



**Ministry of Education  
Resource Management and Corporate Services Division**

**2016/17 K-12 Regular Enrolment Audit**

**AUDIT REPORT**

**SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 58 (Nicola-Similkameen)**

## **2016/17 K-12 REGULAR ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 58 (Nicola-Similkameen)**

### **Background**

The Ministry of Education funds boards of education based on the number of student full time equivalents (FTEs) reported by the districts on *Form 1701: Student Data Collection* (Form 1701). The FTEs are calculated by factoring the number of qualifying courses the student takes. A funding formula is used to allocate funds to boards based primarily on the calculated student FTE.

The Ministry of Education annually conducts Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) Regular Enrolment audits, in selected school districts, to verify enrolment reported on Form 1701. School districts are selected for audit based on a variety of factors, including the length of time since their last audit, enrolment size, and changes in enrolment.

Since 2009/10 funding recoveries are expanded to include FTEs outside of the sample where the auditors can make a clear link between the audit findings in the sample and those FTEs outside the sample.

In the 2016/17 school year, boards of education reported a total of 533,356.8856 FTEs in Kindergarten through Grade 12. School District No. 58 (Nicola-Similkameen) reported a total of 1,969.2500 FTEs or 1,993 students, including 36 students for English Language Learners (ELL) and 875 students for Aboriginal Education.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the K-12 Regular Enrolment audit is to provide assurance to the Ministry of Education and boards of education that Ministry policy, legislation and directions are being followed. The audits are based on *Form 1701: Student Data Collection, Completion Instructions for Public Schools* and related Ministry policies.

### **Description of the Audit Process**

A K-12 Regular Enrolment audit was conducted in School District No. 58 (Nicola-Similkameen) during the week of March 5, 2017. The schools audited were:

- Merritt Secondary (MS)
- Princeton Alternate (PA)
- Kengard Alternate (KA)

The total enrolment reported by these schools on September 30, 2016 was 634.1250 FTEs, of which 245 student files were reviewed.

For each of the schools audited, a segment of the students reported in the 2016/17 school year were selected for review. An entry meeting was held with the Superintendent and each school's

Principal to review the purpose of the audit and the criteria for funding as outlined in the Form 1701 Instructions. The audit team visited each school to review student files, interview staff, and conclude on their observations. The audit team followed a process in each school which gave administrators and program staff opportunities to locate and present additional evidence when the team found that such evidence was not available in the documentation presented by the school. Exit meetings were held with each Principal and the Assistant Superintendent. At each exit meeting the auditors presented their preliminary results and clarified any outstanding issues.

The audit included the enrolment reported in the 2016/17 school year. The areas audited were:

- September 30, 2016 enrolment and attendance
- Ordinarily Resident
- School-Age Grade 10-12 Course Claims
- Alternate Education Programs
- Adult Student Claims
- Aboriginal Education Supplemental Claims
- Post-Secondary Transition Programs with Post Secondary Institutions and Industry Association partners
- District Created Academies

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

## **Observations**

The auditors found that:

- 1.2500 school-age Grade 10-12 FTEs claimed for funding were not enrolled and attending as at September 30, 2016. In accordance to the [Fall Data Collection Form 1701 Instructions](#)...*“students are to be reported by the education facility with which they are enrolled and in attendance...as at September 30, 2016”*.
- 1.6250 school age Grade 10-12 FTEs were claimed for an ineligible support block. The student timetables clearly indicated each student was enrolled in an annual educational program that included a support block and exceeded a total of eight full course claims. P.14 of the Form 1701 Instructions states: *“a support block is for non-special needs, school-aged, non-graduated students in grades 10-12 and SU engaged in their learning at structured times in addition to their annual academic or regular program courses provided in District schools and are taking fewer than 8 courses. The combined total number of support block and courses leading to graduation cannot exceed 8 for these students”*. The directives further clarify that *“In support of students taking distributed learning courses, students cross enrolled in non-DL schools may claim one funded support block per student per school year, as long as the other requirements noted above are met.”* Annual educational programs containing a funded support block(s) are capped at eight full credit claims (including support blocks and DL courses). To avoid a cap in the student's annual educational program do not report support blocks for funding.
- 0.3750 school-age Grade 10-12 FTEs claimed for funding were enrolled in and attending fewer courses than reported at the Data Collection claim date.

- 5.0000 school-age Grade 10-12 FTEs claimed as participants in an Alternate Education Program were not in attendance as at September 30<sup>th</sup>, nor was there any evidence that additional services were planned for these students throughout the school year.
- 2.2500 non-graduated adult FTEs reported for funding did not meet the attendance requirements for adult claims. Adults claimed for funding must meet the attendance definition in accordance with the [Adult Funding Policy](#) which says: “Attendance is defined to be over one reporting period AND either 1) a minimum of 10 hours of instruction in a classroom or learning centre for each course or a demonstrated completion of 10% of the course requirements OR 2) meets the Grade 10-12 active requirements as outlined in the [DL Active Policy](#). To be eligible for funding, those adult claims reported in the Fall Data Collection must meet the attendance requirement by September 30<sup>th</sup>.
- 0.1250 non-graduated adult FTEs claimed for funding was enrolled in a self-paced course verified to have begun in the previous school year. Courses with an open-ended timeline encompass only one organized set of learning outcomes. While completion of the course’s learning outcomes may be over a number of registration periods, only one course is undertaken and therefore eligible for only one funding claim (Ref. P. 12 form 1701 Instructions).
- Two students verified as not enrolled and attending as at September 30, 2016 were also claimed as receiving an Aboriginal Education Program and/or Service. It was confirmed that these non-attending students did not receive any supplemental program and/or support services.
- The majority of the adult students claimed did not meet the attendance requirements. One alternate school appeared to be unaware of the Adult Funding Policy. Specifically, the school was not aware that the attendance criteria had to be met by the September 30<sup>th</sup> claim date; did not retain student work; did not have gradebooks to indicate assignment completion dates; and, had limited indicators of student/teacher interactions. All of which would have provided evidence of student attendance.
- The District has a written policy supported by standard practices to verify that students are ordinarily resident in B.C. The auditors verified that the District policy was followed by all the audited schools. In addition, documentation was in evidence of residency in each student file.
- Verifying the Fall Data Collection funding claims was aided substantially due to the schools’ preparation. Each school provided the auditors with all students’ annual timetables as at October 5, 2016. The evidence required by the audit team was printed, sorted and dated. All files examined by the audit team were well organized and readily available.
- The auditors noted that Student Learning Plans (SLPs) for Alternate Education Program students were living documents. SLPs are reviewed consistently throughout the year(s) and revised as necessary.
- In the Alternate Education Programs the auditors were impressed with the staff’s knowledge of every student in the programs and by the compassion the staff had for their students. In reviewing the student files and discussing specific students, it was readily apparent that the staff in both schools repeatedly reach out to assist students.
- The Alternate Education Programs used similar documents and practices. Their SLPs were all the same format, as were the referral processes, and exit strategies. Processes for tracking student attendance, planning and progress did differ amongst Programs.

- The District is in the process of encouraging students to take the Youth Train-In-Trades/ACE-IT and Youth Work-In-Trades/SSA options. Although still a small program, the staff are to be commended for establishing procedures in a manner that exemplifies how such programs should be organized and monitored. Information and documentation is maintained in a well-organized manner, is current and relevant to the progress of the student. The files include all the required documentation for each student and all agreements with post-secondary partners.
- The auditors noted that members of the Aboriginal Education Program provide ongoing, positive support to their students in a variety of ways.
- The auditors noted that the tracking system used by the Aboriginal Education Department was exemplary. It was well laid out and service provision was clearly articulated.
- All files for Aboriginal Education students contained an annual written record of the students' self-declarations of Aboriginal Ancestry.

### **Recommendations**

The auditors recommend that:

- Schools claim only those students who are enrolled and attending as at the Data Collection claim date.
- All schools claim support blocks only when they meet the Ministry's funding requirements specific to support block eligibility. When reporting support blocks in a student's annual program of courses the combined number of courses in the student's annual educational program, including those taken in a DL program, plus support blocks cannot exceed eight in total, as identified on P.14 of the Form 1701 Instructions.
- The District claim only those students who are enrolled and in attendance as at September 30<sup>th</sup>, including those students attending the Alternate Education Programs.
- To meet the attendance requirement for adult students, all schools must have evidence of each student's attendance and participation in the courses claimed for funding. Availability of dated evidence is required to verify the related claims.
- The District review the format and the processes used in the development of the Alternate Education Program SLPs to ensure that all plans for non-designated school age students identifies the support to be provided to each student and to ensure that the support is based on each student's needs. As aligned with the [Alternate Education Program Policy](#) directives, it is expected that support to all non-graduated school age students will be provided through differentiated instruction, specialized program delivery, additional services and enhanced counselling services based on students' needs.
- The District review their rationale for offering Alternate Education School Programs and reporting these programs as Type three facilities. In doing so the district should take into consideration the eligibility requirements. As stated in the Alternate Education School Program Policy: *“Alternate education programs must focus on the educational, social and emotional issues for students whose needs are not being met in a traditional school program. These education programs provide support to students through differentiated instruction, specialized program delivery and enhanced counselling services based on students' needs.”*
- The District consider ways to assist their Alternate Education Program Schools to collaborate with sharing information, teaching practices, community supports and resources.

- Schools ensure that courses are only claimed as one course regardless of the number of reporting periods/years the student requires to complete the learning outcomes.
- The District ensure that only those students provided with Aboriginal Education support programs and/or services in accordance with Ministry directives are reported for supplemental funding.

### **Auditors' Comments**

The auditors extend their appreciation to the District and school-based staff for the audit preparation and the professionalism extended to the team throughout the audit.