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I would like to focus on the impact of student programs and opportunities should the Board of Trustees decide to close SCITS.

In the past two years alone, the board has spent over 1.2 million dollars on upgrades to SCITS, which confirms a lack of long term financial planning. Most certainly the students and staff at SCITS have benefited from this but it ultimately falls back on those who fund the public school system and our students. It is wasted money if SCITS closes.

The Lambton Kent District School Board states that utility costs at SCITS are double that of St. Clair's. There is a reason for this – SCITS has a theatre and a heated pool, two important amenities that St. Clair doesn't have. SCITS is also the 4th largest in sq/m size out of the 65 schools with the LKDSB. This leads me to the fourteen million dollar question.

The submission of the Board's provincial funding request of fourteen million dollars to upgrade St. Clair is simply that – a request. The approval process time line will surpass that of the board's time line to close SCITS. This makes me question the board's rush to decide on SCITS fate. What does this mean for our SCITS family? Provincial funding approval is a big "IF". SCITS will end up closed, we will lose our theatre, native centre, pool and superior manufacturing shop. Upgrades would also have to be done to the manufacturing shop at St. Clair to match that of SCITS. It is important to note that St. Clair will still have a capital improvements backlog of over 12 million dollars. This also doesn't bode well for St. Clair.

It is the board's obligation to ensure the SCITS students receive the same learning environment they currently enjoy. This will not happen because the fourteen million dollar question cannot be answered prior to April 26th when the Board of Trustees vote on the future of SCITS. There is far too much at risk for both the SCITS and St. Clair school families.

I would like to recommend the Board of Trustees delay the SCITS accommodation review until funding is guaranteed and all other options have been explored.