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Presentation to the ARC

I would like to expand upon the Proposed Pupil Accommodation Review Plan. On page two, the Board states, "The significant reduction in funding and the immediacy of its impacts demands the Lambton Kent District School Board act to implement a multi-year plan in the interest of fiscal responsibility and enhanced learning". I will note that the Board's multi-year plan contains recommendations for 8 phases of consolidation at a faster pace on a **"to be determined basis"**, as written on pages 15 and 16 of the report. **"To be determined" is not a plan.** The Board has closed 14 elementary and 2 secondary schools since 1998. One would also expect to see the consolidation of superintendents – a much larger savings than downsizing school staff.

The Lambton Kent District School Board's Pupil Accommodation Report states recommendations to close 6 elementary schools, 4 in Sarnia and 2 in Corunna, as well as build a new school in Sherwood Village – all on a **"To be determined"** basis.

It is my endeavour to present a viable financial alternative that benefits the students, the school board and the tax payer.

Given the declining enrollment and revenue to the board based on the phase in of the new funding formula by 2018, the Ministry of Education states it will give funding preference to large schools. So, what do our large schools look like south of the 402? Our large schools look like SCITS and St. Clair.

The Ministry of Education also offers funding incentives to combine and reconfigure schools. To take advantage of these two sources of provincial funding, we need to keep our secondary schools open because of their size, and reconfigure them to accommodate grades 7 – 12. Ridgeway and Wallaceburg have successfully reconfigured their secondary schools to include grades 7 and 8. Many school boards in the province have accomplished this. It is not a unique concept.

The board can begin the accommodation review process for the elementary schools by reconfiguring them for JK – 6. Since money is the bottom line, focus on closing those schools that have both the highest assessed values and potential to attract developers. Because our elementary schools south of the 402 are in such close proximity to one another, closing some of them will have minimal impact on students. Start there to ensure SCITS and St. Clair both remain open.

There are benefits to doing this;

- It will maximize provincial student funding and revenue with fuller schools at both the elementary and secondary levels,
- It will increase revenue through the sale of valuable land,
- There could be enough money to build a JK-6 school in Sherwood Village without the Board's plan to bolster enrollment by bussing Lakeroad students to the new school.

If the board considers this option, based on their enrollment projections, SCITS will be at 83% capacity in 2018 when the Top Up Funding is phased out. And in the year 2025, capacity will still be strong at 75%. These numbers are based on current boundaries.

I suggest we work from the bottom up. Ask that the Board of Trustees seriously consider how best to reshape our schools, then start consultation with the elementary school communities, and not close SCITS prematurely.

SCITS & SCSS FAMILY OF SCHOOLS

GRADE 7 & 8 PROJECTED ENROLLMENT

SCITS			SCSS		
Elementary Schools	2018	2025	Elementary Schools	2018	2025
Bridgeview	49	35	Confed Central	57	55
Col. Cameron	39	44	High Park	45	42
Hanna	48	36	Landsdowne	72	51
London Rd.	32	21	QE II	66	50
Mooretown	23	16	Errol Village	26	22
PE McGibbon	82	72			
Sir John Moore	86	90			
TOTAL	359	314	TOTAL	266	220
COMBINED PROJECTIONS					
Grade 7/8	359	314	Grade 7/8	266	220
SCITS	510	473	SCSS	579	533
TOTAL	869	787	TOTAL	845	753
CAPACITY (1050)	83%	75%	CAPACITY (1197)	*71%	*63%

CONSIDERATIONS:

* Currently 300 Sherwood Village elementary students are bussed to schools North of the 402. The numbers for grade 7/8 in this area were not available. These students would feed to SCSS, ultimately increasing the percentage of capacity.

The year 2018 was selected to reflect the new reduced provincial funding that will be completely phased in.

The year 2025 was selected to represent the LKDSB 10 year projection.

Susan MacKenzie, January 2016

Information obtained from LKDSB Pupil Accommodation Report 2015/16,
November 24, 2015 and Gary Girardi*