



**Ministry of Education
Resource Management Division**

2020/21 Special Education Enrolment Audit

AUDIT REPORT

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 45 (West Vancouver)

2020/21 SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 45 (West Vancouver)

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).

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. 45 (West Vancouver) reported 269 students in the supplemental special education funding categories as of September 30, 2020. For the purpose of this compliance audit, School District No. 45 (West Vancouver) reported two student claims in the Physically Dependent Category (Code A), one student claim reported in the Deafblind Category (Code B), one student claim in the Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability Category (Code C), 71 student claims in the Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment Category (Code D), two student claims in the Visual Impairment Category (Code E), 12 student claims in the Deaf or Hard of Hearing Category (Code F), 133 student claims in the Autism Spectrum Disorder Category (Code G), and 46 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. 45 (West Vancouver) during the week of March 8, 2021.

An entry meeting was held via Zoom on March 8, 2021 with the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Director of Instruction and District Principal Student Services. Daily meetings with the Director of Instruction and District Principal Student Services were held to present preliminary findings and to seek clarification related to the contents of files.

Prior to file reviews, the Director of Instruction provided a presentation of the special education processes, programs, and services. The auditors were also provided with documents including the presentation slides, the district enrolment and screening process, the school-based team and IEP process, as well as information about the District Alternate Education Program school.

A sample of three student files reported in the Physically Dependent category (Code A), one student file in the Deafblind (Code B), one student file in Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disabilities (Code C), 28 student files in Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment (Code D), one student file in Visual Impairment (Code E), three student files in Deaf or Hard of Hearing (Code F), five student files in Autism Spectrum Disorder (Code G), and 28 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.

The file review process did not encounter issues requiring contact with individual students. The Director of Instruction and District Principal Student Services were able to provide the audit team with evidence when clarification was required. Meeting daily with the Director of Instruction and District Principal Student Services enabled the audit team to keep the school staff apprised of the audit progress.

The file review process encountered one issue requiring a special meeting. 14 of the students reported in the Intensive Behavior Intervention/Serious Mental Illness Category (Code H), did not have evidence of planning being coordinated, across agency and community. The Director of Instruction and District Principal Student Services provided additional evidence that met criteria for all the Code H student files when further clarification was requested.

An exit meeting was held with the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Director of Instruction and District Principal Student Services on 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

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

The auditors found that:

- For two students reported in Code D, not all the assessment criteria were readily available in the files presented for the audit review:
 - For one Code D student claim the assessment of the Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) did not indicate a level of complexity aligned with the Special Education Services Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines criteria. Further assessment information was provided by District staff to verify the criteria for Code D was met.
 - For one Code D student claim, the assessment information for a seizure disorder did not include evidence that the student's functioning and education was significantly affected by the chronic health impairment. In response to a clarification request from the audit team, additional assessment information was provided by District staff to verify that the criteria for Code D was met.
- For one Code D student claim there was no evidence the student was receiving special education services to address the needs identified in the assessment documentation beyond those offered to the general student population and proportionate to the level of need. In response to a clarification request from the audit team, further information about support services was provided to meet criteria.
- For 14 Code H student claims there was no documentation in evidence initially presented by the District staff to support planning was coordinated, across agency and community. Although outside agency communication was thorough, it was often contained in the confidential counselling files. In response to clarification requests from the audit team, further documentation was available to verify there was integrated case management to meet the criteria for Code H.
- The regular use of the instructional planning tools was helpful in providing evidence to support the category designation placement and IEP planning for students.
- The IEPs showed consistent evidence of parental participation in the IEP development. The IEPs identified that the students were receiving special education services to address the needs identified in the assessment documentation. The IEPs also consistently aligned with the category designation and outlined methods for measuring progress in relation to the IEP goals. The IEPs were reviewed and updated regularly.
- There was evidence that the District has a thorough process for regular reviews of student designation criteria.

Recommendations:

The auditors recommend that:

- The District staff ensure student claims in Code D meet the assessment criteria listed in the Special Education Manual of Policies Procedure and Guidelines. There must be documentation of a medical diagnosis in one or more of the following areas: nervous system impairment that impacts movement or mobility, musculoskeletal condition, or chronic health impairment that seriously impacts student's education and achievement.
- The District staff ensure that evidence to verify service provision criteria has been met and that a plan for the delivery of appropriate special education services are in evidence for the student claims.

- The District staff develop a consistent process to ensure student claims in Code H have evidence that planning is coordinated across agency and community as specified in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines.
- The District staff continue their best practices for services and supports, presented during the audit.

Auditors' Comments

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