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School-based support teams' experiences of the support that they provide within their schools

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Abstract

This study set out to investigate school-based support teams' experiences of the support that they provide within their schools. School-based support teams have a key role in providing support to teachers and learners through consultation on classroom strategies, case management, referrals and decisions regarding resources within the school with the aim of identifying and addressing barriers to learning. This research specifically explores School-based support teams' experiences of providing support in order to gain an understanding of the role that these teams play in schools. Data for this study was collected by conducting focus group interviews with 25 school-based support team members from 5 government primary schools in the Johannesburg East District. In addition, the head of each participating school-based support team completed a questionnaire. The data collected resulted in the generation of four main themes relating to school-based support teams' experiences of providing support within their schools. These were: the functionality of school-based support teams specifically with regards to providing support within their schools, as well as the responsibilities and structure of school-based support teams; access to specialist support, and the District Based Support Team as well as parental involvement; collaboration and the benefits of collaboration; and finally the functionality of the District Based Support Team focussing on school infrastructure, and the involvement of District Based Support Teams.

Key words: School-based support team, District Based Support Teams, collaborative consultation, inclusive education, education support, learning support, schools, institution-level support teams (ILSTs)