



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

2015/16 Special Education Enrolment Audit

AUDIT REPORT

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 43 (Coquitlam)

2015/16 SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 43 (Coquitlam)

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 2015/16 school year, school boards reported 26,633 students enrolled in the low incidence supplemental special education funding categories at September 2015. School District No. 43 (Coquitlam) reported 1,178 students in the supplemental special education funding categories as of September 30, 2015. For the purpose of this compliance audit, School District No. 43 (Coquitlam) reported 28 student claims in the Physically Dependent Category (Code A), four student claims in the Deafblind Category (Code B), 69 student claims in the Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability Category (Code C), 205 student claims in the Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment Category (Code D), 13 student claims in the Visual Impairment Category (Code E), 63 student claims in the Deaf or Hard of Hearing Category (Code F), 440 student claims in the Autism Spectrum Disorder Category (Code G), and 356 student claims 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 are receiving the service and 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. 43 (Coquitlam) during the week of February 29 2016.

An entry meeting was held on February 29 2016 with the Superintendent, three Assistant Superintendents and the Director of Instruction- Learning Services.

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 Power Point presentation by the Director of Instruction-Learning Services which described the demographics of Coquitlam, outlined the delivery of special education service and identified the unique features of the School District. The District has implemented a District-wide IEP template focusing on SMART Goals and encourages the use of the Ministry Instructional Support Planning Tools. Commitment is to providing "in-service in order that Case Managers ensure *Current Levels, Objectives, and Assessment Updates* are each specific and measurable". Each member of the audit team was provided with a binder that listed program supports, school programs and outside agencies and supports.

A sample of 28 student files reported in the Physically Dependent category (Code A), four student files in the Deafblind (Code B), 20 student files in Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disabilities (Code C), 100 student files in Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment (Code D), five student files in Visual Impairment (Code E), five student files in Deaf or Hard of Hearing (Code F), 75 student files in Autism Spectrum Disorder (Code G), and 150 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 did not encounter issues requiring school visits. The Director of Instruction-Learning Services was readily available to answer any questions or clarifications posed by the audit team. A daily meeting was held with the Director of Instruction-Learning Service to keep the District apprised of the audit team's progress.

An exit meeting was held with the Superintendent, four Assistant Superintendents and the Director of Instruction-Learning Services on March 4, 2016. 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 2015/16 school year, and expressed appreciation for the assistance provided.

Observations

There were no recommended reclassifications for the 28 files reviewed by the auditors in Code A.

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

There were no recommended reclassifications for the 20 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code C for this school year. One student was recommended for reclassification to Code K for the 2016/17 school year.

Of the 100 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code D one student was recommended for reclassification to Regular Education. One student was recommended for reclassification to Code C for the 2016/17 school year.

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

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

Of the 75 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code G one student was recommended for reclassification to Regular Education.

Of the 150 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code H seven students were recommended for reclassification to Regular Education. One student was recommended for reclassification to Code Q for the 2016/17 school year.

The auditors found that:

- One student reported in Code D was verified by the District as being claimed in error and is recommended for reclassification to Regular Education. There was no evidence of service provision beyond those offered to the general student population as at the Form 1701 Data collection claim date.
- One student reported in Code G was verified by the District as being claimed in error and is recommended for reclassification to Regular Education. There was no evidence of service provision beyond those offered to the general student population as at the Form 1701 Data collection claim date.
- Seven students reported in Code H were verified by the District as claimed in error and are recommended for reclassification to Regular Education. There was no evidence of service provision beyond those offered to the general student population as at the Form 1701 Data collection claim date.
- For one student claim in Code C there were two assessments dated in 2004 with conflicting report results. The student is on a waitlist to be assessed before September 2016. Pending new assessment results, evidence supports placement in the Mild Intellectual Disability Category (Code K) for the 2016/17 school year.
- One student reported in Code D is recommended for reclassification in Code C. Recent assessment information from CDBC and BCAAN contained evidence that supported the Code C criteria for the subsequent school year.
- One student reported in Code H is recommended for reclassification in Code Q in the 2016/17 school year unless there is documented evidence to support that planning is coordinated, across agency and community, as well as evidence of integrated case management aligning with the criteria for Code H.
- The files as presented were organized into a three levels: audit, confidential and G4.
- There were a number of District-developed forms that were used consistently and contained the required evidence. These included:
 - EA/Skills Development teacher/counsellor schedules
 - Check-In, Tracking and IEP matrix templates
 - Behavioral/Mental Health History: File Review
 - Interagency Planning Log
 - Behaviour Intervention Log

- Behaviour Plans
- Safety Plans
- In certain files there were envelopes identified for Auditors Only; the information contained in these envelopes protected the student's privacy while providing evidence of complexity.
- The Instructional Planning Tool for Code H did not consistently reflect the complexity evident in the IEP's.

Recommendations:

The auditors recommend that:

- The District ensure a standardized process to be followed to align the complexity described in the IEPs with the complexities indicated in the Instructional Planning Tools.
- The District ensure that Form 1701 reporting is verified prior to submission and that student files are updated and reviewed regularly to ensure the students meet the criteria in the category in which they are claimed for the reported school year.
- The District ensure student claims in Code D meet the criteria listed in the Special Education Manual of Policies Procedure and Guidelines for that category. There must be documentation of a medical diagnosis in one or more of the following areas: nervous system impairment that impacts movement or mobility, musculoskeletal condition, or chronic health impairment that seriously impacts student's education and achievement.
- The District ensure student claims in Code H with a mental health diagnosis have evidence to support the diagnosis was made by a qualified mental health clinician. There must be evidence that planning is coordinated across agency and community as specified in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines. There must be an IEP in place dated after September 30th of the previous school year and the students must be receiving additional services.
- The District ensure that the diagnosis meets the criteria for a special education designation.
- The District ensure the medical information regarding the students claimed is current and that processes are in place for declassifying students when they no longer meet category placement.
- The District report only student claims in each category when there is evidence to verify criteria has been met and that a plan for the delivery of appropriate special education services are in evidence at the time of the required claim.

Auditors' Comments

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