

MEETING STATUS: PUBLIC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

SESSION: 2/62

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Motion No: 23

Year: 2005

**VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT OF
HOUSE COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS**

COMMITTEE: STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Tuesday, February 15, 2005

SUBJECT(S) BEFORE THE COMMITTEE:

Further Consideration of Motion No. 23 re Combating Drinking and Driving on Prince Edward Island.

NOTE:

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PRESENT:

Wayne Collins, Chair
Dr. David McKenna
Wilbur MacDonald
Andy Mooney replacing Hon. Kevin MacAdam
Wes MacAleer replacing Hon. Elmer MacFadyen
Hon. Robert Ghiz

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Richard Brown

ABSENT:

Beth MacKenzie
Carolyn Bertram

GUESTS:

Part I - SADD - Adeline Trainor
Part II - Abegweit Driving School Ltd. - Louise MacDonald

STAFF:

Marian Johnston, Committee Clerk
Mary Perry, Research Assistant

**Standing Committee on Social Development
Tuesday, February 15, 2005
2:00 p.m.**

Part I - SADD: Adeline Trainor

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): We're going to call to order this next meeting of the Standing Committee on Social Development as we consider further Motion No. 23 - combating drinking and driving on Prince Edward Island.

I want to welcome to the table today Andy Mooney, substituting for Minister MacAdam, and Wes MacAleer, who is substituting for Minister Elmer MacFadyen. I also want to recognize the presence here today of member Richard Brown as well. We appreciate his input to today's deliberations also.

Today, we have just two presentations that we're going to hear from. There was supposed to be three but there's been a last minute cancellation. However, following today's public portion of the meeting, we're going to have a very short in camera session. I promise you it will be no longer than 5 or 10 minutes at the most and it's just to convey to you some information that you can think about over the course between now and our next meeting. So without further ado, I'm going to turn things over to our first presenter today, Adeline Trainor, and I understand, Miss Trainor, you are a SADD advisor and teacher from Bluefield High School, is that correct?

Adeline Trainor: SADD advisor/teacher assistant.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): At Bluefield?

Adeline Trainor: Yes.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Thank you very much.

Adeline Trainor: Good afternoon honourable members and guests.

I have a presentation today to give you further awareness on what SADD is all about and with my presentation, it is on power point; but I'm also going to give you a handout that is exact same as my power point presentation so I'm just going to maybe circulate these around the table and it also has a brochure with it.

On the agenda today, we're going to look at little bit at SADD's history, SADD's vision and goals, SADD's presence, SADD's challenges, SADD 's annual activities and a few SADD facts. If at any time you want to ask a question, you can go ahead during the presentation or save them for following the presentation.

SADD's history - SADD was founded by Robert Anastas at Wheland High School in Massachusetts in 1981. SADD has been recognized as a national leader in alcohol and drug prevention for the past two decades. What began as a small town grass roots response to the tragedy of two teenage deaths quickly grew to become a nationwide organization. The first SADD chapter to form on Prince Edward Island was at Colonel Gray High School in 1985. There are currently 11 active high school SADD chapters provide-wide.

SADD's Vision and Goals - SADD chapters are continuously working toward, together toward a common goal: educating this province's youth about the dangers involved in impaired driving, empowering them to make positive choices, and encouraging them to promote this message amongst their peers and communities. SADD embraces inclusion, not exclusion. We recognize that the pressure on our youth to use alcohol and drugs is strong. SADD works toward providing students with the best intervention tools possible to deal with underage drinking, other drug use, impaired driving, and other destructive decisions to reduce traffic fatalities and injuries by promoting responsible decision-making about driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

SADD Presence - SADD is becoming much more student and community friendly. We're reaching our youth and adults with various educational tools. All SADD events present an opportunity to promote our message while providing a fun environment for our students and communities. SADD chapters serve as a direct link to the heart of the school system and community. SADD must remain very committed to increasing its presence throughout our province. SADD requires

continued support from schools, communities, and government in its ongoing efforts to promote safe driving. SADD chapters have a student body more aware of and informed about the risks of underage drinking, drug use, and impaired driving. SADD students are valued as contributing members of their communities. These individuals, through their work with SADD, are empowered with leadership skills and much knowledge in the field of impaired driving. Such skills are very effective in being a positive role model and a contributing community member.

SADD's Challenges - I see that I'm missing a few here; well, no, maybe not. Okay. SADD must strive to strengthen existing partnerships, develop new partnerships, and obtain funding commitments. SADD is in need of a full-time co-ordinator. Presently, our co-ordinator is at a part-time position and we, as teacher advisors and SADD student volunteers, are having some difficulty with that because in the run of a school day, students attending our classes and teachers advisors can only do so much and, with that being said, we do need to lean on our full-time co-ordinator which we no longer have at this point.

We need to increase public awareness on impaired driving. People must know that it's not just alcohol related. Within the last couple of years as a teacher advisor, I've noticed an increase within our school system where students are saying and feeling that impaired driving is just alcohol related and, you know, hey, we can't get caught if we're under the influence of drug and operating a motor vehicle but they must realize that just is not so. So we need to further increase the awareness on impaired driving that it involves use of drugs, both prescription and non-prescription. We feel the need to increase roadside checks with the RCMP and where student SADD volunteers are more involved in passing out literature at those roadside checks.

We need also at this point in time to secure funding for training and promotional materials. Many times throughout the school year, the last couple of school years have presented some difficulty in our school. For example, where we're trying as teacher advisors to educate our SADD student volunteers in which they can educate their peers, there's only so much time allotted for that and then when they want to travel to the national conference or purchase training materials, we just

don't have the money unless they are doing a high amount of fund-raising. We just don't have the time to fund-raise, educate them, and educate their peers so what we've done differently last year and this year is that we've held three different assemblies during the school year; one for grade 10, one for grade 11, and one for grade 12. Each assembly brings forth the grade 10 student body, grade 11 and 12, and we address them with RCMP material. We have them guest speak. We have guest speakers in both offenders and victims of impaired driving. We basically have condensed it to the point where we have to have the student body in attendance all at one time of different grade levels so we don't get - it's a great thing but also it doesn't provide a lot of opportunity for one-on-one questioning because things are time sensitive. So we do need to look toward securing funding for training and promotional materials.

Teacher/advisor substitute days have been basically taken away from us at this point in time so it makes it difficult for us to attend meetings that's put together by SADD PEI. The provincial conference, events like that, it makes it difficult for us to get time to get away to those things and further educate ourselves in order to educate our students. So we'd like to see those back at some time and we need to improve the visibility, the public visibility of SADD. And what I mean by that is many times I have students come in at the grade 10 level and we do the basic beginning of the year introduction of SADD and they're like - I'll say: Do some of you know what SADD is? No. What is SADD? So I think that we need to redirect our focus to a degree and make these students much more, our students and our communities much more aware of what SADD is because I get it from a lot of parents as well. You know, what is SADD?

You know, so anyhow, I think that SADD has to be seen and heard to a greater degree and I think provincially we need to recognize the contributions of our SADD student volunteers and where I'm kind of going with that is in terms like of maybe a bursary or scholarship, something along that line at the end of the school, the grade 12 school year to recognize their efforts from grades 10 to 12 because they're just kind of gone and many of these SADD students, I mean they take their work, their SADD work into their adult life following their high school career. Some come back and volunteer with us. Some have contacted SADD

PEI and volunteered with them so it is a great thing and it gives them wonderful leadership skills and I just think that it's necessary to provincially recognize these students.

I'm going to speak briefly on SADD's annual activities. The activities of SADD chapters impact school populations, parents, local community organizations, businesses, law enforcement agencies, and the media. The annual activities we hold at Bluefield - and I do believe I'm safe in saying that they're held throughout all of our high schools on Prince Edward Island - we do drug awareness assemblies where . . . you can do impaired driving assemblies. I've done that before but I really enjoyed separating the two because if we have an officer in, he's basically focusing completely on drug awareness, then the kids are going to get a deeper message so we've separated them.

We had Constable Ken Wakelin in just a little over a month ago and he spoke about my concern, again, being impaired driving is not just alcohol related. So Ken came in and he spoke to the students. He's the only drug recognition expert officer on PEI to date that I'm aware of. He came in and he discussed with the students. You know, this is how I test you if I pull you over and I'm under suspicion that you are impaired, this is what I do and it really gave them a great sense of awareness. It's like, wow! There is stuff going on out there and, yeah, maybe we can be caught so that was a wonderful presentation. The students were completely interested in it and then we have officers come in and speak about alcohol awareness, like speak about alcohol awareness.

Just basically, they will give blood alcohol levels, tell the students what it is, the fatalities. They'll share a little bit of information in terms of, you know, this is the number of fatalities or crashes, injuries, so on and so forth, and this is how long alcohol takes to leave your system. Just general information that the students, in fact, some of them do not know.

We have road safety assemblies as well where we have Constable Charles Hebert on board with us. He is our guy that does this and he talks about seatbelt safety, constructive decisions while you're driving. It's a wonderful presentation. So he comes in as well. Then we do classroom presentations. That mainly involves a video in

which we go to various classrooms and show a 15 minute video and accept questions.

We do a Red Ribbon campaign, in which we do that at Christmastime where normally at the Christmas concert we explain what our Red Ribbon campaign represents and we give red ribbons at the door when parents and students are leaving and they may tie them normally to their antennae of their vehicles or hang them on the Christmas tree. We also have a Christmas tree in our foyer and our students put ribbons on the trees and, basically, these ribbons would represent for these people . . . it's a memory of someone who they may have lost due to an impaired driving crash.

We do a Contract For Life campaign and, basically, we just set up a booth at the school and we circulate a contract for life and, basically, I'll just circulate those around the table. You can take a look at those. It's basically a contract between student, parent, or student and friend and it's just kind of a promise not to drink and drive. It has more of a visual effect, I think, when we put it in a contract rather than just making a verbal promise.

The we do our Safe Grab campaign where we have, normally, the RCMP come out and do a demonstration in our gymnasium of fatal vision goggles where the student . . . we'd set up different activity areas. The students may have to pour water from a jug or they may have to place, try to get a basketball in a net and they do this while they have the fatal vision goggles on. And the fatal vision goggles have different strengths of the physical side effects of what you feel when you're impaired or what you would see, rather not feel.

So we do that and during graduation time, we give out quarters with cards reminding our students not to drink and drive so that they can call for a drive home. We also provide the beverages, mocktails for the prom dance so there's a lot of things that we do around grad time and we normally have an end-of-the-year assembly and it's addressed to grade twelves. And we have parents come in and speak about tragedies they have gone through on prom night with their own children so it's pretty effective.

New this year, no, last year, sorry, we started a

casual day campaign at Bluefield as well where staff wear our Bluefield SADD chapter stickers for four Fridays a month and they donate the money to our SADD chapter. We do school based fundraisers. Those might be bake sales. At Christmastime, we do candy cane messages. Valentines, we do balloon bouquets. This year we kind of followed the great steps of Colonel Gray High School and we did a "battle of the bands"; however, we did it at Bluefield and it was a great success. Everyone had a lot of fun and it was an opportunity for us to get our message out. Basically, the students share in SADD facts, SADD information during the intermissions and the various groups coming up onto the stage.

Again, we normally have students from our school, with the exception of last year, attending the national conference and that's held at a different location across Canada each year. This year it's in Edmonton, Alberta, so we're presently fundraising for that. So at this given time, we don't know. I have 10 who are very interested in going but at this time, we just don't know if that's going to happen.

And I'm sorry I skipped one - National SADD Day. We participate in that and what we do is we set up a booth at the school and we pass out literature on what SADD is all about. Basically, we promote SADD during lunchtime and our provincial conference is always wonderful. It's a great way for our students across PEI to come together to exchange ideas, to know the other delegates. So these are some of the activities that we follow throughout the school year and they are quite effective.

Now I'm just going to share a few SADD facts with you. Four Canadians are killed each day and 200 Canadians are injured each day due to crashes involving alcohol or drugs. Impaired driving is a leading cause of death in Canada. People arrested for impaired driving admit to having done so at least 15 times. Impaired driving is the number one killer of youth from ages 15 to 19. The odds for an alcohol-related collision increase on weekends, in the early morning, and during the summer. Every death and injury caused by impaired driving is preventable. Preventing impaired driving is a shared responsibility.

Thank you and I welcome any questions.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Miss Trainor, I want to thank you for a very thorough and enlightening report from SADD.

Adeline Trainor: You're welcome.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): I take it that most of the activities or all the activities you spoke about, you're speaking about in terms of your role at Bluefield High School, right. You mentioned that there are 11 high schools across the Island with chapters.

Adeline Trainor: Exactly.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Right. So I mean you talked about assemblies for grade 10, assemblies for grade 11, assembly for grade 12. Can we conclude that the same level of activity of SADD chapters is happening all across those 11 high schools or is Bluefield an exception here?

Adeline Trainor: No. I would say Bluefield is an exception. I know that the other schools do have assemblies but I don't know if they have spit them up as I have. I just find what works for us the best. You know, it's kind of like trial and error. I do know that when I say that they participate and they carry out the same activities like the "Contract for Life", the National SADD Day, the provincial conference, and so on. I do know that they carry out those but I can't say for sure that they carry out every one as we do at Bluefield.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Does each of the other high schools have an advisor and someone similar to yourself in your position?

Adeline Trainor: Yes, I do believe so, yes. Every school does.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Do you get together often as a group?

Adeline Trainor: Well, no, see that, and I didn't want to list this as a challenge. I'm glad you asked that question. It's not really a challenge. It's just a new idea. I talked to Jody Corcoran, who is here with me today, our provincial SADD co-ordinator and what I would like to see happen is that the teacher/advisors create, a committee be created for the teacher/advisors so that it gives us an opportunity to come together and voice our concerns, our ideas, and then a representative

from that committee could take them to Jody. Because I have more time to commit to SADD at this point in time than your classroom teacher. I'm in special education and a lot of - like we have a co-ordinator whereas a teacher doesn't have a co-ordinator so I have a bit more time to play with in the evening on my own person time that is to put into SADD. So I do know that they don't have the time that I have type of thing.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): And one other question before we go to questions from committee members, if you don't mind my indulgence here, but I don't know if we're going to hear from Miss Corcoran or not. But the budget overall for SADD provincially and for Bluefield, how does it work and what kind of figures are we talking about to try to finance the tremendous activities, the number of activities that I know Bluefield is involved with?

Adeline Trainor: Really, I can't comment on that to a degree. What I know from my standpoint being in the education system is that the monies that we raise for our individual chapters is what we use to get to buy promotional materials, training materials, SADD clothing, all that kind of stuff. In terms of SADD PEI, all that, I don't really know what, I don't know if there's a budget, so to speak, because when we had a full-time co-ordinator, that was just kind of going as it was type of thing. Like I don't know anything about that. But I know as a teacher/advisor, as teacher/advisors, we don't go to SADD PEI and ask for money because I don't - I get the feel that there's not money there and I think I'm very correct in saying so.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Alright. I'm going to take a question list now from committee members and David McKenna.

Dr. David McKenna (PC): That was a very good presentation.

Adeline Trainor: Thank you.

Dr. David McKenna (PC): My question I have is the student volunteers. I assume they can put that credit hour towards university that in grade 11 and grade 12, you get so many hours of volunteer credit. Can they do that with the SADD organization as well? Like it's accumulate up to 100 hours of volunteer work and you get \$500 towards your university tuition or something like

that, or \$600?

Adeline Trainor: No, I don't believe so at this time.

Dr. David McKenna (PC): Is that right?

Adeline Trainor: No, no. It's . . .

Dr. David McKenna (PC): I'm surprised at that actually.

Adeline Trainor: So maybe that is something that could be looked at.

Dr. David McKenna (PC): I think it would an incentive for some of the students to get involved and I think that would be something we should probably look at or recommend maybe if it's not in there.

Adeline Trainor: Yes, because there's a few things that, you know, I've been looking over in the last while. Even in terms of the - what I'm finding difficulty with in the schools is the SADD name, Students Against Drinking and Driving, because when I get up there and talk to the student assemblies and I say Students Against Drinking, I lose them. I lose them and because they, and they look at my SADD student volunteers and they're like, you guys are all about - you're against drinking. We certainly don't promote that but we're there to help our students make and the student volunteers, their peers, to make constructive decisions while under an influence of alcohol or drugs, right. So anyhow we tend to - I just think that there needs to be change with the name, Students Against Drinking and Driving. I think, like in the U.S. they go with Students Against Destructive Decisions and that embraces the umbrella of problems that we're facing with SADD because we're facing drugs, drug issues. We're facing alcohol abuse. There's many things that follow under the umbrella of SADD, right. So anyhow, I think that to change the name a bit would be much more effective and more friendly to our student body.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Wilbur MacDonald.

Wilbur MacDonald (PC): Thank you very much.

First of all, I am very impressed again, as always, with the SADD facts. Now I thought . . . did you

just say that you tried to get students to make the right decisions when they're under influence? I'd love to know how you could do that.

Adeline Trainor: Well, no, basically, what we're trying to tell the kids that, you know, don't, if you're under the influence of alcohol, I'm not saying that we encourage them to use alcohol or drugs - absolutely, totally not. We know that the kids in the teenage years, they're going out and they're in high school. They're going to high school parties. We're saying you can easily make a destructive decision, a fatal decision, a life-changing decision if you're under the influence of, if you're impaired. So that's - no, we're not saying this is what to do when you're impaired. We're just, we are very much challenging them to live a healthy lifestyle.

Wilbur MacDonald (PC): Okay. How, when you talked about the number of events, do you have like dances where you supervise where there's no alcohol or drugs? Is it not true that no alcohol or drugs are allowed in the school in any of the high schools in PEI?

Adeline Trainor: Absolutely! There's nothing like that allowed.

Wilbur MacDonald (PC): Do you have any dances or events where SADD looks or supervises or do the schools have dances?

Adeline Trainor: No. The schools supervise their own student dances.

Wilbur MacDonald (PC): And do they adhere strictly to the rule that there's no alcohol or drugs in those dances in the schools?

Adeline Trainor: I can't comment. Like I'm sure that they do but I wouldn't want to comment on that because I don't supervise at those activities and I would not want to say that they strictly adhere to it. I just, I will not comment on that. Thank you.

Wilbur MacDonald (PC): The other thing, we had the representatives of the police departments here last week where they indicated that drugs was very hard to, for them to recognize somebody under the influence of drugs because they don't have the equipment like. You know, like the alcohol, they have the breathalyser and so on.

Adeline Trainor: Exactly.

Wilbur MacDonald (PC): So how then, how - You said that there's four Canadians killed, 200 injured each day under alcohol or drugs. Did the police department make that distinction?

Adeline Trainor: No. That information did not come from them. It came from a SADD website, a Canadian SADD website, so I'm not saying that that's completely accurate but, no, it did not come from them. And speaking of drug recognition expert testing, when Constable Ken Wakelin was with us, he gave me basically, the step process in which they follow, if you'd like to take a look at it. I cannot allow anybody to keep these because I've not been given - I've not asked permission to do so so I cannot hand out material that I didn't create but you're certainly welcome to look at them because my students are allowed to look at them so if you'd like to go ahead. If anyone's wondering exactly what they do when they are under suspicion that someone is impaired under with drug use, this is what - I'll just let you hand those out if you like.

Wilbur MacDonald (PC): So you want them back.

Adeline Trainor: Yes, please, yes.

Wilbur MacDonald (PC): I thought the statement is - I've never seen it before. Every death and injury caused by impaired driving is preventable. That's a very profound statement, isn't it? Like every death or injury is preventable. When you think of that, that's quite a statement and it's, of course, quite true and maybe it's something even I, even I am surprised. You know, I've never heard that before but it's a good statement and is one that perhaps we should be pushing a little bit.

Adeline Trainor: Yes, yeah.

Wilbur MacDonald (PC): Because we do have a lot of young people involved in accidents when they're impaired either by alcohol or and maybe if they could understand that, you know. The automobile is quite a rig if it's driven right but it's quite a thing if it's not.

Adeline Trainor: Exactly.

Wilbur MacDonald (PC): And I know it's not easy. I can recall, you know, belonging to a Lions Club

where we used to have parties for kids and we had to give them up because we couldn't handle them anymore.

Richard Brown (L): The kids?

Wilbur MacDonald (PC): Well, actually, they weren't kids; they were teenagers and so on and we just found that we were doing something for them that we didn't want to do because alcohol and drugs were always seemed to be around. So I guess every age that comes along is the same. They're going to try these things and if we can teach them and learn them in moderation.

Adeline Trainor: Well, exactly, and that's SADD's purpose. Absolutely, I agree with you. Like I mean we probably - we both know that probably kids are going to experiment. You know, it's part of life but the thing that we can do is educate these kids and make them more aware of the consequences and how their life can change so dramatically and we must do all that we can to ensure that they're getting those pointers and the education. And I think SADD has to increase its voice within the community. I think that we need to make, to have more awareness out there.

Wilbur MacDonald (PC): I think there's two things that children or teenagers should be done; one is take them to a jail and the other one is to take them to a rehab centre and see the people who are there, you know, under terrible conditions for the rest of their lives, they being perhaps paralyzed and so on. You know, we sometimes look at jail as a place where other people go but some people end up there. They don't want to but because of drinking and driving and so on. It's a very scary place, both of them, and I don't know whether it's a good idea. In some sense, it's a good idea to take students there but they should become, made aware. The gentleman who was here, I guess last week too, from, is from Poole's Corner who was 24 years of age and is paralyzed for the rest of his life. He certainly can tell you what it's like. And I guess, does he go to your school?

Adeline Trainor: He was at our school, yes, last year at the end of the school year and we try. He does a very great presentation, wonderful, and it has such an impact on our students and we have various guest speakers. When I had Constable Ken Wakelin in on drug awareness, I also had a

funeral home director come in and Neil's Ambulance, some attendants there. We try to give them a point of view of basically when there's a fatality, like all the parties involved. I try to bring it to light that this is what happens on this end. This is what happens on the other end and this is the family. And the funeral home director, his message was wonderful because he said, you know, when someone gets killed or gets badly injured, I mean it doesn't just affect that person; it affects everybody. You know, and I mean his message was wonderful so we do bring in quite a scope of various speakers.

Wilbur MacDonald (PC): That's a great idea so keep up the good work.

Adeline Trainor: Thank you and what we do do, this year I've started - I saw this in Regina where some students have been, students are deceased that have been hit by an impaired driver and on the MADD website, they have their life story and all this stuff and what happened. So what we do, I've taken those down and I've posted them in our school. And students draw to them right away because, they're like, at a distance, they're like: Who's that kid? Why are they up there? And then they get up and they read and it's like: Oh, that's reality. You know, a visual affect is a very strong thing so anyhow.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Robert Ghiz.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): Thank you. I think it's important to point out that SADD not only is students against driving drunk dealing with students, the whole society, so kids are learning also. I remember when I was there that even your parents, your aunts and uncles, and it's teaching you lessons in life even though probably when I was in high school, it was a little different than it is today. It was probably a little more acceptable and I'm sure when some of the other members were there, it was even more acceptable but when, just a couple of questions.

SADD, now your fund-raising and your finances, they're all done through fund-raising, is that correct, at the Bluefield level?

Adeline Trainor: Yes, yes.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): You don't receive any core funding.

Adeline Trainor: We do not receive any funding, no.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): And does SADD Prince Edward Island receive any core funding, do you know?

Adeline Trainor: Any?

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): Core funding like from government or from -

Adeline Trainor: I do not know that. I really do not know that. I didn't, I've never felt that it was my place to ask them so they are great. I mean they're there for us and they're wonderful. I mean we have a co-ordinator who we can call and ask for information and it's readily available to us. We get regular monthly newsletters. We're updated on the provincial conference, the national conference, any new SADD material that's out. We are seriously lacking in training materials. I mean I feel there should be a province-wide SADD manual that we're all on the same page when we begin the school year and we know what each advisor isn't teaching something different. I mean we're all teaching the same message but we don't have a training manual and I think that's something that seriously needs to be created and implemented in our schools system with SADD.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): Do SADD and MADD work together at all?

Adeline Trainor: Not to my knowledge. I did do some work with MADD earlier in the school year. I thought it was a wonderful way to make a relationship with SADD and MADD because we're all kind of fighting the same thing to a degree. MADD contacted our school and asked for some students who could be victims in a mock accident so I mean I thought that was a wonderful idea for us to come together and I mean we're both in the same. It was happening in the community of Bluefield in our community so anyhow. That's basically all the work that I'm aware of that was done at this point, has been done.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): I know Jody, Miss Corcoran, you're here today. You are the co-ordinator of SADD PEI. Would you entertain a few questions at the table? Would that be okay because I do believe Robert and I both have been trying to get some information here on the overall

funding for the program.

Adeline Trainor: Yes, and I think that is important but I really - I mean I'm the SADD advisor so I don't really have that information.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Maybe Jody could join us and, Jody, could you tell us a little bit. Now you spoke about the need for a full-time co-ordinator earlier, Adeline, but I take it then that you're not a full-time co-ordinator at the present time.

Jody Corcoran: No. I'm actually a driver improvement officer with highway safety so I'm doing both jobs at the same time.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Oh, I see, driver improvement officer.

Jody Corcoran: Yes.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): And slash part-time SADD Co-ordinator.

Jody Corcoran: Yes.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): The 11 chapters we hear about that are formed in Island high schools right now with SADD, do they receive any kind of funding at all through your offices?

Jody Corcoran: No.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): None at all.

Jody Corcoran: No. It's all done through their own fund-raising.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): I see, and so your position, is it pretty much half-time, half and half, your time devoted?

Jody Corcoran: Pretty well.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Has there ever been a full-time SADD Co-ordinator?

Jody Corcoran: Yes. She's, well, I guess she was full time.

Adeline Trainor: Yes.

Jody Corcoran: She's on maternity leave right now so.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Oh, I see. Will she, when she returns to work, go back into the full-time SADD Co-ordinator position?

Jody Corcoran: Well, I think they're looking right now into what exactly they're going to do with that position so I'm not sure if she's coming back, what they're going to do.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Miss Trainor has spoken earlier about the desirability of getting together on a regular basis with her fellow high school co-ordinators here.

Jody Corcoran: Advisors.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Is this something that would be facilitated through your offices? Is it something could be done if you had some budgeting or something - that's a possibility.

Jody Corcoran: Sure. Budgeting would be good and the substitute days because that makes it difficult. Substitute days are a big issue for teachers.

Adeline Trainor: They're very, very essential and, you know, and us getting together and meeting and planning and also attending meetings from, that are put together by SADD PEI.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): May I ask another question about budgeting as well. In the past - please correct me if I'm wrong - and I may be totally mistaken about this but I thought at one point, government did give out some kind of a grant for safe grad at high schools to assist in some way.

Jody Corcoran: To my knowledge, I'm not sure (Indistinct) .

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): I just dreamed that one, did I?

Jody Corcoran: I don't know.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): There's never been any kind of government assistance towards a safe grad eh.

Adeline Trainor: I do believe you're correct but I do not know a lot about it because I do believe that at a SADD provincial conference several years ago there are monies that come down from the eastern district maybe to each school for safe grad activities.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Yes. I thought there was - It's some form of grant money going out for that intent but not directed to SADD at the high school overall.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): There's chem-free nights, if you remember that. When I graduated, there was the graduation. There was a chem-free night and perhaps that money went to sponsor the chem-free.

Adeline Trainor: And what it does at Bluefield, it does exactly. We have a casino night and that sponsors that and that is a safe grad activity ultimately.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): I don't have to remember so far back.

Richard Brown (L): He remembers the one-room school.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): I was going to give you the floor but did you have any other further questions regarding funding or anything? Is everything clarified to your satisfaction at this point?

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): I take it then that we can say that government is partially funding. You work for Transportation and Public Works so it is the Government of Prince Edward Island that is in fact funding that position too.

Jody Corcoran: I've been doing this, I think, November - I started since Bonnie's been out so I guess they were stuck with nobody to do it so I've been doing it.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): I'm going to go to Wes MacAleer and then to Wilbur MacDonald.

Wes MacAleer (PC): An excellent presentation.

Adeline Trainor: Thank you.

Wes MacAleer (PC): Why are you interested in this? What motivates you to continue to support this?

Adeline Trainor: Actually, I came on board five years ago. One of the teachers at Bluefield was really overwhelmed because she's on a lot of committees and she asked me if I'd help out; and I just became really passionate about it because I saw the passion in the kids and how involved and excited they got about it and I just really, fully enjoy it and I think it's a wonderful cause. But I guess the biggest thing that really got to me is when I started meeting people, victims and offenders. That's what really got to me. I'm like, there's a reason to fight here. There's a reason. You know, when you sit down with the parents and they're weeping because they're sitting there telling you about seeing their child in a morgue. That's what gets you and that's why I'm here today and that's why I'll probably be in SADD for quite a long time.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Wilbur MacDonald.

Wilbur MacDonald (PC): I just want to, just for the record, review the drug recognition expert testing that you have passed around because you want to keep them. It's somewhat, it's a consistent flow of steps and the drug recognition expert, we only have the one now, is that right, in the province?

Adeline Trainor: To my knowledge, yes.

Wilbur MacDonald (PC): Will these people who - say the RCMP stop somebody and they think they're on drugs, they would have to take that person to the drug expert.

Adeline Trainor: They call him out, yeah.

Wilbur MacDonald (PC): He comes out.

Adeline Trainor: Yeah.

Wilbur MacDonald (PC): Well, some of these, are some of the tests are like in a dark room - examination of vital signs, dark room examination of pupil size, a check of muscle tone, an examination of typical injection sites in a person's body, and the provision of body fluid samples. A person must pass eight exams in two practical tests and that he or she must also complete at least 12 drug evaluation detecting the minimum of four different classes of drugs. It's quite a test,

isn't it? How long would this take, do you know?

Adeline Trainor: Actually, I do not know.

Wilbur MacDonald (PC): It says at the beginning that the effect of some drugs are short-lived so the arresting officer would have to make a move fairly quickly, wouldn't he, to find -

Adeline Trainor: I would think, yes, absolutely but again I wouldn't -

Wilbur MacDonald (PC): It's much more complicated than alcohol.

Adeline Trainor: Exactly, exactly. I do agree with that, absolutely.

Wilbur MacDonald (PC): But I'm sure as time goes by, they may come up with a different set of tests, may come up with a machine too.

Adeline Trainor: That's what we're hoping for.

Wilbur MacDonald (PC): It's very interesting to see that it consists of 12 steps and it was developed by the Los Angeles Police Department.

Adeline Trainor: In the early Eighties, I believe.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): David McKenna.

Dr. David McKenna (PC): One final question. I know my daughter was doing something on peer education this year and there was a fair section on drugs and alcohol in that section. Is that tied in with your group as well? They went for a weekend some place. Where was it? No, I think this year it was in North Winsloe. I can't remember where it was. Is that tied in with the SADD group as well? Do you get involved with that?

Adeline Trainor: No, we do not. We work -

Dr. David McKenna (PC): It was a good. I kind of read the materials over myself.

Adeline Trainor: Yeah. Actually, they do have a lot in common. You know, they work toward the same goals and things like that but, no, we don't do any work together. I know with SADD PEI they do a little bit of work with Allied Youth in the sense that if SADD is having a provincial conference,

they contact Allied Youth and they share guest speakers and stuff like that so there are other areas there.

Dr. David McKenna (PC): Work at that a little bit.

Adeline Trainor: Yeah. There's a little bit of networking going on that's very positive.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): In conclusion, I would like to point out here and direct members' attention to some earlier material we had regarding repeat impaired driving offenders by age and county and it is interesting to note that the only category where there is no second time offender is in the age 15 to 19 area and the numbers of first-time offenders in that age group is like the rest of the numbers of impaired driving on the Island declining generally on that downward decline, which is proof positive that your program is having a very desired, good desired effect out there in our community, and I want to thank you both very much. Do you have a final question, Wes?

Wes MacAleer (PC): I was wondering how we connected here. You're appearing before this committee. You're representing SADD -

Adeline Trainor: I'm basically -

Wes MacAleer (PC): - and I'm just trying to determine - You said your specific area of interest is Bluefield so did -

Adeline Trainor: Yes, but basically, I'm representing, today I'm representing the eastern school district to a degree.

Wes MacAleer (PC): The eastern school district.

Adeline Trainor: In a sense because I'm not representing the teacher/advisors and I'm representing the SADD student volunteers. I'm kind of the one voice speaking for us all.

Wes MacAleer (PC): Alright, we're pleased that you were able to show up.

Adeline Trainor: Thank you very much.

Wes MacAleer (PC): I was just trying to determine how we connected with you as opposed

to other high schools or whatever. Was it because of your initiative to come here or?

Adeline Trainor: Well, basically, Jody was in contact with me and -

Wes MacAleer (PC): Okay, we really appreciate your input.

Adeline Trainor: Well, thank you and I thank each of you for your time.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): On behalf of everyone on the committee, I want to thank you both very much for appearing here today and for sharing with us your ideas on how to improve our situation on Prince Edward Island. We appreciate your time.

Adeline Trainor: Thank you.

Part II - Abegweit Driving School - Louise MacDonald

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): And our second presenter today will be Louise MacDonald - I should know that - the instructor and owner of the Abegweit Driving School and I know perhaps many members at the table might have had children who are graduates of the Abegweit Driving School. I think I had two.

Louise MacDonald: Novice drivers, Wayne.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): I beg your pardon.

Louise MacDonald: Novice drivers.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Novice drivers, okay.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): Maybe even some of us went to it.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): That's right. Maybe some are, you know.

Adeline Trainor: Mr. Collins, could I just, before I go back there? Does anyone have the copy of Drug Recognition Expert Testing?

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Yes and you want to pick them up again, right.

Adeline Trainor: Yes, please.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Did you get mine? Okay. I believe mine's been taken up.

Adeline Trainor: They all came back.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): I thank you very much.

Louise MacDonald, welcome. I'm so glad you could make it here today. I think if there's anyone in this province who knows what's going on between the ears of some novice drivers in this country, it is you and I want to thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to be with us. And Louise, perhaps you could introduce yourself a little further, a little bit of your background before you make your presentation.

Louise MacDonald: Certainly. Thank you Wayne. I'd like to say hello to everyone on the standing committee. I recognize most of the faces here, some people from eastern PEI and other parts.

My name is Louise MacDonald. I'm the President of Abegweit Driving School Limited. I've been in the road safety education industry here on Prince Edward Island for 25 years. I've worked hard, traveled far all across Canada to take training, to encourage education and to promote safer drivers in this province for a long, long time. I want to thank Mary Perry from the Highway Safety Division for calling and inviting me here today and I know it's a public forum but Mary did take the time to call me and invite me to present. I will at any time welcome questions. I'm a question and answer kind of presenter. That's really how I like to do it so feel free at any time to ask me a question please. I have a very short presentation but I have a lot to say.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): We're taking notes right now.

Louise MacDonald: Well, I do have a lot to say. Some may be good; some not. I understand that the agenda today is to, part of the agenda, or the agenda today and part of the standing committee's efforts is to combat drinking and driving here in the Province of Prince Edward Island. That is a very big undertaking, as we all know.

My, the first thing I would like to raise is the

definition of impaired driving. We all call it impaired driving but there's more than alcohol that impairs a driver. When I teach a driver education program, when I teach a new class of novice drivers, when we start the segment on impaired driving, the first thing I do is put the word "impairment" on the board with a cloud around it and ask them. Okay, what do you think impairs a driver? What's impaired driving? And of course, right off the top is alcohol and drugs and I go: Is that it? And then I say: okay, is drinking and driving legal? And they go: No, it's not legal to drink and drive. And I go: Oh yes, it is. It is totally legal to drink and drive here in this province. If you're under the age of 19, it's illegal for you to drink and drive. It's zero tolerance. If you're over the age of 19, you are legally allowed to consume alcohol and operate a motor vehicle until you reach the point of .08 per cent blood alcohol concentration.

Now I don't go into the detail with a bunch of novice drivers that I'm going into right now because I certainly don't want them going out there and thinking it's legal or okay. But in the interests of explaining my point to the committee, drinking in relation to driving and impaired driving are actually two different things. If you were to look at the charges here in the Province of Prince Edward Island, one is impaired driving and the other is being over the legal limit. There is a difference. The agenda here today is to talk about combatting drinking in relation to driving. The reason I'm bringing, making this point and bringing this up is because I think that we need to broaden the definition of impaired driving and be more specific about it being alcohol in relation to driving; and instead of using the term "impaired driving" all the time, we should be using the term "alcohol" in relation to driving and drinking in relation to driving and it being legal over the .08 level or illegal, sorry.

I get a lot of questions from novice drivers in the classroom. I ask them, they're all, most of them, 80 per cent of my students are under the age of 18 and I ask them how many of you know people who drink and actually operate a vehicle and you're under the age of 19, which is the legal drinking age here in this province and 70 per cent of them will raise their hand. They will say: Oh yes, I know people who drink and drive, even though it's zero tolerance in that age group. They don't know why they do it but it's happening. It's out there all the

time and it's certainly not lack of education.

As Ms. Trainor said and what the SADD organization does here in the Province of Prince Edward Island, everyone knows it's illegal to drink alcohol and operate a motor vehicle or to consume drugs, be it legal or illegal and operate a motor vehicle. Everybody knows that already so what's the problem. Why is it still happening? There's a certain percentage of people who will take those chances and there's a certain percentage of people who will take the chance and get charged on their first offence and never do it again and then, of course, there's people who just plain would not do it for love nor money.

Under the age of 19 is zero tolerance. If we were serious about stopping impaired driving here in this country, it would be zero tolerance across the board no matter how old you are. We have zero tolerance in seatbelt use, zero tolerance. You are not allowed to drive without a seatbelt. Why are we allowed to drink and drive? That makes no sense to me. I think we have to start educating people at a younger age in more than alcohol in relation to driving. When I say broaden the definition of impairment in relation to driving, well, fatigue is a big issue in relation to driving. Everyone here has suffered from that - attending meetings late at night, getting in your vehicle and driving home and feeling the effects of fatigue. We're adults. We supposedly know what to do about that. I think if we start at a younger age and encourage people to be, to broaden their scope in relation to driving and impairment in general.

We need to educate, encourage education and we need to educate the people who provide the service more. I've been providing the service here in this province for a lot of years and I constantly am developing and changing and upgrading and re-defining and re-developing our program to make it more interesting and to stay current. There are educators in my industry across the country who have never changed the way they do it. We need to encourage more education for the educators. We have to encourage novice drivers to be educated that it is more important than just passing the test. You need to have information.

Alcohol in relation to driving, if you want to stop it at the 15 to 19 age group level, it has to come from the peers. We can talk all we want but until those peers say it, until the leaders in that age group say it, that's what makes it unacceptable and it is now.

You would not believe that at age group that I deal with, 15 to 19, how it is unacceptable to do it. They don't like to hang out with people who drink and drive but yet it still happens. It has to come from the peers. It has to be more socially unacceptable. We need zero tolerance across the board. We need more education. We need more education for the educators. The consequences, everybody is very well aware of the consequences.

I've brought some information here that we present to the students and one of them is this pamphlet put out by the provincial government called "Your Driver's License" and here's how I get them to read this. I tell them that in your beginners' test, which is the test you need to write to get your beginners' permit to start to drive here on Prince Edward Island, that there's six questions on the beginners' test in this purple pamphlet so you better read it and they do because of that. It's all the consequences, all the *Criminal Code* offences, the graduated licensing where there falls a newly licensed driver. All the alcohol related charges are listed in this.

We have another pamphlet called "The Islander's Guide to Drinking, Driving, and the Law" that is put out by the Community Legal Information Association that defines the charges, whether it's impaired driving over the legal limit, and I educate the students to understand the differences between the charges and to understand the differences between alcohol in relation to driving and other things that impair their driving. I try to broaden the scope of what it is they already know because they do already know that it is illegal to drink and drive a vehicle here in the province.

I also refer to getting charged as opposed to getting caught. When we use the term you get caught, we're alluding to not getting caught. I try to make it a little more realistic for them and say you don't get caught. You get charged.

And we do a lot of question and answers and we do a lot of discussions about the reality of what it is that the people in the age group that I work with the most are dealing with out there. In reality, what they actually deal with every Friday and Saturday night when they go out there, and when I have students say to me I take the car, so I don't have to drink, I'm like: Okay, there's the peer pressure.

It's like Ms. Trainor said. Students against drinking. That's what she gets - you're against drinking. So there are people out there in that age group - 15 to 19 - that feel a lot of pressure that they have to drink and that one way for them to avoid it is to take the vehicle. And parents will say it, too: I know when they're not drinking. They take the car. So in the days when the parents didn't want us to take the car, now parents are encouraging their novice drivers to take the car, and that's basically what I would like to say today.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Louise, I thank you very much. We have questions. Wes?

Wes MacAleer (PC): Louise, in clarifying your opening statement concerning the law and the need to expand or change the definition of the infraction, I thought you were backwards in what you were explaining. You were saying that the definition should be defined in terms of alcohol impairment?

Louise MacDonald: Yes. Well, I've heard the term impaired driving here many times today, but there's many other things that will impair a driver.

Wes MacAleer (PC): And I agree with that, but you're saying that the law as it's currently defined is too narrow or is it too broad?

Louise MacDonald: There are two charges here when it comes to the crimes. One of the charges is impaired driving. It says that it is an offence to drive or have care and control of a motor vehicle while your ability to drive is impaired by alcohol or any other drug.

Then there is the charge of being over the legal limit, where someone has taken a breath test and they've been over 0.8. Then there's the refusal, and then driving while prohibited or while disqualified, and I try to explain these different charges to the students so that they understand that it's not just alcohol that impairs a driver or drugs.

Wes MacAleer (PC): Okay.

Louise MacDonald: So when we talk, as a group, to try to combat drinking in relation to driving, when we use the word impaired driving, are we referring to just alcohol or everything? There has to be a line between alcohol in relation to driving and the

true meaning of impaired driving. They are two separate things, although we usually refer to alcohol in relation to driving as impaired driving.

Wes MacAleer (PC): Yes, okay. I see your point now.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Any further questions from committee members? Mr. Mooney?

Andy Mooney (PC): Well, I just wanted to throw out a point. I appreciate your presentation and I'm glad to hear it because my daughter actually (Indistinct) and more boys come and say it's nice to know what they're going to be subjected to when they're there.

Louise MacDonald: Or what you're going to be subjected to.

Andy Mooney (PC): Yes, I'm quite pleased to hear that.

Louise MacDonald: We use a variety of teaching tools as well, and a lot of video presentations and a lot of . . . we get a lot of the students to do work in the classroom in relation to impaired driving and I think one of my points here today that I was trying to make is that we may be - I hate to use the word overeducating in relation to alcohol because everyone knows that alcohol in relation to driving is a big no-no - and with the assignments that I have students do in the classroom, I've even gotten to the point where I've said: Nothing in relation to drinking, please. We want something else. They know that already.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): May I ask you a question? This is not necessarily directly related to impaired driving or alcohol abuse, but from time to time, and we've maybe even looked at it here in our Committee, of the whole issue of novice driver programs or, as some provinces refer to it, the graduated licensing program. I don't think that's the formal name we've put on it in Prince Edward Island.

Louise MacDonald: Yes, it is, actually.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Graduated licensing? Okay. People can drive between midnight and 5 a.m.?

Louise MacDonald: Yes.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): As a driving instructor, mainly 80% of your clients are young people. Do you think we need to go even further with our graduated licensing or is it fine the way it is?

Louise MacDonald: Oh, no, it's not. We need much more. Our graduated licensing program, would you like me to define it? Our graduated licensing program here in the Province of Prince Edward Island starts with a novice driver at 15 and a half years of age, they can get a beginner's permit if they're actively enrolled in a driver education program here on Prince Edward Island.

If they're not already in a driver education program, they have to wait until they're 16. They must have their learner's or beginner's permit for a minimum of 180 days before they can get licensed here in the province.

While they have their beginner's permit, they are allowed to drive the vehicle any time of the day or night, anywhere, with a driver who's had their license at least four years and the immediate family of the licensed driver is allowed in the vehicle with them as long as there are no more passengers than there are seatbelts.

As a newly licensed driver, the first year - well, they're on probation for the first two years they're licensed. The first year, they are allowed three passengers other than immediate family, so if you have a seven-passenger vehicle, you would have the driver, you would have three friends and three members of the driver's family would be allowed in the vehicle for a total of seven people. No more passengers than there are seatbelts. There's zero tolerance on the alcohol until they're 19. It's for the first two years for any driver, but if you're 16, then it's zero tolerance until they're 19, and that's it.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): And you think that's inadequate?

Louise MacDonald: Oh, big time.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): I'm just looking at a comparative draft here of other provinces, and to look it over, I can't say for certain, but I think that many of the other provinces have the same, or even less stringent, than we are.

Louise MacDonald: Yeah. Well, it's way better

than it was, but for instance, the 180 days that a novice driver must have their permit, they could literally drive five hours in 180 days.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): (Indistinct)

Louise MacDonald: Well, you probably had 90 days.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): No, I had to wait six months.

Louise MacDonald: Really?

Wilbur MacDonald (PC): You got yours at 15 and a half.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): I waited six months and one day because somebody said: Don't go in the day of because it'll look bad (Indistinct).

Louise MacDonald: Well, it was 30 days when I got my license. Talk about dating yourself.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): I'm just thinking of this. It says: The permit expires after one year, minimum length of learner's stage, six months.

Louise MacDonald: Right.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): So -

Louise MacDonald: Valid for one year?

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Yes.

Louise MacDonald: Do you know the average newly-licensed driver that passes a road test in the Province of Prince Edward Island has a minimum of 20 hours of driving, usually 20 hours of experience before a license, and yet they have their permit for 180 days?

Dr. David McKenna (PC): Driving with an instructor.

Louise MacDonald: No, in general, or with an instructor or a parent or a co-pilot or - 20 hours is not much if we wonder why novice drivers crash in the first year. I suggest 100 hours before licensing.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Not by length of time, but by hours of experience. All right, interesting

point. Any further questions? Robert?

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): (Indistinct) a great topic. How do we get that? How do we guarantee that they do the 100 hours?

Louise MacDonald: Well, they don't.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): Is that provided through schools or yourself or -

Louise MacDonald: I will speak in terms of my school and what it is that I've developed. I ask every novice driver when they start in the car with their instructor is given a sheet - it's called a driving log and it's broken up into 24 weeks.

It has four sixes, 24, so every week, they're to record the amount of hours they've driven, and there's a comments section and we explain that okay, bad weather, heavy rain, icy roads, nighttime. You know, just kind of elaborate a little bit on the conditions you were driving under, add up the hours, and your co-pilot signs it, and then at the end of the 24 weeks, the closest to 100 hours that you have that, the better, and it's making a major difference. I can tell now a 50-hour driver, if I road test a student that's had 50 hours, I can say: You've had about 50 or 60 hours. And they'll go: Yeah.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): And what else do you think we should change in terms of graduated driver's licenses?

Louise MacDonald: Well, the 180 days is ineffective because it's more like a punishment than an encouragement. If someone was encouraged to have x amount of experience prior to licensing, then they would be more inclined to go about getting that, and when I send a driving log home with a novice driver, I say: This tool will get you more driving because when your co-pilot looks at that and goes: Whoa. They'll say: Well, you'd better get driving.

So it's true. It makes a major difference, and the caliber of drivers is quite high, and if you think about impairment - the things we go over about impairment in relation to drivers, with novice drivers, is we try to have you realize it's not the music that's the impairment. It's the act of changing the music.

That's what's the problem, which is really teaching them about distractors and inattention and how to stay focused and I can't stand in front of a group of 20 students - a very captive audience - and beat them to death about alcohol in relation to driving. That's like saying: What does that red eight-sided sign mean? They knew that in Grade one.

You have to go with what it is those people want to learn. You have to give them what it is they want and what it is, more importantly, they need. That is what they need, and when we put newly licensed drivers on the highways with a minimum, on average, of 20 hours of experience, we're not doing them any favours.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): David McKenna?

Dr. David McKenna (PC): Yes, (Indistinct). I would like to get your impressions on the curfew at midnight or whatever. Do you think that's a good thing or a bad thing or should -

Louise MacDonald: It's not effective.

Dr. David McKenna (PC): No big difference - it doesn't. . .

Louise MacDonald: It doesn't change a thing. A curfew from midnight to 5 a.m. wouldn't apply to a student or to a novice driver who has 100 hours of experience.

Dr. David McKenna (PC): Because my understanding, that's one of the factors we got out of our poor rating is because we don't have a curfew at midnight. Is that correct? It's one of the factors.

Louise MacDonald: Maybe that might be more important in downtown Toronto or in -

Dr. David McKenna (PC): Or you could take a subway. One more question.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Certainly.

Dr. David McKenna (PC): What about the number of people in the car? Do you think that's way too many? Should that be addressed?

Louise MacDonald: Oh, big time. Yes. Actually, I have my own little graduated licensing program

that I give to the parents, and I say that the first 10 hours they're licensed, they should be driving alone.

Dr. David McKenna (PC): (Indistinct) You mean . . .

Louise MacDonald: After licensing.

Dr. David McKenna (PC): Oh, sorry.

Louise MacDonald: Your daughter gets her driver's license today, the first 10 hours she drives after licensing should be alone. The next three months, she should be only allowed one passenger and one friend other than family. I try to encourage parents or co-pilots to realize that a license is just a license to get more practice. It does not mean all of a sudden that they're experts.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Just for the record here, and again, I'm referring to my little comparative guide here. I guess five provinces in Canada allow this to be - limit the number of passengers to the number of seatbelts. One province, British Columbia, has just a one-passenger limit in British Columbia.

Louise MacDonald: Do they have a time frame on that, Wayne?

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Yes. In British Columbia, the permit expires after 24 months. Minimum length of learner's stage: 12 months. So it seems to be a little bit more . . .

Louise MacDonald: Well, I know alcohol in relation to a group of novice drivers, if you have one person driving, they're allowed three passengers, three friends. There's only four other seatbelts. That's just room for the case of beer. Truly, the driver in this case never usually drinks. They don't. It's the friends who are, and it's the distraction of the friends that can cause that novice driver to crash. It doesn't have to be alcohol.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): It's great you're here today because I'm really appreciating your comments here, and there's one other question I have for you. Again, it relates to the broad issue of impaired driving. You said it isn't the music, but it's the changing of the music that's a distraction and a bother.

I don't know how you'd describe this - if you're at a stoplight and you hear the thump, thump, thump, thump, thump, and it's just some big bass speaker of someone's vehicle and it's deafening in your own vehicle and you wonder where's it coming from, how can that driver hear another horn of warning?

Louise MacDonald: Well, they would be absolutely no different than someone who is hearing-impaired. Someone who's hearing-impaired, though, teaches themselves to use their mirrors more or to use their other senses more.

When you have a novice driver who's driving down the street with their speakers that loud, they're just trying to gain attention. Music there is not the problem. They're all about people looking at them.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Oh, okay. Wes?

Wes MacAleer (PC): What's the ratio of students who are driving who take driver education versus those who don't?

Louise MacDonald: It was upwards to 55 per cent of the newly licensed drivers here in the province who were taking driver education programs. That number has dropped, but so have the birth rates in relation to the amount of people getting licensed. I'm not sure of the numbers, but that number is dropping.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Louise, if we were to move to some kind of a mandated number of hours prior to licensing, would you have to have then make driver education compulsory?

Louise MacDonald: Oh, absolutely. Do you know what a driver education program does? I explain learning how to drive is like building a house. I put in the foundation. You build the house. You have the biggest part of the job, and it goes on for the rest of your life. We lead novice drivers into a very false sense of security by telling them that if they pass the test, they're a great driver, and it's not so. That's a very false sense of security.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): It's experience.

Louise MacDonald: It's experience. We all know that. Well, if you think back to your own issues and your own learning, but try to tell a newly licensed 16-year-old driver that they don't know what

they're doing.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Try to tell a 16-year-old anything that they don't want to.

Louise MacDonald: And it's funny because males - I've had females, too - but I've had more male drivers at 21, 22, 23 years old come back to me and say: If I'd only known what I didn't know. I thought I knew so much. Of course, the voice of experience is speaking there.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Robert?

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): Out of the - if you can give us a percentage of new drivers that got licensed, how many go through programs such as yours?

Louise MacDonald: About 55 per cent of the newly licensed drivers in the province take driver education programs.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): So there's still 45 per cent that don't?

Louise MacDonald: Right, and that number is down. It's less than 50 per cent now. That number I'm speaking to is probably two years old.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): But for example - but how much does your program cost?

Louise MacDonald: My program is \$550.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): So if you're a parent, a single parent making \$22,000 or \$23,000 a year, how can they afford to send their child to do that?

Louise MacDonald: Right. Well, if they're lucky enough to get me on the phone, they'll probably be in the program and be on the long payment plan because I do everything in my power, including giving it away.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): It's not a tax writeoff for the parents?

Louise MacDonald: No. It used to be, but not anymore. There used to be a tax deduction because we live in a rural province and a license is a requirement in terms of employment in so

many cases, and that used to be. I provided all the forms for the people to use it on their income tax. I passed it out with every student with their certificate, and then all of a sudden, it changed in Newfoundland. It came out in Newfoundland.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): David McKenna?

Dr. David McKenna (PC): Just getting back to the program. I'm surprised that the number's that low, actually, and I thought it was 80 per cent of students took the program. I'm really surprised. All of my kids are taking it, I'll tell you that. Just getting back to the program, now for insurance purposes, isn't insurance rates better when you take the program?

Louise MacDonald: Yes. There is an insurance incentive.

Dr. David McKenna (PC): And what percent - do you know roughly - I know it's in (Indistinct)

Louise MacDonald: I can't quote the insurance percentage because so many variables effect the price of your insurance.

Dr. David McKenna (PC): Right, yes. The car (Indistinct).

Louise MacDonald: How many drivers? How many vehicles? What type of vehicle? Was there any previous claims? I know that my students will get an insurance reduction because they've completed a driver education program and it is valuable to them for three years unless there's a claim against the insurance, which automatically indicates the discount, and I try to assume that it covers the cost to the program and I'd tell them to check it out with their insurance company for the exact figures.

Dr. David McKenna (PC): So that's an incentive there to use (Indistinct) at that age, they're (Indistinct).

Louise MacDonald: So there's an incentive in the insurance area. There's an incentive in a program and they come in at 15 and a half if they take driver education, and ...

Dr. David McKenna (PC): Well just the knowledge because. . .

Louise MacDonald: Well, there is the actual learning, which seems to be at the bottom of the pile.

Dr. David McKenna (PC): Yes, but (Indistinct).

Louise MacDonald: Yes.

Dr. David McKenna (PC): Thank you.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Louise, it is always a pleasure to hear you speak on this issue. We always learn a great deal from you, and I thank you very much and I encourage you to continue the good work to make our Island highways safer day by day.

Louise MacDonald: Yes.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Thank you for coming in.

Louise MacDonald: Thank you very much, Wayne. It's always a pleasure to talk about what I live and breathe.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Great. Thank you very much.

Louise MacDonald: Anytime.

Wayne Collins (PC)(Chair): Now committee members, before everyone runs away, we're going to have a short in camera session of the committee and I promise you it won't be very long at all, so do we have a motion to go in camera? All of those in favour say yea.

(Some Committee Members): Yea.