

PE1581/Y

Petitioner submission of 27th April 2017

Please find detailed below our latest response to Petition PE1581. This complements the original petition (and supplementary responses) lodged with the Scottish Parliament Public Petitions Committee.

At the beginning of the meeting on April 20th the Cabinet Secretary for Education stated, *"I do not think that there is unanimity on the need to have a national strategy, but the petitioner makes a fair point about the importance of having such an approach and it is my intention to formulate such a strategy."*

We welcome this statement from the Cabinet Secretary for Education, which fully supports the original aim of our petition. We feel it is now important for the Cabinet Secretary to provide detail on how he plans to develop the strategy, which organisations will be involved in any consultation, how the strategy will be delivered and the timescale for the strategy to be in place. Because of the discussions that took place at the meeting on the 20th April, in particular between the Cabinet Secretary and Brian Whittle MSP, we propose that as part of the national strategy national standards for school libraries in Scotland are established.

In addition, in light of the correspondence received so far in response to the petition and as part of the discussion that took place at the meeting on the 20th April, we would like to ask the Cabinet Secretary on whether he intends to meet with representatives of COSLA and ADES. We feel it would be of great benefit to the future success of the national strategy if the Cabinet Secretary were to meet relevant representatives of these associations, as it would allow him to express many of the pertinent points he made about the role of school libraries and school librarians in schools during the meeting.

CILIPS, who represent Scotland's Library and Information Professionals, have stated, "(we) fully welcome the Deputy First Minister's intention to formulate a national strategy for school libraries and would be happy to support the development of this and the associated standards." Save Scotland's School Libraries would fully endorse CILIPS being involved in the creation of a national strategy and any associated projects.

Whilst we are aware that local and general elections are due to take place in Scotland over the coming months, we would urge the Cabinet Secretary for Education to start work on the strategy at the earliest possible opportunity.

We look forward to receiving the result of the committee's considerations and the next course of action.