

Mike Lewis: School board committed to meeting Atikokan needs

M. McKinnon

School board vice-chair Mike Lewis - who started his teaching career at AHS, went on to become its principal, and later the director of education for the Atikokan Board of Education - offered reassurance that the board is committed to establishing a K-12 school that "will serve the needs of all of our students, and the

community, today, and into the future".

Here are further highlights of his comments, made at the school board's committee-of-the whole meeting here Monday:

"We are being influenced by a continuing declining enrolment, and by reduced funding from the Ministry of Education as a result

of the empty spaces in our two Atikokan schools. The Ministry... does hold the purse strings, and will to a large extent control what we can and cannot do," he said.

"To bring this closer to home, as trustees, two of us have a history in Atikokan schools, and know full well the need to have adequate gymnasium facilities to meet physical education, sports teams, and community use needs, to properly serve our students and community. The younger of those two trustees [Raymond Roy] was an accomplished athlete while he was a student here, and to this day continues to share his skills with students in our district."

See 'Lewis offers', page 6

Lewis offers reassurance

From page 1

"As we are in Atikokan, it is also appropriate to acknowledge that our plant manager [Travis Enge], who is charged with the task to bring the board capital plans that can serve as preliminary templates to meet our school community needs, also has deep roots in this community and its culture. He is the son and nephew of two AHS graduates, and the grandson of Atikokan's longest-serving elementary school teacher [Jesse Enge], who is a legend among the Atikokan teaching cohort."

"My point being that there are people among those charged with making this decision who are well aware of what it was like to teach and take physical education classes, and to play a variety of sports, in a very limited gymnasium space, the one and only gym in the basement [AHS old gym], and that we have people who have learned, through their experience and that of others, what it takes to create an excellent, welcoming, and accommodating teaching and learning environment for the youngest to the oldest of our students."