

To: **District Directors, Circuit Managers and Principals**

Topic: **The need to provide Psychosocial Support to educators and learners to deal with post covid -19 effects**

Message Objective(s): **Make Psychosocial Support an integral part of the rebooting of the education system.**

**Message: Psychosocial support for teachers and learners promotes successful rebooting of the education system.**

It is an agreed fact that the pandemic has set the education sector back by eroding the gains we had gained over the last decade. There are huge learning losses that stemmed from the pandemic and as the nation recovers from it, educators and learners must be provided with necessary psychosocial support to deal with the effects of the pandemic.

UNICEF says education departments and governments need to ensure that they manage learner dropout rates and manage the well-being of educators. Psychosocial support can assist the education system to reach out to every learner to be back in the schooling system.

As the system reboots after the pandemic, schools need to change the way they have operated in the past. School managers need to deal with the psychosocial needs of their staff more than before and educators need to make huge efforts to support learners than they have done in the past. It should be business unusual according to UNICEF. The magnitude of the recent past crisis we have had requires that we have stronger collaboration with all stakeholders to provide the necessary psychosocial support to learners and teachers.

The inequalities in our education system require us to think creatively, seek greater collaboration from sister departments, sister schools, non-governmental organisations, and churches to address psychosocial issues and reduce the effects of the pandemic. This will support the rebooting efforts and will lead to successful recalibration of the education system. It will put in place added support structures that were not there before the pandemic. It will strengthen the structures that were not effective. Remedial interventions to recover the learning losses are also reshaped and strengthened.

The National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) is leading the advocacy for provision of psychosocial support for schools through interventions like training the DBSTs in the districts as well as SBSTs in schools. With DBE support the NECT has developed a module on psychosocial support for South African Schools. This module can be used as reference by district officials and schools as they support educators and learners. The module assists the education system to develop PSS model schools as they reboot the system and make more resilient and better prepared to deal with future pandemics.

The module is available on the NECT website [www.nect.org.za](http://www.nect.org.za)

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