

## **Ward 3 Trustee Pamela Gough's Update January 8 2014**

*Happy New Year! As we start the year 2014, I would like to take the time to thank all of you on my e-newsletter list. Many of you read and respond to the newsletter in ways that are very helpful. Special thanks to my assistant, Debbie Wagdin, who distributes the newsletter, and to volunteer Alan Flynn, chair of Twentieth Street JS's SAC, for giving me advice on the format. I am very grateful.*

*This special edition of the newsletter will focus on the weather events we experienced over the last few weeks. If you have comments or questions, I welcome them.*

### **Ice Storm**

The holiday break was full of challenges for the TDSB due to the unprecedented extent of the ice storm and power failures. TDSB Director Donna Quan described the break as "operationally driven and hectic." She and many of the senior staff cancelled vacations and worked non-stop, including weekends and Christmas Day.

Many schools served as warming stations and some hosted Christmas breakfasts and dinners for community members. In a truly gracious gesture, Director Quan and senior staff personally served breakfast at one school-based warming centre on Christmas morning.

Since damage was so widespread, all 610 TDSB sites had to be inspected for safety and countless repairs made in order to bring them into safe operating condition. As you can imagine, this took time and was costly.

As of January 3, the estimated cost for additional staffing to deal with the post-storm problems was a minimum of \$395,000. These costs covered fire watches, heating breakdowns, floods, clearance of damaged rooms and equipment, removal of tree limbs, and repairs to mechanical and other systems. Overall costs have not yet come in but are expected to be in the range of \$1 million.

Schools with operating daycares in them were prioritized and opened as quickly as possible. Some parents unfortunately accrued childcare costs over the period that schools with daycares were closed for repairs or inspection. The TDSB System Response Team, led by Associate Director Lou Vavougiros, will be assessing requests for compensation and will respond as quickly as possible.

I am proud to say that as of January 6, all schools were up and running and only 12 schools of more than 600 sites had issues that impacted their functioning as learning places, most of which were relatively minor. All schools in Etobicoke-Lakeshore opened on the first day after break with full capacity intact.

TDSB management and facilities staff really did put in a magnificent effort and deserve many thanks.

### **Cold Snap**

In a classic case of one thing after another, the weather has been extremely cold over the last day and is expected to stay cold until the end of the week. Although TDSB schools are staying open, busses may be cancelled since they are diesel-powered and difficult to start and run in very cold weather.

Students may be kept inside during recess and lunch if temperatures are so low that it is not safe for them to go outside for regular lengths of time.

In weather this cold, skin that is not covered can freeze quickly, so teach your children to bundle up in layers, protect head, face, hands and feet, and keep active if outside. Use good judgment in deciding how much time outdoors is safe in extreme cold weather.

Parents should keep an eye on the TDSB website ([www.tdsb.on.ca](http://www.tdsb.on.ca)) for updates on bus cancellations. Decisions are made by 6:30 am each day and communicated through radio stations, the website, and Twitter at @TDSB. To read the TDSB operational procedure on severe weather, click [here](#).

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