



**Ministry of Education
Resource Management and Corporate Services Division
School District Financial Reporting Unit**

2016/17 Special Education Enrolment Audit

AUDIT REPORT

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 8 (Kootenay Lake)

2016/17 SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 8 (Kootenay Lake)

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 2016/17 school year, school boards reported 28,048 students enrolled in the low incidence supplemental special education funding categories at September 2016. School District No. 8 (Kootenay Lake) reported 240 student claims in the supplemental special education funding categories as of September 30, 2016. For the purpose of this compliance audit, School District No.8 (Kootenay Lake) reported three student claims in the Physically Dependent Category (Code A), 25 student claims in the Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability Category (Code C), 66 student claims in the Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment Category (Code D), two student claims in the Visual Impairment Category (Code E), five student claims in the Deaf or Hard of Hearing Category (Code F), 65 student claims in the Autism Spectrum Disorder Category (Code G), and 74 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 \(April 2016\)*](#).

Description of the Audit Process

A Special Education enrolment audit was conducted in School District No. 8 (Kootenay Lake) during the week of February 20, 2017

An entry meeting was held on February 20, 2017 with the Superintendent, Director of Instruction and two District Inclusion Teachers. The District staff shared information with the auditors to help them understand the unique features of the District and how programs and services were delivered to students with special needs. The District is comprised of six distinct and unique

school communities. District staff travel through two time zones and 190 km between the furthest east to west schools. The District policy to support the practise of inclusion by serving students with special need through a continuum of service delivery model was evidenced as the auditors reviewed the student files. The excellent relationship the District has established with parents and outside agencies was also evident.

Daily meetings with the Director of Instruction, the two District Inclusion Teachers and the District Psychologist were held to present preliminary findings and to seek clarification related to the contents of files.

A sample of three student files reported in the Physically Dependent category (Code A), 25 student files in Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disabilities (Code C), 66 student files in Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment (Code D), two student files in Visual Impairment (Code E), five student files in Deaf or Hard of Hearing (Code F), 65 student files in Autism Spectrum Disorder (Code G), and 74 student file 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. Meeting daily with the Director of Instruction enabled the audit team to keep the District staff apprised of the audit progress.

An exit meeting was held with the Superintendent, Director of Instruction and two District Inclusion Support Teachers on Thursday, February 23, 2017. The auditors reviewed the purpose of the audit and the audit criteria, explained the audit reporting process, reported their findings and expressed appreciation for the assistance provided to ensure the auditors arrived in the district.

Observations:

Of the 25 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code C:

- one student was recommended for reclassification to Code D.

There were no other recommended reclassifications for the remaining student files reviewed by the auditors.

The auditors found that:

- The student files/binders were comprehensive, well organized and the evidence needed to verify criteria was being met was readily available.
- All the documentation was current, dated and relevant.
- The diagnostic information supported the category in which the student was claimed.
- The IEPs were complete with all the criteria areas in evidence. The objectives were measurable. The methods for measuring progress were well documented and relevant to the goals and specific objectives.
- Evidence of the support services students were receiving was on the IEP or indicated on schedules found in the student file/binder.

- The services students were receiving corresponded appropriately with the category in which they were claimed.
- The educational program being provided for students reflected the needs and recommendations outlined in various assessments and reports found in the student file/binder.
- There was consistent use throughout the District of the Instructional Support Planning Progress for the various categories. This document provided useful information to support the category claim.
- There was evidence in the student file/binder that the District staff reviewed student designations and made any modifications as needed.
- The files/binders for students claimed in Code H contained comprehensive IEPs as well as a Behavior Support Plan, or Safety Plan, or both.
- There were a number of forms that were used consistently throughout the District which contained evidence supporting the criteria in the categories claimed. These included:
 - Individual Needs Assessment for Designated Students (INADS)
 - Student File Category Checklist
 - Level of Assistance Needed for (name)
 - IEP Goal Processing Tracking
 - Goal Progress Report
 - IEP Checklist
 - Evidence of Consultation From
 - Diagnosis Verification Form (from Physician to School) for Code D
 - Monthly graph of support services and attendance for Code H students in Alternate Program Schools.
- In many of the student files/binders was a cover page with a photo of the student and a brief positive description of the student.
- There was one student claim in the Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability category (Code C) that did not have the cognitive assessment to support the category as outlined in the Special Education Services Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines. The student was on a waitlist for a psychoeducational assessment in April of this year. There was evidence verifying a diagnosis of Downs Syndrome. The current IEP had goals, objectives and services to support the criteria for the Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment category (Code D).

Recommendations:

The auditors recommend that:

- The District continue with their exemplary practises and programs supporting students with special needs.
- The District continue the professional development currently being provided to ensure the present level of consistency developing student IEPs is maintained.
- The District be encouraged to share their comprehensive “red binder” format with other Boards of Education in the Province.
- The District report student claims in Code C only if they meet the criteria listed in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines for that category. Ensure assessment documentation showing the student’s intellectual functioning in three or more

standard deviations below the mean on an individually administered Level C Assessment and assessment documentation show there are limitations of a similar degree in two or more adaptive skill areas.

Auditors' Comments

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