

The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)

Noisy classrooms take toll

Saturday, January 17, 2009
Page: C14
Section: News
Column: Canada in Brief
Dateline: OTTAWA
Source: Canwest News Service

Noisy classrooms are preventing children from learning and taking a health toll on teachers, according to experts who want the federal government to adopt national sound standards for new schools and improvements made to existing ones.

"Excessive background noise and poor acoustics can lead to poor understanding of the speech signal, decreased performance by students, reading deficiencies, delayed language acquisition and many other negative consequences," Linda Walsh, president of the Canadian Association of Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists, said at a press conference on Parliament Hill on Friday.

Walsh's association is one of 18 that make up the Concerned About Classrooms Coalition, and it says the absence of standardized classroom acoustics is a gap that must be filled.

The coalition is recommending Canada follow a model already developed in the United States by the Acoustical Society of America that established specific criteria for maximum background noise and reverberation times for classrooms depending on their size.