

The Central Project - Creating Community Hubs of our Schools

An Open [Google](#) Docs Discussion



In 1979, [Central Public School](#) in Hamilton, Ontario Canada, was [saved](#) by leasing the top floor of the school to an insurance company, providing an innovative solution to prevent the school's closure.

Why the Central Project? In honor of [Central](#) public school which opened in 1853. It was the largest grade school in Upper Canada when it was built and the first building owned by the Hamilton Board of Education

There are obvious historical reasonings as to why saving this school was important, but the creative solution to save the school though should be an inspiration for us all to come up with innovative alternatives to save our own community schools.

I've thought a bit about the name I have given this project. I had been looking for this example of renting out empty space to businesses, and the name seemed fitting at that time. I didn't like the idea of using the name 'central' in the title in some

regards though, because that's exactly what our school boards are doing. Centralizing. Tearing down our community schools and shipping our children on transit to a centrally located school.

Centralizing or creating mega anything, is not the direction we should be heading either in education or in business.

Today, however, I realized that the reference to the first school in Upper Canada can work if we look at this as more of a central repository of ideas, thoughts, dreams, and concerns. A central place where we share how you already have or how we might creatively fill empty school space. A central database of other communities across the globe faces these same threats of closing schools.

In closing, no school should be shut down in the name of money or low enrollment today. Schools are hubs. We have lost sight of this.

Central wasn't the only school that we rented out. Highview on the east mountain was also wholly rented out for a time. The business that rented it even installed air conditioning along at least part of the building. It, not unlike Central, is now bustling with the sounds of children again. As is often the case, neighborhoods go through a cycle, and not once during recent rounds of ARC reviews, have we talked about saving any schools or properties, for future demographic shifts.

So how do **you** suppose we fill these empty spaces?

"We're facing a significant emergency, one that's not just economic but cultural as well. The time to act is right now, and the person to do it is you." ~ Seth Godin [#stopstealingdreams](#)

Your Ideas Here: *Leave a comment (You don't need a login), by simply replying to the comment thread I have already started to the right of this text. I'll move your thoughts into this window where appropriate. I will forward all thoughts to members of the legislative, municipal, and education bodies of Ontario. I encourage country and even worldwide input on this discussion and for you to use this or the data within, to help save schools in your local city or town.*

How are other communities around the globe saving their community schools?

Alberta: Re-Imagining our Schools: Creating a Strategic Framework for School-Community Collaborations

<http://www.upstartchampions.ca/userfiles/Re-Imagine2.pdf>

This is what it looks like when a school becomes a community hub -

<http://www.fastcoexist.com/1682549/this-is-what-it-looks-like-when-a-school-becomes-a-community-hub> Progress of this school (under construction) can be found

here. <http://www.emeryvillecenter.org/>

Lorne Ave School Saved! (London, ON) -

[http://metronews.ca/news/london/867020/londons-lorne-ave-public-school-saved-](http://metronews.ca/news/london/867020/londons-lorne-ave-public-school-saved-for-now/)

[for-now/](http://metronews.ca/news/london/867020/londons-lorne-ave-public-school-saved-for-now/) This community now has the task before them, of securing community partners to turn this school into a community hub.

Lorne Ave follow up - A Failed Schools as Community Hubs Proposal (by. Larry Pattison)

https://docs.google.com/document/d/18U7GA5Z7Kh2LVUTSxI_0aLL44NSK4NV3K6itlv6Zewo/edit?usp=sharing

* EXPLORING SCHOOLS AS COMMUNITY HUBS *

<http://ourspace.uregina.ca/bitstream/handle/10294/3397/Community%20Hub%20Final%20Report.pdf?sequence=3>

Investigating the application of the community hub model in the context of the closure of Athabasca School, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, and other small schools - August 2011

“A general definition of community hub is that of a concept, community plan or urban design for a conveniently located public place that is recognized and valued in the local community as a gathering place for people, and an access point for a wide range of community activities, programs, services, and

events. A community hub can be general in nature, similar to a neighbourhood or multipurpose centre, or it can include specific public services such as a library, park, school, health care and/or social support programs. Although each hub is unique to the surrounding community, three objectives are common: service coordination and delivery, place-making, and community building.

The school as a community hub has a great number of variations in different communities. This paper discusses ten different education models that may be considered community hubs.”

Further information about Schools as Community Hubs in Saskatchewan -
<http://www.education.gov.sk.ca/FNM-community-schools>

Athabasca school saved! Sort of -
<http://lcaregina.ca/athabasca-school-saved-sort-of/>

Schools as Community Hubs - Beyond Education's Iron Cage

http://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/ourselves/docs/OSOS_Summer10_Preview.pdf

Evaluating the impacts of school closures in inner city communities

STITCHING TOGETHER SOLIDARITY, CREATING A COMMUNITY -

<http://www.diatribemedia.com/2013/01/09/stitching-together-solidarity-creating-a-community/>

"I'm like you. I've been you. Knowing it's all going wrong but doing nothing about it. Keeping your head down. Giving a quid to charity, signing a petition, talking about it down at the pub. Laughing about it and doing nothing, even now. Right now I want to do nothing, I want to go home, shut the door and pretend this isn't happening, but I can't. I can't."

...

"Because we all know something's wrong, and we all know the world needs to get better. That other world some of us chant about? Yeah, it's possible. Hell, it's even probable. But in order to do that we need to build bonds that form a true community the world over. Because when you get right down to it, all we as humans have in this world is each other. Whether we're sick or tired or poor, imprisoned by the state, persecuted by our own personal problems, or part of any number of huddled masses

yearning to breathe free, none of us can do it alone."

Edmonton Catholic Board's pilot project

The Schools as Community Hubs Project involves two pilot schools in our district, [St. Alphonsus School](#) and St. Patrick School. Edmonton Catholic Schools will bring together key community partners such as Catholic Social Services, the City of Edmonton, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Rotary, The Family Centre, and The Support Network, to create wrap-around community hubs for at-risk youth, children and families, where they live. The Schools as Community Hubs will integrate faith, life, and culture according to the District's foundation statement.

Hamilton, ON Canada - BIA wants the public to speak up about school closures

<http://www.thespec.com/news-story/3881132-bia-wants-public-to-speak-up-about-school-closures/>

"Many of the homes in the neighbourhoods around the BIA are lower-cost starter homes and they fear young families will not move to the area if there are no schools available."

Chicago Board of Ed approves closure of 50 schools (More about how shutdowns are affecting these communities) -

<http://tv.msnbc.com/2013/05/22/chicago-board-of-education-votes-to-shut-down-50-schools/>

I'm a Teacher - <http://www.diatribemedia.com/2013/07/26/gallery-i-am-a-teacher/>

"the fight to stop the district from moving forward with the largest school closing in American history"

Alberta (Canadian Rockies Public School) - School Board looking to fill empty spaces -

<http://www.airdriecityview.com/article/20121115/RMO0801/311159980/0/ACV>

Toronto City Councillor Mary-Margaret McMahon -

<http://www.toronto.ca/councillors/mcmahon1.htm>

"A former senior manager and education leader, she is concerned with wasted budgets and opportunities; and is working at developing underutilized schools as community hubs for residents of all ages at all hours. She is calling for a complete audit of empty city real property and leased premises..."

Schools as Community Hubs (Edmonton Catholic Board) -

http://www.ecsd.net/parents/schools_hubs.html

SUN Community Schools - <http://web.multco.us/sun/history>

Full-service neighborhood hubs where the school and partners from across the community come together to make sure kids and families have what they need to be successful - in school and in

life.

Are School Closings the New Urban Renewal?

<http://thenotebook.org/blog/135696/school-closings-new-urban-renewal>

Cohesive Communities, Improved Outcomes - A Case for Small Schools

<http://www.realrenewal.org/dbdocs//47af87d2ea983.pdf>

"While large schools can provide more comprehensive instructional programs and resources, research indicates that students in small schools, including those labeled 'at risk', outperform those who attend large schools, and are more likely to graduate high school and proceed on to higher education."

Save Kingston Schools

[ARC reviews in Kingston, ON Canada](#)

Benefits of our Children Walking to School

4 ways that walking to school can benefit kids

<http://www.treehugger.com/culture/4-reasons-why-walking-school-benefits-kids.html>

"October 9 is "[International Walk to School Day](#)," meant to increase awareness about the many benefits of walking to school. This event has grown since it was originally devised in 1997 by the Partnership for a Walkable America, and now thousands of schools in the US and in forty countries participate annually.

Walking is known to improve academic performance. Children arrive brighter and more alert for their first morning class. In a UK Department for Transport survey, nine out of ten teachers said their students are much more ready to learn if they've walked to school. Walking reduces stress and increases creativity, both of which will help a child's performance at school."

A bit unrelated to a degree, but I loved this idea: "the '[walking school bus](#).' Parents take turns collecting children from houses in the neighbourhood and accompany them to school."

Five Good Reasons to Walk to School

<http://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org/2011/01/12/the-best-posts-articles-explaining-why-public-education-should-not-be-run-like-a-business/>

“Nearly half (48%) of children would like to walk or bike to school even more if they could, says a new survey carried out by a specialist child research agency, ChildWise, in partnership with the Department of Transport (DfT) in 2004.

A similar study by Sustrans, the sustainable transport charity, found that 51% of children driven to school would prefer to walk or cycle with friends.”

The best place to educate a child? - Not if they attend mega-schools and are bused
<http://www.thespec.com/opinion-story/4167504-the-best-place-to-educate-a-child/>

“Why haven't we come up with a Plan B, C, and D for our schools to bridge them through periods of low enrolment, or to partially repurpose them to expand their function in the neighbourhoods they serve? Can't we be creative with community space or maybe even rent out sections of empty rooms to groups as meeting spaces? At the least, the doors can be shut and the systems to each unoccupied room cut off. The whole school doesn't have to be closed just because the rooms aren't full. It flies in the face of logical thought.”

“anything less conducive to quality education than industrial-type schools that bring thousands of kids into the same location ...” ~ Margaret Shkimba

Schools partnership Ideas

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tZVV5AGjpX15TwBSvFGFaCWOaoaqHGJg_TmGQ24xyUE/edit?usp=sharing