

# RRDSB to offer Pride workshop

By Ken Kellar

Staff Writer

kkellar@fortfrances.com

The Rainy River District School Board (RRDSB) is partnering with a national advocacy organization to help spread education and awareness around LGBTQ2 issues in the district.

"We're working with Egale Human Rights Trust to bring trainers in that will provide a workshop," said RRDSB Superintendent of Education Andrew Harris.

"We're having them come in and talk about how we support students from an identity perspective and also to support diversity.

It will be supporting LGBTQ2 youth, and the workshop is open to our staff and partners with the board, as well as parents and community."

Egale Human Rights Trust is a Canadian advocacy group that works to improve the lives of LGBTQ2 people across the country. On its website, the organization states its vision "is a Canada, and ultimately a world, without homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and all other forms of oppression."

Harris noted that the board has worked with Egale in the past in order to train staff members in supporting identities and diversity.

"We do have turnover within the board," Harris explained.

"We also like to get people

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**—Andrew Harris**

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in leadership positions trained, and so we want to have Egale come back up and provide additional training so we can have additional staff trained."

Harris also explained that it was important to the board to offer a workshop to parents as well.

"As a board we work with students to support students, and we have that as a shared responsibility with parents," he said.

"Parents have the youth most of the time, but we have students when we're at school. We want to open up and invite parents to join with staff in talking about the ways that we can support together, so that we're both on the same page in working with identities and diversity with supporting youth."

While the workshop is scheduled to run the night of June 5 for parents and the community, with an additional workshop on June 6 for staff only, Harris said the workshop is not being run in conjunction with local Pride organizations.

"It certainly works nicely to support Borderland Pride," he noted.

"They've done a really good

job at trying to engage the overall community and we're part of the community, and we're happy to participate in Pride week by providing workshops to our staff."

Harris also said that schools across the board would be participating in Pride week activities in their own ways.

"Schools have been taking a look at creating visual spaces," he explained.

"So you'll see a lot of schools will be putting up flags for creating safe spaces within the front area of their school. GSA groups within schools will be meeting to take a look at activities as well, on an ongoing basis. Diversity will be celebrated from a student-leadership perspective in schools at that time."

Harris invited parents and the community to participate in the workshop. Anyone interested in attending is asked to contact Nancy Taggart at the RRDSB office.

"We're looking forward to an evening discussing identities and diversity in support for youth," Harris said.

The June 5 workshop will run from 6:30-8:30 p.m. A light dinner will be provided.