



A MISERABLE STRETCH
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TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2023

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EMSB PUTS FOCUS ON FRENCH

'Knowledge of one language doesn't mean loss of another,' chairperson Ortona says



ALLISON HANES

There's little chance of students in Adèle Guilloteau's Grade 1 French immersion class at Willingdon Elementary addressing her in English.

Even if they tried, the teacher doesn't understand much of her anglophone pupils' mother tongue anyway.

Guilloteau is one of three new instructors from France recently hired by the English Montreal School Board amid a teacher

shortage in Quebec that has also prompted French service centres to recruit abroad.

But the language barrier may be a blessing in disguise for her young English-speaking students.

"In two months, I already see progress. Certain students didn't speak French at all when I arrived, certain ones did. But today they're speaking more and more French," Guilloteau said in an interview before the holiday break. "You really have to take your time, explain everything, sometimes show or illustrate with actions or pictures. It's also important to get the children to help each other. If there's one student who doesn't understand what I'm saying in French, another student can explain in

their own words. It creates a nice sense of solidarity."

Native French speakers teaching in Quebec's English schools is nothing new. Francophone Quebecers have long been a crucial pillar of the English system. But as anglophone parents contemplate the language of education for children nearing school age — one of the biggest decisions they will make about their futures — one English school board is seeking to highlight the calibre of its French programming.

The EMSB has christened January "Le mois du français" leading up to the kindergarten registration period. The calendar is chock full of special events, including a French podcast, an advertising campaign, a jingle-writing contest for students using the familiar "Être bilingue, c'est gagnant!" slogan, and the launch of a detailed website describing the board's immer-

sion, bilingual and second-language offerings. Some schools will host French-language guest speakers, including Parti Québécois Leader Paul St-Pierre Plamondon, who is to visit students at Edward Murphy Elementary in his east-end Montreal riding this month.

Quebec's English schools face increasingly stiff competition from their French counterparts for the limited pool of eligible students. Since Bill 101 was adopted half a century ago, francophones and new immigrants have been required to go to primary and secondary school in French. Only Quebecers with a parent or sibling who did the majority of their education in English in this province or elsewhere in Canada have a constitutional right to English schooling — and thus a choice. But it's increasingly a complicated one. SEE HANES ON **A2**



Members of the Design Art Student Alliance, from left, Anna Noel, Aseel El-Hariri, Andrée Uranga and Manuel Souris in front of the Welcome to Concordia sign on Guy St., which uses the Gill Sans font they want to see the school stop using. **PIERRE OBENDRAUF**

Concordia students decry use of child molester's font

T'CHA DUNLEVY

A font that has defined Concordia University for close to two decades is at the centre of a brewing controversy, due to the problematic past of its creator.

Concordia selected Gill Sans as its official font in 2006, following consultations with focus groups of students and alumni. The university uses fonts in the Gill Sans family for a wide range of communications. But some students in the school's Design and Com-

putation Arts program feel that by using Gill Sans, the university is associating itself with a known child molester and sexual abuser.

Gill Sans was created in 1926 by renowned British sculptor and typeface designer Eric Gill. In her 1989 biography of the artist based on his memoirs, Fiona MacCarthy revealed Gill had sexually abused his teenage daughters, committed incest with his sisters and engaged in acts of bestiality with the family dog.

"It comes as a surprise, of

course, that the institution could have this as their branding font," said Andrée Uranga, who is organizing the initiative to question Concordia's use of the typeface with fellow third-year design student Ankiné Aparadian.

"We adore the university," Aparadian said. "This is in no way a protest or something we're holding against them. We just think this can better the university and push it forward, and elevate the academic credibility of the institution."

Gill has been a growing source of controversy in the U.K. over the past three decades, with waves of protests surrounding his sculptures and the Gill Sans font.

SEE CONCORDIA ON **A6**

FP

FINANCE

Canaccord managers seek to take firm private **NP7**

CITY

QUOTE OF THE DAY

That's the thing about books. They let you travel without moving your feet.

JHUMPA LAHIRI

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WEATHER

Mainly sunny
high -5/low of
-16, Page A12



LOTTERIES

For lottery results, see the Loto-Québec ad. Page A9



Adèle Guilloteau is one of three teachers from France recently hired by the English Montreal School Board amid a teacher shortage in Quebec. "Certain students didn't speak French at all when I arrived, certain ones did. But today they're speaking more and more French," she says. PIERRE OBENDRAUF

ENGLISH SCHOOLS OFFER 'BEST OF BOTH'

HANES FROM A1

The latest data from the 2021 census show that just over 300,000 children are entitled to English instruction in Quebec and about 76 per cent attend. While enrolment in minority-language education programs has been rising in the rest of Canada, it has waned in Quebec over the past decade.

The reasons are surely many, varied and personal. But as Quebec reinforces the use of French under Bill 96, there is heightened angst among anglophone parents that their children attain the language skills to thrive here.

EMSB chair Joe Ortona said that French has always been a priority, but the board is going to great lengths to demonstrate that children can and do emerge from English schools fully bilingual — and well-positioned

to contribute in a francophone society.

"There is, within some parts of the population in the English community, this perception and — I think it's a misperception — that children need to go to French school if they want to excel in French. That's not true," said Ortona. "I think it's important to emphasize that knowledge of one language doesn't mean loss of another. The benefit of education in an English school ... (is) you're getting the best of both worlds."

Ortona, a lawyer, cites himself among myriad examples. "I didn't speak French at all when I started kindergarten," he said. "I enrolled in a French immersion program, and even though French is my third language now, I speak it fluently. Because of that, I was able to attend a French university and

study, work, socialize in French. That was 30, 40 years ago and our French programs have improved greatly since then."

English schools are also one of the institutional cornerstones of a minority language community living among the much larger French linguistic minority in North America. They inspire great pride and many eligible Quebecers, conscious of hard-won access rights, are committed to ensuring the next generation contributes to their vitality. They just want to know their kids will also be fluent French speakers.

Veronica Bastone is another product of the English system who spoke mainly Italian until she started school. Today she teaches in French at her alma mater East Hill Elementary in Rivières-des-Prairies, including pre-K literacy and Grade 6 immersion courses, like science,

ethics and histoire-géo.

"I'm able to see the way students come into the school and the way they leave the school. And kids that were in the same position I was when I just started, they didn't necessarily know a word in French," said Bastone. "And now they understand, they're speaking it. It really is incredible to see both sides."

English schools offer a strong foundation in French, although she said it is helpful to reinforce language skills outside the classroom, with extracurricular activities or watching movies.

"I have full confidence in all of them to be truly successful in French. I truly do. I'm not just saying that because I work there, honestly. I really believe in the French immersion program in all EMSB schools," Bastone said. "I'm living proof."

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Tips to help you balance your income and expenses as cost of living climbs



PAUL DELEAN
Personal Finance

A year into an inflation spike, many Canadians appear to have adjusted their spending habits to the new reality.

In an Ipsos poll for Global News released last week, 42 per cent of Canadians surveyed in December said they are buying less expensive food, 37 per cent reported shopping at cheaper stores, 25 per cent have cancelled or postponed vacations and 20 per cent reported cutting back on saving.

A survey by tech company Dye & Durham late last year found 1-in-3 Canadians intended to delay making a real estate transaction or major purchase over the next year because of the economic situation.

Even with those changes, many are still struggling to balance

income and expenses.

Higher shelter and food costs, in particular, are squeezing many households.

For those having difficulty coping, Step 1 is to prepare a detailed budget after a true assessment of how much you make after taxes (Quebec is a high-tax jurisdiction for middle and upper incomes) and where your money's going.

"It's like a mental exercise, a form of discipline, but also a relief to know whether we can afford this or that," one Gazette reader wrote in response to a column last summer about ways to trim expenses.

Everyone's situation is particular, but there are some broad guidelines for common living expenses.

Credit Canada, a credit-counselling agency, suggests an allocation of 35 per cent of the budget for housing (including insurance and taxes), 15 per cent for transportation (including insurance, gas and parking), 15 per cent for food (snacks and restaurant meals also count), 10 per cent for utilities (cellphone,

internet, cable, gas, hydro), five per cent for savings, five per cent for discretionary spending, 2.5 per cent for clothing, 2.5 per cent for health care and 10 per cent for debt repayment.

If your percentages are significantly different, changes may be advisable. Having little or no debt obviously creates more wiggle room.

Special cheques and supplements from government helped Canadians cope with higher inflation in 2022, but they're unlikely in 2023. So where can people find extra money?

In the near term, there's tax season. Most Quebecers get sizable income-tax refunds. Rather than wait until the tax deadline at the end of April, file early this year if you're getting a refund. And set that money aside to help with extra costs as the year advances, rather than spend it right away.

Do you really need all the subscriptions, streaming services, meal plans and TV channels you may currently have? How much of your budget goes to lottery

tickets, restaurant meals and delivery services?

Unused objects in your basement or garage and clothing you'll never wear again could be converted to cash through listings on sites like Kijiji, Poshmark and Facebook Marketplace.

If you're renewing your mortgage or insurance policies this year, seek out quotes from other providers rather than automatically sticking to the same one. The savings could be significant. Switching to weekly or bimonthly mortgage payments also could save you a substantial amount of interest over time.

If you've retired your mortgage or made improvements to your property such as a new roof or water heater, be sure to let your insurer know. It could lower your premiums.

The continuing labour shortage means there are plenty of job opportunities for those willing and able to put in extra hours every week and give themselves a bit of a financial cushion.

As personal-finance author Gail Vaz-Oxlade once put it: "Credit is not a way to extend your disposable income." *The Montreal Gazette invites reader questions on tax, investment and personal finance matters. If you have a query, please send it by email to Paul Delean at gazpersonalfinance@hotmail.com.*

ANTIDOTE WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to find the word that matches the definition.

A A N L U N



adjective – happening once a year ♦ over a period of one year
♦ [BOTANY] (of a plant) having a life cycle of one year or less



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