

Ottawa pointing finger at band councils for residential school system

REGINA - A Regina lawyer says Ottawa is trying to wash its hands of its legal responsibility to former students of government-run residential schools.

Merrilee Rasmussen

says through third-party legal claims, the government is trying to point blame at Indian bands.

A federal lawyer will argue in Regina today that a Saskatchewan native band should be added as a third party in a sex abuse lawsuit.

Wilbert Papequash is suing Ottawa and the Gordon Residential School's former administrator, William Peniston Starr. Papequash claims he was abused by Starr when he attended the school

between 1979 and 1985.

Court documents suggest the government will argue that members of the Gordon First Nation sat on the school's advisory board and had an obligation to supervise staff.

If the argument is accepted, the band could find itself sharing the blame and liability if the lawsuit is successful. So far, more than 46-hundred former residential school students across Canada have launched lawsuits over allegations of abuse.