



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

2015/16 Special Education Enrolment Audit

AUDIT REPORT

**ROOTS AND WINGS MONTESSORI
(036 96515)**

2015/16 SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT ROOTS AND WINGS MONTESSORI (036 96515)

Background

The Ministry of Education funds Independent School Authorities based on the Authorities' reported enrolment as of September 30th each year and supplemental special needs classifications in September and February. Independent School Authorities report students with special needs to the Ministry on *Form 1701: Student Data Collection* (Form 1701).

In the 2015/16 school year, the Ministry of Education through the Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools (OIIS) conducted Special Education enrolment audits, in selected schools, to verify reported enrolment on Form 1701.

Purpose

The purpose of the Special Education enrolment audit is to provide assurance to the Ministry of Education and Independent School Authorities that schools are complying with the instructions contained in [*Form 1701: Student Data Collection, Completion Instructions for Independent 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 Compliance Audit Process

A compliance audit was conducted at Roots and Wings Montessori School on February 18, 2016.

Prior to the file reviews, an entry meeting was held with school assigned staff and the auditor interviewed staff to enquire about the Independent School Authority's policies, procedures and programs.

Roots and Wings Montessori reported ten students in special education categories at the Fall 2015 Form 1701 data submission. For the purposes of this audit, seven student records were reviewed in the following low incidence special needs categories:

Student Claims	Category
4	Category D (Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment)
3	Category G (Autism Spectrum Disorder)

Three student records were also reviewed in the following high incidence special needs categories:

Student Claims	Category
1	Category P (Gifted)
2	Category Q (Learning Disability)

The Special Education Manager shared the following:

- Special Education and her position are new to the school.
- The School has developed a Special Education Policy.
- Remediation is supported through the classroom teachers.
- The School identifies the Montessori teaching method, paired with the use of a wide-ranging of manipulatives, as their programming approach is conducive for adaptations and modifications.
- Teacher observation is on-going to assess student progress with IEP goals.

The one day review took place at the main building and the School is located at a different building site, restricting the lack of opportunity to confirm evidence not at the main building. Whole student files were not provided. The information the School determined relevant to the review were organized by category, alphabetically into one binder. Limited were evidence of learning opportunities being offered in accordance to the IEP and the evidence of observations, checklist and other documentation sited as methods for measuring progress in relation to the IEP goals. The auditor requested and received the latest report cards and evidence of evaluation the School refers to as trial implementations. Dialogue with staff confirmed good working knowledge and an intimate understanding of their students' needs.

At the time of the audit two students had recently left the school (Code Q and Code P). Designation and IEP evidence was available and reviewed.

The file review process encountered an issue requiring follow-up contact with a family. One Code G file does not have an autism assessment within the file. There is only a psycho-educational assessment with reference to an earlier autism assessment administered at the same multidisciplinary facility as the psycho-educational assessment. When contacted by the School, the parents refused to submit the autism assessment. The auditor unsuccessfully attempted to contact the family.

An exit meeting was held with Ms. Cassie Thompson (Principal) and Laine Thompson (Special Education Manager) on February 18, 2016. The auditor 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 2015/16 school year, and expressed appreciation for the assistance provided.

Observations

There were no recommended reclassifications for the four student files reviewed in Code D.

Of the three student files reviewed in Code G:

- One student claim was recommended for reclassification to Code K.

The one student file reviewed in Code P was recommended for reclassification to Code Q.

There were no recommended reclassifications for the two student files reviewed in Code Q.

The auditor found that:

- One student claim reported in the Autism Spectrum Disorder Category (Code G) whose assessment did not support placement in that category as outlined in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedure and Guidelines. There was evidence to support placement in the Mild Intellectual Disability Category (Code K). The psycho-educational assessment stated if there was another adaptive skills assessment completed, results may support a different category designation. At the time of the audit no new assessment measures had been completed.
- For one student reported in Code G, the auditor could confirm the diagnosis from a follow-up assessment issued from the same multidisciplinary facility, but not that the initial assessment adhered to the standards and guidelines for diagnosing Autism Spectrum Disorder. If the student is to be claimed next year the assessment and a non-BCAAN form must be in place by the Fall Student Data Collection submission date.
- For a Code P student recommended for reclassification to the Learning Disabilities Category (Code Q), there was equal evidence in the student file to support placement in two different categories. The present IEP and support plan evidence aligns with the category reclassification recommendation.
- Two Code Q students had IEP goals that focused primarily on the work ethic of the student. There was no evidence of emphasis on goals detailing addressing the diagnosed learning needs.
- For the 2016/17 school year, one student claim in Code D will need assessment documentation and other information indicating the extent and impact that the medical condition is having on the student's functioning and education in accordance with the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines.
- The School has no formal learning assistance program, the School uses classroom-based observations and evaluations to assess needs and progress.
- Service provision provided by the School is Special Education Assistants (SEAs) within each classroom.
- The School does not provide any therapy services or formal counselling. The Special Education Manager provides social skills support.
- The designated students' assessments were completed prior to enrollment. Further assessments are the decision and responsibility of the parent. The School suggests qualified specialists and multidisciplinary facilities.
- The Special Education Manager maintains and initials a running record of all meetings for each student. Attendees are not recorded. The School no longer utilizes their IEP meeting note or IEP planning form.
- Of the ten files, five did not have parent signatures on the Parent/Guardian Confirmation Form. The School did have email evidence of the five parents' participation in IEP planning.
- The IEPs were current and dated.
- IEPs were written by the Special Education Manager, in consultation with the family and the staff.
- The School is using a new IEP format through the use of an online Sycamore system. There is a succinct introductory paragraph stating the designation category, the areas of needed support, and a list of the overall types of goals.
- Inclusion of functioning level information was inconsistent between IEPs.

- Each IEP has a standard list of strategies: adaptations and modifications of materials, verbal prompts, discussions, social stories, role-play and use of literature. A few IEP goals list a some additional strategies.
- All IEPs have a generic list of methods for measuring progress in relation to the goals sited: staff observations, documentation, and trial implementations.
- There were on average one to three goals per IEP, with an average of three associated objectives.
- The IEPs contain goals and measurable objectives that reflect to varying degrees the need and category in which the student is claimed.
- The goals and strategies listed do not always reflect the recommendations within various assessment or medical reports.
- Transitional goals are integrated as needed.
- IEPs do not have review dates, evaluation notations, lists of strengths, list of service providers or their roles, and level of services, as outlined in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedure and Guidelines as IEP requirements.
- First names of personnel are at times implanted but not identified within IEP goals.
- Report cards are written from a positive student empowering perspective; correlations to IEP goals were often evident. Adaptive and modified programs are not clearly identified.
- There was consistent use of the Instructional Support Planning Document, providing useful evidence.

Recommendations:

The auditor recommends that:

- The School report only those student claims that meet the criteria for the category in which they are claimed.
- The School follow up with securing assessments and documents as required.
- IEPs be reviewed to strengthen the goal and objective alignment with the category identified and to reflect all the needs of each student.
- Strengths and present functioning levels be added to IEPs.
- No special education claim be made unless stronger evidence of ongoing support services beyond that offered to students in regular education is present in each of the student files.
- The School consider accessing Provincial Outreach Programs.
- The School consider establishing a more formal learning support program.
- Report cards are to clearly reflect level of course adaptations and modifications.
- The IEP document the names (first and last), roles and level of service given to students.
- The School maintain minutes and record participants at IEP meetings.
- The School ensure the Special Education Funding: Parent/Guardian Confirmation Form is signed by all parents.
- IEP review dates are established and evidence of method for measuring progress, including trial implementation results, be recorded in or linked to the IEP.
- Information from the Planning Support Tools be integrated into IEPs.
- The School encourage use of the various in-house forms and revisit the idea of utilizing the IEP format used in previous years.

- IEP objectives, responsible personnel (full names), strategies and methods of evaluation be aligned and consistently provided.
- Assessment recommendations are integrated into IEP goals, strategies, and programs.
- IEP strategies, adaptations, and methods of measuring are individualized and aligned with specific goals and objectives.
- The School undertake a workshop and be considered for a return audit to ensure all claims and IEPs are aligned to and in accordance with the Special Education Manual of Policy, Procedures and Guidelines requirements.

Auditor's Comments

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