



**Let's Make Waves!**

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## **'Pools Out' for Students of 39 TDSB Schools**

*For Immediate Release – June 26, 2008 – Toronto, Ontario* – Last night, TDSB Trustees defeated a motion that would have had the Board reconsider its decision to start the process of decommissioning all school-based pools. The motion was put forth by Trustees Josh Matlow and Chris Tonks.

If passed the motion would have allowed more time for all parties to work out a long-term solution. The motion came forward near the end of the meeting, just after 1:AM and oddly, unlike other motions tabled during the final Board meeting of the year, there was no discussion prior to the vote. A request for a recorded vote was denied. With only 14 Trustees remaining in attendance out of 22, it stood little chance of obtaining the 12 votes required for passing.

“By defeating this motion, the TDSB has stated unequivocally that they are out of the school pool business,” says Nancy Abbey, a member of Let's Make Waves. “Now the TDSB must step aside to allow the City, Province and other interested parties to work out the details of a Toronto Aquatic Plan, which would also include the funding and management of school pools. Until the City and the Province work out a long-term funding solution, no school pool should be drained.”

“The TDSB has not demonstrated an effort to work cooperatively with the stakeholders to find a long-term solution. Instead they are choosing to abdicate their responsibility for pools and play a game of brinkmanship to force other levels of government to step in.” says Peter LaMantia, a Let's Make Waves member. “While sympathetic to their many funding challenges, we are dismayed by the approach and disinterest in ensuring student access to quality physical education offered by these valued pool facilities. We will continue to press for cooperative engagement to find a workable solution to keep swimming programs functioning.”

Let's Make Waves is calling on mediator David Crombie to recommend a Special Adviser be appointed by the Provincial Government to work with the Toronto District School Board and the City of Toronto on a Toronto Aquatics Plan. In addition, the coalition calls on Mr. Crombie to recommend school pools not be drained until a Toronto Aquatics Plan is completed.

Currently, 23 school pools in Toronto are slated for closure in early to mid-August, with another 16 set to close as of June 2009. Last school year over 4,500 elementary school children learned how to swim during their school day and thousands of school swim team students used their school pool to train and compete.

The closure also affects thousands more Toronto residents who use the pools, located in TDSB schools, for aquatics programming.

Toronto has a higher proportion of its public pools in schools than any other urban centre in the country. If over 50% of the TDSB school pools are closed, the remaining pools owned by the City and the TDSB will not be able to meet the public demand for aquatic facilities.

### **ABOUT LET'S MAKE WAVES**

*Let's Make Waves* is a non-partisan coalition of parents, students, concerned citizens, and members of not-for-profit sports organizations from across the city of Toronto. We are united by a common interest to save the TDSB pools from closing.

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