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Curriculum FET Minute: DCF 0003/2022

To: Deputy Directors-General, Chief Directors, Directors (Head Office and district offices), Heads: Curriculum Support, Circuit Managers, Heads: Management and Governance, Subject Advisers and Principals of secondary schools

**Subject: Learner tracking to support learner retention**

1. The learner retention and throughput rate in the Further Education and Training Phase (Grades 10 to 12) in the Western Cape is 74,6%.
2. The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) only becomes aware that a learner has dropped out after they have already exited the system, which does not allow for any interventions to mitigate the number of learners leaving school prematurely. Early identification and subsequent interventions will assist with learner retention and success.
3. The WCED is embarking on research to improve the retention of learners by using an artificial intelligence (AI) model which will identify those learners most at risk of dropping out.
4. This research will run from 2022 to 2024, during which the AI model will be developed to improve its predictive accuracy. The AI model has been designed to identify any learners who are in their disengagement phase (before they drop out), so that appropriate interventions can be implemented by the WCED to retain them in the schooling system.
5. The organisation that will be conducting this research project is the PACE Research Institute (PRI), an organisation with extensive experience in the education sector, built over the past 31 years. Permission has been granted for the PRI to conduct the research at all WCED schools.

6. Schools are required to identify two educators to champion this research project on behalf of the school. The following will be required from the educators:
  - Educators are to attend a 40-minute online training session.
  - All Grades 10 and 12 learners must complete an online assessment. This can be completed during a Life Orientation lesson, facilitated by the educators identified as the champions.
7. Learners will receive an automated report indicating their career interests. This can be used for further career and study research on the system used by the PRI.
8. Issues related to the protection of learners' information have been accommodated in the design of the research system.
9. On implementation of the research, the WCED will provide schools with an annual feedback report.
10. It is envisaged that schools participating in this project will have access to information based on AI to predict which learners are at risk of dropping out and to plan interventions to prevent this in the best interests of those learners.
11. Principals are requested to complete the [nomination of champions](#) form to indicate the educators identified to champion this research project. NOTE: There is no need to save after entering the information. Simply close the document and it will save automatically. Thereafter, the PRI will communicate directly with the educators.
12. Principals are requested to bring the contents of this minute to the attention of the relevant staff, Grades 10 and 12 learners and their parents or guardians.

**SIGNED:** H MAHOMED

**DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL: CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT MANAGEMENT**

**DATE:** 2022-04-29