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## **SPTC SUBMISSION TO PETITIONS COMMITTEE RE PETITION 1581 ON SAVING SCOTLAND'S SCHOOL LIBRARIES**

**SPTC welcomes this opportunity to submit evidence to the Petitions Committee of the Scottish Parliament in response to the petition 1581 on school libraries.**

### **1. SPTC Background**

SPTC is a long-standing parent-led charity and membership organisation providing help, advice and support to parents up and down the country. Our focus is on making parental engagement with education as good as it can be, by supporting parents and working with local authorities, schools and other stakeholders to build and share good practice.

Parents are involved with school because of their child, not for themselves. Parents and parent groups engage actively with activity which is directed at making the educational experience for young people as positive as it can be.

Our membership comprises almost 2000 Parent Councils and/or PTAs in state schools, representing tens of thousands of parents and carers.

### **2. The Role of School Libraries**

We believe school libraries, and librarians, play a critical role in schools, that school libraries are unique in their ability to support teaching and learning and that they should be the central resource of every school, open every day and staffed by a professionally trained librarian. All learners should have equal access to a qualified school librarian.

Our members tell us that in many cases, local authorities are moving towards volunteers or library assistants, whose role can only be one of checking books and resources in and out of a room. The critical role of the qualified librarian is lost to our children when this happens. This includes activities and events specifically designed to support literacy among individuals or groups in school, support around research, referencing and report writing, accessing author sessions and additional activities to inspire and enthuse children.

At a time when literacy – along with numeracy – is a top priority within our education system, it is perverse that this existing and valuable resource to support literacy (and more) in our schools is being dismantled.

### **3. Need for National Strategy**

Given the significance of literacy within our curriculum, we believe this central part of our education system demands a national strategy for school libraries be developed in order to ensure the service is strong and recognised within our schools.

This will require the gathering of data around school libraries, their staffing structure and the roles carried out. It will also require evidence gathering around the impact of school libraries and the work of the professional staff within them, in order to clearly demonstrate the significant impact they make.

The development of the National Improvement Framework and further iterations of How Good is Our School provide significant platforms on which to build understanding of impacts and practices.

Eileen Prior  
Executive Director  
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