

## **Citizens for A Safe Learning Environment**

287 Lacewood Drive, Unit 103, Suite 178

Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3M 3Y7

457-3002, 861-1851, 885-2395, 443-6237

am077@chebucto.ns.ca

<http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Education/CASLE>

---

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

**HALIFAX, N.S.**

**November 20, 2000**

### **For immediate release**

Citizens for A Safe Learning Environment played a significant role in the activation of Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees in schools in the mid 1990's. This provincial group also laid the groundwork for parental representation on school Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees (JOHSC) by obtaining from the N.S. Department of Labour a clear interpretation of the Occupational Health and Safety Act on the matter. "Most schools now have JOHSC's, so that is real progress, however, despite years of work on this issue, educating all concerned on the benefits and on the terms of the Act, many schools are still without parental or student representation.," said Karen Robinson, President of CASLE.

Robinson continues, "Under the Act, there are no obstacles to parent or other community representation being asked to serve on school JOHSCs as long as the 50% rule is followed, yet there has been much misunderstanding and opposition preventing wide acceptance of the benefits of parental representation. Staff, however, tend to be very supportive. As long as the guidelines of the Act are followed, individual committees have the responsibility to design their own guidelines that fit their unique working location. They have the authority to invite parents or students, or others who are seen to be of benefit to their committee, to join their JOHSC. Many schools have received the benefits of such participation, but there is confusion and resistance to the idea from some in the school system. Some schools have lost the benefits of parental assistance because their committees were told parents were not "allowed" by the Act. Others have continued to benefit from parental representation. The situation differs from school to school, board to board."

"It would be good to build into the Act requirements that provide the benefits of parental and student participation on JOHSCs. We ask the House to take this Bill seriously, and make the changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act that will allow the province's school JOHSC's to function to the maximum benefit of the school staffs they represent, but also for the spin-off benefits to the school children who spend their days in the same 'workplaces'," said Karen Robinson.

Citizens for A Safe Learning Environment (CASLE) is an information-based, registered, non-profit, non-partisan, organization with a network of volunteer parents, teachers, affiliated groups and individuals from across Nova Scotia, Canada. CASLE works hand in hand with parents, government, school boards and others to improve the condition of school buildings and the products and practices used within, so that school children and school staffs have safe and healthy places to spend their days. With solid information, respect, and persistence as our primary tools we can effectively encourage healthy improvements in products, practices, and the condition of schools.

Visit CASLE's website at <http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Education/CASLE>

Contact: Debbie Hum, Member of Executive Board, CASLE 499-3987  
or Karen Robinson, President of CASLE 457-3002