



Let's Make Waves!

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The Pools are Community Assets, held in 'safekeeping' by the TDSB

Did you know that the pools represent a partnership between the City of Toronto and Toronto Board of Education, prior to amalgamation? **Did you know** that this was a conscious decision to make schools THE community hub rather than have separate community centres?



Did you know that the TDSB has voted to close 39 school pools by June 2009? This represents over half of the pools.

Did you know that Toronto has a higher proportion of its public pools in schools than any other urban centre in the country? It was part of the vision of our Urban Planners. (PERC Report)

The TDSB's decision to close school pools was done in haste:

The Staff advised Trustees using inaccurate and incomplete information

Did you know the main criteria used for selection of 23 pools for 2008 decommissioning was whether the school could timetable the Health and Physical Education programming without a swimming pool?

Did you know that at least 16 schools with pools slated for closure cannot timetable appropriate Health and Physical Education classes without use of their pool, and that there is no plan or financial analysis in place for how to execute this mandatory requirement?

- For example, without a pool Riverdale Collegiate will have limited gymnasium capacity and students would spend more than half of their class watching the sport being played rather than participating. (See *Let's Make Waves* assessment of Riverdale Collegiate on CD)
- For example at North Toronto Collegiate the field is currently a construction zone as a result of a new school being built, ready for occupancy in 2010. Next year 650 students, roughly 70% of the student population, are expected to sign up for Physical Education classes. Without a pool, it will be impossible to accommodate those classes. Why not keep the pool open until 2010 when the old facility will be demolished? (See news article in *Let's Make Waves* folder on CD)



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The Money

Did you know that the closure of over half the pools in the TDSB (\$4MM) represents an assumed savings of less than 0.5% of the TDSB's overall budget?

Did you know that when *Let's Make Waves* offered to come in and examine the books to find the \$4MM needed to keep the pools open, our offer was refused? (emails provided upon request)

Did you know that the TDSB cannot clearly demonstrate the cost benefits that will result from each of the pools being de-commissioned at a site level?

Did you know that the TDSB has no accurate, current hard data on the cost of operating and maintaining each individual pool? These records do not exist because they are not kept.

Did you know that TDSB claims capital repairs for school pools to be \$56 million, based on 2002 Building Inspection Reports? The TDSB has poor recording keeping to know what repairs have been done to which pools since 2002, even though caretakers tell members of *Let's Make Waves* that repairs have been done. Request by *Let's Make Waves* to get the information from the TDSB have been denied.

Did you know that the TDSB claims they will save \$4 million by closing 23 school pools in 2008 based on assumed operating costs per square feet rather than actual operating costs for each pool?

Did you know that *Let's Make Waves* has met with community groups who tell us they pay to use the pools, and upon looking at the TDSB documentation that calculates permit revenue per pool, the information they have is inaccurate and incomplete?

Did you know that the Toronto Swim Club approached the TDSB to use a pool but their hourly rate is \$185/hour? The TSC uses the much bigger University of Toronto pool for \$85/hour instead.

Did you know that the Toronto Swim Club trains for an average of 30 hours a week for 35 weeks of the year? These 1,050 hours, at a market rate of \$85/hour, represents an annual income of \$89,250? With this in mind, over the past 10 years the TDSB has turned down a revenue opportunity of almost \$1 million because they don't charge market rates.



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Swimming Pools contribute to the Curriculum and Overall Learning

Did you know that it is a TDSB mandated part of the curriculum to provide 20 minutes of Health and Physical Education each day, for students from grades 1-8? Decommissioning the pools will prohibit the TDSB from allowing this to happen, as the pools are a necessary teaching space.

Did you know that *Let's Make Waves* is currently conducting a school by school assessment of the impact of each pool's closure on the Physical Education curriculum at the school impacted (see attachment of Riverdale Collegiate Institute's assessment). If the 14-year old, state of the art pool at Riverdale closes, teachers will need to divide their large gymnasium in half, or use their field, to execute their Phys Ed programming. Scheduling more classes outside is not a feasible option as Riverdale Collegiate ranks among the bottom 10 schools (out of 554) for square foot of field space per student with only 116 square feet per student. (TDSB Field Stats)

Did you know that the greatest amount of field space is in Chairman John Campbell's Ward? Students in Ward #2 enjoy 1,075 square foot of field space per student. (TDSB Field Stats)

Did you know that across the TDSB the Learning Opportunity Index is 0.532? The average for schools with pools is 0.474 The average for schools without pool average: 0.541 This is a statistically significant difference and indicates that pools may contribute to better overall learning.

Did you know there are 4500 elementary school children who learn to swim as part as part of their school day, in the 10 elementary school pools slated for closure? Where will these children continue to learn this lifelong sport, knowing that swimming programs in the City already have waiting lists? (PERC Report)

Did you know that 520 elementary students swim on their school's swim team? Furthermore the TDSB has refused to provide *Let's Make Waves* with information to say how many Secondary school students swim on their school swim team. (emails provided upon request)

Did you know that closing the 39 pools in June 2008 and June 2009 will cripple the existing inter-school competitive swimming program, as there will not be enough schools with teams to compete against each other.

Did you know that in schools with pools, 95% of children can swim by grade 6? (Red Cross)

Did you know that drowning is the leading cause of death after motor vehicle accidents, for Canadian children under the age of 14? (Lifesaving Society, Red Cross)

Did you know that although this specific issue deals with closing the pools, the fundamental issue is that the TDSB wants to get out of the business of teaching swimming. In other countries such as England and Japan, swimming is considered a life skill and a comprehensive school swim program exists as part of the curriculum. The TDSB has no plan on how to ensure that our school children are taught to swim.



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The City of Toronto and the TDSB really need to talk...

Did you know that the City of Toronto Parks and Recreation Common Grounds Strategic Plan received unanimous approval by the Councillors in 2004. This Plan included:

- Recommendation #41: Ensure all children in Toronto have the opportunity to learn how to swim
- Recommendation #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.

Did you know that the City of Toronto currently relies on 33 pools run by the TDSB to fulfill almost half of its Parks and Recreation programming?

Did you know that the City of Toronto currently pays the TDSB \$5.3 million to access the TDSB school pools to deliver Parks & Recreation programming? Since 2003, the City has reduced the number of schools it accesses for swimming from 47 to 33.

Did you know that the reason the TDSB is not closing the pools the City uses is because they have a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Toronto to fund those pools until 2011? In 2011 many of those pools will likely suffer the same fate as the 39 currently slated for decommissioning as the City is specifically working to reduce their reliance on school pools for aquatic programming. (PERC Report)

Did you know that the TDSB has not yet signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Toronto to keep the 33 school pools open until 2011? Until they do, talks with the City are stalemated.

Did you know that in hundreds of school swim team members and thousands of community recreation and competitive swimmers will need to find swim time in the 40 remaining school pools and/or the 30 City owned pools once planned decommissioning occurs?

Did you know that the majority of schools with pools are located in Metro Toronto, and were built prior to amalgamation? Schools were built to act as community hubs - pools were a part of that philosophy - rather than needing to build separate community centres.

The City of Toronto's Aquatics Plan

Did you know that in April 2004, the City of Toronto retained the services of a consulting company to prepare a Strategy for the Provision of Indoor Pools? It is most often referred to as the PERC Report.

Did you know that the PERC Report confirms Toronto has only 30 City owned and operated indoor pool facilities for 2.5 million people? These pools are located in: North York District (6), Toronto & East York (11), Etobicoke York (10) and Scarborough (3).

Did you know that Toronto's swim rate of 1.1 swims per capita in publicly accessible pools is less than one third the lowest swim rate *ever measured* in a Canadian urban centre, large or small? The acceptable average is between 4 and 8.

Did you know that although they agreed with the findings, City Council has asked the writers of the PERC Report to re-evaluate their work and create a new strategy? **Did you know** that the City has not made the results of PERC Report 2 public, despite the fact the work is complete?



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The Province triggered the problem in 1998

Did you know the Provincial government created the funding problem in 1998 when they amalgamated 7 school boards and implemented a new funding formula for education. When introduced, the funding formula was supposed to provide for existing services to be maintained, yet it has never had specific funding assigned for aquatics.

Did you know that prior to 1998, pool costs were addressed through the normal budget process and local education tax levy.

Did you know that since 1998, the TDSB has received no operating or capital repair funding whatsoever from the Ministry of Education, for its school pools.

Kids need Room to Run...

Did you know that the average of field space per student at TDSB schools without pools is 684 square feet/student compared to 408 square feet/student for schools with pools? This is a statistically significant difference. (TDSB Field Stats and additional analysis)

Did you know that the ward with *the most field space* has 1,075 square feet per student? Students in Ward #2 do not have any pools built in their schools, but they have significantly more space to run outside. (TDSB Field Stats and additional analysis)

Did you know that John Campbell, the Chairman of the TDSB, is also the Trustee in Ward #2? Mr. Campbell has specifically said that pools are not a priority for the TDSB. (CBC Metro Morning Interview)

Did you know that while students in the 8 wards in the TDSB have *significantly less* field space than Ward #2, they are more likely to have school pools that currently provide a needed resource to help fulfill the mandatory weekly Health and Physical Education requirement.

Did you know of among the eight wards that *Let's Make Waves* defines as extreme risk (in part because of their statistically significance lack of field space), there are 44 schools that have pools? By June 2009 26 of these pools are scheduled to be de-commissioned.



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About "Let's Make Waves"

Did you know that *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 pools located in TDSB schools, from closing. We welcome others to join us in our efforts. You can contact us with your comment or to request additional information at info@letsmakewaves.ca

Did you know that in June 2008 *Let's Make Waves* was awarded an Operating Grant by the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario? Thank you HSFO!

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