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# MAYOR OF LONDON'S RESPONSE TO THE EDUCATION INQUIRY PANEL'S FINAL REPORT

MAYOR OF LONDON

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Education is one of the most important elements in the future success of London. As Mayor, I recognise the importance of providing a good school place for every child and ensuring they have the skills, knowledge and creativity to succeed in life. We must make our state schools amongst the best in the world if our young people are to grasp new economic opportunities in London and compete with the talent our city attracts from around the globe.

A strong education system is vital to delivering jobs and growth for London, which is the main priority of my second term. However, the best way to achieve this is a firm commitment to education for its own sake. I believe that all London children deserve a rigorous and academic grounding, which will equip them for whatever path they take; whether it is continued academic study or vocational training and employment.

In November 2011, I initiated this independent Education Inquiry to examine the key challenges facing London schools. I strongly support the Government's agenda to reform the system and wanted to see what more we could do in the capital to raise the level of ambition.

I very much welcome this final report and am pleased it contains such a stimulating and innovative set of recommendations. I wish to extend my sincere thanks to the Inquiry's Chair, Dr Tony Sewell, and the Panel Members for all their efforts.

I hope that London's teachers, headteachers, school governors, boroughs, and parents will be encouraged by the Panel's overriding message of aspiration and excellence for young Londoners.

The report acknowledges that London schools already perform better than the national average. However, it also makes clear that too many children still leave formal education without the basic skills in life to get a good job or go into further and higher education or training. I am clear that by 2020 we must aim to eradicate illiteracy and drive up standards in maths, science and languages in London's schools if we are to maintain our position as a major world city.

We also need to be more ambitious for those who are in the middle and at the top. That means encouraging them to study modern language and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects, as well as ensuring that they apply for the best universities and apprenticeships. In order to achieve this, our schools need to embrace fresh ideas and the educational wisdom of our most successful school leaders.

Finally, the report examines the growing crisis in school places and the negative consequences this will have for families across the city. London desperately needs more good quality provision. I want to encourage a new generation of free schools in our capital, to help address the shortage of school places and give parents more genuine choice.

I therefore welcome the challenges set out for my Mayoralty and accept all the Panel's recommendations.

I have set out below a record of the existing programmes and activities the GLA supports for young people in the capital, including investment of £14m on existing initiatives for children and young people.

In addition, I have set out new commitments below, in response to specific recommendations from the report.

The final report of my independent Education Inquiry recognises the ongoing importance of the boroughs and local school improvement networks, as well as the role of new academy chains, teaching schools and other initiatives in driving further improvement and ambition in the London school system. I welcome the recent acknowledgement by London Borough Leaders<sup>1</sup> that a new approach is needed and look forward to working with key partners, including schools, the boroughs, London Councils and the Government to develop more detailed implementation plans over the next few months.

Once again, I would like to record my thanks to Dr Tony Sewell, the Panel and the many individuals and organisations that have contributed to this important report.

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## RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1: In order to encourage all London schools to aspire to excellence and seek out best practice, the Mayor should establish a 'Gold Club' of schools that are 'bucking the trend' of low aspiration and under-achievement. These would be selected and announced on an annual basis, with a report featuring the background data for Gold Club schools. The publication should coincide with a major 'London as a Leading Global City' conference where schools can celebrate their achievements and share their approaches.**

Supporting schools to learn from each other is vital to a good education system. I will establish the Gold Club of schools, which will share valuable data about school performance and lessons for school improvement. This will launch in 2013.

I also commit to facilitating events, workshops and an annual education conference about London education, starting in 2013, that will bring together London's teaching profession to hear from experts around the world and ensure they are at the forefront of ideas.

**Recommendation 2: The Mayor should establish a 'London Schools Excellence Fund'. This major fund would work alongside the Gold Club to help schools make substantial progress on the most pressing education priorities in the capital, namely literacy, numeracy and raising standards in science, technology, engineering and maths. The fund would also stimulate new partnerships and innovation.**

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<sup>1</sup> London Councils' Leaders Committee of 16<sup>th</sup> October 2012, Item 3, London local government education policy.

I will create a London Schools Excellence Fund, to address these key strategic priorities. Full details of the fund will be announced in early 2013.

This fund will drive progress towards world-class education in London through funding evidence-based interventions which promote excellence in teaching and in school leadership. It will stimulate the sharing of good practice and tackle key areas of underperformance, including literacy and numeracy. More detail on the Fund will be provided in the New Year following further discussions with DfE officials and key school improvement partners in London over the next few months.

**Recommendation 3: The Mayor should facilitate summer schools for primary school teachers across London to consolidate and deepen their subject knowledge in English and maths. There should also be specialist networks and events that bring together secondary school teachers from across schools and boroughs to share good practice and develop effective collaborative links.**

I agree that we need to give specialist support and training to primary and secondary teachers, especially to drive up standards in literacy, numeracy and subject knowledge. I will explore how this can be facilitated through the London Schools Excellence Fund.

**Recommendation 4: The Mayor should help improve outcomes for some of London's most troubled young people by working with local authorities and Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) Headteachers to deliver a leadership programme that focuses on improving student achievement and helps them succeed in education, employment or training.**

London has more outstanding Pupil Referral Units than any other region, but I agree that more can be done to support excellent leadership in these institutions that work with the most challenging and vulnerable young people.

I am already working with the London PRU Network for headteachers, and in 2011 supported a pilot 'parent advocacy' project in five boroughs. I will explore how we can strengthen this network and facilitate more exchange/training through a specific strand in the London Schools Excellence Fund.

**Recommendation 5: The Mayor should launch a 'London Curriculum', using the city itself to inspire every secondary school to strengthen its curriculum. This would be supported by a rich programme of events, interactive resources and partnerships that enthuse students, teachers and their communities.**

I agree that there is a unique educational asset open to all schools – London itself. A London Curriculum aimed at lower-secondary school would certainly encourage greater knowledge and understanding of school subjects through the city's extraordinary heritage, people and places. I will explore with partners how this could be developed.

**Recommendation 6: The Mayor should bring together schools, further education (FE) and higher education (HE) institutions and employers to develop better links between the education and business sectors, ensuring that training given to young people helps meet London's current and future skills needs. This should include developing new ways to increase the supply of high-quality work placements and improve access into apprenticeships.**

There are encouraging signs in the capital's unemployment figures, with lower youth unemployment for 16 - 24 young Londoners than nationally. However, it is also clear that there are underlying issues in how young people make choices about their education, access good quality work experience and careers advice, and choose their routes to vocational education or university.

I have launched a campaign to create 100,000 more apprenticeships in London by the end of this year, but I want to do what I can to help equip young Londoners with the education and skills to succeed in the world of work.

I am conscious that schools are commissioning their own careers support, and there is a growing market of providers to meet their needs. Therefore, I want to explore what, if any, value the GLA could bring to support improved careers education in London schools, broker links between employers and education, and share information about the labour market with education providers. I will explore with London Councils' Young People Education and Skills Board and the London Enterprise Panel how this could work and will consult further with schools, businesses and the boroughs.

**Recommendation 7: The Mayor's office should play a practical role in helping schools improve links with business and HE, improving the information available on post-16 career pathways in all London schools to ensure school leavers are better informed, and promoting a more aspirational culture.**

I will explore how this can be done alongside recommendation 6.

**Recommendation 8: The Mayor should ensure priority is given to children in care and care leavers in all London apprenticeship, mentoring, work experience and job opportunities, through the London Schools Excellence Fund and work with FE colleges, universities, business and other employers.**

In my Mayoralty I have championed opportunities for children in care who face worse educational outcomes than any other group. In 2010 I established a pilot 'near peer mentoring' programme called Mayor's Scholars, which supported children in care in seven boroughs in their education. I organised innovative careers events for children in care called 'Wise Up' and encouraged more higher education institutions in London to sign up to Buttle UK's quality mark for care leavers.

I will continue to work with the boroughs and voluntary organisations in London to share learning from this programme. I will also look at how apprenticeships, work experience and other opportunities could be made more available and accessible to children in care.

**Recommendation 9: The Mayor should champion greater collaboration between schools and leading, research-intensive universities like the Russell Group and 1994 Group, so more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds both aspire to study at the best universities and succeed in their applications.**

I agree that London is a centre of excellent universities and we should do more to harness their value in schools. I will explore what additional help would be useful to schools in terms of creating links and providing information.

**Recommendation 10: The Mayor and GLA should work with boroughs and the Department for Education (DfE) to develop pan-London collection and analysis of data necessary for planning the provision of school places.**

The GLA currently runs a pan-London school roll projections service for boroughs. I will explore how we can expand this to cover all boroughs, and how we can work more effectively to develop a more strategic picture of school places in the capital. I will work closely with the boroughs and DfE on identifying areas of need.

**Recommendation 11: The Mayor's office should work with boroughs, London Councils and the DfE to play a more strategic role in supporting free school developments in London, by identifying sites and targeting areas of local need.**

London is facing a severe shortage of school places and I am grateful that the Government has doubled its funding for basic need, addressing the severe shortfall left by the previous Government. I will continue to make the case for London to the Treasury and do what I can to ensure we address this crisis properly.

I agree with the Panel that free schools can play an important role in helping to provide more good quality places where there is a shortage, but also in those places where there is no shortage yet parents feel the quality of provision is not good enough. Free schools can help drive up standards and stimulate new thinking. The new freedoms that schools have present an opportunity for our best school leaders to innovate and improve in an unprecedented way.

I want to see a new generation of free schools in the capital and am setting up a unit, in the GLA, called New Schools for London. This will work in partnership with the boroughs and DfE to help find sites for approved free school groups. As the strategic planning authority and regeneration and housing agency for London, with access to data about school places, the GLA is in a unique position to help free school groups. I have also committed to auditing the GLA group estate for 10 buildings or sites for purchase by the DfE for free school developments.

I will ask the Government for resources to support our work in this area and ensure that London gets the additional funding it needs to cope with the demographic change we face.

**Recommendation 12: The Mayor and London Councils should disseminate the best ideas for innovative solutions to address current primary - and future secondary - school place shortages in London.**

I agree this is an important area and will explore how to do this, possibly as part of an annual education conference and the New Schools for London unit, working in partnership with DfE, the boroughs and other stakeholders.

**Current Mayoral programmes for young Londoners**

Clearly, taking forward the Education Inquiry's recommendations will dovetail with many of my current programmes and initiatives for young Londoners. Some of these are school-based, while others relate to supporting young people into training and the job market.

I currently co-sponsor three secondary Mayoral Academies in London through the LAET (London Academies Enterprise Trust) – Nightingale and Aylward Academies in Enfield and the Bexleyheath Academy in Bexley. The aim is to turn around poor performing schools, ensuring that young people leave with a rich academic grounding and the skills and confidence to make the most of the opportunities in London. Two further Mayoral Academies are in the pipeline; a secondary academy in Hounslow, and a new University Technical College in Greenwich, which I am supporting through Transport for London.

I remain committed to encouraging more adult volunteers to support disadvantaged young people through my Team London scheme. My Capital Men programme will provide mentors for 1,000 black boys who are at risk of offending by the end of this Mayoral term. The 'You Matter' programme is helping uniformed youth groups to recruit 1,000 adult volunteers and reach even more young people, especially in deprived areas of London.

The Love Latin scheme places classics graduates in state schools giving talks on classical themes and providing Latin tuition in London primary schools. The scheme has already reached 2000 pupils after its first year, and aims to work with 200 schools in 2012.

As well as Team London, I am developing a new programme of 'Leadership Clubs' to be launched in London schools, starting this autumn and working with a range of innovative organisations. This programme aims to improve young people's behaviour, academic attainment and to raise their aspirations. Over three years, this programme will reach 25 schools, reaching 1,000 pupils aged 10-14 years old.

I am determined to support more young people into good jobs and training. We have made great progress towards the ambitious target of 250,000 apprenticeship starts in London over the next four years, and are well on the way to achieving the target of 100,000 by December 2012. London is now by far the fastest growing apprenticeships region in England. In City Hall we have led the way – over the last three years we achieved 3,000 apprenticeship starts across the GLA Group.

I believe it is crucial to give additional support to those young people who are at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Employment, Education and Training). My £10million Youth Programme, funded by the European Social Fund, will mainly target young people aged 14 to 17, and help them into education, employment and training. Projects will start to roll out from this month and have particular focus on young people who have been excluded from school, those with learning difficulties and disabilities and resettlement support for young offenders.

I have also recently launched a trial project funded by the European Social Fund to help around 6,000 18 – 24 year olds on Jobseekers Allowance and with limited employment history having left full-time employment, to get a 13-week work placement and gain valuable experience and support. Placements will be carried out in a wide range of sectors including charities, social enterprises and voluntary organisations.

I have worked with London Councils to support the 'Back on Track' programme, which led and supported a wide range of improvement projects for Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) in 2010-11 and resulted in the establishing of the London PRU Network.

The Mayor's Fund for London, an independent charity which I established in 2008, runs a series of programmes to support young people of all ages. It currently runs a successful employment scheme in East London, 'Young London Working', which has placed 375 young people into employment or apprenticeships to date. The Fund also has two exciting initiatives to support primary school children's academic achievements over the next three years – Magic Breakfast will provide free healthy breakfast to 5,000 primary school children, while Volunteer Reading Help will provide targeted one to one literacy support to over 2,000 children who are struggling with their reading.

I want more young people to engage in sports and the arts, and the positive benefits they bring. In 2009, I set aside £15.5 million to establish a Sports Fund to help deliver a sporting legacy from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The Fund is directly benefiting young people through investment in 76 sporting facilities for all ages across London in a range of sports (*Facilities Fund*); over 3,500 16-25 year olds receiving subsidised training (*Skills Fund*); and 23 projects in a range of sports mainly aimed at under-25s (*Participation Fund*). A further £7 million will now be available to continue the sports legacy fund following the 2012 Games.

In 2010 I established a charity, The Mayor's Fund for Young Musicians, which has raised over £1.4m of philanthropic funding since its launch in May 2011 and is currently supporting 166 highly talented 7-11 year olds who cannot afford the cost of continued music lessons. The fund also gives thousands of children the chance to learn alongside London's top professional musicians in their schools and music centres, supporting boroughs' music services and schools.

Finally, I am continuing to protect free and concessionary fares by Transport for London (TfL) for children and young people. This includes the free bus and tram fares Zip Oyster scheme and discounted travel on tube, DLR and London overground, for those young Londoners in education and training.



Given my strong commitment to supporting young people into apprenticeships, I am now planning for TfL to introduce a travel concession for apprentices similar to the concession enjoyed by students in higher education.

### **Next steps**

I shall publish the GLA delivery plan in the New Year and immediately begin the task of implementing the report's recommendations.

Clearly, in some areas, the GLA can move forwards quickly. In others, I want to develop a collaborative and ambitious programme of work over the rest of my Mayoral term, by continuing the dialogue with London schools, central Government, boroughs, businesses and cultural, sport and voluntary sectors.

It is hard to find two more contrasting images of London than the scenes of rioting in summer 2011 and the huge positivity of the London Games one year on and their legacy.

Let us now move forward, building a permanent belief in our city's ability to deliver excellence and achieve great things where it matters most - in the education of our children and young people.



**Boris Johnson**  
Mayor of London

