

**Summary of Advocacy for School Noise Abatement in BC and Canada**  
**School Noise Action Group (SNAG), CAEDHH-BC,**

By Thomas A. Tylka, M. Ed., Certified Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

- 1999 Vancouver School District, Tennis Ball Initiative, Tom Tylka
- 2001 Vancouver School District, Luminescent Light Ballast Study, Tom Tylka and Dan Paccioretti
- 2001 **School Noise Action Group** was formed, subgroup of CAEDHH-BC  
**Purpose:** to review local, national and international solutions to school noise  
**Members:**
- Janet Jamieson, Professor UBC, Deaf Education
  - Murray Hodgson, Acoustical Engineer and Professor and Director, UBC School of Occ. & Env. Hygiene
  - CAEDHH-BC Reps: Tom Tylka, Maureen Clarke, Bev McKenna
  - Dan Paccioretti, Glynnis Tidball, Audiologists
  - John Beach, Administrator, Vancouver School Board
  - Les King, Director of Facilities, Vancouver School Board
  - Maureen MacDonald/Mark Keelan, Health and Safety Officers, BCTF
  - Karen Bernauer, Health and Safety Officer, Vancouver School Board
  - Dr. Linda Rammage, SLP, Vancouver General Hospital
- 2002 Investigation and Resolution of Noise Problems Due to Light Ballasts in Schools,  
Jonathan Lashin, Dr. Murray Hodgson, UBC
- 2003 BCTF Investigated Teacher Voice Problems, Dr. Linda Rammage
- 2005 BCCASLPA Vibrations, School Noise Action Group Article, Tom Tylka
- 2005` Letters of support for tennis ball use in schools sent to Superintendent of Vancouver School District. This initiative was supported by audiologists (Vancouver Coastal Health and BC Children's Hospital), school principals, and teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing
- 2005 Acoustical Survey of BC Classrooms. Identified all noise sources that impede student learning and provided solutions for noise abatement, (CAEHDD-BC)
- 2005 SNAG met with Acoustical Society of America. Forum panel of stakeholders/ organizations presented a panel addressing acoustical issues.  
Organizations: UBC Faculty of Education, Vancouver General Hospital Voice Clinic, BC Family Hearing Resource Centre, Director of Facilities from Vancouver School District, Berwick Pre-School, BCTF Health and Safety, Tom Tylka, TDHH
- 2006 Vancouver School District, Investigation of the Effect of Tennis-Ball Cushions on Classroom Noise, Gary Chan, Murray Hodgson, UBC
- 2006 SNAG letter (Tom Tylka) to Gordon Campbell, Premiere of BC, Shirley Bond, Minister of Education, Emory Dossdall, Deputy of Education, Rick Davis, Liason Superintendent, Ministry of Education, George Abott, Minister of Health, Penny Ballam, Deputy Minister of Health, to

request ANSI standards in BC schools. Subsequent letter to Lower Mainland affiliated organizations to inform them of the above request/initiative

2006 Response from Keith Miller, Director of Funding Department, BC Ministry of Education, stating that there are no current standards. He redirected SNAG to Building Policy Branch and BC School Trustees Association

2006 SNAG Representatives (Tom Tylka, Murray Hodgson, Janet Jamieson) met with North Vancouver School District regarding building of Sutherland Secondary encouraging them, to consider following the ANSI standards in the new school build..

2007 Letter from Barbara Burnet, Speech Language Pathologist on behalf of Vancouver SLPs, to Jeff Vasey, Director of Building Policy Branch, asking them to do something about school noise.

2007 Letter from CAEDHH-BC to Tom Tylka commending his work and continued advocacy for ANSI standards

2007 Letter from CAEDHH-BC to Jeff Vasey, Director, BC Building Policy Branch, requesting ANSI standards in BC Schools

2007 Letter from Tom Tylka to Shirley Bond, BC Minister of Education and Deputy Premier, to bring attention to the issue of school noise and the need for acoustical treatments and standards in BC. Informed her of Alberta's infrastructure acoustical guidelines.

2007 Letter to Shirley Bond, BC Minister of Education, from Linda Rammage, on behalf of Registered SLPs, re: impact of noise/poor acoustics on student learning and teacher voice strain

2007 Letter from Emery Dosedall, EdD, BC Deputy Ministry, redirecting SNAG to go and look at the Alberta standards.

2007 Meeting with Katherine Whittred, MLA, North Vancouver. Acknowledged work of SNAG and said she would bring the issue to the attention of the Minister of Education (Shirley Bond).

2007 SNAG letter to BC School Trustees Association, requesting that they support legislation of ANSI standards in BC.

2007 Letter to BC Minister of Education from Dr. Kristine Juck, Coordinator of Cochlear Implant services, BC Children's Hospital, noting the challenges of school noise for students with CIs and encouraging the BC Gov't to legislate ANSI.

2007 Response from Penny Tees, President of BC Trustees Association, suggesting that the only way to have ANSI standards addressed is to have a School Board member bring it forward at a governance meeting.

2007 Letter from Tom Tylka to the Chair of North Vancouver School District #44 asking him to bring forth the request for ANSI standards to the Trustees Association. No response.

2007 Letter from Keith Miller, BC Deputy Ministry, stating that the request for ANSI must go through the BC Building Code office.

2007 CAEDHH-National letter from Patricia McDonald, National Director to Tom Tylka, , supporting SNAG initiative for all Canadian Schools.

2007 Letter to Shirley Bond, BC Minister of Education from Mark Hansen, BCASLPA President, on behalf of SLPs and Audiologists in BC.

2007 CAEDHH National Convention (Winnipeg, Manitoba) Presentation: "SNAG: The BC Paradigm for Improving Learning by Minimizing Background Noise" by Tom Tylka.

2007 Jeff Vassey, Director of BC Building Code office received 6 letters of support for ANSI standards in 2007 from: Barbara Burnet, SLPs of Vancouver School Board; Beverly McKenna, CAEDHH-BC; Dr. Linda Rammage and Dr. Murray Morrison, Provincial Voice Care Resource Program; Mark Hanson, BC CASLPA-BC; Patricia McDonald, CAEDHH National.

2008 Letter to Linda Walsh, President of CASLPA from Tom Tylka requesting that her association lobby the Prime Minister and the Canadian Gov't to legislate ANSI or have it coded at the National Research Council and requested that she chair the coalition (soon to be formed).

July 2008 Due to the lack of response from Jeff Vassey's office regarding the letters of support, Tom Tylka met twice with Amanda McReynolds, Ombudsman Officer to request support in obtaining a response from Jeff Vassey.

July 2, 2008 Letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper from Tom Tylka requesting his support to legislate the ANSI standards or encourage the NRC to code the ANSI standard. His Executive Correspondence Officer replied on Oct. 3, 2008, that the comments were carefully reviewed and that the matter raised did not fall under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government.

July 4, 2008 Letter from Amanda McReynolds, Ombudsman Officer, to Tom to follow up that she contacted Jeff Vassey.

July 30, 2008 Letter from Jeff Vassey, Executive Director, Ministry of Housing and Social Development to say that the BC Building Code, as well as other provinces/territories, was modelled on the National Building Code. He suggested that **for consistency throughout**

**Canada, comments would be best explored at the National level.** He forwarded comments from all previous letters of support for ANSI to the Canadian Code Centre at the National Research Council for their consideration and ongoing code development. **(Proposal #1 to the NRC).**

Aug. 2008 Letter from Peter Julian, MP, Burnaby New Westminster, in support of Proposal #1 to the Canadian Codes Centre.

Oct. 2008. Letter from Tom Tylka to Andrew Saxton, MP North Vancouver, requesting that he support legislation of ANSI standards or coding of ANSI standards at the NRC.

Jan. 2009 Letter from Anne Gribbon, Secretary of the CCBFC, to Peter Julian informing him that the NRC would meet in Feb. 2009 and assured him that he would be informed of the outcome of the discussions. **Peter Julian received a follow-up letter stating that although Proposal 1 had merit, it was beyond the current scope of the NRC.**

2008 Concerned About Classrooms Coalition was formed. It consisted of 30 organizations to support this initiative and was chaired by Linda Walsh, President of the Canadian Speech and Language Pathologists and Audiologists (CASLPA). Coalition Members included:

Canadian Association of Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists  
Speech and Hearing Association of Nova Scotia  
Alberta College of Speech-Language Pathologist and Audiologists  
BC Association of Speech-Language and Audiologists  
Canadian Association of Educators of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
PEI Speech and Hearing Association  
Communicative Disorders Assistant Association of Canada  
School Noise Action Group  
Hearing Foundation of Canada  
Canadian Academy of Audiology  
Canadian Hearing Society  
Yukon Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Association  
Learning Disabilities Association of New Brunswick  
Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists  
Saskatchewan Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists  
BC Teachers Federation  
Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists  
Manitoba Speech and Hearing Association  
New Brunswick Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists  
Association of Northwest Territorial Speech-Language Pathologist and Audiologists  
Association Québécoise des Orthophonistes et des Audiologistes (AQOA)  
Canadian Acoustical Association  
Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work  
Canadian Education Association  
Canadian Hard of Hearing Association  
Learning Disabilities Association of Canada

The Coalition:

- Created an advocacy and media plan
- Established goals/key messages, and strategies for advocating for legislation and/or coding of ANSI Standards
- Enlisted coalition members commitment
- Gathered information from every province on existing guidelines for noise abatement and determined that **no provincial legislation regarding classroom acoustics existed anywhere in Canada**
- Created a document, “Concerned About Classrooms Coalition: A Sound Environment for Learning”
- Media campaign across Canada, 2009.

Jan. 16 2009 News conference on parliament Hill, Jan. 16, 2009. Many representatives from the coalition met with MPs on Parliament Hill to specifically request ANSI legislation.

Jan. 2009 Honorable Minister Flaherty, Minister of Finance, visits West Vancouver for public consultation on input to the Federal Budget. Tom Tylka meets with him to request that he legislate the ANSI standards and provide Federal funding for job creation using Canadian trades people to use the ANSI standards in new schools, colleges and universities across Canada. At the meeting Tom provided him copies of the ANSI standards, letters from the coalition members and research supporting the initiative. No response was ever received from Minister Flaherty.

Jan. 2009 Letter from Tom Tylka to Paul Seear, Executive Assistant, Office of Andrew Saxton, MP North Vancouver, to request that the Federal Gov’t legislate ANSI (as per Jeff Vassey’s suggestion.)

March 2009 CAEDHH-National letter to Andrew Saxton to support ANSI legislation initiative.

March 2009 Letter from Tom Tylka to Andrew Saxton to support this legislation initiative.

March 2009 **Proposal #2** Submitted by Tom Tylka on behalf of CAEDHH National to the Canadian Code Centre, NRC; also submitted to the Chair of the Coalition and they submitted their own Proposal as well in April 2009.

May 2009 Tom Tylka sends a copy of the ANSI standards to Cathy Guild, Delta School District

June 2009 Letters from Tom Tylka requesting updates from:

- Philip Rizcallah, Manager of Building Code Team, NRC
- Amelie Chartrand, Assistant to the Director, Codes and Evaluation, NRC

July 2009 Letter from Tom Tylka to the Canadian Centre of Occupational Health and Safety, requesting information on the impacts of noise. Chris Liddy, Inquiries and Client Services,

responds outlining the harmful effects found by Canadian researchers in the following categories: physiological, performance, annoyance and job interference.

2009 Coalition and Member Organizations begin a letter writing campaign to all premiers and Ministers of Education. Received letters of support from the Premiers of: Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Quebec, Nunavut.

**Jan. 14, 2010 Executive Council of the NRC met to review Proposal #2.** Tom Tylka participated by teleconference and over the course of 1.5 hours, provided all the background and research information and responded to all the NRC's questions. Tom took notes of all key discussion points, and sent a summary to all Coalition members as well as to John Bradley, Principal Research Officer at the Institute for Research in Construction, NRC, Ottawa.

Feb. 9, 2010, John Bradley, Principal Research Officer at the Institute for Research in Construction, NRC, Ottawa, responds thanking Tom for his notes. (He was one of the authors of the ANSI standards and supportive of the legislation or coding of standards in Canada.)

May 2010 Letter from Tom Tylka to Philip Rizcalah, Manager of Canadian Codes Centre, NRC, reinforcing the needs for acoustical standards.

2010 LEEDs Certification Initiative in BC....Noise Abatement Design or Criteria not included.

March 2010 Construction Canada Magazine article, "Unheard Problems with High Performance Schools" by Brandon Tinianov, PE, PhD, FASA. This article outlines the fact that the NRC and the Canadian Acoustics Association, and the Acoustical Society of America were working together to conduct several studies to highlight the concern of noise in schools, and supported the adoption of ANSI standards in Canada.

May 6, 2011 Tom Tylka meets with CAEDHH-BC President, to request that CAEDHH-BC support a formal complaint to the BC Human Rights Coalition. The BC Human Rights Coalition recommended to Tom that all parents of DHH students in one school district initiate the class action suit together. No further action taken in this regard.

2012 Anne Gribbon, Secretary of NRC, wrote Tom to say that the decision was made re proposal #2 on Sept. 15, 2011 and that the Coalition was informed at that time. Tom never received a formal letter in response to his and CAEDHH-BC's second proposal.

Sept. 2011. Letter from Anne Gribbon to the Coalition re May 2009 Proposal #2 Submission. The 10 member Executive Committee stated that the proposal was beyond their scope and would require a change in scope for the codes. They consulted **Provincial/Territory Policy Advisory Committee on Codes (PTPACC) who indicated that this would be best addressed by individual jurisdictions.**

**\*\*Note: This decision is in opposition to the view stated by Jeff Vassey in his letter in 2008 that it should be dealt with at a National level for consistency throughout Canada.**

2011 Phillip Rizcalah, Manager of Canadian Codes Centre, NRC, advised Tom Tylka on the phone that he could, if he wished, submit another proposal for ANSI standards in 5 years.

2012 CAEDHH National Journal, "Acoustics in the Classroom: A Historical Perspective", by Maureen Clarke and Tom Tylka.

Feb. 14, 2016 Tom Tylka sent a letter to CBC, requesting that they do a broadcast on School Acoustics. No response.

March 2016 Proposal #3 Submitted by Tom Tylka to the NRC. As suggested by Anne Gribbon, the third proposal was revised **specifically** for deaf and hard of hearing children, children with central auditory processing disorder, auditory learning disabilities and tinnitus. Anne Gribbon requested that Tom gather and include additional current research to support the proposal.

March 24, 2016 Letter from Tom Tylka to the Canadian Human Rights Commission to inquire about process for making a formal Human Rights Complaint to the Canadian Gov't, should proposal #3 be rejected.

2016 CAEDHH National Journal, "The Ultimate Solution for Acoustical Inadequacy in Canadian Schools" by Tom Tylka.

May 3, 2016. Anne Gribbon letter to Tom Tylka acknowledging receipt of Proposal #3 and that he would be informed of the discussion date so he could attend either by phone or in person. Tom informed her that he would attend in person.

April 12, 2016, CAEDHH-BC sent a letter to Anne Gribbon supporting Proposal #3

April 13, 2016, CAEDHH National Certification Committee sent a letter to Anne Gribbon supporting Proposal #3

April 22, 2016 Peter Julian, MP from Burnaby/New West wrote to the Honorable Navdeep Bains, PC, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development supporting the ANSI standards and indicating his support and the full support of the NDP Caucus in Ottawa.

June 22 2016 Letter from Jim Iker, President of BCTF to the NRC supporting Proposal #3 on behalf of all teachers and students in BC.

June 22, 2016 Letter from Tom Tylka to the President of CHHA, Lauren McDonald, requesting a letter of support to the NRC Exec. Committee.

June 24, 2016. Letter to Tom Tylka from Ian Fine, Executive Director of Canadian Human Rights Commission, agreeing that work needs to be done to ensure that Canadian classrooms meet the needs of students with hearing loss.

July 11, 2016 Letter from Speech-Language and Audiology Canada to Anne Gribbon on behalf of 6,000 SLP and Audiologists supporting Proposal #3.

August 22, 2016 Letter from The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association to Anne Gribbon supporting of Proposal #3.

Nov. 2016 Tom Tylka registered to participate in the public consultation for Accessibility Legislation (Federal Government) and presented at the Public Session in Vancouver and gave an acoustical package to Honorable Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities, at her request.

Feb. 2017 Tom Tylka attended the Accessibility Consultation: Spotlight on Invisible Disabilities, hosted by CHHA. Tom provided CHHA a package of information.

Feb 5, 2017 Tom Tylka wrote to Anne Gribbon to inquire about when the NRC meeting would take place at which the Proposal #3 would be reviewed/discussed.

May 15, 2017 CAEDHH-BC Letter to Tom thanking him for his efforts.

July 19, 2017 Glen Hansman, President of BCTF, wrote to Anne Gribbon to reiterate support for this initiative.

2017 CAEDHH-BC wrote a letter to James Van Raalte and Carla Qualtrough in response to a presentation that he gave at a Community Service Providers meeting of all organizations affiliated with hearing loss in BC. At this meeting he presented a summary of feedback acquired from public consultations across Canada on access legislation. In response to a pointed question re: an up-date on proposal #3, he suggested that it was a provincial matter.

Sept. 2017 Letter from James Van Raalte recognizing our advocacy for over a decade. He informed us that the NRC had already met in June 2017 without Tom Tylka being informed nor present and that the Standing Committee would meet Sept. 26/27 for the Exec. Committee's guidance regarding the "expansion of the scope of application of acoustic requirements".

Sept. 2017 Letter from Tom Tylka and Rhena Tevendale to James Van Raalte requesting that he inform us about the outcome of the discussions with the Standing committee that Tom was not informed about.

Oct. 2017 Letter from James Van Raalte suggesting that Tom and Rhena contact the NRC Secretary, Anne Gribbon, directly to request the minutes from the meeting.



Tom followed up with a phone call to James Val Raalte's office to explain that he had already submitted requests via email and telephone messages with no response.

Dec. 10, 2017 Email from Tom Tylka (as per James Van Raalte's advice) to Anne Gribbon at the NRC requesting the minutes of Standing and Executive Committee meetings with cc's to: CAEDHH-BC, CAEDHH National, Human Rights Commission, Peter Julian, MP, SLP-Audiology Canada, BCTF, current SNAG members.

Dec 2017 Letter from CAEDHH-BC letter to Anne Gribbon requesting minutes from the meetings.

2017 Tom sent a complete package of data and Proposal #3 to Ian Fine, at the Human Rights Commission.

In November 2017, Tom and Rhena attended the CAEDHH National meeting in Vancouver to request that the SNAG committee be resurrected. This was approved. Mary-Ann Livesey, our BC Representative, joined this group and Terry Ferrell, agreed to support this initiative.

January 2018, the SNAG committee attended a meeting with the BCTF Executive Committee and the Occupational Health and Safety Committee.

\*\*It should be noted that Murray Hodgson, Acoustical Engineer and one of the original SNAG members, passed away earlier this year. It is our hope to continue to push for this important legislation in Murray's memory.

