



To: **District Directors/District Officials**

Topic: **Responsibilities of District -Based Support Teams**

**Message Objective(s):** To build capacity for district officials to constitute and operationalise District-Based Support Teams (DBST) in their districts.

**Message:** As matter of policy, districts are mandated to constitute District Based Teams (DBST) to deal with psychosocial issues of learners and teachers and monitor compliance and achievement. Research has shown that these teams are not adequately constituted at best but largely not functional. The guidance this week therefore focuses on how to constitute and operationalise this crucial structure.

The establishment, functioning and support of the DBST at any district is the ultimate responsibility of the District Director. The structure must include.

- a DMT representative, especially the District Director
- DBST coordinator
- Circuit Manager representatives
- Education support providers
- Psychologists employed by the department of education
- additional members from sister departments, NGOs, or specialists from Full-Service Schools.

The following is the summary of the responsibilities of the DBST at district level:

- The key function of the district -based support team is to assist education institutions, which include early childhood learning centres and schools, to identify barriers to learning and support learners in accessing the curriculum.
- The structure must set accountability standards for educational institutions within their districts.
- Providing focused support to educational institutions within the district.
- The structure must diagnose (needs, compliance, and achievement) the SBST functionality in schools.
- Identifying and providing additional resources to educational institutions within the district
- Coaching SBST members for improvement

According to White Paper 6 the DBST must “ support all learners, educators and the system as a whole so that the full range of learning needs can be met “. The focus must be on teaching and learning factors, and emphasis must be placed on the development of good teaching strategies that will benefit all learners; on overcoming barriers in the system that prevent it from meeting the full range of learning needs; and on adaptation of support systems available in the classroom. The DBST structure must provide direct interventionist programmes to learners in a range of settings and or, serve as ‘consultant-mentors’ to school management teams, classroom educators and school governing bodies. It is critical that the District Director is a member of this structure to give it direction and support for it to be effective.

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References: Education White Paper 6 Special Needs Education, Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (2001); Psychosocial Support: A model for South African Schools. (2021)