



**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. 74 (Gold Trail)

2016/17 SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 74 (Gold Trail)

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. 74 (Gold Trail) reported 113 student claims in all of the special education categories as of September 30, 2016. For the purpose of this compliance audit, School District No.74 (Gold Trail) reported six student claims in the Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability Category (Code C), 18 student claims in the Physical Disability/Chronic Health Impairment Category (Code D), three student claims in the Deaf or Hard of Hearing Category (Code F), 23 student claims in the Autism Spectrum Disorder Category (Code G), one student claim in the Intensive Behavior Intervention/Serious Mental Illness Category (Code H), 11 student claims in the Mild Intellectual Disabilities Category (Code K), three student claims in the Gifted Category (Code P), 43 student claims in the learning Disability Category (Code Q), and five student claims in the Moderate Behaviour Support/Mental Illness Category (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 \(April 2016\)*](#).

Description of the Audit Process

A Special Education enrolment audit was conducted in School District No. 74 (Gold Trail) during the week of January 23, 2017.

An entry meeting was held on January 23, 2017 with the Superintendent, Teresa Downs, Secretary Treasurer, Lynda Minnabarriet, and District Inclusion Specialist, Nicky Minnabarriet.

Prior to the file reviews, the audit team interviewed the District staff to enquire about the District's policies, procedures and programs. The District Inclusion Specialist provided a verbal presentation on some of the unique features of Student Support Services in the Gold Trail District. She stated they are working towards becoming a truly inclusive district. To that end, they have inclusion specialists (rather than learning assistance teachers) in each school who work with teachers to co-teach and meet the learning needs of all learners. They are currently using the core competency based IEP format developed by Shelley More. It was explained that because the District struggles to find qualified counsellors, they have three childcare workers who are trained to support the social/emotional needs of students. In addition the District employs three Speech and Language Assistants to support the programming suggestions of the Speech and Language Pathologists (1.5 FTEs).

Daily meetings with the Superintendent and District Inclusion Specialist were held to present preliminary findings and to seek clarification related to the contents of files.

A sample of six student files in Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disabilities (Code C), 18 student files in Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment (Code D), three student files in Deaf or Hard of Hearing (Code F), 23 student files in Autism Spectrum Disorder (Code G), one student file in Intensive Behavior Interventions/Serious Mental Illness (Code H), 11 student files in Mild Intellectual Disability (Code K), three student files in Gifted (Code P), 20 student files in Learning Disabilities (Code Q) and five student files in Moderate Behaviour Interventions (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 District Inclusion Specialist was able to provide the audit team with evidence when clarification was required. Daily meetings with the District Inclusion Specialist and the Superintendent enabled the audit team to keep the District staff apprised of the audit progress.

An exit meeting was held with the Superintendent and District Inclusion Specialist on January 26, 2017. The auditors reviewed the purpose of the audit and the audit criteria, explained the audit reporting process, reported their findings, clarified any outstanding issues, and expressed appreciation for the assistance provided.

Observations:

There were no recommended reclassifications for the student claims reviewed.

The auditors found that:

- There was evidence of co-planning between the inclusion specialist and the classroom teacher.
- The record of parental consultation was current and reflective of parental input and involvement in planning the student's educational program.
- The Community Care Plan form used for interagency planning appeared to be a very helpful document for student meetings and follow up actions by each person attending.

- The Application for Modification form assured appropriate consultation took place before a student is placed on a modified program.
- There was evidence of the Instructional Support Planning Tool used for all students claimed in codes D, G, H, R, and Q.
- The format of the IEP made it challenging to find the specialised services and supports being provided to address the needs of the student beyond those offered to the general population.
- Some IEPs had few to no goals other than social/emotional even though other areas are recognised in the planning tools, and in assessments and recommendations in the file.
- Many of the IEPs did not have measurable criteria for the objectives.
- Although the IEP contains a rubric to communicate student learning, it is often unclear what methods are employed to gather data and assess student progress.
- Many of the IEPs did not have clearly recorded roles of the team supporting the student. Many had only names making it difficult to ascertain the support personnel who are on the team.
- Many of the IEPs for students in Grades 11 and 12 lacked transition plans and corresponding goals on the IEP.

Recommendations:

The auditors recommend that:

- The District ensure that the additional special education services being provided to identified students claimed on the 1701 are clearly stated on the IEP.
- The District ensure goals are reflective of all areas of need for the category the students are claimed in.
- The District ensure the IEPs clearly state measurable criteria for each objective.
- The District ensure the IEP outlines methods for measuring progress in relation to the IEP goals.
- The District ensure the roles of support personnel are recorded on the IEP form.
- The District ensure transitions goals are included in IEPs for students in Grades 11 and 12.
- The District continue with the processes in place to meet the individual needs of the students.

Auditors' Comments

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