

**MEDIA RELEASE:** For immediate release

**September 2017**

**Canadians for A Safe Learning Environment is closing after 25 successful years**

**Canadians for A Safe Learning Environment (CASLE)** is an award-winning national registered charity with twenty-five years of experience in improving indoor environments in schools - work that was done completely by volunteers and on a shoe-string budget.

Children are uniquely vulnerable to toxins and hazards in their environments. Researchers have found a 5-to-10-point grade difference between children in goodquality buildings versus those in poor buildings. Incidents of asthma and other environment-related health conditions are reduced or eliminated in Healthy Schools.

Twenty-five years ago the founding members of CASLE were astounded by what they found in their local schools. Some of them were parents whose children were made sick by their school, and some were teachers whose health was severely compromised.

CASLE provided options and expertise that led Nova Scotia to become a leader in healthy school operation and construction. In particular, CASLE partnered with the Departments of Education, Labour, and Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Every Nova Scotia student and staff person since 1992 has benefitted from CASLE's work, and changes to the system ensure that these benefits will continue.

Was this isolated to Nova Scotian schools? No. CASLE went on to assist schools from Whitehorse to St. John's, in the US and beyond, even before the internet. Long before other regions in Canada and the US were even aware of the importance, Nova Scotia's schools used less-toxic products for cleaning and teaching, safer practices for maintaining the buildings and grounds, and preventive measures to reduce health-related problems.

Federally, CASLE worked with Health Canada and with many agencies (such as CMHC) and organizations (such as the AWMA). There is now a similar organization working in the US, and one focused on Ontario schools.

CASLE and partners developed a new approach to building healthy new schools, called Healthy School Design and Construction. (See [www.casle.ca](http://www.casle.ca)). This document was written into the Province's Design Requirements Manual DC350, so that every new provincial building can be a healthy building, from offices to jails to seniors' residences.

CASLE is closing, and is scheduled to donate all of its documents to the NS Archives.

CASLE has made a difference, but there is always more to do.

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