



In April 2008, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) announced its intent to close 23 school pools by June 2008, and another 16 school pools in June 2009, as a result of not having the operating or capital funds available to maintain them. Since that time, thousands of Torontonians have come together to save these valuable community assets from closing.

1. What is Let's Make Waves (LMW)?

Created in 2008, *Let's Make Waves* is a volunteer, non-partisan coalition of parents, students, concerned citizens, and members of not-for-profit sports organizations from across the city of Toronto united by a common interest to advocate for swimming pools in Toronto schools and for aquatic recreation for all residents of Toronto.

2. How is Let's Make Waves different than the Aquatic Working Group (AWG)?

In March 2008, the TDSB asked David Crombie, Chair of the Toronto Land's Corporation to propose a long-term sustainable solution for the continued use of the Board's pools. In September 2008, the Aquatic Working Group (AWG) was created to develop a community-based long-term strategy for the use of pools. The AWG includes swim clubs, aquatics instructors, parent councils, trustees, representatives from the City, Province and TDSB as well as organizations like the YMCA, The Canadian Tire Foundation for Families, *Let's Make Waves*, and the LifeSaving Society.

In March 2009, the Toronto Land's Corporation Report "Long-term Strategy for 39 Pools in the TDSB" was submitted to the TDSB. See www.torontosportscouncil.com for a copy of the report and recommendations.

3. What was the response from the TDSB to the AWG Report?

In April 2009, the TDSB voted to keep open 13 of the pools because permit revenue was sufficient to cover the incremental costs of operating these pools. Trustees voted to close 7 pools permanently at the end of the school year. They agreed to put a further 19 pools on probation and that if sufficient revenue was generated to offset their incremental operating costs they would remain open. The deadline for these 19 pools to generate sufficient revenue was August 31, 2009.

In June 2009, the TDSB Trustees approved their budget for 2009/10 and voted to keep open another 7 pools: George S. Henry, Malvern, Forest Hill, Rosedale, North Toronto (until the new school is open), Humberstone and West Toronto (not part of the original AWG mandate). The remaining 13 probationary pools were to be closed on August 31st but not drained until December 31st pending sufficient funding from community & corporate sponsorship to offset the incremental operating costs. The lists as of June 2009, are below.

Open	Probation	Closed
1. Allenby Jr PS	1. Carleton Village Junior P.S.	1. Bickford Centre
2. AY Jackson SS	2. Central Technical School	2. Bloor CI
3. Deer Park PS	3. Downsview SS	3. Central Commerce CI
4. Forest Hill CI	4. Earl Grey Sr PS	4. Danforth C & TI
5. George S Henry Academy	5. Fern Avenue Jr & Sr PS	5. Oakwood CI
6. Glenview Sr PS	6. Geroge Harvey CI	6. Parkdale CI
7. Harbord CI	7. Jarvis CI	7. Ursula Franklin Academy
8. Humberstone CI	8. Kensington CS	
9. Keele St Jr PS	9. Monarch Park CI	
10. Lawrence Park CI	10. Queen Alexandra Sr PS	
11. Malvern CI	11. SATEC @ WA Porter CI	
12. Newtonbrook SS	12. Western Tech CS	
13. North Toronto CI	13. Winona PS	
14. Northern SS		
15. RH King Academy		
16. Riverdale CI		
17. Rosedale Heights		
18. Stephen Leacock CI		
19. West Toronto CI**		
20. Westview Centennial		

** West Toronto was not on the initial list which is why this list of 39 is 40

4. Why did the TDSB vote to close 7 pools as of August 31, 2009?

The 7 “closed” pools were identified in the TLC Report as being prohibitive to repair. The report recommended their closure but referred them to the City for inclusion in their review of the City’s Indoor Pool Aquatic Strategy.

5. What has happened to these 7 pools? Were they really closed?

The pools located at ...

1. Bickford Centre,
2. Bloor CI,
3. Central Commerce CI,
4. Danforth C&TI,
5. Oakwood CI,
6. Parkdale CI,
7. Ursula Franklin Academy

... have all been drained and they WILL NOT be considered for future operations. These communities have permanently lost these assets as resources.

(Photo to the right: Danforth pool, September 2009)



6. The TDSB referred these 7 facilities for inclusion in their review of the City of Toronto’s Indoor Pool Strategy. What was the City’s response?

After hearing from thousands of its residents, the City of Toronto has continually maintained that they are not part of the solution to keep any TDSB pools from closing. This, despite knowing that City Parks & Rec swim programs are not able to meet the current demand for services, and that the City already permits 33 TDSB pools for 45% of its programming. The City has not released a date for its Indoor Pool Strategy report.

7. Why should the City be responsible for pools owned by the TDSB? What is the City’s position?

The majority of school pools are located in Metro Toronto, and were built prior to amalgamation, including the 9 on probation. Schools were built to act as community hubs rather than needing to build separate community centres. Furthermore, like all cities in North America, LMW believes that aquatic facilities for its residents are the responsibility of City Hall, and not that of the local school board.

In 2004, the City of Toronto Parks and Recreation Common Grounds Strategic Plan received unanimous approval by the City Councillors. This Plan included:

- Reco #41: Ensure all children in Toronto have the opportunity to learn how to swim
- Reco #53: The City of Toronto will work with the Toronto District School Board to achieve the objectives of our Common Grounds, especially those objectives for children and youth.

On August 5 and 6, 2009, Toronto City Council adopted the development of a City-wide, multi-year Recreation Service Plan guided by the principles of *Equitable, Quality, Inclusion* and *Capacity Building*. We are hoping these pools become part of this Plan.

8. Have any of the 13 “probation” pools been saved since the June 29th vote? What TDSB school pools are still on “probation” today?

Since June 2009, 4 pools have been moved from the probation list to open list. At the September 23, 2009 TDSB meeting, trustees voted to remove Jarvis CI, Queen Alexandra Sr. PS, Fern PS, and Downsview CI from the probation list and move to the open list. As a result, there are now 9 probationary pools.

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|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Carleton Village Jr PS | 6. Monarch Park CI |
| 2. Central Technical School | 7. SATEC @ WA Porter CI |
| 3. Earl Grey Sr PS | 8. Western Tech CS |
| 4. George Harvey CI | 9. Winona PS |
| 5. Kensington CS | |

Saving these pools will be the core focus of LMW advocacy between now and December 2009.

9. What happens if these 9 pools are still on probation as of December 31, 2009?

As it stands, the decision of the TDSB is that they will be drained and closed. If community demand and external revenue sources are not identified for the pools still on probation they will suffer the same fate as the 7 school pools that closed in the summer of 2009. There is no available plan on how these areas of the pool will be re-purposed, and there is currently no budget set aside for any capital to make any adjustment to this space. For closures prior to 2009, re-purposing has been paid for out of the individual school’s budget.

10. How did those 4 TDSB school pools move from the “probation” list to the “open” list?

Community support from schools, service providers and local community organizations must work together to increase the **permitting** and aquatic programming to cover the incremental costs of these pools. Find the need and fill it. Support is also needed to identify and secure any **sponsorship** dollars.

AWG has set up a **charity** for the pools, and any donation over \$20 will receive a taxable donation receipt. Donate on-line as follows:

- Go to www.CanadaHelps.org
- Where it says “I want to give to”: Enter Charity Name or Keyword, type in Toronto Community Foundation and click on “Search”.
- Click on “Donate Now” and Swim Toronto Fund.
- In “Fund/Designation” pull down menu, select “Swim Toronto Fund”.
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Alternatively cheques payable to Toronto Community Foundation – Swim Toronto Fund can be mailed to:
Toronto Community Foundation
33 Bloor Street East
Toronto, ON M4W 3H1

11. What do I need to do if I want to permit a TDSB school pool? How much does it cost?

- See <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/site/ViewItem.asp?siteid=179&menuid=15633&pageid=13844> for information regarding permits, rules and regulations.
- The permit application form can be found at <https://secure.tdsb.on.ca/survey/survey.asp?id=1132>
- The TDSB has supported a flat fee of \$50.00/hour – any pool, any user group.

12. What are the requirements to permit a TDSB school pool?

Specific detail regarding requirements to permit a TDSB school pool can be found on the application form at the url above. Important to note that a permit holder is required to hire a certified lifeguard(s) at their own cost and expense. The AWG has a list of lifeguards who have offered their services to permit holders. If you are a lifeguard who is interested in being placed on this list contact the AWG. TDSB Caretakers will open the pool room and ancillary areas only after being shown current lifeguard certificates of the required lifeguards and assistant lifeguards. The permit holder would be responsible for confirming availability and paying the lifeguard.

13. What about the capital costs to keep the “remain open” pools in a state of good repair?

In April 2009, Premier McGuinty pledged \$15.8 million for repairs and improvements over two years to bring the school pools into a state of good repair. This work has already started and will be offered to any of the original 32 pools who can cover the operating costs for that pool. .

14. How long are the aforementioned TDSB school pools “saved”?

In April 2009, Premier McGuinty pledged \$15.8 million for repairs and improvements over two years to bring the school pools into a state of good repair. This work has already started and will be offered for any of the original 32 pools recommended for probation by AWG where the operating costs can be covered for that pool. The agreement with the Province of Ontario requires the TDSB to keep the pool open for a minimum of 8 years. If they close the pool before the end of these 8 years, the TDSB will have to repay the capital spent on the pool.

15. What will become of the pools that have been closed?

No plans have been confirmed for how these former pools will be de-commissioned, including how the space will be re-allocated, if it can be. Furthermore, there is no budget set aside for how to re-purpose this un-used/ un-usable TDSB property. At three of the schools with pools that closed, they were identified by the TDSB as being required to timetable the school for physical education and therefore the TDSB will need to convert these to other space. These are: Bloor CI, Oakwood CI, Parkdale CI.

16. What community users are using the TDSB school pools, and/or who should I contact if I am interested in knowing about swim programs at my TDSB school pool?

Contact the AWG for an updated list of swim clubs executing programs out of your local school, both on an off the probationary list.

CALL TO ACTION

What can I, as a parent, a swimmer, or interested aquatics group, do to help 'save' my community pool?

- i. Create a 'story' for your pool. Using LMW guidelines as your starting point, identify ways in which your pool is distinct from others and should be considered as a viable resource for a target market you identify. For example...
 - a. Is it deep? Contact scuba clubs to let them know it is available for permitting.
 - b. Is it shallow? If so, that is excellent for young children who may need re-assurance when learning to swim so that they can touch the bottom.
 - c. Is it warm? This is also excellent for young swimmers, and for therapeutic use.
 - d. Is it accessible? Find groups with special needs, who have a need for this space.
 - e. Is it long? This makes it excellent for early morning adult lane swimming.
- ii. Market your pool to your community and target markets. Call them, email them. Get the word out.
- iii. Add to your story some facts and figures about your community. Call the local principal and ask about the socio-economic and ethnic diversity as his/her school. Use the references on the attached excel sheet. Find out if feeder schools are using this pool, and determine if other groups are interested in permitting it.
- iv. Contact the programs currently permitting at your school pool, to ask if they have room. If they do not, ask them to be placed on a waiting list. If there is enough of a need they may be willing to expand their program.
- v. Determine if there is an unmet need in your community. If a program is not currently offered, then contact an established swim club to inquire if they can commit to services run out of your school pool. Identify a need by finding a list of contacts who would be willing to sign up for a program.
- vi. Ask your local TDSB Trustee, City Councillor, and MPP to work together to help find a long-term sustainable solution for the pools in your community. *Use the story you have created to help them to understand what is unique about your pool.*
- vii. Contact your local TDSB Trustee, City Councillor, and MPP, asking them what they are doing specifically to help this cause. Keep them accountable by following up with email and phone calls, so that they deliver on what they promise they will do.
- viii. Contact local business owners, letting them know about the "Swim Toronto Fund" (Point 10 above) and encourage them to donate to a good cause.
- ix. Ask your employer if they have a budget for charitable contributions and encourage them to donate to the "Swim Toronto Fund" (Point 10 above)