



Canadian Federation of Library Associations
Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques

For Immediate Release

Canadian Federation of Library Associations Calls for the Release of all Outstanding Residential School Records

September 29, 2022 (Ottawa, ON) – The Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA) has sent an open letter to federal Cabinet Ministers calling on their support for the full public release of outstanding residential school records currently being withheld by the Catholic Church and other orders of government.

Following calls from the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR), the federal government has committed to turning over 12,000 residential school documents. Over five million documents and six thousand witness statements have been archived by the NCTR.

“The library community is united in the belief that truth must first come before reconciliation,” said Lorisia MacLeod, Chair and Indigenous Ancestry Representative at CFLA-FCAB. “For families, documents can represent important missing pieces of truth or can serve to clarify stories that have been passed down. The importance of this material cannot be overstated in supporting intergenerational healing and understanding. We hope that all organizations including governments and churches who currently hold these materials will turn these documents over to be respectfully and appropriately shared with the families and communities.”

The Pope’s recent visit to Canada is an important step in the long healing process needed. However, in order for the apology to have an impact in the journey towards reconciliation, action must be taken to uncover the full truth of the Canadian residential school system. Not only are these documents pertinent to understanding the scope of profound injustices and human rights abuses committed and by whom, they are also integral to the achievement of justice for survivors and Indigenous communities.

The release of this information should be made in consultation with the NCTR and libraries and archives to ensure it is first made available to Indigenous peoples, while also working to minimize secondary trauma for survivors.

As representatives of the library and archive community, we are calling on elected officials and Church officials to take the steps necessary for reconciliation by working to uncover any and all documents that remain withheld.

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CFLA-FCAB is the united voice of Canada’s libraries. We work to influence public policy, advance library excellence, and raise the visibility of libraries in Canada to advance our national intellectual, social, economic, and cultural success.

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