

Quebec English school boards must await appeal before hiring, despite Bill 21 ruling

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APRIL 21 **UPDATED**



The English Montreal School Board says it can't yet begin hiring teachers who wear religious symbols despite its court victory Tuesday in a challenge of the province's secularism law.

A spokesman for the board says its lawyers have advised that hiring of teachers who wear hijabs, turbans or other symbols has to wait until the province's appeal of the Quebec Superior Court ruling is heard.

Justice Marc-Andre Blanchard upheld most of the law known as Bill 21, but he struck down clauses pertaining to English-language school boards, as well as a ban on members of the provincial legislature wearing face coverings.

The Quebec government announced within hours it would appeal the ruling.

School board officials initially said today they planned to begin hiring immediately, but a spokesman later said the province's appeal has put those plans on hold.

The law, adopted in June 2019, prohibits public sector workers who are deemed to be in positions of authority, including teachers, police officers and judges, from wearing religious symbols at work.

It includes a grandfather clause exempting those who were employed before the bill was tabled, as long as they stay in their current jobs.

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