

CSDM to start testing for lead in the drinking water of all its schools

In a letter to parents, Quebec's biggest board said it wants to ensure the water "meets the standards established by Health Canada."

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The CSDM said it wants to ensure that "water available to students and school staff meets the standards established by Health Canada." *WEEDEZIGN / GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO*

The Commission scolaire de Montréal says it will start testing for lead in the drinking water of all its schools over the coming days.

In a letter to parents on Wednesday, the CSDM, Quebec's biggest board, said it wants to ensure that "water available to students and school staff meets the standards established by Health Canada."

The move comes after Education Minister Jean-François Roberge this month said [the drinking water in all public and private schools across Quebec](https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/drinking-water-in-all-quebec-schools-will-be-tested-for-lead) (<https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/drinking-water-in-all-quebec-schools-will-be-tested-for-lead>) would be tested for lead.

That announcement follows a [La Presse report](https://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/enquetes/201910/07/01-5244510-ecoles-quebecoises-trop-de-plomb-dans-leau.php) (<https://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/enquetes/201910/07/01-5244510-ecoles-quebecoises-trop-de-plomb-dans-leau.php>) that four elementary schools had lead levels exceeding recommended levels.

The CSDM said its testing will be completed by June 2020 for elementary schools and by November 2020 for other facilities. The results are to be made public.

The board has 114,000 students in 189 educational institutions.

The English Montreal School Board, for its part, does not yet know when it will start testing water in its schools.

Spokesperson Mike Cohen said the board is awaiting provincial guidelines "to appropriately assess the resources required in order to make an action plan that will respect the budgetary rules and available resources."

Cohen said the EMSB, the province's biggest English-language board, has begun drawing up an "an inventory of our water points and tests already carried out."

The EMSB has 44,000 students in 77 schools and centres.

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