

# English Montreal School Board will let teachers wear religious symbols

The English Montreal School Board will not enforce a law that would ban teachers or other employees from wearing religious symbols at work.

MONTREAL GAZETTE ([HTTPS://MONTREALGAZETTE.COM/AUTHOR/MONTREAL-GAZETTE](https://montrealgazette.com/author/montreal-gazette)) Updated: March 27, 2019



The English Montreal School Board building on Fielding Ave. in N.D.G. *JOHN MAHONEY / MONTREAL GAZETTE*

The English Montreal School Board adopted a resolution Wednesday declaring its refusal to enforce any law that prohibits its teachers and other employees from wearing religious symbols on the job.

“The Quebec government has stated its intent to propose legislation to prohibit the wearing of religious symbols for all persons in a position of authority, including teachers,” said EMSB chairman Angela Mancini. “We believe in the secularity of the state while still supporting an individual’s right to freedom of religion.”

In 2014, the EMSB declared it would not implement the measures outlined in the former Parti Québécois government's charter of values, and in a resolution approved by commissioners at Wednesday's council meeting, the board indicated it will take the same stance against the Coalition Avenir Québec's proposed law.

The resolution states that the EMSB believes a religious symbol worn by a teacher in no way affects their ability to provide quality education in a secular state and that the EMSB values inclusiveness and the diversity of its students and staff and respects their personal and religious rights.

EMSB vice-chair Joe Ortona, who drafted the resolution, said the EMSB believes the proposed Quebec legislation would be contrary to several guarantees in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, including freedom of conscience, freedom of religion, and the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination based on religion.

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