

NEW FORMULA FOR RENT HIKES

Guidelines will keep pricing people out of city: tenant groups **A4**



HIGH PRAISE FOR HUGHES

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Anglo school boards push certificates

Even eligible kids in French system will need them later: EMSB chair

ANDY RIGA

It's a campaign about a school system parents aren't using — and a right they might one day need.

Quebec's English school boards are urging anglophone parents who have opted for the French school system to obtain English school eligibility certificates for their children.

"The message that we are sending is that the eligibility certificate is really, really important," Joe Ortona, president of the Quebec En-

glish School Boards Association, told The Gazette.

"Even if you don't need it now, you're going to need it later. You don't want to permanently close doors unnecessarily and close certain opportunities for your children."

The QESBA, which represents nine boards across the province, is highlighting the need for the certificates via radio ads and its website. The tag line: "If you don't use it, you will lose it."

The campaign coincides with the

school registration period, which begins this week at many English boards.

The English eligibility certificate — known in French as *déclaration d'admissibilité à l'enseignement en anglais* — has been required since Quebec significantly tightened access to English schools with the adoption in 1977 of the Charter of the French Language, better known as Bill 101.

Premier François Legault widened the certificate's reach.

Under the Coalition Avenir Québec government's Bill 96, which reinforced language laws, whether a student holds an English eligibility certificate can now shape their path through CEGEP.

English CEGEPs must now prioritize applicants with certificates when spots are limited, and students with a certificate follow the standard English curriculum, including the English exit exam.

Students, including anglophones, without a certificate who attend an English CEGEP must instead pass the French exit exam and take specific French courses designed to prepare them for it.

Some parents who requested their child's eligibility certificate after high school have been refused because the Education Ministry says it can only give certificates for students currently enrolled in elementary or high school. SEE ELIGIBILITY ON **A2**



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PIECING THEIR LIVES TOGETHER

Rashid Gizitdinov and other tenants had to leave a decrepit Lachine building last year when it was ruled a fire risk. He rents an apartment from the city and tells *Jack Wilson* 'government (housing) is better' than what he saw from private landlords. **A3**

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U.S. company involved in Santé Québec projects sued by Texas for allegedly limiting access to files

AARON DERFEL

A U.S. software engineering firm that's responsible for Santé Québec's two pilot projects involving digital health records is being sued by the state of Texas amid allegations that it restricts parental access to children's medical files and is maintaining a monopoly that has proved costly to taxpayers.

Santé Québec, however, is standing by Wisconsin-based Epic Systems despite cost overruns for its projects of nearly \$135 million to date.

On Dec. 10, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton filed a lawsuit against Epic for what he asserts is the multibillion-dollar company's "unlawful monopolization of the electronic health records industry and for engaging in deceptive practices that restrict parental access to their minor children's medical records." Paxton noted that Epic's database "houses more than 325 million patient records, representing 90 per cent of all U.S. citizens. The corporation uses a wide range of exclusionary tactics to prevent potential competition from its

partners, customers, and even its own employees.

"Epic also interferes with hospitals' ability to use its own patient data as part of its scheme to block software competitors. As a result, Texas patients experience diminished quality of health care due to their preferred physicians receiving incomplete or out-of-date patient health records. These anticompetitive practices further harm Texas hospitals and Texas patients by raising costs and blocking innovative technologies."

SEE EPIC ON **A3**

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