



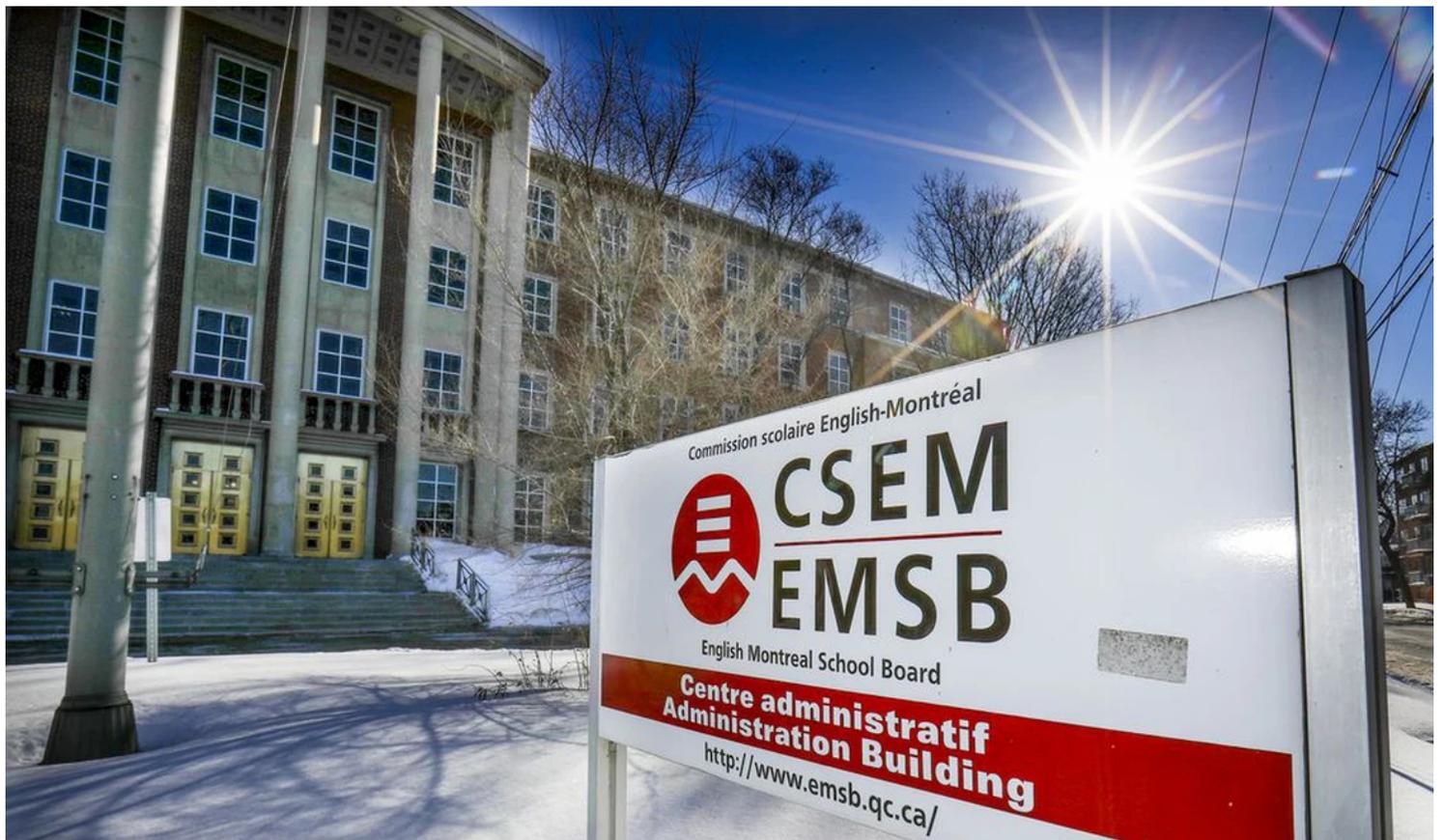
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# Suspected COVID-19 variants force EMSB to close elementary school

*It marks the first time the board has needed to close a school because of COVID-19 concerns this school year.*

Jesse Feith • Montreal Gazette

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All of the students at Michelangelo International School will be moved to distance learning until at least March 29, at which point public health authorities will reassess the situation. PHOTO BY JOHN MAHONEY /Montreal Gazette

The English Montreal School Board has been forced to close an elementary school due to suspected cases of the more contagious coronavirus variants.

It marks the first time the board has needed to close a school because of COVID-19 concerns this school year.



Public health authorities have recommended the board close Michelangelo International Elementary School in Rivière-des-Prairies until at least March 29.

“It is important to note that all students and their families are considered to be low risk,” the board wrote in a news release issued Tuesday. “Students in five classes, considered at moderate risk, must remain in isolation until March 25.”

All of the school’s 494 students will be moved to distance learning until at least March 29, at which point public health authorities will reassess the situation.

The EMSB would not confirm Tuesday how many cases were detected at the school but said the number <https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/covid-19-outbreak-forces-emsb-to-close-first-school-since-start-of-pandemic>

THE EMSB WOULD NOT COMMENT TUESDAY HOW MANY CASES WERE DETECTED AT THE SCHOOL, BUT SAID THE NUMBER of cases is not “overly alarming.”

“This was not done because of an outbreak,” said EMSB spokesperson Michael Cohen.

“It was done for precautionary reasons (...) There are cases of concern and it does involve the variant, so we’re being prudent.”

The school cancelled classes on Wednesday to allow families time to get tested. Classes will resume online Thursday.

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