

Premier's 'snitch line' concerns board trustees

By Sam Odrowski

Staff writer

sodrowski@fortfrances.com

The Rainy River District School Board chair and one of its trustees raised concerns about the premier's so-called "snitch line" at last Tuesday night's regular monthly meeting here.

The website, which critics are calling a "snitch line," is where concerned parents can go to complain if teachers are using the repealed 2015 sex-ed curriculum instead of the interim one that was created back in 1998.

Premier Doug Ford warned last month that educators caught breaking the rules will face consequences.

"I want to express my grave concern over the 'snitch line' that the premier has put in place for reporting infractions of the minsters directive," said RRDSB chair Diane McCormack.

"I would like all stakeholders to note that the board has a process in place for reporting concerns, and this process begins at the classroom level and escalates from there until the concerns resolved," she explained.

"With that said, it's quite clear to me, at any rate, that there is no need for people to run tattling to the premier if they have concerns at the school level"

"There is no need for people to run tattling to the premier if they have concerns at the school level."

—Diane McCormack

took the unprecedented step of creating an online opportunity for any parent to make a direct complaint about any teacher who delivers a classroom lesson to which a parent takes exception," Lewis added.

"This completely ignores the fact the teachers are employees of school boards, which have time-honoured processes through which parents can address their concerns, beginning with the teacher, then the principal, board administration, and if deemed necessary, even the college of teachers," he said.

Lewis would much rather a concerned parent deal with the school board face-to-face to resolve any concerns directly instead of through the Ministry of Education.

He drew similarities between the premier's actions and the notion of bullying.

"My hope is that someone in the Ministry of Education will take this teachable moment to

concerns at the school level," McCormack added.

"We would much rather deal with them one-to-one and resolve them within our system."

Atikokan trustee Michael Lewis expressed similar concerns during the meeting.

"Classroom teachers are good at dealing with difficult and sensitive topics within each of their classrooms," he noted.

"They do that every day and I hope that they will continue to do so as they see fit.

"The premier last month

explain to the premier the concept of bullying, as outlined in any of the health and physical education curriculum, 1998, 2005, 2010, 2015," Lewis said.

"They can take their pick," he added. "Bullying is bullying regardless whether you're [the premier]."

Parents who have issues with how their child's teacher is delivering any curriculum are asked to contact the school board directly to have those issues resolved.