



PRESS RELEASE

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School Library Commission invites submissions

The School Library Commission chaired by Baroness Estelle Morris, a joint initiative between The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) and the National Literacy Trust, is today (18 February 2010) announcing its intended lines of enquiry¹ and is requesting schools, local authorities, education professionals and any organisation or individual who is interested in the future of school libraries to submit their views and ideas. The Commission aims to set a national agenda to ensure school libraries are delivering exceptional services to help young people reach their potential.

Baroness Estelle Morris, chair of the Commission, said: "School libraries make a vital contribution to teaching and learning. As the education landscape and pedagogical practice changes rapidly, so our vision for this vital service needs to be proactive, exciting and challenging, embracing new opportunities to inspire children and their families with a love for literacy and learning."

Director of the National Literacy Trust, Jonathan Douglas, said: "We strongly urge all individuals and organisations who are committed to the future of school libraries to submit their ideas to the Commission. As powerhouses of reading, school libraries are a vital resource that must be rediscovered in the context of a changing educational landscape. We need the expertise of all parties with a vested interest in school libraries to ensure our final report is balanced, results driven and engaging."

Museums, Libraries and Archives Chief Executive, Roy Clare, said: “Libraries are vital in offering children and families access to reading, learning and information - whether in physical media or digitally - and in supporting them to achieve their full potential. This Commission offers an exciting opportunity for everyone to contribute and help to shape the future of effective library services in a changing educational and economic environment. The new primary curriculum offers the potential for some fresh linkages, too, and we believe that everyone gains from the earliest possible engagement with all that libraries have to offer.”

Baroness Estelle Morris is joined by commissioners Peter Wanless, Chief Executive of the Big Lottery Fund; Jean Gross, Government Communication Champion; Catherine Blanshard, Chief Officer of Libraries, Arts and Heritage for Leeds City Council; Karen Tyerman, MLA board member, Director for Community Learning Kensington and Chelsea; Martin Cooper Deputy Head Teacher, Mile Oak Primary School, Brighton and Stephen Shields Chief Executive, SHINE Trust.

Ends

If you would like further information, or to arrange an interview with National Literacy Trust Director, Jonathan Douglas; MLA Chief Executive, Roy Clare; MLA Director of Policy & Sustainability, Sue Wilkinson; or the commissioners, please contact: Anna Lindsay, Press Officer, National Literacy Trust on 0207 820 6256; email anna.lindsay@literacytrust.org.uk or Katy McMullen, Press and Campaign Manager, MLA on 020 7273 1406; email katy.mcmullen@mla.gov.uk

Notes to Editor

1. School Library Commission: Lines of Enquiry

1. It is generally agreed that children need to read widely, enjoy reading and are able to find the information they need from a range of sources, evaluate it, critically and synthesise their findings. In the context of the Commission’s work, are there other outcomes for children and young people, their families and parents and the wider community that we need to consider?
2. What are the adult skills, attitudes and knowledge required to help children achieve these outcomes?
3. What experiences do children need in order to achieve these outcomes?
4. What resources do children need to achieve these outcomes?
5. What resources and support are required by parents, teachers and the children’s workforce to allow children to achieve these outcomes?
6. How does the school library and school library service support the delivery of outcomes?
7. What other agencies have a role in delivering these outcomes?

8. How could these outcomes be delivered more effectively in the future?
9. How can the school library and schools library service work to deliver these outcomes more effectively in the future? Please consider the following:
 - The opportunities created by developments in the curriculum
 - The partners it should be working with
 - The clusters and networks it should be involved in
 - How it should fit within the extended school system
 - How it should work within local authority performance and delivery systems
 - How it could become more cost effective and efficient
 - What the relationship should be between the school library, the school library service and the public library network
 - What the relationship should be between the school library, the school library service and organisations working with children and young people
 - What the relationship should be between the school library and school leadership in terms of target setting and monitoring to deliver the school's priorities.
 - What are the comparative challenges of establishing and popularising school libraries in areas with different socio economic and ethnic groupings
 - Can other agencies and services add value through partnerships with schools libraries or deliver these outcomes themselves?
10. What do you think needs to happen to create a sustainable and valued school library and school library service in the next ten years?

All written evidence must be submitted to the Commission by 12am on 17 March 2010 and should be emailed to National Literacy Trust Policy Adviser George Dugdale at:
George.Dugdale@literacytrust.org.uk

3. The MLA is the government's agency for museums, libraries and archives. Leading strategically, we promote best practice to inspire innovative, integrated and sustainable services for all. Visit www.mla.gov.uk

4. The National Literacy Trust is an independent charity that transforms lives through literacy. We believe that society will only be fair when everyone has the literacy skills they need to communicate, to fulfil their potential and to contribute more to society. We campaign to improve public understanding of the vital importance of literacy, as well as delivering projects and working in partnership to reach those most in need of support.

To help us transform lives through literacy, you can make a donation. To find out how visit <http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/About/donate.html>

5. The commission's final report will be released at the end of June 2010.