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English Montreal School Board says it will continue fight despite school move

By Kalina Laframboise and Gloria Henriquez Global News



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Question period at the EMSB's special meeting held Tuesday July 09, 2019.

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The English Montreal School Board (EMSB) says it is considering filing a judiciary review of the transfer after its last-ditch effort to save two of its schools failed in Quebec Superior Court.

The decision comes after an injunction to stop the transfer of General Vanier Elementary School and John Paul I Junior High School to an overcrowded French-language board was rejected on Monday.

READ MORE: EMSB injunction to stop transfer of 2 schools to French-language board rejected in court

EMSB chairperson Angela Mancini says a judicial review would look into the minister's use of the article of the Education Act that allowed him to transfer the schools without proper consultation.

"We still believe that the minister did not have the right to do what he did," Mancini explained. "The judge made it very clear that we raised issues that belong to our rights as a minority community under the Charter [of Rights] and that's part and parcel what we would be asking the judge; to review in terms of the decision of the minister. Does it meet the constitutionality of our rights?"

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Parents at the meeting had mixed feelings about continuing the fight.

"I hope they pursue it until the very, very end because this is about our rights as a minority community," said Maria Corsi, one of the founders of the "Save Our East End Schools" group.

"I thought there were a lot of underhanded plays from the minister and the CSPI and that has to come to light. I think we need to find ways to prevent this from happening again, personally I think those schools were stolen from us."

"I think that's like trying to go up a river in a row boat without oars," said Antonio Zaruso, a parent at General Vanier. "I've lost hope."

General Vanier Elementary and John Paul I highschool will be moved

In the meantime, the EMSB will go ahead with moving General Vanier Elementary into Pierre de Coubertin Elementary and John Paul I High into Laurier Macdonald High School.

All schools will keep their names, uniforms, staff and curriculum.

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The board also agreed it will no longer offer Galileo Adult Education centre up for cohabitation to the CSPI while they continue negotiations with the French board. It will, however, look into offering cohabitation at Gerald McShane Elementary in Montreal North and Lester B Pearson High School, also in Montreal North.

Quebec Education Minister Francois Roberge said he asked the CSPI to continue negotiating with the EMSB to find more solutions to ease their overcrowding issues, in addition to the two school transfers.

On August 12, all schools involved in the move will hold consultations in order to map out the details and conditions of the move.

On August 14, the board will hold a special meeting to finalize their decisions.

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— With files from Global News' Rachel Lau and Kalina Laframboise

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