education

Department:
Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

CONCEPTUAL AND OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION:

DISTRICT-BASED SUPPORT TEAMS

2005

EDUCATION WHITE PAPER 6

SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

CONCEPTUAL AND OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR DISTRICT-BASED SUPPORT TEAMS

2005

Directorate Inclusive Education
Sol Plaatje House
Schoeman Street, Pretoria
(012) 312 5349
Fax (012) 312 5029
www.education.pwv.gov.za

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEVELOPING DISTRICT-BASED SUPPORT TEAMS: GUIDELINES FOR PRACTICE.....6

1. INTRODUCTION.....6
   1.1. What are the guidelines about?.....6
   1.2. Who are the guidelines for?.....7
2. BACKGROUND.....8
   2.1. Why do schools and other education institutions need support?.....8
   2.2. What support already exists at 'district' level?.....9
   2.3. Why do we need these guidelines?.....10
3. SUMMARY OF POLICY FRAMEWORK.....11
   3.1. What does the Department of Education's White Paper 6 on Building an Inclusive Education and Training System say?.....11
   3.2. What are the key practical challenges relating to the building of district-based support teams emerging from this policy?.....14
   3.3. How does this policy link to other policies in education?.....15
4. COMPOSITION OF DISTRICT-BASED SUPPORT TEAMS.....16
   4.1. What are the key principles that should guide the composition of district-based support teams?.....16
   4.2. Who are the *core* education support service providers at district level?.....17
   4.3. Which education institutions should be involved in providing support at this level?.....18
   4.4. What other government officials should be incorporated in these teams?.....19
   4.5. Which community role players should be involved?.....19
   4.6. How should district-based support teams be structured?.....20
5. FUNCTIONS AND ROLES OF DISTRICT-BASED SUPPORT TEAMS.....20
   5.1. What does the new policy say about the core purpose and key functions of these teams?.....20
   5.2. In summary, what are the core functions of these teams?.....21
   5.3. What does this mean for the *roles* and *competencies* of the district-based support team?22
   5.4. What are the key challenges relating to identification and *assessment* of needs and barriers to learning?.....23
   5.5. What are the 'capacity building' challenges for education support providers at district level?.....32
6. DEVELOPING INSTITUTIONAL-LEVEL SUPPORT TEAMS.....34
   6.1. What is an institutional-level support team?.....34
   6.2. What does the policy say about institutional-level support teams?.....34
   6.3. What are the core functions of these teams?.....35
   6.4. Who are the members of these teams?.....35

6.5. How can district-based support teams support institutional-level support teams?.....37
7.1. How can support providers and recipients *work together* (collaborate) as partners and as teams?.....38
7.2. How can and should the work of district-based support teams be effectively *coordinated* and managed?.....43

REFERENCES.....45

GLOSSARY.....48

FOREWORD

This is one of a set of three booklets that emerge out of Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System. White Paper 6 introduces the notion of a full-service school, special school as resource centre and district-based support team.

Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System suggests a field-testing exercise over a three year period. Regarding implementation, the following will be done as part of short-term steps (2004-2006):

a) Implement a national advocacy and education programme on inclusive education.
b) Plan and implement a targeted outreach programme, beginning in Government's rural and urban development nodes, to mobilise disabled out-of-school children and youth
c) Complete an audit of special schools and implementing a programme to improve quality and efficiency
d) Designate, plan and implement the conversion of 30 special schools to special schools/resource centres in 30 designated school districts
e) Designate, plan and implement the conversion of thirty primary schools to full service schools in the same thirty districts as (d) above
f) Designate, plan and implement the district support teams in the same 30 districts as (d) above
g) Establish, within primary schooling, on a progressive basis, systems and procedures for the early identification and addressing of barriers to learning in the Foundation Phase (Grades R-3)

This booklet focuses on district-based support teams and provides detail regarding definitions and the developmental issues. This booklet is not exhaustive and concepts and other ideas will be field-tested as part of the implementation of the short-term steps over the next few years. According to White Paper 6, in the short-term, the

establishment of district-based support teams will be field-tested in 30 nodal areas all over the country.

Mr D Hindle
Director-General

DEVELOPING DISTRICT-BASED SUPPORT TEAMS: GUIDELINES FOR PRACTICE

… the key to reducing barriers to learning within all education and training lies in a strengthened education support service.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. What are the guidelines about?

The Department of Education's White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System, 2001, commits itself to establishing district-based support teams as a central part of the overall strengthening of education support services in South Africa.

The guidelines for *district-based support teams* refer to integrated professional support services at district level. Support providers employed by the Department of Education will draw on the expertise from local education institutions and various community resources. Their key function is to assist education institutions (including early childhood centres, schools, further education colleges, and adult learning centres) to identify and address barriers to learning and promote effective teaching and learning. This includes both classroom and organisational support, providing specialised learner and educator support, as well as curricular and institutional development (including management and governance), and administrative support.

The way in which particular provinces and districts use and further develop these guidelines depends on identified local needs and available resources. The support system needs to be flexible and responsive to specific needs. So, while there is a clear vision of the 'ideal' we are trying to achieve in the development of district-based support teams, these guidelines do *not* provide a blueprint or model for practice.

It should be noted that the education support system in South Africa includes the following levels and functions:

Level	Key Support Functions
Department of Education	Providing national policy and a broad management framework for support
Provincial departments of education in the nine provinces	Coordinating implementation of national framework of support, in relation to provincial needs
District-based support teams (including special/resource schools) (Developed within smaller geographical areas, determined in different ways in the nine provinces)	Providing integrated support to education institutions (Early Childhood Development, schools, colleges and adult learning centres) to support the development of effective teaching and learning
Institution-level support teams (local teams in schools, colleges, early childhood and adult learning centres)	Identifying and addressing barriers to learning in the local context – thereby promoting effective teaching and learning

1.2. Who are the guidelines for?

These guidelines are relevant to everyone involved in *providing* support to schools, colleges, early childhood and adult learning centres.

The primary targets for these guidelines are:

- *Specialist/professional education officials* working in *district support structures*. These include:
  - (a) psychologists, specialised and general counsellors, therapists and other health and welfare workers employed by the department of education, and various learning support personnel, e.g. 'remedial' teachers and facilitators, language and communication teachers, and 'special needs' teachers;
  - (b) department officials providing administrative, curricular and institutional development support at district levels.
- Specialist support providers and teachers in *special schools*;
- Members of the *school/education institution community* itself, including:

(a) educators and other members of staff;

(b) the learners themselves, who can provide 'peer-support' to one another.

The secondary targets for these guidelines are:

- Specialists/professionals from *other government departments* involved in supporting schools and other education institutions, e.g. health workers and social workers;
- *Community* organisations and role players, including:
  (a) parents, grandparents and other care-givers of learners at ECD centres and schools;
  (b) community organisations, e.g. non-governmental (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) directly and indirectly linked to education;
  (c) individuals within the community who have contributions to make on particular issues and challenges.

In addition, the guidelines are also relevant to those *receiving* support such as schools, colleges, early-childhood and adult-learning centres, their governing bodies and institution-level support teams in particular. It is important that they understand what kind of support is available to develop their own capacity.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. Why do schools and other education institutions need support?

The ultimate goal for educators, schools and other education institutions, and for those who support them, is the development of learners. This is dependent on effective teaching, which, in turn, relies on the development of effective curricular and supportive teaching and learning environments. Educators and their institutions need constantly to learn and grow, and must have ongoing support to achieve this. Therefore, the Department of Education's function is to provide the necessary infra-structural and human resource support for success. The district-based support team is a primary channel through which this should be provided.

2.2. What support already exists at 'district' level?

In some districts, there has been no meaningful support for some time moment. This is particularly true in rural and historically disadvantaged areas. Where there is support, however, this usually includes some, or all, of the following:

Various forms of *classroom-based support*, such as:

- direct learning support to learners with 'special education needs';
- training and ongoing support of educators to respond to learners' needs;
- curriculum development to ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are responsive to different needs;
- provision of teaching and learning materials and equipment to facilitate learning for all learners.

Organisational support, such as:

- staff development for educators and non-educator staff;
- training and support for parents, so that they are able to participate in governance structures and support their children;
- training and ongoing support for governance, management and leadership structures;
- organisational development support for institutions, e.g. assisting them in vision building, policy formulation and implementation, and providing conflict management between various members of the school community, etc.

Administrative support, such as:

- training in and support for financial management, in particular, in relation to taking over financial responsibilities outlined in the South African Schools Act;
- information technology support;
- administrative training;
- personnel management training and support.

Addressing *social/contextual factors*, such as:

- various psychological, social and physical health interventions to address particular problems, or to promote the health of members of the school/education institutional community.

District support is currently provided through different kinds of departmental structures in the nine provinces: for example, through some form of district centre that integrates the various kinds of support listed above. In other instances, it is provided through separate structures in the Department of Education, which either work together or do not. For example, some of the support is being provided by 'school clinics/support centres', other aspects by the Department's head office officials, or by 'circuit managers' or by specialised 'subject advisors'.

It is obvious then, that even if support is available, it is often fragmented and uncoordinated. To unite it into cohesive practice which works is the challenge. Often different support providers do not work as a team around common issues. One example of this would be the way in which human resource development or training is being provided at the moment. These training programmes are often not developed in an integrated way, so that educators and others, who are targets of these programmes, are overwhelmed and over-loaded (having to attend many workshops). But the main problem is that the training does not provide them with an understanding of how the different areas of training connect around the core purpose of education: teaching and learning.

2.3. Why do we need these guidelines?

These national guidelines provide a practical framework and some strategies to assist in the establishment and strengthening of district-based support teams. They focus particularly on how the historically fragmented support provided to schools, colleges, early childhood and adult learning centres can be better coordinated so that a more holistic and integrated approach to support can be realised. This includes developing a framework of 'collaboration', or teamwork, where the different support providers plan and work together to address local needs and challenges in a comprehensive way.

3. SUMMARY OF POLICY FRAMEWORK

3.1. What does the Department of Education's White Paper 6 on Building an Inclusive Education and Training System say?

In a 'nutshell', the Department of Education's policy on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System includes the following key points:

Vision:

Within the context of the principles of the Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) and the overall policies and legislation in education in South Africa that have been developed since the first, over-arching White Paper on Education (1995), the Department of Education has committed itself to the following vision:

> "Our vision is of a South Africa in which all our people have access to lifelong education and training opportunities, which will in turn contribute towards improving the quality of life and building a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society."

Flowing from this, White Paper 6 reflects a commitment to the development of an

> "education and training system which will promote education for all and foster the development of inclusive and supportive centres of learning that would enable all learners to participate actively in the education process so that they could develop and extend their potential and participate as equal members of society."(p5)

***Principles*:**

The principles of this policy are framed by the Constitution of South Africa with a particular focus on the following:

- human rights and social justice for all learners;
- optimal participation and social integration of all learners;
- equal access for all learners to a single, inclusive education system;

- access of all learners to the curriculum so they can engage meaningfully with the teaching and learning process;
- equity and redress of past inequalities;
- sensitivity to and involvement of the community;
- cost-effectiveness of services provided.

Short-, Medium- and Long-Term Goals:

In the short- and medium-term, the focus is on:

- addressing weaknesses in the current system;
- gradually expanding access to and provision of education for all;
- building the capacity and competencies of those providing education and other support services;
- monitoring and evaluating these developments within the whole system.

The long-term goal of this policy is the development of an inclusive education and training system that will uncover and address barriers to learning, and recognise and accommodate the diverse range of learning needs. It is part of a 20-year programme to build an open, lifelong and high-quality education and training system for the 21st century.

Key strategies are:

- Revising existing policies and legislation for all levels of education;
- Expanding access to and provision of education to all learners, mainly through mobilising out-of-school learners, and developing 'full-service' or `inclusive' schools and other institutions;
- Strengthening education support services, with an emphasis on district-based support services (including special schools), and institutional-level support teams;
- Conducting national advocacy and information campaigns and orientating 'mainstream' schools and education institutions to inclusive education;
- Focusing on curriculum development and assessment, institutional development, and quality improvement and assurance;
- Providing human-resource development for educators in the 'mainstream' and 'special' schools;

- Developing early identification and intervention programmes in the Foundation Phase of schooling;
- Identifying and responding to the incidence and impact of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases;
- Developing a revised funding strategy to facilitate all of the above.

What is 'Inclusive Education'?

Inclusive education is about:

- recognising and respecting the differences among all learners and building on the similarities;
- supporting all learners, educators and the system as a whole so that the full range of learning needs can be met . Here the focus should be the development of appropriate teaching strategies that are informed by the diverse learning needs of the learners, and that will be of benefit to all learners and educators;
- focusing on overcoming barriers to learning in the system. Here the focus should be those structures and processes at all levels of the system that prevent learners from achieving success.

What do we mean by 'barriers to learning'?

Barriers to learning are those factors which hinder teaching and learning. These can and do occur at all levels of the system and include:

- Factors relating to specific *individuals*. In the education system this refers specifically to *learners* (e.g. relating to specific learning needs and styles) and *educators* (e.g. personal factors as well as teaching approaches and attitudes);
- Various aspects of the *curriculum*, such as: content, language or medium of instruction, organisation and management in the classroom, methods and processes used in teaching, the pace of teaching and time available, learning materials and equipment, and assessment procedures;
- The physical and psychosocial *environment* within which teaching and learning occurs. This includes buildings as well as management styles;
- Dynamics and conditions relating to the learner's *home environment*, including issues such as family dynamics, cultural and socio-economic background, socio-economic status, and so on;

- Community and *social dynamics*, which either support or hinder the teaching and learning process.

3.2. What are the key practical challenges relating to the building of district-based support teams emerging from this policy?

White Paper 6 has the following to say about the development of district-based support teams:

The Department of Education commits itself to:

> "The establishment of district-based support teams to provide a coordinated professional support service that draws on expertise in further and higher education and local communities, targeting special schools and specialised settings, designated full-service and other primary schools and educational institutions, beginning with the 30 districts that are part of the national district development programme." (p8)
>
> "The Ministry believes that the key to reducing barriers to learning within all education and training lies in a strengthened education support service. This strengthened education support service will have, at its centre, new district-based support teams that will comprise staff from provincial, district, regional and head offices and from special schools. The primary function of these district-based support teams will be to evaluate programmes, diagnose their effectiveness and suggest modifications. Through supporting teaching, learning and management, they will build the capacity of schools, early childhood and adult basic education and training centres, colleges and higher education institutions to recognise and address severe learning difficulties and to accommodate a range of learning needs." (p28/29)
>
> "Education support personnel within district support services will be orientated to and trained in their new roles of providing support to all teachers and other educators. Training will focus on supporting all learners, educators and the system as a whole so that the full range of learning needs can be met. The focus will be on teaching and learning factors, and emphasis will be placed on the development of good teaching strategies that will be of

benefit to 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." (p19)

The key challenges for the development of district-based support teams include:

- establishing new district-based support teams where they do not currently exist;
- developing and strengthening existing district-based support teams;
- integrating the special schools/resource centres into these teams, and drawing the growing expertise from the full-service institutions into the support provision network;
- creating a pool of resource people to serve local sites of learning;
- drawing on a broad range of 'community resources' to provide the support needed;
- developing and supporting institutional-level support teams, schools and other learning sites;
- developing the capacity of members of district and institutional-level support teams as well as the special/resource schools to identify barriers to learning, and to develop and evaluate strategies to address these challenges. This includes moving away from a way of seeing and responding to problems that focus on the learner only, towards one that tries to understand and respond to problems from a broader 'systems' view. This acknowledges that problems and solutions can be located at different points in a system (refer Section 5.4 for more details about problem-solving within this approach);
- developing the capacity of all support service providers to provide a holistic and comprehensive support service, including the ability to 'work together' in coordinated and collaborative ways. This involves moving from a currently fragmented, un-coordinated approach to an integrated one that brings together the different role players to understand and address barriers to learning.

3.3. How does this policy link to other policies in education?

White Paper 6 is framed by the Constitution of South Africa, and supports and expands on all other education policies developed in the last few years in this country. It fits in with various approaches to school management and curriculum development being promoted at the moment. In particular, it fits in with the move towards a 'school-based management' approach outlined in the South African Schools Act, where the capacity of schools and other education institutions are developed so that they can take responsibility for managing themselves and responding to local needs. It also fits in with the outcomes-based education curriculum, which, if implemented well, supports the idea of responding to the diverse needs of the learner population in flexible ways.

In addition to policies and legislation within South Africa, the policy on inclusive education reflects and supports international movements and conventions. In particular, it draws from the Salamanca Statement (1994), which reflects an international commitment towards inclusive education, and the International Convention on the Rights of the Child.

4. COMPOSITION OF DISTRICT-BASED SUPPORT TEAMS

4.1. What are the key principles that should guide the composition of district-based support teams?

- The composition of the teams will be affected and influenced by local needs and resources. This requires a *flexible approach;*
- Issues of *equity and redress* do, however, have to be kept in mind so that all learners and institutions have access to support. This requires an approach that recognises differences relating to past disadvantage as well as current socio-economic conditions;
- The principle of flexibility should include a focus on the *competencies* needed to address particular needs. This is in contrast to an approach that focuses on qualifications and particular professional categories. For example, the 'support' need may be 'counselling'. A number of different professional and even non-professional categories could fulfil this role;

- The Department's commitment to developing a *community-based* approach to education support means that the natural support systems inside and outside of schools and other education institutions need to be identified and included in the provision of support;
- There is an important role to be played by *professional specialists*, e.g. learning support facilitators or psychologists in these district-based support teams. In this regard, the Department has committed itself to the development of a *'pool'* of district resource personnel, drawing from various levels of 'head-office' and the special schools. The utilisation of this 'pool' will be determined by local *needs* as explained in the following extract from the White Paper.

  "Particular attention will be given to optimising the expertise of specialist support personnel, such as therapists, psychologists, remedial educators and health professionals. … A pool of posts for the district-based support teams and special schools/resource centres to provide support to schools will be created … These posts, together with those traditionally allocated to provincial education support services, will thus form a pool of specialists with appropriate expertise and experience. Posts will therefore be utilised for the deployment of resource persons that can 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."(p41)

4.2. Who are the *core* education support service providers at district level?

The core support providers at district level include:

- Specialist learner and educator support personnel currently employed in the Department of Education at district, regional or provincial level. These include: psychologists, therapists, remedial/learning support teachers, special needs specialists (e.g. relating to specific disabilities), and other health and welfare professionals employed by the Department of Education;

- Curriculum specialists who provide general and specific curriculum support to educators and education institutions;
- Institutional/management development specialists who provide support to education institutions;
- Administrative experts who provide administrative and financial management support;
- Specialist support personnel and teachers from existing special schools.

Within each district, the designated district director should act as *leader* of the support team, with major responsibility for providing leadership and management to it, focusing on coordination and collaboration to ensure holistic and integrated support provision.

4.3. Which education institutions should be involved in providing support at this level?

The district officials outlined above, could draw on the expertise of educators and support personnel from:

- Special schools/resource centres;
- Full-service/inclusive schools developed in the short- and medium-term period. These are the schools that the Department will focus on in the short- and medium-term, developing their capacity to provide a well-supported inclusive environment;
- Higher education institutions;
- All other education institutions.

These human and other resources can be identified and accessed through a process of 'community resource profiling' or 'asset-auditing', which is explained in section 7.1.7 in these guidelines.

Developing 'clusters' of schools and other education institutions to support each other, particularly through sharing their different skills and knowledge, is a very effective strategy for providing 'peer-support' and can proof to be cost-effective and 'empowering'.

4.4. What other government officials should be incorporated in these teams?

This is dependent on particular needs and availability of resources in local contexts.

Government departments that are likely to be centrally involved include:

- Department of Health
- Department of Social Development (Welfare)
- Office of the Status of Disabled Persons(Presidency)
- Department of Justice
- Department of Correctional Services
- Department of Safety and Security
- Department of Transport
- Department of Sport and Recreation
- Department of Labour
- Department of Public Works
- Department of Agriculture
- Local government structures

Other departments not mentioned above would be involved on an *ad-hoc* basis, on the basis of particular needs.

4.5. Which community role players should be involved?

This is also dependent on particular needs and local resources available.

Community resources that could be centrally involved include:

- Members of the school/education institution itself, e.g. members of the governing body, educators and other staff, and learners, providing support to one another;
- Parents, grandparents and other care-givers;
- Non-government education organisations;
- Other relevant NGOs;

- Community-Based Organisations;
- Disabled Peoples' Organisations;
- Faith-Based Organisations;
- Traditional leaders;
- Traditional/indigenous healers;
- Other natural support systems and people.

These resources could also be identified through the 'community-resource profiling' or 'asset-audit of community resources' process explained in section 7.1.7 in these guidelines.

4.6. How should district-based support teams be structured?

District-based support teams need to be brought together in some way to facilitate a more coordinated and team approach to providing support to schools and other education institutions. There are different ways in which this could happen. Provincial departments of education have the responsibility of identifying and establishing these structures based on their particular local needs. An organising principle that should be used when making decisions about this whould be to ensure that the education institutions have relatively easy access to the support they need. Geographical and other factors will play a role in determining this.

5. FUNCTIONS AND ROLES OF DISTRICT-BASED SUPPORT TEAMS

5.1. What does the new policy say about the core purpose and key functions of these teams?

White Paper 6 says that the key purpose and functions of the district-based support teams are:

> "To support all learners, educators and the system as a whole so that the full range of learning needs can be met. The focus will be on teaching and learning factors, and emphasis will be placed on the development of good teaching

strategies that will be of benefit to 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." (p19)

"To assist educators in institutions in creating greater flexibility in their teaching methods and the assessment of learning. They will also provide illustrative learning programmes, learning support materials and assessment instruments." (p20)

"To evaluate programmes, diagnose their effectiveness and suggest modifications. Through supporting teaching, learning and management, they will build the capacity of schools, early childhood and adult basic education and training centres, colleges and higher education institutions to recognise and address severe learning difficulties and to accommodate a range of learning needs." (p29)

"To 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." (p41)

5.2. In summary, what are the core functions of these teams?

The core purpose of these teams is to foster the development of effective teaching and learning, primarily through identifying and addressing barriers to learning at all levels of the system. Key functions that support this purpose include:

- The *primary* focus for district-based support teams is the development and ongoing *support of local institutional-level support teams* in schools, colleges, early childhood and adult learning centres. In this regard, the key focus areas of these teams are:
  - supporting the *capacity building* of schools/education institutions;
  - identifying and prioritising learning needs and barriers to learning in their local contexts; and
  - identifying the support needed to address these challenges, and pursuing these within a strategic planning and management framework;

- ongoing monitoring and evaluation of all of the above.

(Section 6 below outlines some of the challenges relating to this function.)

- A *second* key focus of these teams is to *link* these institutions with formal and informal support systems in the surrounding community so that these needs and barriers can be addressed. (Section 7 below outlines some of the challenges relating to this function.)
- The main focus for district-based support teams would be to provide *indirect* support to learners through supporting educators and school management, with a particular focus on curriculum and institutional development, to ensure that the teaching and learning framework and environment is responsive to the full range of learning needs. This indirect support role is often referred to as 'consultancy'. A secondary focus would be to provide *direct* learning support to learners where necessary and possible, where institutional-level support teams are unable to respond to particular learning needs. (Refer to Section 2.2 in this booklet for a list of possible support interventions at classroom, organisational, administrative, and social levels).

5.3. What does this mean for the *roles* and *competencies* of the district-based support team?

Members of the district-based support team will play different roles and have different competencies, although some competencies will be common to all concerned. Their specific roles will be determined by the needs and tasks at hand, as well as the particular competencies available.

District teams are likely to include the following roles and therefore require competencies in the following areas:

- Assessors of needs and barriers to learning at individual (learner and educator), organisational, and broader system levels; (see Section 5.4)
- Researchers/evaluators: to identify resources in and outside of the schools and other education institutions, and to monitor and evaluate programmes in and outside of specific institutions. This monitoring and evaluation should include

ongoing ‘action-reflection’ within the district-based support teams themselves, so that the provision of support can be progressively improved;

- General learning support facilitators, to identify particular learning needs and develop responsive learning programmes;
- Specialist learning support facilitators, to provide expertise on particular ‘special needs’ (e.g. Braille or Sign Language support);
- Materials developers, providing material that is responsive to particular learning needs;
- Health and welfare workers to address particular psychological, social and physical health problems, and to develop general health promotion programmes;
- Counsellors for learners, educators, and parents (this includes stress management);
- Trainers of educators and parents to develop their capacity to provide support to learners;
- Team effectiveness and conflict management trainers and facilitators;
- Curriculum specialists and developers, with general and specific curriculum competencies, including being able to develop adaptations of learning programmes to meet particular needs, and being able to advise on the process of mediation of learning;
- Organisation development experts to assist schools and other education institutions to develop supportive and effective teaching and learning environments;
- Leadership, management and governance experts to assist governing bodies, management teams and individuals to provide this important role in schools and other institutions;
- Financial management experts to build each institution’s capacity to take responsibility for its own finances.

5.4. What are the key challenges relating to identification and *assessment* of needs and barriers to learning?

It is clear that, for the district-based support teams and the institution-level support teams, the key function is to identify and address barriers to learning for the purposes of supporting the development of effective teaching and learning. This process of 'identifying and addressing' barriers to learning includes a process of *assessment*, which is basically a process of *uncovering* the needs and problems so that appropriate strategies to address these can be developed.

This section will briefly highlight the key challenges relating to understanding and responding to the needs of learners, parents/care-givers, educators, education institutions and the broader system that frames the teaching and learning process. These guidelines aim to provide a *broad framework* for identifying and addressing barriers to learning. Detailed guidelines and instruments for the assessment of learning needs and barriers to learning still need to be developed at national level. Theses include the development of instruments and procedures to guide management and resource-provisioning decisions on matters such as identifying support needs (including so-called' high needs') for the purposes of post-provisioning and the general financing of support, and making decisions regarding where and how learners should receive their education. This task is important given that current assessment practices are considered to be problematic and in need of review (White Paper 6).

Before looking at some of these key challenges, key principles relating to assessment, the purpose and types of assessment will be briefly outlined.

5.4.1 Principles of assessment:

Effective assessment needs to be guided by the following principles:

- Educators, parents and learners need to be centrally involved in the process;
- Assessment procedures need to be guided by the principle of respect for all concerned;
- The purpose should be clear and open;
- It needs to be appropriate and relevant to the person or institution concerned;
- It must be fair, bias-free, and sensitive to gender, race, cultural background and abilities;

- It needs to identify barriers to learning, with the purpose of improving the teaching and learning process;
- It needs to be continuous and built into the teaching and learning process;
- It needs to be multi-dimensional or systemic in nature, located within the framework of barriers at the individual (learner and educator), curriculum, institution, and family, community and social contextual levels (refer below for more details about a systemic approach);
- The different levels of the system that are involved in the assessment process (e.g. education-level support teams and district-based support teams) need to work closely together;
- It must be manageable and time-efficient;
- It needs to be varied, including a mixture of forms and drawing from diverse perspectives;
- Assessment results must be clearly, accurately and documented and communicated to those affected as soon as possible.

5.4.2 Purpose of assessment:

The core purpose of all assessment within education is to promote effective teaching and learning. Within this context, however, assessment can be used for different purposes, including

- contributing towards the development of profiles of learners, educators and institutions, which can then be used for the following purposes;
- determining learning needs and whether learning is successfully occurring;
- identifying barriers to learning, and pointing to where and how these barriers could be addressed. This could include various interventions at any level of the 'system': an intervention with the learner or educator; transformation of some aspect of the curriculum; development of the institutional environment; or addressing particular family, community or social factors;
- contributing to strategic management planning and decision-making within the Department of Education, including identifying support needs for the purposes of post-provisioning and general resourcing; and informing where and how learners can obtain the most appropriate learning programmes.

5.4.3 Types of assessment:

The following types of assessment have been identified and are relevant here:

- *formative* assessment, where the strengths and weaknesses of the learner, educator, curriculum, or institution are identified and areas for action for improvement are identified and followed;
- *diagnostic* assessment, where barriers to learning, including learning difficulties experienced, are identified, and programmes of action to address these developed;
- *evaluative* assessment, where information about achievements is collected and reported on.

These three types are often interchangeably used, in line with the principle of providing varied forms of assessment, with the primary purpose being the promotion of effective teaching and learning.

5.4.4 Who assesses?

Who should be identifying and addressing these barriers to learning? White Paper 6 clearly indicates that:

- Educators need to play a central role in this process;
- Learners need to be involved in self- and peer-assessment;
- Parents of learners also need to be part of this process;
- Institution-level support teams need to support educators and parents in this process by providing an opportunity for regular, collaborative problem-solving around areas of concern, and facilitating the provision of support where it is needed;
- District-based support teams need to work very closely with institution-level support teams. Their function in this regard includes:
    - (a) assisting institution-level support teams to develop their capacity to problem-solve in the way described above;
    - (b) providing expert advice and services (e.g. medical or psychological testing, or particular therapy interventions) where needed;
    - (c) helping institutions to link their needs with local resources that can address these needs.

5.4.5 Problem-solving process as a framework for assessment:

The process of identifying and addressing barriers to learning needs to be placed within a basic *problem-solving process* where the following steps are pursued:

1. Acknowledging and identifying that there is a need or problem (which usually reveals itself in some form of learner behaviour or outcome).
2. Building an understanding of the need or problem. This requires trying to understand what the underlying issue is, not just what is initially presented as the problem. This involves analysing the issue at all levels: learner, educator, curriculum, institution, and family/community/social levels.
3. Identifying what kind of intervention or form of support is needed to address the problem (which may need to be addressed in more than one way).
4. Identifying who could provide this support (considering all the resources inside and outside of the education institution).
5. Providing the support required.
6. Evaluating whether or not the support was successful.

The evaluation of the success of the problem-solving may initiate a new cycle of problem-solving!

It should be noted that while problems or weaknesses are often the starting point for addressing barriers to learning, there is a need to also develop *preventative* programmes. These include:

- Identifying the positive factors that need to be in place to support learning and teaching, and developing these. This includes recognising and building on the existing strengths of learners and educators, and developing a supportive and effective teaching and learning environment. This is the most radical level of prevention;
- Identifying where learners or educators are 'at risk', and providing support to prevent them from developing serious problems. This includes the important area of 'early identification and intervention' that is highlighted as a priority in White Paper 6. This refers to the task of identifying and intervening in a

problem in the early stages of its development to avoid it developing into a serious 'disability'. This includes 'screening', wherein diagnostic instruments are used to pick up problems at their early stages of development so that more serious ones can be avoided;

- Providing programmes that focus on social inclusion for learners and educators (e.g. people with disabilities or educators and learners who have already contracted a terminal illness such as HIV/AIDS) and ensuring that difficulties experienced because of their status are minimized. This level of prevention is often referred to as 'rehabilitation'.

5.4.6 Developing a systemic view of problems and solutions:

It is important to note that the way we look at problems and solutions (the particular 'spectacles' we put on) makes a great deal of difference to how we eventually act. These guidelines emphasise the need to understand and respond to barriers to learning in a *systemic* way. This means that, when trying to 'uncover' the problem, we need to consider the following aspects:

- What in the *learner* her/himself is contributing to the problem? (For example, s/he may not be able to hear properly.)
- Is the *teacher* contributing to the problem in any way? (This includes considering how the teacher manages the class, how teaching and learning happens in the classroom, and so on.)
- Are other aspects of the *curriculum* impacting on the problem? (For example, are the learning materials accessible to all learners, or, are the assessment procedures sensitive to the different needs of learners in the class?)
- How does the *school/institutional* physical and interpersonal environment affect the problem? (For example, factors such as interpersonal conflict in an institution, mis-management, a lack of adequate materials or equipment, or inaccessible buildings and classrooms for learners with disabilities may indirectly be acting as barriers to the teaching and learning process.)
- How does the *home environment* influence the teaching and learning process? (This includes consideration of family dynamics, home-language, socio-economic class, cultural background, and economic conditions of the family, including employment or unemployment status.)

- Are there broader *community and social factors* that are acting as barriers to the learning process? (This includes the number of social challenges facing schools and other education institutions at the moment, including poverty, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, various forms of violence, substance abuse, and so on.)

It should be noted that the framework provided above is a way of *categorizing barriers to learning*. This framework could be used as a basis for developing profiling and other diagnostic forms of assessment, to ensure that all aspects of the system are considered in understanding of and responding to challenges.

Once one has identified *where* the problem lies, strategies that address each aspect of the problem can be developed, and the people with the relevant skills and knowledge can be brought in to address the challenge.

5.4.7 The why, what, how, who and where of assessment procedures:

When considering the practical questions of why, what, how, who and where of assessment procedures, the following guidelines might be useful.

First, it should be noted that the following table highlights a process of assessment that works progressively through cycles of problem solving. Generally, the process would start at level 1 and, if necessary, progress through to the other levels. The ultimate goal is that most, if not all, 'problem-solving' will occur successfully at the level of the school, college, early childhood, adult learning and higher education levels. Only when the educators or local institution-level support teams are not able to understand or respond to the challenges adequately, will the other levels of support be brought into the process.

Second, it should be noted that at all times, all aspects of the system (all categories of barriers identified above) need to be evaluated when trying to understand and respond to a particular challenge.

Third, the procedures described below focus primarily on two types of assessment:

- Curriculum-based assessment, which is integrated into the ongoing assessment procedures in the curriculum (level 1);

- Diagnostically-orientated assessment which consists of problem-solving processes which, in a cyclic way, attempt to deepen the understanding of the barriers to learning so that more effective programmes can be developed (level 1(b) – 4).

What?	***Why?***	***How?***	***By whom?***	***Where?***
CURRICULUM-BASED ASSESSMENT				
1(a)Curriculum-based assessment	To identify specific learning needs for the purposes of promoting effective teaching. To document progress and identify success of teaching and learning.	Continuous assessment within OBE curriculum	Teachers	Learning site
1(b)Informal and broad-based formal diagnostic assessment (screening)	To identify barriers to learning for the purposes of developing strategies to address these; and for early identification purposes	Learner profiles and profiles of other aspects of the system Action research in the classroom Screening procedures and instruments	Teachers; Parents; Learners; DBST members supporting screening processes and providing other preventative interventions if necessary	Learning site

DIAGNOSTICALLY-ORIENTATED ASSESSMENT				
2. Deepened problem-solving diagnostic assessment	To deepen understanding of the barriers to learning to ensure that a comprehensive picture of the issue is developed – for the purposes of more effective action to address this	Collective problem-solving amongst members of learning community – considering all aspects of the system	Institution-level support team (including parents)	Institution-level support team at learning site
3(a) Diagnostic assessment around specialised areas	To gain more specialised insight into the challenge – for the purposes of more effective action to address this	Advice from specialists from the extended district-based support team (including 'community' expertise if necessary)	Institution-level support team in consultation with relevant district-based support team members (including special /resource schools)	Institution-level support team at learning site OR District-based support team Centre/ Structure
3(b) Diagnostic assessment around specialised areas	To gain more specialised insight into the challenge – for the purposes of devising strategies to address barriers to learning. To inform strategic management decisions regarding issues such as post-	Specialist interventions, including relevant tests and procedures by relevant members of the district-based support team – including analysis of all aspects of the system	Relevant district-based support team specialist (including special/ resource schools)	District-based support team

	provisioning and resourcing; and placement of learners in appropriate programmes			
4. More specialised diagnostic assessment	To address high level needs and challenges	Specialist interventions	Professionals outside of the education support system	Other systems outside of education support system

It should be noted once again that the purpose of all of these activities is to identify and address barriers to learning for the purposes of promoting effective teaching and learning.

5.4.8 The central role of educators within this process:

A final note about the role of educators in this process: If educators are the central actors in this process of identifying and addressing barriers to learning, they need:

- Training on what the barriers to learning are, and how to identify them (through, for example, developing 'learner-profiles' that document, on a regular basis, the development of the learner). This includes highlighting the need to move away from 'labelling' learners in unhelpful ways;
- Strategies and instruments to assist the educator to identify needs and barriers to learning (for example, through checklists);
- Training and ongoing support on how to address specific needs and barriers in the classroom and institution;
- Access to and ongoing support from the institution-level support teams to assist in their problem-solving processes.

5.5. What are the 'capacity building' challenges for education support providers at district level?

Education support service providers also need support! While there are some general insights, knowledge and skills required by all members of district-based support

teams, specific training and support needs have to be identified in each local context. Provision of this training and support could be provided by:

- Education officials at regional, provincial and national levels who have appropriate knowledge and expertise;
- Support providers and educators in district support structures, schools and other education institutions who have relevant knowledge and skills to share through a `peer support' approach;
- Higher education institutions that offer relevant programmes in the areas concerned (in particular, those programmes that provide pre- and in-service (continuing education) programmes for support service providers);
- NGOs and other community resources with particular expertise to offer;
- Relevant consultants and technical advisors;
- Human resource directorates in the Department of Education need to be centrally involved in these activities.

In addition to training related to particular areas of expertise (e.g.therapy), some generic or core training needs that are likely to be appropriate to all members of the team include:

- Understanding and working with the process of change;
- Understanding the challenges of providing support;
- Knowing what support is available within education and other government departments, and within local communities;
- Understanding the concept of inclusive education, including the attitude changes that this requires;
- Understanding what the barriers to learning and development are, within a systemic understanding of problems and solutions;
- Developing knowledge and skills to address barriers to learning at the level of the learner, the educator, and the institution;
- Adult education skills to pursue various training roles required at this level;
- Networking skills and learning to 'work together' through team effectiveness training and ongoing support;
- Basic management and leadership development, including project management skills.

An *action-reflection* approach to the development of the district-based support teams is important to ensure continuous development of the attitudes, skills and knowledge needed to provide effective support services. This means that teams commit themselves to thinking about how they operate and how they can improve.

6. DEVELOPING INSTITUTIONAL-LEVEL SUPPORT TEAMS

6.1. What is an institutional-level support team?

An institutional-level support team is an `internal' support team within institutions such as early childhood centres, schools, colleges, adult learning centres and higher education institutions. In each institution, this team will ultimately be responsible for liasing with the district-based support team and other relevant support providers about identifying and meeting their own institution's needs. For this reason, institutional-level support teams should be made up of educators and staff from each individual institution.

6.2. What does the policy say about institutional-level support teams?

White Paper 6 says:

"At the institutional level in general, further and higher education, we will require institutions to establish institutional-level teams. The primary function of these teams will be to put in place properly coordinated learner and educator support services. These services will support the learning and teaching process by identifying and addressing learner, educator and institutional needs. Where appropriate, these teams should be strengthened by expertise from the local community, district-based support teams and higher education institutions. District-based support teams will provide the full range of education support services, such as professional development in curriculum and assessment, to these institutional-level support teams."(p29)

6.3. What are the core functions of these teams?

The core purpose of these teams is to support the teaching and learning process. Key functions include:

- Coordinating all learner, educator, curriculum and institution development support in the institution. This includes linking this support team to other school-based management structures and processes, or even integrating them for better coordination of activities and to avoid duplication;
- Collectively identifying institutional needs and, in particular, barriers to learning at learner, educator, curriculum and institutional levels;
- Collectively developing strategies to address these needs and barriers to learning. This should include major focuses on educator development, parent consultation and support;
- Drawing in the resources needed, from within and outside of the institution, to address these challenges;
- Monitoring and evaluating the work of the team within an 'action-reflection' framework.

The above functions can best be met through the development of a problem-solving process that brings together the various team members around specific needs and challenges (refer Section 5.4 above).

6.4. Who are the members of these teams?

The White Paper does not say specifically who should be members of these teams, but the Report of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCSNET/NCESS, Department of Education, 1997) does give some direction in this regard. This is outlined briefly below.

As with the district-based support teams, institution-level teams should include members of the school/institution community who can best fulfil the functions of the

teams as outlined above. Particular local needs and conditions will also play a role in determining who best can serve on these teams.

The functions of the institution-level support team should provide the basis for determining who should be members. It is suggested, however, that the following people make up the *core* members of this team:

- educators with specialised skills and knowledge in areas such as learning support, life skills/guidance, or counselling;
- educators from the school/institution: these could be teachers who volunteer because of their interest, or who represent various levels of the programme e.g. Foundation Phase, etc., or who represent various learning areas, e.g. language and communication;
- educators who are involved directly in the management of the school/institution: this could be the principal, a deputy-principal or another member of the management team;
- educators on the staff who have particular expertise to offer around a specific need or challenge;
- non-educators from the institution including administrative/ care-taking staff;
- learner representatives at senior, further education or higher education levels. This is an important addition to the team if it wishes to strengthen 'peer-support'.

In addition to the above core team who would meet on a regular basis to 'problem-solve' particular concerns and challenges in the institution, the following additional people could be brought into some of the team's meetings and processes to assist with particular challenges:

- parents/caregivers at early childhood centre or school-levels: the inclusion of interested and specifically skilled parents would strengthen the team;
- specific members of the district-based support team, including special/resource schools;
- members of the local community who have a particular contribution to make to specific challenges;

- educators from other education institutions, particularly from full-service schools and those that may be in a 'cluster' relationship with the school/institution concerned.

A key challenge of this institution-level support team, as with the district-based support teams, is to provide a holistic and integrated support service to the school, college, early childhood or adult learning centre concerned.

6.5. How can district-based support teams support institutional-level support teams?

The following specific interventions from the district-based support team could be pursued:

- Where there are no existing institutional-level support teams, the district team could assist institutions to set them up;
- In the early stages of developing institutional-level teams, the participation of a district support member in regular meetings at the institution will assist in building the institution's capacity to identify and address its own needs and challenges;
- Where institutional teams already exist, but are struggling to function, the district team could assist them;
- District-based support teams could inform institutional-level teams about what expertise is available in the district support structures, and how to obtain assistance when they need it;
- District teams could assist institutions to form 'clusters' with other neighbouring institutions, for the purposes of providing 'peer-support';
- District teams should also assist these teams to identify and use local community support networks for the purposes of improving teaching and learning processes;
- The district-based support team needs to ensure that it provides well-coordinated and collaborative support to the institution (see Section 7).

7. WORKING TOGETHER: THE CHALLENGE OF INTER-SECTORAL COLLABORATION

7.1. How can support providers and recipients *work together* (collaborate) as partners and as teams?

7.1.1 Why should we collaborate?

Collaboration refers to the challenge of working together, as a team. This is important for district-based support teams that aim to provide *holistic* and comprehensive help. A holistic approach, which acknowledges that all problems and development challenges are complex, requires bringing in different perspectives of the problem and the solution. This does not mean that members of the team should not have particular expertise but rather engage with the full range of expertise available to understand and solve the problems at hand. In practice this means that we need to talk and listen to one another; identify what we can and need to do together; and identify what each person needs to do to contribute to the whole.

This kind of 'working together' occurs naturally around particular issues. The challenge associated with the HIV/AIDS pandemic is a good example. A variety of perspectives and skills are necessary to address the massive challenge that this brings to us. For example, there is a need to involve, amongst others, learners and educators, parents/care-givers, counsellors and other health professionals, social workers, relevant community organisations, business, and community leaders, in addressing this challenge. We need each other. We cannot do it alone. This is what drives collaboration.

7.1.2 Who should collaborate?

At district level, this includes various combinations of the people identified under the section on 'composition of district-based support teams' in these guidelines (refer Section 4). The actual combination will always be determined by the particular needs concerned, and the specific resources available in a local context.

7.1.3 General challenges and strategies for team work

Below are some suggestions for what needs to be in place for intersectoral collaboration and teamwork to be effective:

Intersectoral collaboration works when teams:

- identify what is needed, who should be involved to address these needs, and who is available to respond to them;
- identify who should provide the 'lead' coordinator's role in the team, on the basis of whoever has the major responsibility;
- understand and pursue the political and bureaucratic processes that need to be followed to draw in the appropriate people;
- ensure that our institutions recognise and appreciate intersectoral work;
- ensure that the material resources, include
- ing budgets needed to pursue this work, are available and used to optimal effect;
- learn the 'language' of the different sectors and professions, and try to develop common understandings of the problems and challenges facing us;
- develop 'team skills' (see below) to assist us to work with others.

Effective teamwork includes:

- being sensitive to the needs of others in the group. This includes being aware that we all need 'to be needed' and valued, and that we all have fears that can interfere with our ability to make an optimal contribution;
- acknowledging and respecting the resources that others bring;
- respecting all members of the team as equal partners;
- respecting our own needs and resources, and sharing these resources when and where needed;
- being accountable to the team: doing our 'bit' to complete the 'whole'.

7.1.4 Building teams within education support structures

KEY CHALLENGES
1. Ensuring that all education officials at district level understand the challenges

involved in identifying and addressing barriers to learning and developing an inclusive education system. This includes being able to identify and solve problems and develop effective conflict management strategies.
2. Being able to identify who, in these structures, needs to be involved in what, and when. This includes recognising the need for an *integrated* approach to support provision, where the traditional 'psychological and special needs' services, including the special schools, work together with administrative, curriculum and institutional development support staff to provide a holistic and comprehensive support service.
3. Developing clear procedures and processes for including the human and other resources in the special schools into the 'pool' of district support.
4. Linking district support strategic plans to regional, provincial and national plans and priorities.
5. Learning to work well as a team.

7.1.5 Working with other government officials to provide support

KEY CHALLENGES
1. Developing a 'profile' of what government services are available in relation to particular needs in the district.
2. Developing official and non-formal relations with relevant personnel in these departments.
3. Developing a common understanding of the challenges facing the schools and other education institutions, including identifying specific barriers to learning.
4. Developing a 'common professional language' for the purposes of understanding and responding to particular challenges.
5. Developing particular task teams or working groups in response to particular needs and tasks.
6. Identifying the budgetary and other material resource implications of working together, and ensuring that the necessary infrastructural support is then in place to support this work.
7. Identifying who should take the 'lead' role and responsibility in the team and specific working groups.
8. Learning to work well as a team.

7.1.6 Working in partnership with the community to build effective schools

KEY CHALLENGES
1. *Believing* that community involvement in supporting schools is not only desirable, but essential to providing effective support. This includes respecting and valuing the expertise available in 'the community'. A partnership approach is only possible if this mutual respect is there.
2. Making an effort to 'speak a common language' to avoid excluding community members from participating fully in the process.
3. Having policies, procedures and practices in place in the Department of Education to support the inclusion of community resources.
4. Conducting a 'community resource profile' or 'asset-audit of community resources' (see below), to identify what resources are available, including non-traditional sites of natural support that exist in every community.
5. Consulting with and drawing in parents and other care-givers in the provision of support to the early childhood centres and schools.
6. Developing effective strategies for including these resources in the provision of well-coordinated support to schools/institutions.
7. Co-ordinating community support so that unnecessary overlap in support provision does not burden schools/institutions.
8. Providing training for community members where possible and appropriate, to facilitate their inclusion in the support process.
9. Identifying who should take 'lead' responsibility in the team's work.
10. Learning to work as a team with other sectors.

7.1.7 Some guidelines on developing a 'community resource profile' or conducting an 'asset-audit of community resources'

At various points in these guidelines, there has been reference to a 'profiling' or 'asset-auditing' process. This refers to a process that identifies all the resources inside and outside of the schools and other education institutions in a particular area, in relation to particular needs and challenges relating to addressing barriers to learning and development.

This is a process that needs to be developed, together with appropriate research instruments, in local contexts. Ideally, these could also eventually be utilised at national and provincial levels. What follows are a few guidelines on how to proceed with such a process:

- Needs analyses at institution and district levels must to be conducted so that the local needs and conditions are clear and provide direction for identifying resources;
- District and institution-level support teams then need to 'map' the resources available in the local community for which it is responsible. This includes identifying people, groupings, organisations, institutions, government and non-government services in that community. It should also include identifying scarce resources, such as special schools, outside of the local community, but 'close enough' to be able to provide specialised support;
- The above-mentioned district and institutional processes should feed into one another. District-based support teams can support institutions to conduct these analyses where necessary;
- 'Mapping' the available resources includes various forms of research activities, but this can be done in very creative ways. Research instruments that are locally sensitive should be developed to assist in this process;
- When identifying resources, we need to be sure that we do not overlook indigenous resources because we do tend to be very 'western' orientated in our approaches. This means including non-traditional support systems in the community. For example, whether we like it or not, shebeens or bars are often the places people go to for help! Or, another example would be grandparents … who, particularly now with the HIV/AIDS pandemic, are playing a major role in bringing up our children.

7.1.8 Working with schools and other education institutions

KEY CHALLENGES
1. Commitment to the development of a *community-based* support system that focuses on the development of capacity at institutional level, and emphases partnerships

between education institutions. This requires valuing the skills and knowledge that do already exist in our schools and other education institutions.
2. Identifying, through an 'asset-audit', the resources available in the different institutions. This could then be used as a basis for 'linking needs and resources' from district level, and could be made available to all education institutions so that they can make their own direct linkages.
3. Facilitating linkages through formal 'clusters' and 'partnerships' between different education institutions.
4. Assisting schools and other educational institutions to integrate the institutional-level support team structures and processes with other school/institution-based management structures and procedures.

7.2. How can and should the work of district-based support teams be effectively *coordinated* and managed?

7.2.1 Why do we need coordination in district support services?

Coordination is about ensuring that quality support services are provided in a well-managed, effective, efficient, and economical way.

A key purpose of ensuring good coordination is to avoid a situation where the different service providers act in fragmented ways, which often result in schools/education institutions being overwhelmed with uncoordinated services that do not seem to know 'their left hand from their right hand', or where they do not receive any services at all. These services need to 'fit together' in such a way that the schools/education institutions experience well-managed support for their work, and the service providers work within a clear, well organised plan of action.

7.2.2 What are the key coordination challenges?

KEY CHALLENGES
1. Understanding the 'whole picture' in terms of needs, resources available to meet those needs, and 'who is doing what' to address those needs.

2. Identifying priorities on the basis of a needs assessment. This is crucial given that we cannot respond to all needs.
3. Having a clear, commonly understood strategic plan, within which each role player understands her/his roles and responsibilities.
4. Being able to link district strategic plans to institutional plans and other levels of the system including regional, provincial and national levels.
5. Being able to identify both 'overlaps' and 'gaps' in support being provided, and being able to address these accordingly.
6. Ensuring that structural arrangements within schools and other educational institutions are rationalised to avoid the formation of too many overlapping committees.
7. Identifying who should take 'lead' responsibility within the team and specific working groups.
8. Providing good leadership and a clear vision that links to the needs and demands of the changing situation, and the ability to 'inspire' others to commit themselves to this.
9. Providing good management, both in terms of 'managing people', and in terms of 'managing the tasks' that need to be pursued.

REFERENCES

Ainscow, M. (1999) *Understanding the Development of Inclusive Schools.*

Booth, T., Ainscow, M., Black-Hawkins, K., Shaw, L. & Vaughan, M. (2000) *Index for Inclusion. Developing Learning and Participation in Schools.* Bristol: CSIE.

Department of Education. (1999) Consultative Paper 1 On Special Education: Building An Inclusive Education And Training System, First Steps. Department Of Education, Pretoria

Corbett, J. (1999) Inclusivity and School Culture: The Case of Special Education. In: Prosser, J. (1999) (Ed.) *School Culture.* London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Department of Education (1996) *South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996.* Pretoria: Department of Education.

Department of Education. (1997) *Quality Education for All. Overcoming barriers to learning and development.* The Report of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS)

Department of Education. (1997). Report of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Commission on Education Support Services (NCESS). Pretoria: Department of Education.

Department of Education. (1998) *Norms and Standards for Educators.* Technical Committee on the Revision of Norms and Standards for Educators. Pretoria: Department of Education.

Department of Education. (2002) *Curriculum 2005 Assessment Guidelines.* Pretoria: Department of Education.

Department of Education. (2002) *Developing District Support Teams: Guidelines for Practice*. Draft. Unpublished manuscript.

Department of Education. (2002) *Issues on Gender in Schools. An Introduction for Teachers.* Pretoria: Department of Education.

Department of Education. (July, 2001). Education White paper 5: Special Education - Building an inclusive education and training system. Pretoria: Department of Education.

Department of Education. (March, 1995). White Paper on Education and Training. Pretoria: Department of Education.

Department of Education. (November, 1995). White Paper 2: The Organisation, Governance, and Funding of Schools. Pretoria: Department of Education.

Department of Education. 2001(a). *Report on National ECD Policies and Programmes.*

Department of Education. 2001(b). Education White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education: Meeting the Challenge of Early Childhood Development in South Africa. *Government Gazette,* Vol.436. No.22756. 17 October 2001. Government Printer. Pretoria.

Department of Education. (2001). Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education, Building An Inclusive Education And Training System. Pretoria: Department of Education.

FETC Policy Document. (2001). South African Qualifications Authority.

Fulcher, G. (1989) Disabling policies? A comparative approach to education policy and disability. London: Falmer Press

Ministry in the Office of the Deputy President (November 1997). The White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy. Pretoria: Office of the Deputy President.

Department Of Education, (2000). National Curriculum Framework For Further Education And Training. Pretoria: Department of Education.

Remedial Teaching Foundation. (2001). *Teacher Development Course*. In partnership with SCOPE. Park view: The Remedial Teaching Foundation.

Government of the Republic of South Africa. (1996). The South African Constitution (Act 108 Of 1996)

Sage, D., D. (1996). Administrative Strategies for Achieving Inclusive Schooling. In: Stain back, S. & Stain back, W. (1996) (Eds) *Inclusion. A Guide for Educators.* Baltimore, London, Toronto, Sydney: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Schaffner, C. B. & Buswell, B. E. (1996) Ten Critical Elements for Creating Inclusive and Effective School Communities. In: Stainback, S. & Stainback, W. (1996) (Eds) *Inclusion. A Guide for Educators.* Baltimore, London, Toronto, Sydney: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Department of Education (1996) South African Schools Act.

United Nations. (1994) Standard Rules On The Equalisation Of Opportunities For Persons With Disabilities.

UNESCO (2000) *Human Resource Development in Support of Inclusive Education. Sub-Regional Workshop, Central and Eastern Europe, Report.* On the Internet: http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/sne/publications/bucharest/cover.html

UNESCO. 1997. *International Consultation on ECD and Special Educational Needs.* Paris.

GLOSSARY

ANC: African National Congress

CBO: Community-Based Organisation

CTP: Committee Of Technikon Principals

CUP: Committee Of University Principals

DOE: National Department Of Education

DPO: Disabled People's Organisations

ECD Early Childhood Development

EWP6: Education White Paper No. 6

FET: Further Education And Training

GET: General Education And Training

HE: Higher Education

IDCC: Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee

IE: Inclusive Education

INDS: Integrated National Disability Strategy

LOLT: Language Of Learning And Teaching

MOLT: Medium Of Learning And Teaching

NCCIE: National Coordinating Committee Meeting

NCESS: National Committee On Education Support Services

NCSNET: National Commission On Special Needs In Education And Training

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisations

NQF: National Qualifications Framework

NSB: National Standards Body

OSDP: Office On The Status Of Disabled People

PCCIE: Provincial Coordinating Committee Meeting

RPL: Recognition Of Prior Learning

SAFCD: South African Federal Council For Disability

SANASE: South African National Association For Special Education

SAQA: South African Qualifications Authority

SASA: South African Schools Act

SASL: South African Sign Language

SGB: School Governing Body

WHO: World Health Organisation

UNACCEPTABLE TERMINOLOGY

- Learners with 'Special' Education Needs
- Learners with barriers to learning
- Remedial
- The Deaf, the Blind, the Physically Disabled, the Mentally Retarded
- SMH – Severely Mentally Handicapped
- Slow learners
- Sufferers

TERMINOLOGY THAT IS ACCEPTABLE WITHIN THE NEW FRAMEWORK OF THINKING

- Learners who experience barriers to learning
- Describe the barrier rather than the person, e.g. Deafness, Blindness, Visual Impairment
- People first terminology: People who are Blind, Children with hearing loss
- People living with HIV/Aids
- People with Intellectual Disability, Down Syndrome, Autism, Physical Disability, Mental Illness
- Wheel-chair users