



**Ministry of Education
Resource Management Division**

2019/20 Continuing Education Enrolment Audit

AUDIT REPORT

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 42 (Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows)

2019/20 CONTINUING EDUCATION ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 42 (Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows)

Background

The Ministry of Education conducts Continuing Education audits, in selected school districts, to verify enrolment reported on *Form 1701: Student Data Collection* (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.

Continuing Education centres provide adults who have not graduated from secondary school the option of obtaining a B.C. Adult Graduation Diploma or a regular Dogwood Diploma by taking courses offered through school districts, and effective September 1, 2008 boards that have passed motions may offer graduated adults specific courses tuition-free. In certain situations, school-age students may also enrol in Continuing Education courses.

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 2019/20 school year, boards of education reported a total of 972.2500 full-time equivalent (FTE) students. School District No. 42 (Maple Ridge) reported 278 Continuing Education students or 46.8750 FTEs for the September reporting period.

Purpose

The purpose of the Continuing Education 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 Continuing Education (CE) audit was conducted in School District No. 42 (Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows) the week of February 3, 2020. The total enrolment reported at September 30, 2019 was 46.8750 FTEs, of which 278 student files were reviewed.

An entry meeting was held with the Deputy Superintendent, the CE Principal, two Assistant Superintendents and the Secretary-Treasurer to review the purpose of the audit and the criteria for funding as outlined in the Form 1701 Instructions. The audit process was reviewed and the administrators and the audit team discussed the procedures that would be followed to undertake the audit.

Following the entry meeting District staff presented a series of slides outlining the District's Vision, Mission and Values; Riverside Centre's multi-faceted function in the District and, information about the programs offered by the CE Centre.

The auditors worked out of Riverside Centre where the CE Centre, the Connected Learning

Community, Maple Ridge College and International Education operate from. The audit team followed a process which gave District staff the opportunity to locate and present additional evidence when the team found that such evidence was not available in the documentation presented by the CE staff. To minimize the likelihood of missing relevant data, the staff were also given the opportunity to seek further information on all student claims when there was a discrepancy in the FTE calculation. Throughout the audit the Principal, the Deputy Superintendent and Superintendent were kept apprised of any issues.

A combined exit meeting was held with the CE Principal, the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, and three Assistant Superintendents. At the exit meeting the auditors presented their preliminary results and clarified any outstanding issues.

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

Description of the Programs

A former elementary school was renovated and now, as Riverside Centre, encompasses a variety of programs including the CE Centre, Distributed Learning at the Connected Learning Community (CLC), Ridge Meadows College and International Education. In addition, Riverside Centre also houses the District's Safe and Caring Schools Office and a District Alternate Education Program.

The CE Centre offers a broad range of course options towards graduation as well as literacy foundations. The audit team observed teachers in classrooms working with typically large groups of students during assigned class times. Classes are scheduled during the day and evening to accommodate the CE Centre's different educational options, teachers and learners. The former elementary school gymnasium is regularly used as a reception centre for students who are new to the CE Centre.

CE options are also provided to inmates at Fraser Regional Correctional Centre (FRCC) and the Alouette Correctional Centre for Women (ACCW).

Observations

The auditors found that:

- 2.0000 non-graduated adult FTEs were for courses previously reported. A decision was made by the District staff to change course codes used by the CE Centre to align with the codes used by other schools in the District. This change process triggered duplicate claims.
- 0.5000 were ineligible course claims. It was verified the students were graduated adults and were reported for courses not part of the list of [Tuition Free Courses](#). Per the Adult Funding Policy: "*Effective Dec 4, 2014, boards of education may receive funding for adult students who have graduated and who enroll in any of the literacy courses offered at continuing education centres, K-12 schools or through distributed learning. See the list of [tuition free foundation courses](#).*

To be eligible to claim for funding, the board of education must

- ✓ *adopt a motion that it intends to provide tuition-free education to graduated adults in Continuing Education and/or K-12 schools, and notify the ministry that it has done so, and*
- ✓ *ensure that [graduated students](#) are ordinarily resident in B.C., enrolled in the district, and under the supervision of, assessed and evaluated by an employee of the Board of Education who is certified by the Teacher Regulation Branch.*

Eligible courses will only be funded if they are documented on a Course Enrolment Form and if the student taking the course(s) meets the attendance requirement”.

- 0.7500 graduated and 5.5000 non-graduated adult FTEs claimed for funding did not have evidence to meet the attendance requirement for eligible courses. The Adult Funding Policy says that: *The adult students must be enrolled in eligible courses that lead to the B.C. Certificate of Graduation or the B.C. Adult Graduation Diploma.*

[Eligible courses](#) must be documented on a [Course Enrolment Form](#),

The adult student taking the course(s) must meet the [attendance](#) requirements, and

The adult student must meet the following criteria as set out in the [K-12 Funding – General Policy](#):

Students must be:

- ✓ *ordinarily resident in B.C.*
- ✓ ***enrolled in the district***
- ✓ *under the supervision of, assessed and evaluated by an employee of the Board of Education who is certified by the Teacher Regulation Branch.*
- It was verified that the assigned educator would go to the prison site with students meeting him in the common areas. The duration of each meeting varied widely as many students were in these facilities for only a short time before moving to another site or were released, etc. To avoid what the teacher called “a lot of extra paperwork”, once the minimum number of hours was tallied (versus a percentage of the learning) then student was enrolled. There was limited to no evidence of what course work was undertaken during this time nor of further student engagement in the funded options once the students were enrolled.
- In accordance with the Adult Funding Policy and the K-12 Funding-General Policy, there must be evidence the student is eligible prior to assigning any tasks associated with a funded educational option. To align with Ministry directives regarding student claim eligibility, the CE staff were asked to provide evidence of student work after the student was enrolled. At the time of the audit, the Principal (new to the role as of September 2019) was unaware of the practice with these incarcerated students. The audit team had several meetings with the teacher assigned to the prison facilities to review the student attendance records. The records were sparse with little detail of what was undertaken during each student interaction. There was little evidence to verify what course work was undertaken or discussed, and few records that indicated the duration of each student/teacher contact. Several additional meetings were held with the Principal and/or the Director of Instruction and/or the teacher assigned to the student inmates, in an attempt to verify what course work if any was provided to and undertaken by the incarcerated inmates.
- Sentenced inmates at FRCC were reported by the CE Centre for funding based on the consideration of five hours of interaction with the assigned teacher, then were enrolled in the funded course(s).
- Remanded inmates were reported for funding by the CE Centre based on the consideration of three hours of interaction with the assigned teacher, then were enrolled

- in the course(s). The process at ACCW was similar to the process at FRCC.
- At ACCW the teacher assigned to the facility was expected to return to her job in September but did not. The CE Centre was unable to find a replacement until well into the school year. The audit team was unable to verify the claims for any of these student claims as the former educator left no records that could be found by CE school staff.
 - The auditors were able to find evidence meeting the attendance requirement after the student was enrolled and prior to the course claim date for a number of these student claims. For the recommended recoveries there was no evidence of actual student work to meet the attendance requirement subsequent to enrolment.
 - In the correctional centres, there was conflicting evidence provided. Information from different sources often contradicted each other with students shown as attending on one document yet absent in another.
 - 4.3750 non-graduated adult FTEs reported for funding were verified as parents of school age students who were fee paying students in the District's schools. There was no evidence to clarify why the children were determined to be fee payers yet the parents were reported for a funded educational program.
 - The District does not have a policy on student withdrawals as required by the [Provincial Letter Grades Order](#). The Order states: *"according to the policy of the board, and upon request of the parent of the student or, when appropriate, the student, the principal, vice principal or director of instruction in charge of a school may grant permission to a student to withdraw from a course or subject."*
 - The CE Centre charges a Student Service Fee which is used to fund the provision of goods and services associated with each student's educational program (i.e., expenses associated with the course completion celebration, graduation ceremony, graduation photographs, etc.). For students who demonstrate financial need, these fees are waived.
 - Every student enrolled in the CE Centre who did not graduate in British Columbia was automatically labelled as a non-graduate. In preparation for the audit, the CE Centre reviewed all claims to identify students who were incorrectly identified as non-graduated adults. After the CE Centre's review, some students were still incorrectly categorized. The *School Act* Sec. 82 (2.2) states that free of charge to an adult student does not apply when student *"has already met the general requirements for graduation, or completed the requirements for graduation from a secondary school or high school in another jurisdiction."* Nowhere is there a distinction that "another jurisdiction" refers only to British Columbia graduation status.
 - Several students were engaged in continuous, self-paced learning courses. The Form 1701 Instructions states that: *Courses 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".*
 - The auditors found that some courses were coded inconsistently, and in some instances, incorrectly. Some enrolment forms identified outdated course names and codes, yet report cards indicated student progress using current Ministry of Education course names and codes.

Recommendations

The auditors recommend that:

- The District staff ensure that all schools, including the CE Centre, enrolling adult students are aware of and adhering to the Adult Funding Policy.
- The District staff work with their adult education staff and teachers to improve their current practices ensuring all procedures align with Ministry policies and directives to provide educational programming that supports student success.
- The CE Centre staff explore means of ensuring non-attending students are encouraged to re-engage in their learning of the funded educational options.
- The CE Centre staff report for funding only claims for those students who have met the attendance requirement in accordance with the Form 1701 Instructions, including evidence to verify the claims.
- Attendance records are to reflect only actual attendance under the instructional lead of a certified teacher who provides tangible learning in eligible courses.
- The District's CE Centre staff ensure that self-paced courses are only claimed as one course regardless of the number of reporting periods the student requires to complete the learning standards for the course.
- The District's CE Centre staff ensure that students claimed on Form 1701 are enrolled and attending eligible courses in accordance with Ministry requirements.
- The District staff develop a Withdrawal Policy in accordance with in the Provincial Letter Grades Order.
- The CE Centre staff amend current enrolment practices to ensure students are appropriately placed in relevant and current courses.
- The District staff must verify the graduation status of all adults claimed for funding ensuring those who have achieved graduation status from any jurisdiction are reported as graduated adults and those students are only reported for eligible tuition free courses as defined in the Adult Funding Policy.
- The District staff ensure effective tracking of student claims from the time of enrolment until they are reported to ensure the claims are eligible for funding in accordance with the Form 1701 Instructions, the Adult Funding Policy, the K-12 Funding General Policy and the *School Act*.
- The District staff ensure that all students are ordinarily resident in B.C. prior to submission of related funding claims. Only eligible B.C. resident students are claimed for funding. International and out-of-province individuals are non-resident, ineligible for a provincially funded education, and are not to be claimed for funding.
- The District staff ensure the cost of goods and services charged to students are aligned with the directives in Sec. 82 of the *School Act* as well as the Goods and Services and Educational Resource Materials segments of the [School Regulation](#) ensuring all costs are eligible fees and these fees are of direct benefit to the student.

Auditors' Comments

The auditors wish to express their appreciation to the District and program staff.