



**Ministry of Education  
Resource Management Division**

**2020/21 Special Education Enrolment Audit**

**AUDIT REPORT**

**SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 44 (North Vancouver)**

## **2020/21 SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 44 (North Vancouver)**

### **Background**

The Ministry of Education funds boards of education based on their reported enrolment as of September 30<sup>th</sup> 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).

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.

In the 2020/21 school year, school boards reported 34,264 students enrolled in the low incidence supplemental special education funding categories at September 2020. School District No. 44 (North Vancouver) reported 776 students in the supplemental special education funding categories as of September 30, 2020. For the purpose of this compliance audit, School District No.44 (North Vancouver) reported 17 student claims in the Physically Dependent Category (Code A), 17 student claims in the Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability Category (Code C), 203 student claims in the Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment Category (Code D), four student claims in the Visual Impairment Category (Code E), 26 student claims in the Deaf or Hard of Hearing Category (Code F), 316 student claims in the Autism Spectrum Disorder Category (Code G), and 193 student claims in the Intensive Behavior Intervention/Serious Mental Illness Category (Code H).

Workplace and travel restrictions resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic provided an opportunity for the Ministry of Education, public school boards and independent school authorities to transition to digital remote evidence verification during the 2020/21 school year. Due to the remote procedures undertaken, much of the evidence was based on anecdotal explanations when evidence submitted required further clarification.

### **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 remote special education enrolment audit was conducted in School District No. 44 (North Vancouver) during the week of March 8, 2021.

An entry meeting was held via Zoom on Monday March 8, 2021 with the Superintendent, two Assistant Superintendents, the District Principal of Inclusive Education, and the District Vice Principal of Inclusive Education. Daily meetings with the Assistant Superintendent, the District Principal of Inclusive Education, and the District Vice Principal of Inclusive Education were held to present preliminary findings and to seek clarification related to the contents of files.

A sample of 17 student files reported in the Physically Dependent category (Code A), two student files in Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disabilities (Code C), 25 student files in Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment (Code D), two student files in Visual Impairment (Code E), two student files in Deaf or Hard of Hearing (Code F), five student files in Autism Spectrum Disorder (Code G), and 25 student files 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.

At the entrance meeting, the District Principal of Inclusive Education and the District Vice Principal of Inclusive Education provided a PowerPoint presentation that described the many processes and programs in place to meet the needs of students with special needs in an inclusive environment. Of note in the presentation were the systems the District has in place to:

- ✓ Support students with diverse needs through tiers of intervention;
- ✓ Track coordinated planning across agency and community; and
- ✓ Ensure comprehensive planning and support for students claimed in Code H the Intensive Behaviour/Severe Mental Illness category.

A meeting was held via Zoom with the Principal of the District's Alternate Educational Program, the District Principal of Inclusive Education, the District Vice Principal of Inclusive Education and the audit team to further describe the services at the Alternate Education Program facility for students claimed in Code D, G, and H. The Principal provided the team with a chart showing the services that students in each category were eligible to receive. These services, as presented, were beyond those offered to the general student population. The District staff also provided the team with an analysis showing the increased staffing at the Alternate Education Program facility compared to the traditional secondary schools in the District.

An exit meeting was held with the Superintendent, two Assistant Superintendents, the District Principal of Inclusive Education, and the District Vice Principal of Inclusive Education on Friday March 12, 2021. The auditors reviewed the purpose of the audit and the audit criteria, explained the audit reporting process, reported their findings, clarified any outstanding issues, discussed reclassifications for the 2020/21 school year, and expressed appreciation for the assistance provided.

## **Observations**

No student claims were recommended for reclassification in Code C, Code E, Code F, Code G and Code H.

Of the 17 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code A:

- two student claims were recommended for reclassification to Code D

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

- one student was recommended for declassification from any special needs category

The auditors found that:

- While the Instructional Support Planning Process was extensively used and the domain areas informed the goals on the IEP, there were instances where the goals in Code D and Code H did not correspond to the category, nor areas identified in the reports or on the planning tool.
- In some cases, students did not have clearly stated transition goals on their IEP. The Special Education Services Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines states the IEP should contain plans for the next transition point in the student's education.
- Evidence verified two student claims in Code A were without evidence aligned with the category in accordance with the Special Education Services Policies, Procedures and Guidelines criteria. In each case the students were no longer completely dependent on others for meeting all major daily living needs. They no longer required assistance at all times for feeding, dressing, toileting, mobility, and personal hygiene. Both students are able to eat, dress and toilet independently. There was evidence to meet the Code D criteria.
- For one Code D student claim there was no evidence student was attending as of the Form 1701 claim date nor any evidence of ongoing support and service provision from the school. Evidence provided indicated the student attended an intake meeting at the school on September 15, 2020. On September 17, 2020 a text message was sent by the student indicating they was not going to access a spot in the program and would not be coming back to school for the 2020/2021 school year. Without evidence of required supports and services student claim is recommended for declassification from any special needs category.

## **Recommendations**

The auditors recommend that:

- The District staff ensure that goals correspond to the category in which the student is identified.
- The District staff ensure that students have IEP goals for the next transition point in the student's education. Further information regarding IEP transition planning can be found on Appendix H.17 of the Special Education Services Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines.
- The District ensure students are claimed in the educational category that best reflects the type and intensity of educational interventions and supports that are needed as per the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines. In Code A the student must be completely dependent on others at all times for meeting all major daily living needs.

- The District staff ensure that students claimed on the Form 1701 data collection are attending at the claim date.
- Based on the remote findings, the District's Alternate Education Program facility be scheduled for a K-12 Enrolment audit to ensure directives of the [Alternate Education Program Policy](#) are being followed for each student claimed, in addition to the reported support services.

### **Auditors' Comments**

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