



**Ministry of Education and Child Care
Resource Management Division**

2022/23 Special Education Enrolment Audit

AUDIT REPORT

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 34 (Abbotsford)

2022/23 SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 34 (Abbotsford)

Background

The Ministry of Education and Child Care 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 2022/23 school year, school boards reported 38,581 students enrolled in the low incidence supplemental special education funding categories at September 2022. School District No. 34 (Abbotsford) reported 1,198 students in the supplemental special education funding categories as of September 29, 2022. For the purpose of this compliance audit, School District No. 34 (Abbotsford) reported 20 student claims in the Physically Dependent Category (Code A), three student claims reported in the Deafblind Category (Code B), 50 student claims in the Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability Category (Code C), 334 student claims in the Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment Category (Code D), nine student claims in the Visual Impairment Category (Code E), 35 student claims in the Deaf or Hard of Hearing Category (Code F), 508 student claims in the Autism Spectrum Disorder Category (Code G), and 239 student claims in the Intensive Behavior Intervention/Serious Mental Illness Category (Code H).

The Ministry of Education and Child Care 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. 34 (Abbotsford) during the week of February 27, 2023.

An entry meeting was held on February 27, 2023, with three Assistant Superintendents, the Associate Superintendent of Human Resources, the Director of Learning Support Services, and two District Principals of Learning Support Services. Daily meetings with the Director of

Learning Support Services and one of the District Principals of Learning Support Services were held to present preliminary findings and to seek clarification related to the contents of files.

A sample of 20 student files reported in the Physically Dependent category (Code A), three student files in the Deafblind (Code B), five student files in Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disabilities (Code C), 61 student files in Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment (Code D), three student files in Visual Impairment (Code E), six student files in Deaf or Hard of Hearing (Code F), 22 student files in Autism Spectrum Disorder (Code G), and 60 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 encountered two issues requiring a special meeting. The first related to IEP requirements. For five student claims in Code A, the IEP goals did not correspond to Code A. There were two IEPs that did not contain a method of measurement. Some IEPs for students in Grades 10 to 12 did not contain transition goals.

The second issue was related to updated reports for students reported in Code A. For four student claims in Code A, there were occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech language therapy services listed, but there were no reports of progress to indicate the students' current level of functioning. Reports from these professionals indicating the students' level of functioning and therapeutic goals were available once requested.

An exit meeting was held with the Superintendent, three Assistant Superintendents, the Director of Learning Support Services and the District Principal of Learning Support Services on March 3, 2023. 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 2022/23 school year, and expressed appreciation for the assistance provided.

Observations

There were no recommended reclassifications for the student files reviewed by the auditors in Code A, Code B, Code C, Code E and Code G.

Of the 61 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code D:

- two students were recommended for declassification.

Of the 60 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code H:

- two students were recommended for reclassification to Code R.

The auditors found that:

- Two student claims in Code D did not have evidence to meet the criteria for the Physical Disability/Chronic Health Impairment category.
 - One student claim had evidence of a concussion in 2016. The Instructional Support Planning Tool indicated a significant level of impact in social/emotional, academic, and

self-determination domains; yet there was no current evidence to support that these impacts were directly attributable to the concussion sustained six years earlier. The evidence verified declassification.

- One student reported in Code D due to seizures from ten years ago. No further medical assessment confirmed that seizures were still occurring, nor was there evidence that the student's functioning and education were significantly affected. The clarification completed by District staff indicated that the student transitioned to apprenticed employment, that no support was needed, and that the student was working successfully and independently. The evidence verified declassification.
- Two student claims for Code H did not have evidence to meet the criteria for placement in the category. There was no evidence to support that planning was coordinated, across agency and community. There was no integrated case management. These two students were verified to meet criteria aligned with the Students Requiring Behaviour Support or with Mental Illness category (Code R).
- IEPs did not consistently contain the requirements of an IEP as per the Form 1701 Instructions, the Special Education Services Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines and the [IEP Order M638/95](#). Several IEPs did not contain goals corresponding to the category. Two IEPs did not contain a method of measurement. Many IEPs did not contain specific and measurable objectives. There was no evidence of transition goals for students in Grades 10 to 12 who did not have a developmental disability or did not attend the Alternate Education Program.
- The files were well organized providing easy access to the evidence the auditors were seeking and the evidence within the files was clearly labeled.
- Evidence of service provision was provided in the Weekly Schedule of Services in all except two student files.
- The Instructional Support Planning Process Tool for Code D and H were available in almost all the student files and provided additional evidence of the impacts on the students functioning and education in various domains.
- There was evidence that the District uses a consistent process for determining designation requirements for student's reported in Code H. There was also a consistent process for integrated case management with evidence of well documented communication and coordinated planning with a variety of outside agencies. The forms used regularly for students in Code H included:
 - Behaviour Assessments
 - History of Behaviour Interventions
 - Instructional Support Planning Tool for Code H to demonstrate impact on learning
 - Consultation Log of Outside Agency Contact
 - Outside Agency Planning (e.g. with Archway Community Services, the Foundry, Impact, Abbotsford Addictions).
 - Care Team Meeting Minutes
 - Summary of School-based Support Programs
 - Behaviour Plans and Safety Plans as needed.

- There were several forms used consistently for students reported in Code F that helped to verify the areas of impact of the hearing loss on the students' education and to determine planning for supports and services. The following forms found were:
 - Hearing Alert form completed by a Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (TDHH) for classroom teachers
 - Informal Inventory of Independence and Self-Advocacy Skills for Deaf/Hard of Hearing Students
 - Access to Curriculum Inventory
 - Minnesota Compensatory Skills Checklist for Student with Hearing Loss
 - Auditory Self-Advocacy Checklist – Middle School
 - Teacher Appraisal of Listening Difficulty
- There was evidence of a thorough transition process for students with developmental disabilities using a person-centred PATH planning process with multi-year plans involving District, school, service provider and parent/guardian input. In addition, Care Team Minutes provided evidence of short-term transition planning with community partners.
- For the students reported in special education categories in the Alternate Education Program, there was evidence of a transition planning process that involved:
 - Transition goals identified annually for each student in September and included employment training programs and coursework to help students achieve their goals.
 - Year-end class reviews determined program placement for each student for the following year.

Recommendations:

The auditors recommend that:

- The District continue the commendable level of service, coordinated planning and integrated case management for students in Code H.
- The District continue the commendable level of planning and service provision for students reported in Code F.
- The District staff ensure student claims in Code D meet the criteria listed in the Special Education Manual of Policies Procedure and Guidelines for that category. 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 the student's education and achievement.
- The District staff ensure, for student claims in Code D, there is current medical diagnostic information for conditions that may change over time such as epilepsy, diabetes and concussion. The assessment documentation provides evidence that the students functioning and education are significantly affected by their physical disability or chronic health impairment.
- The District staff ensure that Form 1701 reporting is verified prior to submission and that student files are updated and reviewed regularly through an annual designation renewal process to ensure the students meet the criteria in the category in which they are claimed for the reported school year.

- The District staff report only student claims in Code H when the evidence is aligned with the Special Education Guidelines including evidence of coordinated planning across agency and community and integrated case management.
- To ensure all the requirements of an IEP are met, the District staff be required to undertake a Ministry sanctioned compliance workshop on writing Competency Based IEPs.

Auditors' Comments

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