



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

2015/16 Special Education Enrolment Audit

AUDIT REPORT

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 50 (Haida Gwaii)

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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. 50 (Haida Gwaii) reported 28 students in the supplemental special education funding categories as of September 30, 2015.

For the purpose of this compliance audit, School District No. 50 (Haida Gwaii) reported one student claim in the Deafblind Category (Code B), two student claims in the Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability Category (Code C), 11 student claims in the Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment Category (Code D), one student claim in the Deaf or Hard of Hearing Category (Code F), four student claims in the Autism Spectrum Disorder Category (Code G), nine student claims in the Intensive Behavior Intervention/Serious Mental Illness Category (Code H), 11 student claims in Mild Intellectual Disabilities (Code K), two student claims in Gifted (Code P), 30 student claims in Learning Disabilities (Code Q) and six student claims in Moderate Behavior/Mental Illness (Code R).

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. 50 (Haida Gwaii) during the week of February 22, 2016.

An entry meeting was held on Monday February 22, 2016 with the Superintendent and the Student Services Coordinator. Daily meetings with the Student Services Coordinator 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 an overview of the unique features of the School District and the challenges to create consistent processes and procedures. Professional resources needed to support students with special needs are limited. The District has provided opportunities for specialized training to staff in order to have the personnel available to support their students.

A sample of one student file reported in the Deafblind (Code B), two student files in Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disabilities (Code C), 11 student files in Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment (Code D), one student file in Deaf or Hard of Hearing (Code F), four student files in Autism Spectrum Disorder (Code G), nine student files in Intensive Behavior Interventions/Serious Mental Illness (Code H), 11 student files in Mild Intellectual Disability (Code K), two student files in Gifted (Code P), 30 student files in Learning Disabilities (Code Q), and 6 student files in Moderate Behavior/Mental Illness (Code R) 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 Student Services Coordinator was able to provide the audit team with evidence when clarification was required. Meeting daily with the Coordinator of Student Services enabled the audit team to keep the District apprised of the audit progress.

An exit meeting was held with the Superintendent and the Student Services Coordinator on Friday February 26, 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 school year, and expressed appreciation for the assistance provided.

Observations

The one student file reviewed by the auditors in Code B was recommended for reclassification to Regular Education.

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

Of the 11 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code D:

- one student claim was recommended for reclassification to Code H.

The one student file reviewed by the auditors in Code F was recommended for reclassification to Regular Education.

There were no recommended reclassifications for the four student claims reviewed by the auditors in Code G.

There were no recommended reclassifications for the nine student claims reviewed by the auditors in Code H.

Of the 11 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code K:

- one student claim was recommended for reclassification to Regular Education.

There were no recommended reclassifications for the two Code P reported student files reviewed.

There were no recommended reclassifications for the 30 Code Q student files reviewed by the auditors.

Of the 6 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code R

- one student was recommended for reclassification to Regular Education.

The auditors found that:

- One student was verified as being incorrectly reported in DeafBlind category (Code B). While the student file contained diagnostic information aligned with the Visual Impairment category (Code E), there was no evidence of any support services being provided by a teacher of the Visually Impaired. The District verified that there was no teacher of the Visually Impaired working in the District or involved in any way with this student. With no service provision in place, the recommendation is for reclassification to regular education until service and support aligned with the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines requirements are provided.
- There was no evidence to support the criteria for one student reported in the Physical Disability/Chronic Health Impairment category (Code D). There was evidence in the student file to support placement in the Intensive Behaviour Interventions/Serious Mental Illness Category (Code H). There was evidence of a diagnosis of ADHD in the reports and the student is on medication that is being taken at school.
- There was no evidence of support services from a teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing for one student reported in the Deaf or Hard of Hearing category (Code F). While there was evidence to support that the student had been appropriately assessed and identified as meeting criteria for Code F, the District verified that there was no teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing working in the District or involved in any way with this student. With no service provision in place, the recommendation is for reclassification to regular education until service and support aligned with the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines requirements are provided.
- There was no evidence to meet the criteria for placement for one student identified in the Mild Intellectual Disabilities category (Code K). The student was removed from the category by the District in November 2015. There was no evidence of an IEP, nor was there evidence of any service being provided.

- There was no evidence to meet the criteria for placement for one student identified in the Moderate Behaviour Support/Mental Illness category (Code R). There was no evidence of an IEP, nor was there evidence of any service being provided.
- Evidence required to support the various categories was available but was not always identified in the file for the following reasons:
 - school files were poorly organized;
 - each school organized their files in a different manner;
 - several IEP formats were used amongst the District schools and completed to different degrees of comprehensiveness; and
 - forms were not consistently used and filled out.
- There were a number of forms, that when used, provided the evidence verifying reported classification met the criteria. These included:
 - Student Behaviour Record
 - Category Change Form
 - Behaviour Intervention Plan
 - Annual Designation Renewal Request
- The Interagency Case Management Communication Record form was used consistently in student files to verify evidence of interagency involvement.
- The IEPs for students in all categories were written to reflect the specific needs of each individual student. The goals and strategies often reflected recommendations from various assessment or medical reports.

Recommendations:

The auditors recommend that:

- The District report only those student claims when the criteria for the category in which they are claimed is met and that the students are receiving the special education support services required in accordance with the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines.
- The District report only student claims in each category when there is the required evidence, requisite service provision to the student, and that a plan for the delivery of the special education services are in evidence at the time of the required claim.
- 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 encourage consistent use of the various in-house developed forms.
- 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 there are processes are in place for declassifying students when they no longer meet category placement.

Auditors' Comments

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