



# TERRY FOX SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD



## UPDATE ON MOULD SITUATION

As most of you are aware, mould was found on the wood beams in the main school building following the removal of the portables in January of last year. Following contradictory reports from various laboratories and after lengthy discussions between the School Board, your Governing Board and the teachers union, the Direction de Santé Publique de Montréal Centre, the agency responsible for health issues in our area, stepped in. They asked the Laboratoire de Santé Publique to conduct tests to determine the severity of the situation.

Their report, released in late June, concluded that the mould infestation was severe enough to warrant remediation. The school board subsequently hired a consulting engineering firm to determine what steps would be needed to remedy the situation. They recommend the following:

- ?? That the mould be removed by cleaning with chlorinated water, application of a fungicide on the wood beams and sealing the beams with varnish;
- ?? That the roof over the kindergarten and parts of the administrative area be immediately repaired and that portions of the roof over other areas be repaired within the next three to five years;
- ?? That a ventilation system be installed that would control the humidity levels in the school.

The clean up of the mould was completed by the end of last summer. To evaluate the effectiveness of the clean up, the Laboratoire de Santé Publique (LSP) conducted a second series of mould tests in September and they concluded that the mould infestation was effectively removed. At the time, they also pointed out areas of the school that had not been adequately cleaned, such as the ventilation grills in the gym and the neon light fixtures.

During the month of November, the sections of the roof requiring immediate attention were repaired. However, due to inadequate protection of an unfinished section of the roof during these repairs, minor water infiltration occurred. Officials from Santé Publique visited the school and felt that the situation was under control and that no special measures need be taken.

The ventilation system was installed in December and was up and running by the resumption of classes in January. It is hoped that with this system, the humidity can be maintained at a level below that required for mould growth (less than 70% ambient humidity).

Although many were hoping for regular periodic mould tests, Santé Publique feels this is not required. Mr. Norman King from Santé Publique attended our last Governing Board meeting and explained their position: that the test done in September showed that the mould had been

effectively removed and that if the humidity levels were maintained below the critical level and that water infiltration is eliminated by the proper maintenance and repairs of the roof, that there was no possibility of the mould infestation returning.

However, this does not mean that they believe that more testing is not required. They feel it is imperative that humidity and Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) levels be monitored; the humidity levels to ensure that the conditions for mould growth do not return and the CO<sub>2</sub> levels to ensure that the ventilation system is evacuating stale air at an adequate rate. In fact, it has been planned for the CLSC to do the first set of tests in the near future and the school board has planned to install monitoring sensors. We also hope that Santé Publique or the CLSC will set up a monitoring protocol so that we can continue to monitor the situation for as long as is required.

However, the School Board has decided to alleviate the concerns of the parents and teachers and will be hiring an independent laboratory to conduct one final set of mould tests in the coming weeks. We all hope that the results will be positive and that, with the continuing monitoring of the humidity, we can be confident that our school will remain mould free and be a safe environment for our children as well as for the school staff.

Although we can be reasonably sure that Terry Fox School is mould free, there can be other irritants or air quality issues affecting health. While this might be unlikely, if you feel that your child has persistent health problems that may be linked to interior environmental factors, we urge you to have your family doctor or pediatrician contact Santé Publique at the number provided below so that they can assess the situation properly. Health officials must be presented proper medical evaluations to adequately gauge the situation and to be able to address any potential problem.

Normand King's telephone number: **(514) 528-2400 ext. 3696**

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