



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

2015/16 Special Education Enrolment Audit

**AUDIT REPORT
*REVISED MAY 6, 2016***

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 52 (Prince Rupert)

2015/16 SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 52 (Prince Rupert)

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. 52 (Prince Rupert) reported 111 students in the supplemental special education funding categories as of September 30, 2015. For the purpose of this compliance audit, School District No. 52 (Prince Rupert) reported two student claims in the Physically Dependent Category (Code A), one student claim in the Deafblind Category (Code B), 18 student claims in the Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability Category (Code C), 42 student claims in the Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment Category (Code D), one student claim in the Visual Impairment Category (Code E), 11 student claims in the Deaf or Hard of Hearing Category (Code F), 14 student claims in the Autism Spectrum Disorder Category (Code G), and 22 student claims in the Intensive Behaviour 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. 52 (Prince Rupert) during the week of February 1, 2016.

Two entry meetings were held on February 1, 2016, one with the Superintendent and members of the District staff including the District Principal-Learning Services and a second meeting with the District Principal-Learning Services that was specific to Special Education programs and

services. Daily meetings with the District Principal-Learning Services were held to present preliminary findings and to seek clarification related to the contents of files.

Prior to the file reviews, the auditors met with District staff to discuss the District's policies, procedures and programs. The auditors were provided with an overview of the staff and their areas of expertise and the services provided to special needs students. The staff advised the auditors about the materials used for assessment, tracking and teaching. District staff pointed out that their program supports diversity and inclusion.

A sample of two student files reported in the Physically Dependent category (Code A), one student file in the Deafblind (Code B), nine student files in Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disabilities (Code C), 42 student files in Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment (Code D), one student file in the Visual Impairment Category (Code E), five student files in Deaf or Hard of Hearing (Code F), seven student files in Autism Spectrum Disorder (Code G), and 22 student files in Intensive Behaviour 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 resulted in two issues requiring school visits. There was no evidence in the files to verify criteria was being met for the two student claims reported in the Physically Dependent category (Code A). Upon completion of the school visits, it was verified that the evidence did not support either claim for Code A. There was evidence for both students supporting placement in Physical Disabilities Chronic Health category (Code D).

An exit meeting was held with the District Principal-Learning Services on February 3, 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:

Of the two student files reviewed by the auditors in Code A:

- Two students were recommended for reclassification to Code D. **During an appeal of one student claim acknowledgement to the complexity of the student profile along with the type and level of supports indicated intensive support arrangements for the current school year, but from June 2016 student should be reported in Category D.**

There were no recommended reclassifications for the one student file reviewed by the auditors in Code B.

There were no recommended reclassifications for the nine student files reviewed by the auditors in Code C.

There were no recommended reclassifications for the 42 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code D.

There were no recommended reclassifications for the one student file reviewed by the auditors in Code E.

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

There were no recommended reclassifications for the seven student files reviewed by the auditors in Code G.

Of the 22 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code H:

- one student was claimed in error

The auditors found that:

- Two students claimed in the Physically Dependent category (Code A) demonstrated purposeful mobility. Neither student was completely dependent on others for meeting all five daily living needs and both students walked independently during a site visit by members of the audit team. The on-site findings, as well as the evidence contained in the student files, did not support placement in the reported category to meet the criteria as outlined in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedure and Guidelines. There was evidence to support criteria for placement in the Chronic Health Impairment category (Code D). **Based on the findings for the District's appeal, one student claim would be recognised for the current school year and reported in Category D for the 2016/17 school year.**
- The District staff advised that one student reported in the Intensive Behaviour Interventions/Serious Mental Illness category (Code H), with no evidence of service, was a mistake and should not have been claimed.
- The student files were well organized and the Instructional Support Planning Tool was consistently used. The IEP goal progress reports and the annual category review forms were of assistance and contained the required evidence.
- It was often difficult to find evidence of the intensity of the behavioural concern and evidence of the supports provided for students claimed in the Intensive Behaviour Interventions/Serious Mental Illness category (Code H).
- Code H files contained limited diagnostic information from Child and Youth Mental Health services (CYMH) who appeared to be concerned about how much information could be disclosed. Verification of criteria was greatly aided once the information from CYMH was received.
- There were a number of students that had not had an assessment for many years.
- The student files were well organized, the data was readily available and the documentation was dated and current.

Recommendations:

The auditors recommend that:

- The District claim only students in the category for which the evidence fully supports the Special Education Services Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines criteria.

- Documentation of the level and amount of service given to students be clearly recorded in the IEP.
- As behaviour disorders vary in their severity and effect on learning, the District consider using Moderate Behaviour Support (Code R) planning to better determine the level of behaviour and the progression of intensity for some students.
- The District consider implementing a system to consistently document behaviour concerns, incidents and the support provided to students.
- The School District and Child and Youth Mental Health services continue to build on their strong partnership, with particular emphasis on sharing information about students who require support and services based on their assessed needs from both organizations.
- The District consider updating assessments for students at least once in their secondary years to assist with the transition after leaving the K-12 school system.

Auditors' Comments

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