

I wanted to talk about two schools in neighbouring school districts. If anyone wants to read more on these schools, there is information on both at savescits.ca.

One school is London Central Secondary School. London central was built in 1922, the same year as SCITS. The school even looks similar, they could be sister schools.

In 1995-1996, extensive renovations took place, which fully modernized Central's building and made it fully wheelchair accessible. The school is consistently rated the top high school in London.

The second school is John Campbell Public School in Windsor. The school was called one of the finest in Ontario when it opened in 1927. A few years ago, the school underwent a complete renovation. It reopened in 2010. Rather than opting to build a new school, the Greater Essex County District School Board chose the costlier yet more historically focused route to modernize the existing school.

A provincial consultant for the project said: "the goal of the building is not only to preserve a part of Windsor's heritage, but to provide a pretty cool school for kids to attend, and a facility which can be used by the community outside of school hours, in the summer and on weekends."

That sounds like exactly what the LKDSB should be doing at SCITS. Usage of SCITS by the community already far outpaces that of St. Clair. The building is an important part of Sarnia's heritage. Building on both of those aspects that seems to be a no brainer.

There is even a convincing argument that SCITS is the more cost effective choice. Last year the LKDSB spent \$85,000 dollars renovating a classroom in this school for use by board consultants. Imagine if that kind of funds and focus were put into all of the classroom at SCITS. It could cost a lot less than the \$14 million the board is plans on applying for to make big upgrades at St. Clair.

So my questions is: Why is the school board not following in the footsteps of its neighbours? There is no precedent to set here. There is one simple solution. We are standing in the heart of a building that could serve Sarnia for generations to come. The LKDSB should reverse course and work with the community to build an updated learning space in this heritage building, for both students and the city of Sarnia.