

**1. Are all independent schools required to fill in this form?**

No. Only designated independent Special Education Schools are required to fill in this form.

**2. What is a designated Special Education School?**

A designated Special Education School is a Group 1 or 2 independent, brick and mortar school that provides highly specialized educational programs and a tailored learning environment for a unique group of students with a range of special educational needs, who require services and supports above and beyond what is available in a regular classroom setting. There are 13 designated Special Education Schools in the Province.

**3. Why are independent Special Education Schools being asked to fill in this form?**

On top of operating grants and supplementary special needs grants, designated Special Education Schools that meet the following criteria are eligible for an additional Special Education grant of \$2,000 per HC (headcount):

- Enroll students with special needs exclusively and maintain evidence of special needs category eligibility, in accordance with special education guidelines; and,
- Maintain 1:6 educator/student ratio (or less).

This form and accompanying auditor's report provides assurance to the Ministry of Education and Child Care that Special Education Schools receiving the additional grant meet the second criteria.

**4. Who is responsible for filling in the Educator / Student Ratio Form?**

Management of the Authority is responsible for the completion of this form (not the auditor) which represents their assertion regarding compliance. This form should be prepared and signed off by the Authority and submitted to the Ministry along with a separate auditor's report / cover letter (separate from ES Audit report).

**5. Who qualifies as an auditor for the purpose of reviewing the information provided on the Educator / Student Ratio Form and providing an opinion?**

The auditor of a reporting society is a person who is qualified under the Act (Section 12 of the *Independent School Act*; Section 2 of the Independent School Regulation) and has the appropriate licensing (Audit category) with the Chartered Professional Accountants of British Columbia (CPABC). These qualifications requirements align with the ES Audit form completion instructions.

**6. What is the auditor being asked to do?**

The auditor is being asked to provide a professional opinion regarding the accuracy of the calculation provided by the school to describe their educator to student ratio.

- The auditor will verify the documents used by the school to determine the total eligible student FTE and total educator FTE and provide their professional opinion regarding the accuracy of the calculation in a separate, accompanying report / cover letter.
- As part of the verification process, auditors will make a statement regarding whether or not personnel being used in the calculation fall under the 'educator' definition provided (see Question 13). For schools with more than 100 students, this will consist of sampling approximately 25% of employee files, with a focus on educator roles that do not fall under that of B.C. certified teacher.

**7. What should the report consist of?**

(a) Verification of student and educator FTE: The report should list the documents used by the school to determine the ratio and reviewed by the auditor for accuracy (see Question 8 for examples of acceptable documentation).

(b) The auditor's professional opinion as to whether or not the staff FTE used towards the ration calculation falls under the 'educator' criteria listed in Question 13. If the auditor has verified the qualifications and experience of a sample of employees, the report should briefly describe the sample selected.

**8. What kinds of records should be provided to the auditor to confirm the accuracy of the school's calculation?**

The following documents are recommended when calculating educator FTE: 1701 form; Payroll lists; and Appendix 1 of the External Evaluation Catalogue. The school should highlight staff listed in the documentation, who meet the educator criteria, as per guidelines provided in the response to Question 13 and Appendix A.

**9. When should it be submitted?**

The completed form and auditor's report / cover letter should be completed using the May 15<sup>th</sup> ES Audit Eligible Student FTE and submitted in conjunction with the May 15<sup>th</sup> ES Audit Form by June 15 annually.

**10. What is the definition of an Eligible Student for the purpose of this form?**

The Special Education School additional grant is only available for eligible students who have been reported with a designation on the 1701 form. This excludes out-of-province students, international students, First Nations students living on-reserve, and registered homeschoolers. Non-graduated adults that meet the eligibility requirements for special education funding, as per the Adult Non-Graduated Funding Policy (*Independent Schools*) are eligible for the additional grant and can therefore be included in the eligible student total.

**11. Why are international students, out of province students, First Nations students living on-reserve, registered home schoolers and non-graduated adults that do not meet special education funding criteria not included in this calculation?**

These students are not included in this calculation because they are not eligible FTE for funding purposes.

**12. Does the ratio calculation have to be exact?**

The ratio must be 1:6 or less. Failing to meet this criterion may result in the Ministry recovering applicable funds.

**13. What is the definition of an Educator for the purpose of the calculation?**

In addition to B.C. certified teachers overseeing the educational program and individual education plan, a variety of professional, specialist personnel may work to support designated special needs students in meeting the goals that have been identified in their individual education plan (IEP).

The Ministry acknowledges the vital role of counsellors, educational assistants, psychologists and psychiatrists, speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, behavior analysts, play therapists in meeting the often complex needs of students enrolled in Special Education Schools. These and other personnel with appropriate training and/or relevant experience may be considered in the educator/student ratio calculation for the purpose of Special Education School funding eligibility criteria, provided they:

- are employed/contracted by the school (i.e., require additional expenditure on the part of the school),
- provide an integral service relating to a student's IEP or the school's support model,
- have appropriate qualifications and Criminal Record Checks through the Criminal Records Review Program (CRRP), through the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General,
- work with a B.C.-certified teacher, who oversees the educational programs / delivery of IEPs.

Please see Appendix A for a list of the types of educator roles and related qualifications that may be used when determining the ratio. This is not an exhaustive list. The Auditor is asked to do a sampling of the educators used in the calculation, with an emphasis on non-teaching staff. Auditors are requested to verify employment status (that the individual is employed or contracted by the school) and whether they have appropriate qualifications.

**14. Is there a set calendar date used when working out the educator FTE or a formula for the year? For example, do I use the number and FTE of educators at the time of the 1701 fall submission date?**

Educator FTE should be based on the same period as the Eligible Student FTE in the ES Audit: July 1, 2023 to May 15, 2024. As staffing can change throughout the year, please ensure that the calculation reflects these changes.

**15. How do I calculate FTE for educators that are paid on an hourly basis?**

For educators that are paid on an hourly basis, the Authority will determine what full-time employment consists (i.e., how many hours per week). FTE will be determined based on the number of hours worked on average over time.

**16. How do I calculate FTE for part-time educators?**

For part-time educators, the Authority will determine the equivalent FTE as a percentage of a regularly employed, full-time educator's contracted hours. If 1.0 FTE represents a full-time staff member, then 0.20 FTE would represent an assignment of one day per week, or 20% of a full-time position.

**17. How do I calculate FTE for externally contracted professionals?**

For externally contracted staff that fall under the definition of an educator, the Authority should determine the equivalent FTE by:

- (a) subtracting any travel time that the Authority has been billed for,
- (b) averaging the number of contracted hours worked on a weekly basis by the contracted individual,
- (c) dividing this number by the average number of weekly hours worked by regularly employed, full-time educators.

Appendix A: Types of educator roles that may be used when determining the educator/student ratio

Educator Roles (not limited to)	Examples of qualifications
<b>Teacher</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BC certified teacher</li> </ul>
<b>Learning Assistance / Special Education Teachers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BC certified teacher through the Teacher Regulation Branch</li> <li>Post-secondary program completion in the following areas:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students with special needs;</li> <li>Assessment/testing theory and practice;</li> <li>Strategies for adapting and modifying curriculum to meet the diverse needs of students</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Educational / Learning Assistants</b>  <b>Example position titles:</b> Educational Assistant Teaching Assistant Aboriginal Support Worker Special Education Assistant Child and Youth Care Worker Visual Language Interpreter Augmentative Communication and Adaptive Technology Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Certificate/diploma/degree from recognized post-secondary program</li> <li>For roles supporting students with particular needs or challenges, additional training in a particular area may be required.</li> </ul> <p><b>For example:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Classroom and Community Support Worker Program</li> <li>-Special Education Assistant Certificate</li> <li>-Special Needs Worker Program</li> <li>-American Sign-Language</li> </ul>
<b>School Counsellors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A degree in counselling psychology or a related discipline with a focus in counselling</li> <li>Registration with a professional body where required</li> </ul>
<b>School Psychologist</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration with the College of Psychologists, with special training in school Psychology OR</li> <li>A Master's degree in school/educational psychology or a related field with a focus on school psychology and qualifications that meet the standard for membership in the British Columbia Association of School Psychologists</li> </ul>
<b>Speech-language Pathologists / Audiologist</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registered with the College of Speech and Hearing Professionals in British Columbia, and are expected to adhere to their roles and responsibilities as defined in the Speech and Hearing Health Professions Regulation 413/208 and the College Bylaws</li> </ul>
<b>Physiotherapy/Occupational Therapy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A recognized master's degree from an accredited institution specializing in physiotherapy or occupational therapy</li> <li>Registered with the College of Physical Therapists / Occupational Therapists of British Columbia</li> </ul>
<b>Youth and Family Counsellor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bachelor of Arts Degree in Child and Youth Care, Social Work or an associated discipline</li> </ul>
<b>Mental Health Worker</b>  <b>Example position titles:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A degree in a related discipline and registration with a professional body where required</li> </ul>



Aboriginal Mental Health Practitioner Crisis Counsellor Case Manager Dietitian Nurse Peer Support Worker Psychologist Psychiatrist Behaviour Analyst/Consultant Psychosocial Rehabilitation Worker Social Worker Play Therapist	
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Please contact the Independent Schools Branch if you have any questions regarding the completion of the Educator / Student Ratio Form and the auditor's report at: [EDUC.IndependentSchoolsOffice@gov.bc.ca](mailto:EDUC.IndependentSchoolsOffice@gov.bc.ca).