

- To develop learning materials for learners experiencing barriers in mainstream schools.
- To develop a strategic plan for reducing the number of learners who require only low levels of support.
- To be integrated into district-based support teams.
- To collaborate with mainstream and full-service schools, including institution-level support teams.
- To work collaboratively with informal support resources in the community.
- To develop a catalogue of educational resources in the community that can be used in mainstream and full-service schools.
- To develop a flexible pattern of placement of learners with disabilities depending on the level of support required.
- To provide a network of support to mainstream schools, including curricular support, assessment support, specialised teaching methodologies and specialised equipment.
- To assist in the ongoing evaluation, monitoring and therapeutic support of learners with disabilities in mainstream schools.
- To provide educators with support in curriculum assessment and programme planning for learners with diverse needs.
- To assist in the mobilisation of the 280 000 children and young people who are outside the schooling system.

FULL-SERVICE SCHOOLS

Full-services schools are mainstream education institutions that provide quality education to all learners by supplying the full range of learning needs in an equitable manner.

Principles of full-service schools

- A full-service school is equipped and supported to provide for a greater range of learning needs.
- A full-service school engages itself in the process of inclusion, i.e., increasing the participation of, and learning by, all learners in the school and attempting to reduce or remove the barriers that may inhibit learning and participation.
- A full-service school acts as a beacon of the transformation process in education by developing cultures, policies and practices that celebrate diversity, respect differences and value innovation and problem-solving.
- A full-service school works in collaboration with, and provides assistance and support to, other schools in the area so that a range of learning needs can be addressed mainly in learners' neighbourhood schools.

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THE INTEGRATED AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SUPPORT SYSTEM

District-based Support Teams, Special Schools as Resource Centres and Full-Service Schools



“Schools that are able to take charge of change, rather than being controlled by it, are more effective and improve more rapidly than ones that are not.”

AN INTEGRATED, COMMUNITY-BASED SUPPORT SERVICE

In a transformed inclusive education and training system, effective and appropriate support will be made available to all learners, whether they are in ordinary or in special schools. The support will be organised according to the needs of the community and will be accessible in ordinary, full-service and special schools/resource centres.

DISTRICT-BASED SUPPORT TEAMS

At the centre of this support system will be the new district-based support teams (DBSTs), which will comprise staff from various units of a provincial district office and from special schools.

Functions of district-based support teams

- ❖ To support teaching, learning and management and to build the capacity of schools to have inclusive cultures, policies and practices.
- ❖ To foster the development of effective teaching and learning, primarily through identifying and addressing barriers to teaching and learning at all levels of the system.
- ❖ **Organisational support**
 - To develop and support local institutional-level support teams in schools.

- To build the capacity of schools and foster strategic planning and management frameworks.
- To link schools with formal and informal support systems in the surrounding community.

❖ Educator support

- To consult with educators on the teaching and learning framework and environment in order to ensure that they are responsive to the full range of learning needs.
- To identify and prioritise learning needs and barriers to learning in the context of local schools.

❖ Learner support

- To provide indirect support to learners by supporting educators and school management, with a particular focus on curriculum and institutional development.
- To provide direct learning support to learners, where necessary and possible, where institution-level support teams are unable to respond to particular learner needs.

Guiding principles for the composition of district-based support teams

- Flexible approach, determined by local needs and resources.
- Equity and redress mean that all learners will have access to support.
- Professional specialists will be utilised as local needs determine.
- Community-based approach means that informal support systems will be used in and outside of schools.

Core support providers

- Curriculum advisors;
- management and institutional development advisors;
- administrative, financial, staff provisioning and development officials;
- psycho-social, environmental, health and inclusive education support officials; and
- educators from special schools.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS AS RESOURCE CENTRES

Education White Paper 6 suggests a radical transformation of the existing system by moving away from the segregation of learners with disabilities towards a system that includes them at every level of educational practice. There is a need to base the provision of education on the intensity of support required by learners with disabilities rather than on the category of disability. Special Schools/ Resource Centres will cater for learners who require high levels of support. Thus, designated special schools will be strengthened and transformed into resource centres.

The role of special schools as resource centres

- To work with the community in advocating inclusive education policy and practices.
- To recognise the rights of people with disabilities to live as independent and respected members of society.
- To provide improved education for learners with diverse needs who require high or intense levels of support.