



**Ministry of Education
Resource Management and Executive Financial Office Division
School District Financial Reporting Unit**

2017/18 Special Education Enrolment Audit

AUDIT REPORT

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 81 (Fort Nelson)

2017/18 SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 81 (Fort Nelson)

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).

In the 2017/18 school year, school boards reported 29,359 students enrolled in the low incidence supplemental special education funding categories at September 2017. School District No. 81 (Fort Nelson) reported 54 students in the supplemental special education funding categories as of September 29, 2017. For the purpose of this compliance audit, School District No.81 (Fort Nelson) reported one student claim in the Physically Dependent Category (Code A), two student claims in the Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability Category (Code C), 12 student claims in the Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment Category (Code D), three student claims in the Deaf or Hard of Hearing Category (Code F), eight student claims in the Autism Spectrum Disorder Category (Code G), and 28 student claims in the Intensive Behavior Intervention/Serious Mental Illness Category (Code H).

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.

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. 81 (Fort Nelson) November 20 to 23, 2017.

An entry meeting was held on November 20, 2017 with the District Principal responsible for Student Support Services and the Secretary Treasurer. Daily meetings with the District Principal were held to present preliminary findings and to seek clarification related to the contents of files. All the low incidence 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 one issue requiring a school visit to R.L. Angus Elementary School. There was a student reported in Code A for whom the evidence in the file did not support that he was completely dependent on others for meeting all five daily living needs. A visit by the auditors to the school confirmed that the student was completely dependent on others meeting the criteria .

An exit meeting was held with the Superintendent, District Principal, Secretary Treasurer and the Chairperson of the School District's Board on November 23, 2017. 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 2017/18 school year, and expressed appreciation for the assistance provided.

Observations:

There was no recommended reclassification for the one student file reviewed by the auditors in Code A.

There were no recommended reclassifications for the two student files reviewed by the auditors in Code C.

Of the 12 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code D:

- four students were recommended for reclassification to Regular Education

Of the three student files reviewed by the auditors in Code F:

- three students were recommended for reclassification to Regular Education

Of the eight student files reviewed by the auditors in Code G:

- one student was recommended for reclassification to Regular Education

Of the 28 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code H:

- one student was recommended for reclassification to Regular Education
- two students were recommended for reclassification to Code R

(See Appendices for details)

The auditors found that:

- The student files were well organized and labelled.
- There was inconsistent evidence that parents of elementary students were offered an opportunity to consult on the IEP.
- There was inconsistent evidence that the information from the Secondary Student Assisted Functional Assessment Interview (a school developed form used at the high school for student reported in Code H) was being used in writing the IEP.
- In many of the student files at the secondary level there was evidence of similar IEP goals and strategies in Code H.

- There was evidence that the degree of completion of the Instructional Support Planning Tool varied as did the use of it to develop IEP goals and objectives. In some cases, the domain checklists showed moderate difficulty, but the cover sheet showed all areas at the complex level.
- There was evidence in some cases that all four domain areas of the Instructional Support Planning Tool were identified as needing improvement, but the IEP had only one goal.
- For the following recommended reclassifications, there was insufficient evidence to verify students had been appropriately assessed and identified, nor was there evidence of students receiving support for the category in which they were claimed in accordance with the Special Education Services Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines and the K-12 Funding-Special Needs Policy.
 - In Code D (for Chronic Health) there were two students recommended for reclassification. There was no evidence of a medical diagnosis or chronic health impairment that seriously impacted the student's education and achievement. One student was enrolled in the school on September 29, 2017 with the School reporting the student in the category based on the mother's description of the needs of the student. The other student was recommended for a medical diagnosis in September 2017. At the time of the audit there was no evidence of the diagnosis.
 - Two students in Code D were recommended for reclassification. There was no evidence of an assessment by a multidisciplinary team. The Special Education Services Guidelines require that the assessment must include and integrate information from multiple sources and various professions from different disciplines that indicates the complex developmental behaviour conditions are complex and seriously impact the student's education and achievement. One student was diagnosed with Complex Developmental Behaviour Disorder and the other with Developmental Coordination Disorder. Both diagnosis were done by the Registered School Psychologist in the absence of a qualified specialist. The Guidelines require that a diagnosis be done by the CDBC Network or by a qualified specialist (psychiatrist, registered psychologist with specialized training, or medical professional specializing in developmental disorders).
 - For three students recommended for reclassified from Code F there was no evidence of service or assessment provided by a teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing as required by the Special Education Services Guidelines. Additionally one student had no evidence of educationally significant problems directly attributable to the loss.
 - For one student recommended for reclassification from Code G there was no evidence of a diagnosis to support placement in the category at the claim date. The Kindergarten student was scheduled for an appointment with the British Columbia Autism Assessment Network (BCAAN) in December 2017.
 - For two students recommended for reclassification from Code H there was no evidence of planning across agency and community, and no evidence of antisocial or extremely disruptive behaviour in most other environments and consistently/persistently over time.
 - One student claimed in Code H had no evidence of attending at the claim date of September 29, 2017 and there was no evidence of antisocial or extremely disruptive behaviour in most other environments and consistently/persistently over time. It was verified that the student was working full time and not attending school during the first semester.

Recommendations:

The auditors recommend that:

- The District ensure that all claims meet the appropriate category criteria on or before the claim date.
- The District ensure that all students claimed are enrolled and attending at the claim date.
- The District ensure any student claims in Code D meet the criteria listed in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures 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 student's education and achievement.
 - A diagnosis of a complex development behaviour condition must be made by either CDBC Network or BCAAN Network or a qualified medical professional (paediatrician, psychiatrist, neurologist) or a medical professional specializing in developmental disorders in consultation with a multi-disciplinary team of specialists (i.e. registered psychologist, speech/language pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist).
 - A diagnosis of Developmental Coordination Disorder must be made by a qualified medical profession in consultation with a multi-disciplinary team of specialists.
- The District ensure any student claims in Code F meet the criteria listed in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines for that category.
 - A qualified teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing provides assessment and services.
 - There must be documentation that there is an annual assessment.
 - The unilateral hearing loss is moderate to profound.
 - The student has educationally significant problems directly attributable to the loss.
- The District ensure any student claims in Code G meet the criteria listed in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines for that category.
 - There must be documentation of a clinical diagnosis and assessment by a qualified specialist in keeping with the Provincial Standards. The assessment must include and integrate information from multiple sources and various professionals from different disciplines: BCAAN or a paediatrician, psychiatrist or registered psychologist whose assessment meets Standards and Guidelines and adopted BCAAN policy.
- The District ensure any student claims in Code H meet the criteria listed in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines for that category.
 - There must be documentation that there is evidence of antisocial, extremely disruptive behaviour in most environments and consistently/persistently over time. There is documentation of the settings in which the behaviour is persistent over time.
 - That planning is coordinated across agency and community (integrated case management/wraparound).
- The District be required to undertake a special education audit workshop to ensure support services staff are aware of and adhering to the directives specific to the Special Education guidelines and related inclusive supports to service their students.
- The Ministry of Education adjust the District's funding by a reduction of \$185,953 in accordance with the following table:

Code	Category of Special Education	Enrolment Sampled	Audit Adjustments +/-	Net Total	Funding Adjustments
A	Physically Dependent	1	+0/-0	1	\$0
C	Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disabilities	2	+0/-0	2	\$0
D	Physical Disability/Chronic Health	12	+0/-4	8	(\$76,280)
F	Deaf or Hard of Hearing	3	+0/-3	0	(\$57,210)
G	Autism Spectrum Disorder	8	+0/-1	7	(\$19,070)
H	Intensive Behavior Interventions or Serious Mental Illness	28	+0/-3	25	(\$28,830)
R	Behaviour Support	0	+2/-0	2	\$0
	Regular Education	0	+8/-0	8	\$0
	Supplemental Claim Declassified	0	+1/-0	1	\$0
Sub-Total – Special Education Supplemental Funding Claims		54	+11/-11	54	(\$181,390)
Enrolment Adjustment:					
School Age – Not Enrolled and/or in Attendance			-0.6250 FTE		(\$4,563)
TOTAL					(\$185,953)

Auditors' Comments

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

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Ministry of Education
November 26, 2017
