instructions and aligned with the DL Active Policy criteria.

- The School ensure that all Challenge courses are aligned with the [policy](#) directives which say: *“report successful course challenges to the Ministry through the Transcript and Examination (TRAX) system by June 30 of the school year in which the challenge occurred. For courses completed via a challenge process, schools must report the appropriate TRAX code in the "Course Type Field." More information about reporting course challenges can be found in the [Handbook of Procedures for the Graduation Program](#)”*. Challenge courses are not to be reported for funding through the Form 1701 data collection process.
- The School ensure that for Grade 8 and 9 student claims, the Form 1701 reporting instructions are followed. The funding of these educational options are program driven and not per course funding. It is an ineligible claim practice for the Grade 10 to 12 courses, undertaken and funded in the student's K-9 educational program, to be additionally reported in a subsequent school year.
- The School and its teachers ensure that all K-9 students are progressing in all areas of the curriculum in each school year, and that student learning activities meet all of the required areas of study.
- All student work and teacher grading is to be dated in order to ensure that Grade 10-12 students are active in each eligible course claimed for funding within the appropriate claim period in accordance with the with the DL Active Policy and aligned with Form 1701 reporting instructions.

Auditor's Comments

The auditor expresses appreciation to the school staff for their cooperation and hospitality during the audit.