

# United4 Survivors.ca

## Île-à-la-Crosse Residential School Injustice

### Historic Class Action Lawsuit Launched by Survivors of the Île-à-la-Crosse Residential School to Seek Recognition and Justice

**Whitecap, SK, January 24, 2023** – The Île-à-la-Crosse Survivors Committee, with support from the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, have taken a major step forward in their pursuit of recognition and justice for the Survivors and their families of the former residential school.

A lawsuit has been commenced by six Survivors and intergenerational Survivors of the Île-à-la-Crosse residential school seeking compensation for the harms and abuses the Survivor suffered from attending at the School. The Île-à-la-Crosse Survivors Committee, and the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan are supporting this proposed class action. The lawsuit filed with the Saskatchewan Court of King's Bench late last month follows many years of failed attempts to negotiate with the Governments of Saskatchewan and Canada for fair compensation for Survivors.

"I hope, that by bringing forward this lawsuit, that the Survivors of Île-à-la-Crosse will finally receive the justice that we deserve and that our truth is heard," said plaintiff and Survivor Louis Gardiner, "we lost our language, our culture, and our identity at the school. We deserve justice and recognition moving forward."

From the residential school's inception in the 1820s, to its closure in the 1970s, Survivors who attended Île-à-la-Crosse faced inhumane living conditions and suffered physical, sexual, and psychological abuse at the hands of school staff. The harms endured by Survivors have resulted in long-term mental health challenges, and the loss of Indigenous culture, language, and identity. The intergenerational trauma that impacts Survivors and their families continues, passing from one generation to the next.

"We are ready to negotiate and invite the Government of Canada and the Government of Saskatchewan to work with Survivors and their families" said Duane Favel, an intergenerational Survivor whose father attended the school in the 1940s and 50s and is a member of the Survivor's Committee, "Survivors and their families deserve recognition, justice and compensation. Survivors are dying and we are losing time. The time to act is now."

The plaintiffs in this lawsuit are seeking compensation from the Government of Canada and the Government of Saskatchewan for the roles that each played in operating the Île-à-la-Crosse School, and for breaching their legal duties to the Survivors.

"For too long, the truth of the residential school experience of Métis children has been ignored by Canadians. Métis Survivors have been denied the benefits of Indian Residential School settlements, including both the compensation and apologies that other Survivors have received," stated Michelle LeClair, Vice-President of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, "MN-S is



proud to support the Survivors Committee in its pursuit of justice, and hope that the Governments of Saskatchewan and Canada come to the table to negotiate a fair settlement with Survivors.”

This lawsuit is brought on behalf of all First Nation, non-status, Inuit and Métis people who attended as students for educational purposes at the Île-à-la-Crosse residential school at any time (the “Survivor Class Members”), including both day students (individuals who attended at the school during the day and slept somewhere else), and residential/boarding students. The lawsuit also includes claims on behalf of close family members of Survivor Class Members (any spouse, parent, child, grandchild, or sibling), and surviving spouses of deceased Survivor Class Members.

More information can be found at [United4Survivors.ca](http://United4Survivors.ca).

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### **About the Île-à-la-Crosse Boarding School Steering Committee**

The Île-à-la-Crosse Boarding School Steering Committee Inc. is comprised of 12 board members representing twenty communities in Northwest Saskatchewan. The committee has been actively advocating for Survivors of the Ile a la Crosse Boarding School for over twenty years. Founding members of the committee include Antoinette Lafleur, Emile Janvier, Margaret Aubichon, and Duane Favel.

### **About Métis Nation–Saskatchewan**

Métis Nation–Saskatchewan (MN–S) is the recognized government of the Métis Nation in Saskatchewan. MN–S is built on a foundation of Métis identity, culture, values, and language. MN–S works to advance Métis rights and recognition. MN–S represents the political, socioeconomic, cultural, and educational interests of more than 80,000 Métis in the province through an elected representative system at local, regional, and provincial levels.

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