

Saskatoon judge hears Timber Bay residential school claim

By [Brent Bosker \(/author/brent-bosker\)](#) // April 23, 2013 - 4:32pm



Regina residential school / Courtesy of Wikipedia

Hundreds of Métis children who suffered abuse while attending the Timber Bay residential school in northern Saskatchewan are hoping their fight for compensation will continue to move forward.

A Saskatoon judge is hearing arguments regarding a 12-year-old class action lawsuit filed by the Merchant Law Group on behalf of about 2,000 students who attended the school at Montreal Lake between 1952 and 1994.

The two-day hearing wraps up Tuesday and will determine whether the claim is legitimate, said lawyer Tony Merchant.

“By certification the court says this is a valid case that has merit. That’s usually led to some form of settlement.”

The Timber Bay School is one of many across Canada the federal government does not recognize as a residential school. As a result, its former students are left ineligible for compensation under the residential school settlement.

“The real injustice was primarily these were Métis people going to those schools and the Indian Residential Schools got compensation but the Métis schools did not,” said Merchant.

“The government has set their own standard; arbitrarily decided that the Montreal Lake residents wouldn’t be included. It was most unfair, primarily to Métis people, and we’re trying to remedy that.”

Merchant said Timber Bay was small in comparison to Ile-a-la-Crosse, which too has an active class action before the courts.

“There are other homes, residences across the north [in] Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta so it’s important to succeed because that will lead to further successes,” he said.

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