

# Board pushes back on sex-ed issue

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sexual orientation, gender identity, and same-sex relationships.

In doing this, Judson said the province is degrading and alienating LGBTQ2 students, as well as undermining their equality.

“The government’s approach leads one to the conclusion that it believes and intends to convey that there is something wrong with LGBTQ2 people from which others should be shielded or protected,” he argued.

Judson also touched on how the minister’s actions negatively can impact both the equality and security of students.

“As you know, women, girls, LGBTQ2 people, and people with disabilities are disproportionately effected by sexual violence, assaultive behaviour, and



**Local lawyer and Borderland Pride co-chair Douglas Judson gave a presentation to the Rainy River District School Board at its regular monthly meeting last Tuesday evening about the legal impacts of the province’s decision to revert back to the 1998 health and sex-ed curriculum he says are contrary to sections of both the Education Act and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.**

—Sam Odrowski photo

Judson told trustees that the minister’s directive likely constitutes both direct and indirect

increased risk of self-harm or suicide, and a general sense of shame about one’s identity and

the continuing of keeping that curriculum in place,” said Borderland Pride co-chair Peter

harassment," he noted.

"The interim curriculum fails to equip them with the tools they need to clearly communicate about consent and the governing of their bodies.

"And places them at a heightened risk of harm as a result of that," he warned.

Lastly, Judson explained how the Human Rights Code in Ontario could be violated by the 1998 curriculum.

The code is aimed at protecting Ontarians from discrimination based on sex, gender, sexual orientation, or family status.

This legal document applies to the delivery of education and

studies both direct and indirect discrimination.

"In our view, direct discrimination emerges because it excludes LGBTQ2 issues and fails to provide LGBTQ2 students with equally-relevant health information to other students," he reasoned.

"But even if it isn't a direct discrimination, in our view it is an indirect discrimination because it sends the message that queer students simply do not exist or their existence isn't something we should talk about in public.

"That sets the stage for years of trauma and isolation, crisis,

shame about one's identity and their belonging," he noted.

Following his presentation, Judson urged the board to issue a response to the minister outlining their position and intention of continuing to implement the 2015 curriculum.

Borderland Pride was thrilled with the board's response and motion to write a supportive letter.

"We think this is an important first step of the school board to become engaged in this issue, and it help sends a message to the Ontario government that there is wide support for the 2015 curriculum and

demand pride co-chair Peter Howie, who also attended last Tuesday's board meeting.

Both Judson and Howie are hoping to make a similar presentation to the Northwest Catholic District School Board in the near future.

Howie urges members of the public who are concerned about this issue to write their local MPP and the minister of education, as well as participate in whatever consultation process takes place.

The minister of education has not indicated yet when consultations for the new curriculum will occur.