

AUDITS AT A GLANCE

OVERSIGHT OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN OFFSHORE AND GROUP 4 SCHOOLS

Why we did these audits

- K–12 schools are a pathway for international students to B.C. post-secondary institutions
- The quality of this education can impact the reputation of the B.C. education system
- Offshore and Group 4 schools enrol over 40% of all K–12 international students
- During the period of our audit, there were 45 offshore schools with 11,650 students and 24 Group 4 schools with 2,622 students

Objectives

- *To determine whether the Ministry of Education provides effective oversight of the delivery of education programs by offshore schools*
- *To determine whether the Ministry of Education provides effective oversight of the delivery of education programs by Group 4 schools*

Audit period: 2014/15 to 2018/19 for offshore schools
2015/16 to 2018/19 for Group 4 schools

Conclusions

- The Ministry of Education's oversight of offshore and Group 4 schools is effective
- The audits identified minor shortcomings and incomplete oversight of business risks for both types of schools

The Ministry of Education has accepted all 8 recommendations that we made to improve the oversight of offshore and Group 4 schools.

What we found

OFFSHORE SCHOOLS

Certification

Ministry confirms new schools meet certification requirements before being certified, but does not adequately assess business capacity of school operators

- Certification requirements cover school educational responsibilities and operator responsibilities
- School operators are not required to submit enough long-term business information
- School operators are not required to provide enough information on local regulatory processes
- School operators do not always fully translate compliance documents

RECOMMENDATIONS 1, 2

Compliance monitoring

Ministry monitors schools for ongoing compliance with requirements

- 3-step annual monitoring completed: schools report, on-site inspection, ministry follow-up of compliance issues needing correction
- Schools inspected as required by qualified Inspection Chair
- School corrections followed up and confirmed before certificate renewed
- Pending teacher certifications and priority suggestions not identified for follow-up
- Growth in number of schools impacting time for review

RECOMMENDATION 3

What we found (continued)

OFFSHORE SCHOOLS (continued)

Performance monitoring

Ministry monitors school performance

- Ministry tells schools the annual performance reporting requirements
- Schools provide information on student achievement, graduation and transition rates
- 5-year trend data shared with schools to support better delivery of education programs
- Data used to evaluate individual schools
- Ministry not assessing progress on goals of B.C. Global Education Program

RECOMMENDATION 4

GROUP 4 SCHOOLS

Certification

Ministry confirms new schools meet certification requirements before being certified, but does not adequately assess business capacity of school operators

- Certification requirements cover school educational responsibilities and school operator responsibilities
- School operators provide information on municipal compliance, financial surety bonds
- School operators are not required to submit business plans or longer-term financial information
- Schools are not required to assess English language proficiency of new students

RECOMMENDATIONS 5, 6

Compliance monitoring

Ministry monitors schools for ongoing compliance with requirements

- 3-step annual monitoring completed: schools report, on-site inspection, ministry follow-up of compliance issues needing correction
- Schools inspected as required by qualified Inspection Chair
- School corrections followed up and confirmed before certificate renewed
- High volume of documents makes critical review of school responses to inspection issues challenging

RECOMMENDATION 7

Performance monitoring

Ministry monitors school performance

- Ministry tells schools the annual performance reporting requirements
- Schools provide information on student achievement, graduation and transition rates
- 5-year trend data shared with schools to support better delivery of education programs
- Data used to evaluate individual schools
- Ministry does not regularly evaluate the collective performance of Group 4 schools

RECOMMENDATION 8

After reading this report, you may wish to consider asking the following questions of government:

1. Will the COVID-19 pandemic have long-term impacts on the delivery of B.C. education programs to international students in offshore and Group 4 schools?
2. Given their similar business models and risks, should the ministry work to better align the financial requirements for offshore and Group 4 schools?
3. Are the bonding requirements for Group 4 schools sufficient to protect the interests of international students and school staff in the event of a school closure?