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## **Dialogue Surfaces Around the Need to Reinvent Education**

OACS schools may have long had the answer

In a recent column in the *Globe and Mail*, columnist Margaret Wenté writes about the dated school systems and offers ideas as to what a 21st century education could look like.

Wenté, of course, is not the first to point to the dated education model. For example, world-renowned education and creativity expert Sir Ken Robinson gave a talk on changing education paradigms a couple years ago.

Robinson said that every country is reforming public education for economic and cultural reasons, but “the problem is they are trying to meet the future by doing what they did in the past.”

He noted the education system was designed, conceived and structured for a different age — during the Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution — and is modelled on the interest of industrialism. (Click [here](#) for a RSA animate video illustrating Robinson’s talk.)

In her [column published March 8](#), Wenté writes that “trying to impose improvement from the top down doesn’t work.”

She references thinker Walter Russell Mead when considering what a 21st-century education system would look like.

“Imagine a world where groups of like-minded teachers are empowered to get together and open neighbourhood schools and run them as they see fit. Parents could choose any school they want. Teachers and principals would determine their

own curriculum, teaching materials and policies.

“They, not the school board or the government, would decide how big the classes would be and whether they should offer Grade 11 history, gym, music or clown lessons. Teachers would be treated as entrepreneurs and professionals instead of factory workers. Principals would be able to recruit the teachers they want. They could use the powerful new tools of distance and computer education as they see fit.”

Though Wentz writes these ideas are “just a fantasy” for now, some are not far off from current reality when looking at schools like those belonging to the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools (OACS).

Many OACS member schools are celebrating their 50th anniversaries. They were founded by groups of like-minded parents, many of whom had a Christian Reformed Church background, who wanted their children to receive the same religious worldview at school as they did at home.

In Ontario, parents who choose independent education outside of the public or Catholic school system pay tuition entirely out-of-pocket. Though OACS schools meet — or most often exceed — ministry standards, they have more freedom around how they deliver education.

And a key part of the OACS member school ecology is that they are democratically-run. Parents who are school members elect their board that make decisions around the school’s vision and operations.

When it comes to 21st-century education and thinking outside the box, a new OACS News series is underway to ask principals, teachers, board members and parents questions about the ideal future of schools and education.

*Axiom News provides Stakeholder News Services to the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools (OACS). A [version of this article](#) was originally published on the OACS website, [www.oacs.org](http://www.oacs.org). If you would like to learn more about our Stakeholder News Services, contact [peter@axiomnews.ca](mailto:peter@axiomnews.ca).*

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## **It is pretty strange that no**

It is pretty strange that no one noticed this already. It is not as much reinvention that we require, but certain boost would not be out of place. I've been to many countries and I can say that I've seen weaker forms of education (get [the article](#) about education). But it is not right...we need to be like the best ones are. We need to sit down and start looking for main problems' solutions. If we need money, we need to revise our financial policies and see where we could apply potential cuts. If we need qualified staff, we need to make changes in teacher training programs. Until we don't do anything, education will go on vanishing.

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