



Public Petitions Committee
Scottish Parliament

PE01581 – Save Scotland’s School Libraries

On the 24th November at the evidence gathering hearing of the Petitions Committee Duncan Wright was asked by the Convener: There is a School Library Association. Is it already supporting the petition? To which Duncan Wright replied: Yes. It is fully behind the petition.

I would like to take this opportunity to fully endorse our support for this petition – we as an organisation, have been encouraging our members and social media followers to sign the petition, and have encouraged SLA Board members to do likewise. SLA current membership in Scotland stands at 136 – less than half the number we had a few years ago – and this seems indicative of the difficult position of school libraries in Scotland.

School libraries occupy an important place in the lives of school students, and there is ample research supporting the impact that they, and the school librarians who run them, have on attainment in schools. I am sure other respondents will have mentioned the excellent 2013 report from Professor Dorothy Williams et al entitled *The Impact of School Libraries on Learning: Critical review of published evidence to inform the Scottish education community* (Robert Gordon University). To quote the Executive Summary -

The findings reveal a considerable body of international evidence showing that school libraries impact on:

Higher test or exam scores equating to academic attainment: this includes academic attainment in the form of higher standardised test scores in reading, language arts, history and maths, and better grades in curriculum assignments or exams;

Successful curriculum or learning outcomes, including information literacy: this includes higher quality project work, the development and practice of information literacy, increased knowledge and reading development; and

Positive attitudes towards learning: including increased motivation, improved attitude towards learning tasks, self-esteem, and wider reading for pleasure.

Justification enough from those three points to fight for the continuation and expansion of school library provision in Scotland.

The SLA fully supports the statement - We firmly believe that school libraries are unique in their ability to support teaching and learning and should be the central resource of every school, open every day and staffed by a professionally trained librarian. We believe that all learners should have equal access to a qualified school librarian. The SLA wish to encourage you to do all in your power to protect school libraries in Scotland.

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