

## SAVE PCVS!

### [PETERBOROUGH NEEDS PCVS](#)

*An east view of PCVS, taken from behind the cenotaph*



The Mike Harris years changed the province of Ontario. Increased debt, decaying social services and a democratic deficit were among his chief legacies. Nowhere is the latter more apparent than in our governance structures. ‘Amalgamation’ was touted as cost efficient, and municipalities and school boards across the province were stapled into larger units. But it turned out there weren’t any cost advantages and, in fact, many of the newly-formed jurisdictions are still trying to reinvent themselves – Toronto being the best example. In addition to the cost and chaos of amalgamation, there came a democratic deficit. The beauty of local government is that it is just that, local. It is possible to make a tangible difference, street by street, ward by ward. With amalgamation, political units became large and removed from local involvement.

Education governance in Peterborough is a prime example. The Peterborough school board was local – city and county. Now ‘The Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board’ stretches from Brighton to Bowmanville and as far north as Apsley. The Board’s decision-making reflects this.

Recently the Board blindsided the City of Peterborough by voting to close PCVS, Peterborough’s iconic centre-city high school. PCVS has a long and illustrious history, that includes an extraordinary art collection, some noteworthy grads (including Sean Cullen and Mike Balsillie) and, most recently, a vibrant life as the city’s arts-focused school. PCVS was the only high school to actually operate at capacity. It is downtown and vital to the city’s core. The kids actually walked there. And now it is being closed because some Board members from areas far, far removed from the City have made a sudden and capricious decision. And there is no need

for them to back down – the residents of Peterborough are united in their support of PCVS but the city itself elects only a small number of members to the sprawling board.

That said, it's not over till it's over. Sign on with the Save PCVS movement – link above – and support this thriving arts school:

And a little end note. PCVS shares a central city block with the city armories and its cenotaph, an impressive 1929 Walter Seymour Allward-designed monument. A Veterans Wall of Honour rings the monument. An elderly aunt observed the following to me – and this says volumes about the school's place in the community: “There were a lot of boys who graduated out the doors of PCVS, went to Europe to fight in the War, died for their country – and came back to be named on that monument.”

Make some noise.

*The Allward-designed cenotaph. For many years people also referred to the sculpture as commemorating a notoriously debt-laden local judge fending off his creditors.*



War Memorial, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada,—25.