

*“We have a powerful need to grade” – Charles H. Hargis*

## **Make time a variable**

Most service-based organizations have found a way to adjust their operations to meet the needs of clients. Courts sit until the case is over; patients stay in hospital until they are well enough to go home or elsewhere; strawberry growers adjust to late seasons and poor weather, and pick strawberries as they ripen.

But not schools. They’ve not yet found a way to set a standard, or series of standards, and adjust the time and support needed until students reach it. Schools seem to devote a disproportionate portion of their time and energy dealing with class schedules, PD days, spring breaks, instructional periods, school openings and closings, graduations, storm days, absences and attendances, credit hours, years of schooling, first year courses, and the list goes on. Schools act as though all students learn at the same pace and, in fact, need the same “unit of instruction’ at the same time.

The above items need to be dealt with, but they pertain to the operation of the “school as a factory” rather than school as a centre intended to help people develop their full capacities; they are important, but they tell nothing about the quality of the product.

Students learn at different rates and there will always be significant differences in what people of any age “know and are able to do”. What is needed is a restructuring of the school system in order to provide the help students need when they need it. It can be done, it must be done and, in fact, it should be done.

## **Award to Prince Street Elementary**

Prince Street Elementary School is this year’s winner of the Excellence in Education Award, an award designed to recognize schools and learning centres for their efforts in providing a quality education to their students. Last year’s Award was won by Kinkora Regional High School. The Award, established through the generosity of an Island family, includes a cheque for \$2,500 and is intended to call attention to important characteristics of “effective schools”. Check out our website at [www.education2020.ca](http://www.education2020.ca) for more details.

## **B.C. Court renders a decision**

The B.C. Court of Appeal rendered its ruling recently on a long-standing dispute between the Government and the B.C. Teachers Federation (BCTF). In fact, it removed classroom working conditions, especially class size and composition from the bargaining table. The decision marks another stage in a five-year fight. The BCTF is likely to launch an appeal.

## **Ombudsman**

The Washington Post dated September 20, 2014, reported that the Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education received 150 complaints during its first six months of operation; complaints were mostly about “credits lost during school transfers, poor services for students with special needs or disabilities, long-term suspensions and fears related to intimidation and bullying.”

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