

Call for defibrillators

By BRENDA BRANSWELL, The Gazette July 8, 2010

Coroner Andree Kronstrom zeroed in on the life-saving importance of defibrillators in her report into the death of Yanick Charpentier.

The boy's chances of surviving would have been clearly better if school staff or police had access to an automated external defibrillator, Kronstrom said. The 12-year-old, who suffered from a heart condition, died after being punched in a St. Eustache schoolyard in 2007.

The Lester B. Pearson School Board has put a defibrillator into each of its 60 schools and centres at a cost of \$103,000. It maintains it is first school board in Quebec to do so.

"It's a cost and it's an expense -except if you have to use it once and it saves one life," said Pearson chairperson Marcus Tabachnick.

The Advanced Coronary Treatment (ACT) Foundation says its first focus in Quebec is making sure all high schools offer CPR training. But the foundation would also like to add defibrillation training and put the devices in high schools, said executive director Sandra Clarke.

The English Montreal School Board says it is looking into the costs of defibrillators and has polled principals on the subject. The Commission scolaire de Montreal said it would reflect on the topic in the coming months to decide whether to equip itself with the devices.