

Hello Trustees,

I wanted to talk tonight about credibility and this process in general.

I have heard many members of the LKDSB mention how they asked the City of Sarnia to attend a meeting back in October. Yet during the City of Sarnia's presentation on April 12, Head Trustee Jane Bryce interrupted the speaker near the end and said his ten minutes were almost up. As a member of the public, I found this disrespectful, not only to representative from the City of Sarnia, but to everyone in the room that wanted to hear the presentation. If there is ever a situation to drop the formalities and 10 minute speaking limit, it is during a presentation by the largest city in the county. I found the interruption not only disrespectful, but indicative of the administration's attitude on this whole process.

Another recent example: Head Trustee Jane Bryce as quoted in the Sarnia Journal on April 20th: "The people fighting to keep SCITS open are pleading for a building and the memories they have." I am certain the City of Sarnia's report was not based on memories. I am certain that the many SCITS supporters who did not attend SCITS are not basing their decisions on memories. I am certain that the vast majority of Save SCITS supporters are not making their decisions based on memories of the school, but what they feel is both the best decision for the LKDSB and the community in general. Dialogue like that, from the board chair, not only disrespects concerned citizens with many valid concerns with this decision, but greatly contributes to any negativity now surrounding this amalgamation.

I know the administration seems to be happy with the ARC and final staff report. As an outside observer, I have been very disappointed with this whole process. I say this as not just a SCITS supporter, but as someone who was interested in ensuring whatever decision made was a good one. From day one there has been a frustrating lack of details. Very simple issues like explanations on electricity cost differences could and should have been available from the very beginning.

Last board meeting, Trustee Rising asked a good question on why electricity costs at SCITS were double what they were at St. Clair. Mr. McKay said he would have to look into it and prepare a report. We are 6 months into this process and Mr. McKay still needs to look into what the differences are? Is this not a bit absurd?

Let's do a little thought experiment. You own two houses, and they both have similar natural gas costs, one is 17% higher, but they are close enough, especially when accounting for the difference in square footage. Yet one house has an electrical bill that is 127% higher. Do you not think that you would have look into the reasons for that? I would find it very hard to believe that the administration hasn't known the reasons for the differences from the very start.

I have heard two different quotes on the HVAC systems at SCITS, one being 'immaculate' and the other being that the system is 'a Cadillac.' When compared to St. Clair, the SCITS HVAC system provides the building with much more AC, much better temperature regulation and much better ventilation and air circulation. Like many newer systems, there will be days where both the chillers and boilers are running to better regulate temperatures, and exhaust fans will be running almost constantly to provide more fresh air. Everything just mentioned requires electricity. I would make the assumption that if the ST. Clair HVAC system is upgraded to the SCITS standards, the utility difference will be much more negligible. Last meeting, Trustee McKinley said, to paraphrase, that outside of the electrical costs, the annual operating costs between the two schools are really negligible. Why has there not yet been an accurate explanation of electricity cost differences and/or discussion on how upgrading the system at St. Clair factors into these differences.

At the last meeting, Trustee Fletcher asked a direct question to Mr. McKay on what the 4 million dollars of upgrades were for at SCITS in 2004. Mr. McKay said he did not know and would have

to look into it. Many in the audience knew the answer, I did, I know the ladies from Save SCITS did. The answer to the question was even presented half an hour earlier in the City of Sarnia's report. It was for, to quote the report a "heating system replacement" and to "upgrade heating and ventilation." The City Report contains a list of building permits going back to 2003.

It seems to me one of many cases where the administration has sought to avoid a direct answer, or to further delay information that should have been available from day one. It also plays into the credibility question of these reports.

On the final page or two of the Final Staff Report, there is a quote from ARC member Kara Wooridge, quoting a LKDSB wide assessment of buildings done prior to building PE McGibbon School. The SCITS HVAC system was described as "immaculate." How then does this relate to the 3.3 million required at SCITS for 'Services' in 2015 and 4 million in 2019. In the ARC FAQ it says that quote, 'significant electrical and heating/cooling repairs.'

I would greatly question those repair numbers for an 'immaculate' HVAC system that is still fairly new. When discussing tenders for work at other school last board meeting, Mr. McKay said that for rooftop units, the typical lifespan was 15 to 20 years. 2019 may bring us to 15 years at SCITS, but I would think those numbers deserve some greater scrutiny, especially as you're not going to be replacing boilers after just 15 years, or need to replicate much of the work required for the initial upgrades in the first place.

To use a house analogy again, let's say you have an old house and upgrade the furnace and AC, which requires new ductwork and electrical. 15 years later you need to replace the AC, should that require anywhere near the same amount of money to just replace the AC unit, when all the upgrading work had already been completed? I am no expert here, but to me, those numbers require some scrutiny. For any given school it likely doesn't matter if they are accurate or if the work is even really needed in that given year, but it is much more consequential when they are including those costs in a formula to determine which school to keep open.

At the beginning of the last board meeting, a number of tenders were approved for projects at different schools. Trustee McKinley remarked how many bidders there seemed to be for these projects. Mr. McKay commented on how the board had saved 3 to 4 hundred thousand with all the different bids. Yet in the Final Staff Report on SCITS and St. Clair we are taking the rough estimates from single firms as concrete facts. I know it's not possible to have a bidding process when preparing reports like this, but the lack of, at the very least a second opinion, doesn't help with the credibility of the numbers, particularly for some of the bigger issues.

An even bigger question for me regarding these numbers would be the fact that these firms are both diagnosing all the problems and the costs. For those of us from Sarnia, it may bring to mind Centennial Park, where the consultants who found the supposed issues with the park, are the same ones who made many millions doing the remediation work. It would seem to me there is very plausible motive for a firm in this situation to perhaps overestimate either the amount of work needed or the costs involved or both.

The credibility gap extends to the asbestos issue where the administration has decided to release only a portion of the necessary information. Why should Trustee Sasseville be required to ask for information on asbestos abatement priorities to go along with the one page of quotes in the final staff report. As far as I know, this information is available and updated year after year in LKDSB asbestos reports for every school. Why is that information not included in the final report when it is needed to understand and critique the full numbers?

Like I said at the beginning, this has been a frustrating process. For something like the asbestos reports, or electricity differences, this is information the LKDSB already has but for whatever reasons has not been properly included in the discussion. It has been this way since day one and these are not the only examples. Throughout the process there has been a clear failure to

anticipate valid concerns with closing either SCITS or St. Clair and in many cases to properly address those concerns. I believe these faults, along with some very questionable statements from LKDSB officials have more than anything, led to the negativity some feel has become attached to this decision.

I would like to thank the trustees for listening, and hope that you will consider some of these concerns as you make your decisions.

Kevin Forbes