

## **TEACHERS WANT MORE CANADIAN FILM, NEW STUDY SHOWS**

**But current distribution system antiquated and inaccessible.**

**Toronto, March 8, 2011** – A study being released today reveals that ninety-one percent of teachers surveyed feel that having Canadian film and video material in the classroom is important. Unfortunately, school libraries in Canada are spending only an estimated ten percent of their acquisition budgets on Canadian material (of all kinds), with the rest going towards the purchase of US and other foreign books and films. Canadian film and video makes up an even smaller percentage, accounting for a miniscule 1.5% of total acquisition budgets on average.

Despite this obvious demand among high school teachers, the study also found that the current system for bringing Canadian film into schools is broken: The vast majority of teachers bypass official channels and obtain the films they show in the classroom from retail stores, the internet or wholesalers, often paying out of their own pockets even when their schools or boards have already paid for a central licence.

This data is revealed in a new study authored by Pauline Couture & Associates (PCA) and commissioned by REEL CANADA, an innovative educational initiative that brings festivals of Canadian film into high schools

The study, called *The Red Oasis*, was executed with partnership, funding and in-kind contributions from the Ontario Media Development Corporation (OMDC), the Canadian Association of Film Distributors and Exporters (CAFDE), the University of Toronto Scarborough. PCA oversaw the research and created the report. *The Red Oasis* can be downloaded at <http://www.reelcanada.com>.

A team at the University of Toronto Scarborough, under the supervision of Professor Steve Joordens, conducted an on-line survey of teachers, principals, librarians and administrators with explored their attitudes towards Canadian film and television as well as their high school's spending habits.

PCA conducted focus groups with members of the same population which confirmed the survey results, revealing that aside from REEL CANADA's

activities, there is no systematic way in which teachers can receive information about the Canadian films they could and should be showing to their students.

“It was important to undertake this study so that we could all work from a common factual base”, said Ted East, President of CAFDE. “There is tremendous confusion about access to the right Canadian films for the classroom, despite the goodwill of those teachers who are passionate about sharing Canadian culture with their students— particularly kids who are new to this country and just learning what it means to be Canadian. We have to do much better.”

“The good news is that there is a strong appetite for Canadian films in schools. The vast majority of teachers, principals and librarians understand the cultural importance of exposing students to Canadian values, their need to see themselves reflected in the preeminent medium of our time, and the value of helping them see career opportunities in our domestic industry,” said Jack Blum, Executive Director of REEL CANADA. “If we can find ways to meet the teachers’ wish lists and improve the system, we can see that there will be tremendous uptake for Canadian films in schools.”

“Ontario Media Development Corporation was delighted to partner with REEL CANADA and CAFDE on this important study. This research has the potential to help improve business results for Ontario’s filmmakers and to build audiences for our creative products by increasing their reach into our schools,” said Karen Thorne-Stone, OMDC’s President and CEO .

“Canadian films are a very small percentage of our members’ business,” said Ted East, President of CAFDE, “and it’s intriguing that the study shows that Canadian distributors and filmmakers may be missing out on an opportunity to reach many more students with our Canadian product. We’ll be working with REEL CANADA and PCA to find ways to increase the number of Canadian films being studied in our schools.”

*CAFDE is a non-profit trade association that represents the interests of Canadian owned and controlled feature film distributors and exporters.*

*PCA is a consulting firm specializing in research, strategy and advisory services to the creative and knowledge industries. Pauline Couture is a former senior executive in the film and television industry.*

*Dr. Steve Joordens, Professor of Psychology, University of Toronto Scarborough. One of his specialties is the use of technology for educational purposes. Dwayne Paré, Doctoral Student, led the student team that designed and worked on the survey.*

*The Ontario Media Development Corporation (OMDC) is an agency of the Province that facilitates economic development opportunities for Ontario’s cultural media industries*

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