



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MN–S government congratulates Île-à-la-Crosse residential school Survivors' historic victory

April 30, 2026 - Heartland of the Métis and Treaty 6 Territory, Saskatoon, SK –

In a historic decision this week, Justice R.C. Wempe of the Court of King's Bench has certified the Île-à-la-Crosse residential school Survivors' class action and approved the settlement agreements reached last year with Canada and Saskatchewan. In making her decision, the Justice wrote:


“While it is not appropriate for the court to rubber stamp settlements, there is a strong presumption of fairness in matters where a proposed final settlement has been negotiated by experienced counsel at arm's length and presented to the court for approval.”

This marks the single largest class action settlement by the Government of Saskatchewan.

Louis Gardiner, one of the representative plaintiffs on the class action, discussing this decision has said, “The people of our community have been through so much over the years and the residual effects are still felt today. This has been a long time coming and we have lost so many of our Survivors' at this point. I only hope their families can join with us as this long-awaited decision sinks in and we take our next steps together.”

Antoinette Lafleur, Survivors' Committee member, and residential school survivor, was just four-year-old when she was taken from her home to the residential school. She expressed relief after the court ruling, “I was 4 years old when I was forced to attend that school. I suffered unspeakable abuse but have shared my experience in the hope that the Survivors' would be believed. I have faith this court ruling will allow our entire Survivors' Community and their families to move forward.”

The Île-à-la-Crosse residential school was one of the oldest residential schools in Canada, and operated from the 1860's to the mid-1970's. The Île-à-la-Crosse Survivors' Committee came together more than two decades ago to fight to be heard and to fight for justice. The Métis Nation–Saskatchewan (MN–S) government has been by their side providing support.



MN–S Vice President Michelle LeClair, who’s been personally invested in this case for many years, and been waiting to see justice prevail, has said, “This is a day many thought would never come. There have been difficult moments for the Survivors sharing their stories with others in the quest to be heard. This is a monumental time for them and their families. We truly hope they can now find some semblance of meaningful closure.”

“There is a great deal of emotion attached to this ruling because for Survivors, being heard has taken a lifetime,” said MN–S Justice Minister Brennan Merasty, an intergenerational Survivor. “The pain of residential schools did not end with our parents, it lived in our homes and in our hearts. I carry that legacy through my late father, but I also carry the responsibility to end the cycle. With this, we tell the truth, we let go of silence, and we choose healing, together.”

The Île-à-la-Crosse residential school Survivors or surviving family members now move into the compensatory phase of settlement which also includes a \$10 million legacy fund for the community. More information on next steps will become available to Survivors here: <https://ilexsettlement.ca/>

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About Métis Nation–Saskatchewan:

Métis Nation–Saskatchewan (MN–S) is built on a foundation of Métis identity, culture, values and language. Empowered by the Métis citizens of Saskatchewan, MN–S works to advance Métis rights and strengthen capacity. MN–S represents the political, socioeconomic, cultural and educational interests of Métis in the province through an elected representative system at local, regional and provincial levels. Social Media Links: @MNSask, @metisnationsask

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