



## INDIGO LOVE OF READING FOUNDATION BRINGS AWARENESS TO CANADA'S LITERACY CRISIS IN NEW DOCUMENTARY, *READ BETWEEN THE LINES*

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*In a new documentary launching today, leading literacy foundation reveals depth of literacy crisis in Canadian schools – and presents a path forward.*

TORONTO, ON (May 18, 2017) – The Indigo Love of Reading Foundation has launched *Read Between the Lines*, a 35-minute documentary which shines light on the chronic underfunding of high-needs elementary school libraries in Canada. Premiering today on [loveofreading.org](http://loveofreading.org), *Read Between the Lines* explores the gravity of Canada's literacy crisis, and takes viewers to the frontlines: Canada's sorely underfunded school libraries.

Produced by Emmy award-winning documentarian Ms. Ric Esther Bienstock for the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation, *Read Between the Lines* shares a candid look at the literacy challenges faced by high-needs elementary schools in Canada. At Fairview Community School in Nanaimo, B.C., library collections are badly depleted and out-of-date. Whereas school libraries are meant to provide students with vital access to books and a foundational love of reading, teachers are all too often left to bridge the funding gap on their own, spending hundreds of dollars each year on books and learning resources.

With inadequate funding and books in short supply, Canada's literacy crisis continues to worsen with alarming consequences:

- 30% of grade 3 and 4 students in Ontario<sup>i</sup> and British Columbia,<sup>ii</sup> respectively, fail to meet provincial reading standards<sup>iii</sup> - and students in these provinces are generally higher-performing in literacy compared to students in other Canadian provinces.<sup>iv</sup>
- Children who struggle with literacy are 4 times more likely to drop out of high school.<sup>v</sup>
- One of the most important predictors of higher achievement is a student's love of reading.<sup>vi</sup>
- Each year, Canadian teachers spend more than \$200 million of their own money to buy books and learning materials for their classrooms.<sup>vii, viii</sup>

Featured in the documentary are award-winning children's author Robert Munsch, acclaimed author and essayist Neil Gaiman, and leading educational researcher Henry Giroux. As Gaiman states, "When you cut library funding [...] all you are doing is stealing from the future."

Since 2004, the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation has committed \$24 million in funding to high-needs elementary schools across Canada. These funds are instrumental in providing high-needs schools with the resources they need to update and enhance their library collections; promote and support school-driven literacy initiatives; and encourage a love of reading in Canadian kids.

To view *Read Between the Lines* in full, and to learn more about the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation, please visit [loveofreading.org](http://loveofreading.org).



### **About the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation**

Indigo Books & Music Inc. founded the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation in 2004 to address the underfunding of public elementary school libraries. To date, the Foundation has committed \$24 million to more than 3,000 high-needs schools through its two signature programs each year. To date, the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation's Literacy Fund has committed \$18 million to more than 215 schools nationally. Additionally, each fall, the Foundation's annual grassroots Adopt a School program unites the Foundation with Indigo, its employees, its customers and their communities to raise funds to support high-needs elementary schools across Canada and put even more books into the hands of children. In October 2016, Indigo Adopt a School contributed over \$800,000 to more than 500 schools. To learn more about the Foundation, visit [www.loveofreading.org](http://www.loveofreading.org).

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For more information please contact:

Kate Gregory  
Senior Manager, Public Relations  
Indigo  
[kgregory@indigo.ca](mailto:kgregory@indigo.ca)

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<sup>i</sup> Education Quality and Accountability Office, "EQAO Provincial Assessments," news release, August 27, 2014, [http://www.eqao.com/en/about\\_eqao/media\\_room/news\\_releases/Pages/2014-highlighted-provincial-results.aspx](http://www.eqao.com/en/about_eqao/media_room/news_releases/Pages/2014-highlighted-provincial-results.aspx).

<sup>ii</sup> British Columbia Ministry of Education, "A New Focus on Reading," email from Education Minister George Abbott, 2012, [http://wpmedia.vancouver.sun.com/2012/07/a\\_new\\_focus\\_on\\_reading.pdf](http://wpmedia.vancouver.sun.com/2012/07/a_new_focus_on_reading.pdf).

<sup>iii</sup> Education Quality and Accountability Office, "EQAO Provincial Assessments," news release, August 27, 2014, [http://www.eqao.com/en/about\\_eqao/media\\_room/news\\_releases/Pages/2014-highlighted-provincial-results.aspx](http://www.eqao.com/en/about_eqao/media_room/news_releases/Pages/2014-highlighted-provincial-results.aspx).

<sup>iv</sup> "Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), 2011," Education Quality and Accountability Office, (2011), <http://www.eqao.com/en/assessments/national-international-assessments/PIRLS/Communication%20Documents/PIRLS-highlights-ontario-results-2011.pdf>.

<sup>v</sup> Donald J. Hernandez, "Double Jeopardy: How Third Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation," Annie E. Casey Foundation, (2012).

<sup>vi</sup> "Reading for Joy." *People for Education*, (2011), <http://www.peopleforeducation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/People-for-Education-report-on-students-reading-enjoyment-Reading-for-Joy.pdf>.

<sup>vii</sup> Canadian Teachers Federation, "Teachers go out of pocket \$453 on materials and activities for their students," news release, July 12, 2010, <http://www.ctf-fce.ca/en/news/Pages/default.aspx?NewsID=1983984693&year=2010>.

<sup>viii</sup> "2011 National Household Survey – Occupation," Statistics Canada, (2011), <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/dt-td/Rp-eng.cfm?LANG=E&APATH=3&DETAIL=0&DIM=0&FL=A&FREE=0&GC=0&GID=0&GK=0&GRP=0&PID=105897&PRID=0&PTYPE=105277&S=0&SHOWALL=1&SUB=0&Temporal=2013&THEME=96&VID=0&VNAMEE=&VNAMEF>