



**Ministry of Education
Resource Management Division**

2019/20 Special Education Enrolment Audit

AUDIT REPORT

STUDIO 9 SCHOOL OF THE ARTS (02396676)

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Background

The Ministry of Education funds Independent School Authorities based on the Authorities' reported enrolment as of September 30th each year and supplemental special needs classifications in September and February. Independent School Authorities report students with special needs to the Ministry on *Form 1701: Student Data Collection* (Form 1701).

In the 2019/20 school year, the Ministry of Education conducted Special Education enrolment audits, in selected schools recommended by the Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools (OIIS), to verify reported enrolment on Form 1701.

Purpose

The purpose of the Special Education enrolment audit is to provide assurance to the Ministry of Education and Independent School Authorities that schools are complying with the instructions contained in [*Form 1701: Student Data Collection, Completion Instructions for Independent Schools*](#) and Ministry policies are being followed. The audit also provides assurance that the students reported 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 Compliance Audit Process

A compliance audit was conducted at Studio 9 School of the Arts February 3 to 4, 2020.

Prior to the file reviews, an entry meeting was held with School assigned staff and the auditor interviewed the Principal and CEO to enquire about the Independent School Authority's policies, procedures and programs.

Studio 9 School of the Arts reported 17 students in special education categories at the Fall 2019 Form 1701 data submission. For the purposes of this audit, 13 student records were reviewed in the following low incidence special needs categories:

Headcount	Category
1	Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment Category (Code D)
8	Autism Spectrum Disorder Category (Code G)
4	Intensive Behaviour Intervention or Serious Mental Illness Category (Code H)

4 student records were also reviewed in the following high incidence special needs category:

Headcount	Category
4	Learning Disability Category (Code Q)

The Principal was the contact person throughout the audit and was able to provide the auditor with evidence when clarifications were required. Short meetings at the end of each day with the Principal enabled the auditor to keep the School staff apprised of the audit progress.

The file review process encountered two issues requiring a meeting. The first issue related to a student claimed in Code H. There was no evidence that planning was coordinated across-agency and community. The second issue was related to a student who moved to another school after September 30th. The School retained only the IEP with no other evidence to support this Code Q claim.

An exit meeting was held with the Principal and CEO on February 4, 2020. The auditor reviewed the purpose of the audit and the audit criteria, explained the audit reporting process, reported the findings, clarified any outstanding issues, discussed reclassifications for the 2019/20 school year, and expressed appreciation for the assistance provided.

Observations

There were no recommended reclassifications for the student claims reported in Code D and Code G.

Of the four student claims reviewed by the auditors in Code H:

- One student was recommended for reclassification to Code R.

Of the four student claims reviewed by the auditors in Code Q:

- Two student claims were recommended for declassification in any special needs category.

The auditor found that:

- One student claim reported in Code H did not have evidence to meet the criteria for placement in the Intensive Behaviour Interventions/Serious Mental Illness category in accordance with the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedure and Guidelines. There was no evidence to support that planning was coordinated across agency and community, nor was there evidence of integrated case management. All evidence met the criteria for placement in the Students Requiring Behaviour Supports or Students with a Mental Illness category (Code R) for the 2019/20 school year.
- For one student claim reported in Code Q only an IEP was in evidence. The School did not retain copies of any other supporting evidence when the student moved to a new school after the September claim date.
- One student reported in Code Q did not have an assessment that met criteria for reporting in Code Q as outlined in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedure and Guidelines.
- Integrated case management documentation for three students reported in Code H were available upon request. The Principal met regularly with the outside agency to review students needs, progress and strategies.
- The Instructional Support Planning Process document was used consistently for all students reported in Code H.
- An IEP goal tracking sheet was used weekly for each of the students reported in special education categories to follow progress towards IEP objectives.

- The services were outlined in the IEP and indicated access to support services.
- All students were involved in providing input about their interests, learning preferences, strengths and stretches in the IEP.
- The Special Education Funding: Parent/Guardian Confirmation Form was signed and included in all student files.

Recommendations

The auditor recommended that:

- The School ensure any student claims in Code H meet the criteria listed in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines for that category, including evidence of integrated case management with outside agencies.
- The School retain evidence records, required to verify the current school year Form 1701 claims, when students transfer to another school.
- The School ensure that student claims in Code Q meet the diagnostic criteria listed in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines for Learning Disabilities.
- The School ensure all student files have appropriate assessments with detail to support the recommendation of the reported classification category in accordance with the Special Education Manual of Policy, Procedures and Guidelines.
- The School continue the commendable programming and servicing undertaken to support students which was identified at the time of the audit.

Auditor's Comments

The auditor expresses appreciation to the school staff for their cooperation and hospitality during the audit.