

Editorial

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Sad state of school

Posted 2 days ago

Kudos to Mitchell Case, a Grade 12 student at Korah Collegiate, who has taken up the cause of the Attawapiskat First Nation's quest for a new school.

The old school was contaminated by a diesel spill in 1979 and closed in 2000. Eight years later, Attawapiskat's 400 elementary students, who live in one of the harshest climates in the province, are still being taught in portable classrooms.

"I heard about the school and thought, 'This is Canada, and this shouldn't be happening,'" said Case.

This wouldn't happen in an urban setting. In fact, we're building schools in Afghanistan, which is

wonderful, but what about our own backyard? How much longer will the parents and children of

Attawapiskat have to wait? "We've had over eight years to do something. . . . It's part of the ongoing, systemic negligence (toward the First Nations)," says Timmins-James Bay MP Charlie Angus.

A number of weeks ago, Canadians were inspired by the apology offered to victims of residential school abuse. We said at the time that the apology was an historic moment, but that it had to be followed by actions that address the problems faced by Canada's native community.

The state of the school in Attawapiskat is one such situation. A new school sends a message to young natives in the area. It tells them we care.

Doing nothing also speaks volumes.