

Delegation to April 26, 2016 LKDSB Trustees

Presenter: Keith Wyville

Re: SCITS closure and amalgamation with St. Clair Secondary School

My name is Keith Wyville. I am a neighbour of SCITS. I have been an observer of this ARC process since early January 2016, and have been following the news about the closing of SCITS since November 2015. I have written emails to Board administrators and trustees. I have made oral presentations to both the ARC and the Trustees. Since this is our last opportunity, as members of the public, to address the Trustees prior to your vote on closing SCITS, I thank you for the opportunity to express a few thoughts. I think we can all agree that this process has been "quite a ride," including some very late nights! Further, other than the agreed upon point that the two schools, St. Clair and SCITS, must amalgamate, many of the points discussed have been vigorously debated.

I would like to briefly comment on two points: 1) the higher utility bills at SCITS, and 2) the architect's preliminary report on SCITS.

#### Utility Bills – specifically electricity

One of the arguments for closing SCITS has been made based on the difference in costs between running both schools, for example, the electricity bills. As a reminder, SCITS is a much larger school and has things St. Clair does not have such as: 850 seat auditorium, a pool, welding and manufacturing shops, and AC throughout –those shops and air conditioning in particular, add a lot to the electrical bill. None of these amenities are currently at St. Clair so its electrical bill is

considerably less. In addition, SCITS hosts many more after-hours community activities than St. Clair. For these reasons, the electrical bills at SCITS are much larger, but so is the pay back to the students and the community.

### Architect's Preliminary Report

I would like to express some thoughts about the architect's report on SCITS, which was discussed during the April 12<sup>th</sup> Trustees' meeting. On April 12<sup>th</sup>, an architect's report on SCITS was presented to the Trustees, identifying all the deficiencies that need to be addressed if SCITS remains open. Now, the next two points seem important to me.

1. Costing: The architect's report did not include an actual bid on the work, but rather, "estimated costs."
2. Timeline: The report did not prioritize the work, or explore "other options" for resolving deficiencies.

### Costing

If I were the architect submitting "some estimated costs," at this stage – please remember, this is not the bid stage – I would submit the highest costs that I thought the project "could" run into. However, once tenders went out, I would take a much closer look at each project and submit the lowest possible bid, including suggesting various cheaper options, in order to hopefully become the successful bidder. It's a lot more palpable to the LKDSB if my bid price is less than the preliminary general estimate rather than me trying to explain why my bid is higher than my original estimate.

So, the point I'm trying to make is, the estimated costs we saw in the report, may be on the high side.

### Timeline

The magnitude and cost of repairs at SCITS, as presented to the Trustees on April 12<sup>th</sup>, was overwhelming. In fact, the report was so scary that my initial thoughts were that the school is a safety hazard to anyone within a quarter mile of it! However, we all know that is not true. In fact, the school is very safe, and the repairs required are repairs that would be expected for any school of that age, and even schools that are newer. I heard the architect's opinions at the March 21<sup>st</sup> ARC meeting. I heard him qualifying some of his suggestions as "this may be an option," or, in the alternative, "this may be another option." Also, he indicated that not all repairs were urgent. However, at the Trustee's meeting on April 12, 2016, many items in the architect's report were not presented in that spirit, but rather presented almost as a list of things that have to be done NOW. The report was not presented in the spirit of, "if we take option A our costs would be 'X', but if we do option B our costs would be Y." Nor was there any timeline presented to the Trustees indicating priorities, or itemizing which repairs need to be done "ASAP" and which upgrades or repairs could be done within a 5, 10 or even a 20 year window, or in conjunction with other repairs. I would suggest that such a timeline, including 'other options' would be extremely helpful in making the final decision on closing SCITS.

In summary, in my opinion:

1. Electrical bills at SCITS are proportionate to the larger school and reflect its unique facilities including the auditorium, manufacturing / machine shops, air conditioning, a pool, and

- after-hours community use. These things come with a cost, but are worth the expense.
2. The costs discussed in the architect's report require a closer and more critical examination. There may be a lot of wiggle room in those estimates.
  3. I would suggest that a timeline, which prioritizes all the repairs; includes deadlines for each repair; and, includes more cost effective options for repairs where applicable, should be provided to the Trustees in order for you to confidently make an informed decision on the closing of SCITS.

Thank you for this opportunity to address the board. Thank you to the members of the ARC and administration for the hours of hard work dedicated to this process.

Keith Wyville

April 26, 2016