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The Suburban

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QUEBEC'S LARGEST ENGLISH WEEKLY NEWSPAPER



MINISTER GIRARD COMES TO ROYAL VALE

JOEL CEASU/THE SUBURBAN

Quebec Finance Minister and minister responsible for the Anglophone community talks inflation with Royal Vale students.

By Joel Ceausu
The Suburban

Baseball, math and McGill, helped Quebec's Finance Minister learn to speak English.

A love of numbers and sports drove the CAQ Finance Minister as he told some 30 students at Royal Vale School in NDG, "I was in Secondary 5 when I first heard the then finance minister's budget speech, and I knew I wanted to do this."

Girard, who is also Minister responsible for relations with English-speaking Quebecers, gave the students – from Secondary 1 to Secondary 4 – a nickel tour of fiscal conservatism, inflation, and the importance of responsible stewardship

(his "favourite English word) of public finances, all en Français.

Girard noted that he "chose McGill University" so he could embrace bilingualism, and took questions from the friendly and inquisitive crowd, ranging from language skills to his job, and it was not long until a student asked his thoughts on Bill 96.

Girard responded with an explanation of Statistics Canada and the Institut de la statistique du Québec, and population numbers for Mexico, English Canada and Quebec, ultimately stating that Bill 96 will help "slow the decline of French in Quebec," specifically in Montreal and notably in Laval. A Secondary 4 student later told *The Suburban* that "I don't think

he really answered that question."

The drop-in was part of the EMSB's month-long island-wide campaign to celebrate bilingualism and was the first visit by a CAQ minister to an EMSB school. "We are proud of the quality of our French instruction" which prepares students for lives and careers in Quebec, EMSB Chair Joe Ortona told the students and Girard, whose visit could be seen as a friendly sop to English Quebecers, who have been stricken with various levels of fear, concern and outrage over the Le-gault government's school-board-eliminating Bill 40 – still under review by the

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Municipalities warned by Quebec on bilingual status

By Joel Goldenberg
The Suburban

Forty-seven municipalities were warned last month by the Quebec government that they must pass a resolution within 120 days from this past mid-December if they want to retain their bilingual status, or risk losing it.

Montreal-island municipalities that received the letter include Côte St. Luc, Town of Mount Royal, the borough of Pierrefonds-Roxboro, and the cities of

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System failed students at St. Laurent school

By Joel Goldenberg
The Suburban

A Ministry of Education report says the system failed students who complained of sexual assault by three basketball coaches at École St. Laurent, part of a harmful atmosphere at the school for some 20 years.

The report says complaints were made about inappropriate behaviour and words by coaches to the Marguerite-Bourgeys Service Centre, the high school itself and the Quebec Basketball Federation, but they did not take action.

Basketball program rogram head Daniel Lacasse, as well as Charles-Xavier Boislard and Robert Luu, were arrested for sexual assault in February 2022.

The report also points out that if complaints were made to the school, or were received by the Réseau du sport sportif du Québec through its “Je porte plainte” website, the entities did not share the information. As a result, many complaints

could be made against a particular coach, but the matter would not be investigated.

In the case of École Saint-Laurent, the school had received five complaints about a coach and the federation had received two. The government report redacts the name of the target of the complaint.

The report recommends training to act on complaints, and to provide a guide on how to prevent sexual incidents from taking place between educators and students.

The report also dealt with alleged financial irregularities in terms of the accounting of sales, admission costs and registration in connection with the school's basketball program, and recommends an independent audit.

A previous Quebec government investigation on the assault allegation found the dignity of “several athletes was compromised” and that a “particularly low level of organizational trust was also found in this school.” ■

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ÉCOLE SAINT-LAURENT

BILINGUAL

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Dollard des Ormeaux, Dorval and Kirkland. CSL council passed a resolution to this effect at a special Dec. 21 council meeting.

The demand that cities pass these resolutions is a part of Quebec's new language law Bill 96. The cities in question have had bilingual status because more than 50 percent of their residents speak English, but the percentage for many dipped below 50 percent because the criteria changed many years ago from language spoken at home to mother tongue.

Many in CSL, in which 46 percent of the population is mother tongue English, had Yiddish or other languages as a mother tongue, but adopted English ear-

ly in their lives.

On the other hand, Montreal has to approve a resolution passed by Pierre-fonds-Roxboro, as it is a borough.

During the Dec. 21 CSL meeting, Mayor Mitchell Brownstein pointed out that Bill 96 affects bilingual cities in many other ways, including search and seizures based on anonymous tips and other aspects and the risk of provincial grants being withdrawn if Bill 96 is not adhered to exactly.

“For that, we have been in contact with the other 88 bilingual cities to consider a legal contestation.... There's a misunderstanding between protecting French and protecting one's culture. The language is not at risk and punitive laws will not help protect a language.” ■

GIRARD

Cont'd from page A1

courts, Bill 96 reforms to Cégeps, and tightening language rules in the private workplace and for accessing government services.

The students were selected from various immersion classes, all save for Secondary 5 students, many of whom were actually attending a Cégep counselling session, as application time fast approaches with English eligibility issues and a slew of new rules continuing to pester the English community.

Girard took no questions from media and left the group with an important les-

son or two: the challenge of running a government “with limited resources and unlimited demand” (which he got them to chant in unison,) and how to answer a potentially touchy question with statistics.

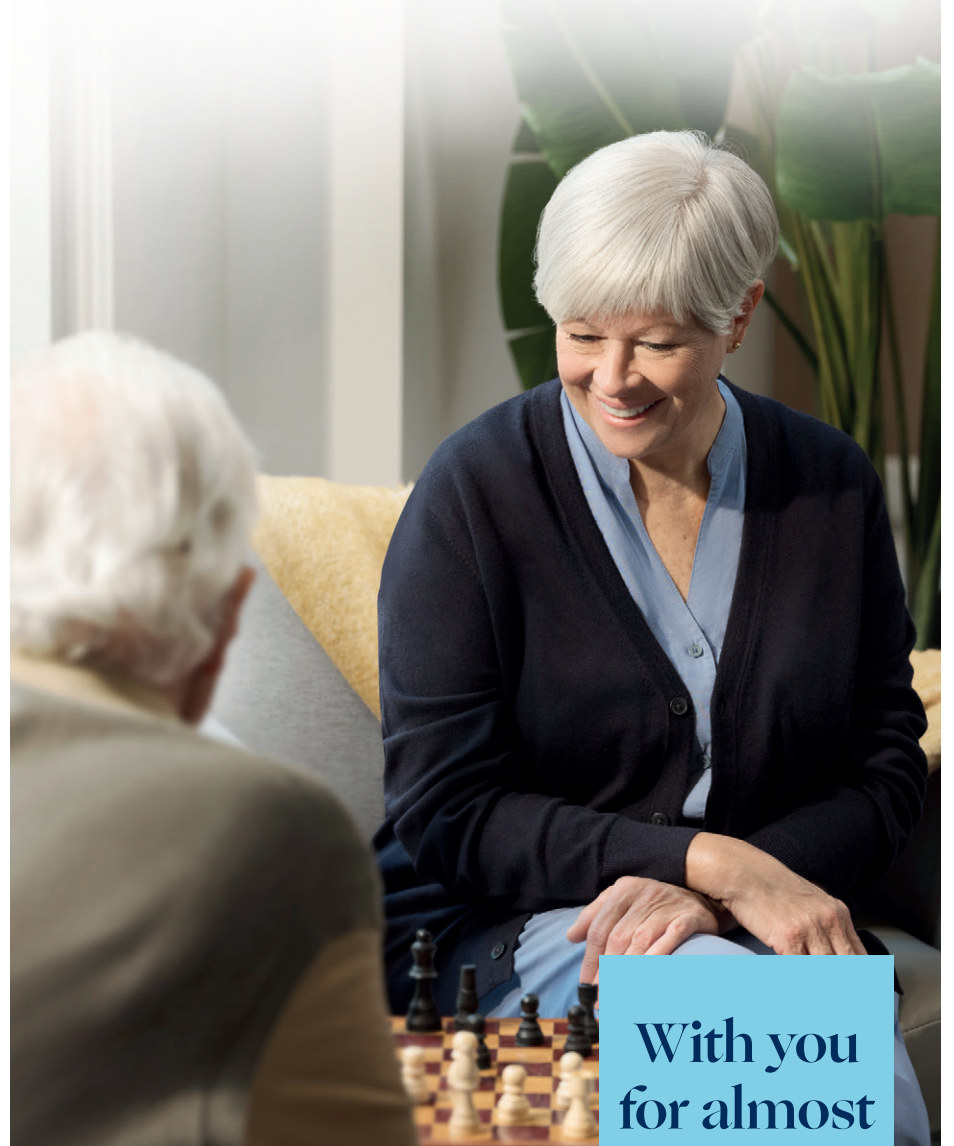
Next Thursday, January 19, Québec Solidaire co-leader Gabriel Nadeau Dubois speaks to students at Pierre Elliott Trudeau Elementary School in Rosemount, and PQ leader Paul St. Pierre Plamondon visits Edward Murphy School in Hochelaga on Monday, January 23.

For more information about the EMSB campaign visit <https://www.emsb.qc.ca/emsb/schools/initiatives/EtreBilingue> ■

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