

The Journal of
the Coalition of
Essential Schools

horace

24.3 FALL 2008

Education for Democracy



CESPublications 

Social Justice Education Resources

Rethinking Schools
www.rethinkingschools.org

Education for Liberation Network
www.edliberation.org

Teachers 4 Social Justice
www.t4sj.org

Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Continuum International Publishing Group, 30th Anniversary Edition, 2000)

Steven Wolk, *A Democratic Classroom* (Heinemann, 1998)

Each Family School teacher has dozens of books and articles for particular units that she or he would be willing to share. The important point to understand about social justice education is that it is based in the community. Community leaders, activists, and artists are your best resources.

their Civil Rights study tour every three years. Visits with Hollis may include a tour of Tougaloo College (a historically Black college and sanctuary for many Civil Rights activists), a stop at the Mississippi state legislature and meetings with black representatives, or a visit to slain Civil Rights activist Medgar Evers' home, where Hollis sings a song he wrote about Evers.

In turn, with a sponsorship from Hamline University, Hollis visits Minneapolis every winter, sharing civil rights history and informed observations about race and equity issues today with college students and with our students and their families. "I tell people I have family in Minneapolis, from the little Kindergartners to the eighth graders and teachers and parents," Hollis says. "I am so committed to my family that I break one of my personal rules, which is not being in the Frigid Zone during the winter."

Like many activists and adult members of the extended Family School family, Hollis reflects on the two-way road of learning as he deepens his relationship with the school. "The situation (the struggle for justice and the understanding of injustice) is ever-evolving. Can my experiences from the past be used today, or do I have to change and broaden my understanding? My experience is my generation. New generations vary and their experiences are also specific to location. The past is important but does it apply? When you work with children and you have a close and trusted relationship, they will reveal to you what they need and what their circumstances are. This is one of the gifts of the school."

Susie considers the school community "a microcosm of what the movement [for racial and social justice]

should be, a multi-ethnic, multi-racial group of intergenerational activists who understand the relationship between learning and activism. We feed each other along the way."

Intergenerational learning is so embedded in the Family School philosophy and approach that I sometimes forget about it until a student reminds me. Over the last few years, as I've written about the school's vibrant arts program—which engages a diverse population of local artists as mentors, and features an original musical play (written by Susie)—I was struck by two unsolicited remarks from young people who talked to me about the play as an intergenerational learning experience.

Yolanda Hare graduated from Family School in the early 1980s and came back after college for a year's stint through AmeriCorps. I was asking her about her memories of the play. Recalling her career as one of the "good guys," she observed, "I got to work with kids I wasn't in class with. And we all got to feel proud of our hard work. Now I work at the school and it's wonderful to watch the next generation learn and have fun in the Family School play."

You wouldn't expect kids who are in the play now to make the same observation but when I interviewed Fiona, age 13, backstage, she said, "I like it that different ages can work together and create the play." Another young actor, Amity, observed, "Older kids have an impact on younger kids and help them out."

The intergenerational focus is critical to the high expectations and strong academic outcomes that characterize the school. "You don't have to wait 'til children are half grown before you talk to them about justice," Hollis reminds us. "Even itty bitty ones can learn."

I asked Hollis what he thought other schools and youth organizations could learn from Southside Family Charter School. He took a characteristic long moment to think before he spoke. "The biggest obstacle that people in schools have is the fear factor. Southside Family Charter School takes risks. They have faith in themselves and the children. Educators need to get outside their little boxes. If they would take risks, they would see endless possibilities."

Romona Safree, a practicing artist, and 18-year Family School veteran, encourages kids to explore the world and master skills through art. She describes her painting class as a "little kid version of color theory. They learn about pigment, shades, and color." She uses visual art to teach math and help children learn to read. "There's a direct link between creative thinking and critical thinking." And one of our youngest teachers, Melissa Favero, characterizes the school's philosophy and her own innovations in science and math teaching with the compellingly simple slogan, "Dream It! Do It!"

A child or adult engaged in creative activity cannot help but respond critically to a social environment that so often denies the importance of the creative spirit. Part of the school's creative genius is to honor this connection, and insist that critical thinking be as "hands on" as any art or science project. Critical thinking leads the school community beyond the classroom and into the streets as student artists and dreamers become activists who in turn teach their peers, their parents and anyone who will listen that the world can indeed be a better place.

Sometimes this better place, and the school's role in creating it, is found when some of our students make critical identity declarations. Because the school is forthright in its opposition to homophobia and its embrace of GLBT rights and issues, the school climate has made it possible for many students to come out early, with the support of their Family School family as they make their identities known. In turn, leaders of GLBT groups support the school because of its willingness to take risks and do the right thing on this issue.

Many of our alumni are studying and building careers with the explicit goal of making the world a better place. Yolanda Hare, the young woman who talked so clearly about students helping students, returned to the school as an AmeriCorps volunteer to give back and to learn more. Today she's enrolled in the MFA program at Hamline University with the intention of writing juvenile novels, the kinds of stories she wished for when she was first exploring literature. Other students find careers in economic development, nursing, community radio, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Even those pursuing more conventional careers filter their choices through the lens they discovered at Family School. Many Family School alumni have returned to the school to volunteer, serve on the board of directors and, as the years go by, send their own children to the school.

I met Beth Hart when she was five years old, starting kindergarten along with my daughter in 1974. Since then, Beth has enrolled her children at the school, served on our board, and become a neighborhood activist. Now she's a grandmother. This intergenerational connection with the school is remarkable evidence of the way that the school becomes a primary, orienting source of community and stability in so many lives.

At a time when teachers are pressured more and more to compartmentalize knowledge and produce "outcomes" as measured by standardized tests, Southside Family Charter School flies in the exact opposite direction, encourages integrated curriculum, spontaneous creativity, and teacher-generated curricula based on each one's interests and aspira-

tions. Rounding the corner towards its fourth decade, Southside Family Charter School is all about endless possibilities.

Flo Golod is a consultant who works with nonprofit organizations, including schools, in the Twin Cities. She provides assistance in fundraising, board development, and planning. Before starting her consulting business, she was the Executive Director of Southside Family School for 20 years.

CES Announces the The Theodore R. Sizer Dissertation Scholars Grant Program Spring 2008 Awards

Presented by the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) and named for its founder and chair emeritus, the Sizer Dissertation Scholar Awards encourage a new generation of scholars to conduct research on CES schools and further an understanding of the effectiveness of innovative school practices. Award recipients receive a grant to conduct research or complete their dissertation, as well as a stipend to present their research at Fall Forum.

Laura S. Chesson
The University of Massachusetts at Lowell Graduate School of Education

Thesis: Teacher Leadership in Support of School Reform in Boston Pilot Schools

Jacqueline Jenkins
Stanford University

Thesis: Ghosts in the Machine: White Identity Politics, Reform, and Power in the Coalition of Essential Schools' Urban Small Schools Network

Proposals for the Sizer Scholar Grants will be reviewed twice a year. Upcoming deadlines for proposals are:

December 1, 2008 to be reviewed in December

April 21, 2009 to be reviewed in May

Visit www.essentialschools.org/pub/ces_docs/about/org/DSP_cfp.html for application instructions, abstracts of current Sizer Scholars' research, and information about past recipients.

Education and Democracy: Back to the Future

by George Wood

I know it's 2008, but the prospect of a new administration—and a new U.S. Department of Education—has me thinking about 2001.

I have to admit that when the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act was passed seven years ago, I paid little attention. As a high school principal, I had other things on my mind, like developing a literacy program, finding funding for our students to do more internships, setting up senior project night, finalizing next year's schedule, and scraping together enough dimes from vending machines to send our juniors on college visits. Federal legislation was the last thing on my mind; I was interested in the quality of work going on in our classrooms.

When I did note what was going on, it seemed benign, and maybe even beneficial to my work. A new push to support schools that served our most needy students would be a good thing, and according to our staff members, it would also mean a few dollars for the high school from funds that were usually just targeted to the elementary schools. Not a bad deal, I thought—slightly more money for all our schools, a new fund for the literacy work we were doing, and an ambitious federal bill that would not meaningfully impact my daily work as an educator.

Clearly, I was wrong.

Seven years after the fact, what haunts me most about NCLB's sound and fury is that this legislation—far from signifying nothing—has helped lock in place the very structures of schooling we most need to change. Here are a few examples:

Commissions, college presidents, and business leaders have rightly called for schools to help students think more broadly, systemically, creatively, and collaboratively. Yet federal and state accountability systems rely on high stakes standardized tests as the only measure of student progress and school accountability. In these tests, students are not asked to demonstrate any of these higher-order thinking skills. Instead, to build in more time for test prep, many schools have

abandoned the very programs that best develop these skills, such as internship programs, interdisciplinary curricula, field trips, and labs.

Everyone from Oprah Winfrey to Bill Gates has suddenly realized that a large number of kids drop out and never graduate. (Pardon me if I wonder why it took them so long to find this out—could it be where they live?) Talk with drop-outs and they will tell you they leave school because they are bored, they feel invisible, or they have family needs they must attend to. The solution? Not very effective. State after state has added more course requirements for graduation, leading to less flexibility for the engaging experiences that we know help keep kids in school.

Nothing rings truer to parents or kids than the fact that good teachers make all the difference. However, enshrined in NCLB and state curriculum models are strategies designed to make teaching “teacher-proof.” Scripted curricula (most clearly seen in reading programs), and increasingly frequent testing are tools to control teaching rather than professionalize it. No wonder so many people are leaving the field.

As a new administration takes shape and debates intensify over the future of federal and state education policies, it's important to remember that none of this is new. For decades, we have relied on test scores as outcomes, increased graduation requirements, and tried to teacher-proof our classrooms. None of these steps have helped engender the school renewal we seek.

We founded the Forum for Education and Democracy to try and turn around this misguided agenda for our schools. The Forum's Conveners, staff members, and I are driven daily by the experiences and dreams of families, children, and educators around the country. We are also tired of those folks being led on by politicians who are more concerned with sound bites and talking points than they are with doing the right thing when it comes to our children.

At the Forum, we are committed to taking seriously the mission of our public school system—the development in all of our children the tools necessary for lifelong learning and engaged citizenship. To that end, we hope to do three things well in the coming months and years:

Visit the Forum for Education and Democracy online at www.forumforeducation.org for news about Washington D.C. policy briefings, blog posts, access to the Forum's newsletter, policy statements, research reports, and more.

The Five Freedoms Project

The Five Freedoms Project is a national organization that equips local school leaders with the leadership development, coaching and support they need to address two of America's greatest challenges—improving the performance of our public schools, and strengthening the quality of our civic discourse—at the same time.

To support its growing national community, the Five Freedoms Project offers two online resources—an official web site (www.fivefreedoms.org) and an online network (network.fivefreedoms.org) of educators, students, and citizens who share a commitment to First Amendment freedoms, democratic schools, and the idea that children should be seen and heard.

A virtual “public square” for the 21st century, the Network is made up of individuals from different places, perspectives, and points of interest. Join today (it's free) and share your voice!

Advise thought leaders and policy makers about what characterizes engaging, equitable, and high-functioning schools;

Advocate for policies that help schools refocus on the whole child, prepare young people for democratic citizenship, and restore a balanced approach to whole-school assessment and accountability; and

Amplify the voices of practitioners, young people, and partner organizations so that the stories of educators and students can become the central data points that shape how policies are made and clarify what purpose they should serve.

To do this work effectively, we need to hear from you. Imagine if you were in a hearing on Capitol Hill. It's a new day in Washington, and you're there because the new administration has said publicly that it intends to listen to educators at length before proposing any new legislation. This is your chance, and they have asked you three questions:

What are the best examples of high-quality teaching and learning you've had the privilege to experience? What are the key attributes of these experiences, and how can policies help support more of these experiences across the country?

Does the approach to whole-school governance in your school help or hinder the learning needs of children? If it helps, why and how does it help? If it hinders, why and how does it hinder?

In what ways is your school's commitment to equity and access made more difficult by federal and state policies? How do those policies need to change so your school can more effectively meet the needs of all children?

We've created a special online discussion area so you can share your ideas with us and see what others have to say as well. Please, visit <http://network.fivefreedoms.org/forum> today and share your voice.

Together, let's make sure the lessons of the last seven years aren't forgotten, and let's help the next administration craft policies that help us ensure all young people acquire the skills and self-confidence they need to be seen and heard—both in their schools and throughout our democratic society—in meaningful, responsible ways.

George H. Wood is principal of Federal Hocking High School in Stewart, Ohio, and the founding Director of The Forum for Education and Democracy. Dr. Wood's 30-year career in public education includes work as a classroom teacher, school board member, professor of education, and school principal. He authored Ohio Governor Ted Strickland's K-12 Education Transition Paper, as well as the books *Schools That Work*, *Time to Learn*, and *Many Children Left Behind*.

Choosing To Participate

by Jeremy Nesoff

Ask students what to “participate” means. In a year of a presidential election, would they say it means to choose to vote for the candidate of their choice? Would they say that it means to make a choice about helping victims of storms or natural disasters? Would they see how making choices to participate could begin right in their own schools and communities? The range of answers might be impressive and suggest something about the state of civic education in our nation and the ways our schools help prepare students to participate in democracy.

For twelfth-grader Ibtesam “Sunny” Anjum the answer is sharp and focused: “We talked a lot about that question in my class.... it means helping others and being an Upstander and including others in your Universe of Obligation.” Danielle Cureton, tenth grade, says, “It means to be an active member in your school and take part in creating better community standards.” Olivia McClendon, twelfth grade, agrees adding, “...You need the willpower, motivation and determination to make a difference.” Nicholas Mendez, eleventh grade, says “Choosing to Participate means doing good things not for the perks but for honestly wanting to have good morals.”

How did these students arrive at their definitions? What do Upstander and Universe of Obligation mean? Where did Sunny encounter these ideas and vocabulary? Besides their own experiences, these students share the experience of learning in a Facing History and Ourselves (FHAO) classroom. Sunny adds, “After being in my Facing History class, I realized that my Universe of Obligation was very small. Now it includes the whole world.”

As the 2008 school year began, choices about responsibility and participation were everywhere. We are making choices in the 2008 presidential election, which is engaging young people in unusually high numbers. According to the *Washington Post*, youth voter turnout has tripled and even quadrupled in some primary states compared with the 2004 elections. As



Photo by Kathy Richland

our students, preparing to be voters in the near future, think about national and global issues, they are also faced with the decisions each school year brings: What kind of student will I be? What groups do I want to be a part of? The large and small choices students make may not seem important at the time, but little by little, those decisions will shape them as individuals and influence their potential to be responsible citizens.

Facing History and Ourselves

Questions about the meaning of participation and how one can make a difference are always on the mind of adolescents, and they permeate the entire educational framework of FHAO. Its sequence of study begins with an investigation of identity, first individual and then group identities with their definitions of membership. Through thinking about the use of such terms as labeling, stereotyping, obedience, conformity, and resistance, students develop a perspective within which to approach history and the connections that can be made to the present. They then explore an in-depth case study in history—the failure of democracy during the 1920’s and 1930’s in Germany and the steps that lead to the Holocaust, as well as other examples of mass violence such as the Armenian genocide and the Civil Rights struggle in the United States. Students see how such events were not inevitable, but

were the result of choices made, or not made, by individuals, groups and nations. They learn that violence and injustice begin with small steps of indifference, conformity and a lack of critical thinking. They make connections to their own world and the moral choices that citizens of the world may need to confront. As they extend those connections to the future they think about prevention and how they, as young people and as adults can make a positive difference.

FHAO students grapple with the use and meaning of language as a tool for connecting past to present. While analyzing historical case studies they use words like perpetrator, victim, and bystander as well as terms that Sunny used above, including Upstander and Universe of Obligation. According to journalist and academic Samantha Power, Upstanders are people

Facing History's Scope and Sequence

The FHAO Scope and Sequence is a journey of discovery about oneself and others. Students begin with questions of identity and membership: how is identity formed? How does it influence behavior? How does it shape the way we see ourselves and others? These sessions provide a framework and a vocabulary for exploring history in depth. Next, choices made by individuals and nations at pivotal times in history are examined. It is a study that adds new perspectives on the effects of bigotry and indifference, as well as courage and empathy in the world today. Finally, students consider questions of judgment, memory, and legacy in history—questions of right and wrong, of guilt and responsibility. The journey culminates by reflecting on Choosing to Participate: the ways that responsible civic participation can help preserve democracy and civil society in our own time.

whose actions reflect courage and resilience, and whose determination to stand up for human rights has influenced subsequent public policy. Upstanders are “the sharpest challenge to the world of bystanders.” Universe of Obligation is the name historical sociologist Helen Fein has given to the circle of individuals and groups “toward whom obligations are owed, to whom rules apply, and whose injuries call for [amends].” Students use this vocabulary to engage with history and historical choices in order to make judgments about the roles they could assume.

The lessons of the past help students confront the necessity for responsible participation to protect and promote democracy, justice and human dignity in the future. Education for a democratic citizen-

ship means encouraging students to recognize that participation can make a difference and is integral to the ethical choices and decisions that citizenship demands. Students are exposed to individuals and groups who have participated by taking steps to build just and inclusive communities. Through examining the meaning of participation in history and the present, Facing History classes help teachers and students think about what it means to be a good citizen in their schools, their neighborhoods, their nation, and around the world.

Examples of Resources for Choosing to Participate:

Facing History is unique in that it is not a packaged curriculum or prescribed set of lessons. It offers long-term support and is designed to have a lasting effect on the life of a school. FHAO provides teachers with ongoing professional development, pedagogy, and content resources to sustain this work.

Believing that no classroom exists in isolation, FHAO has developed a number of community resources, including the exhibit titled Choosing to Participate: a multifaceted and multimedia exhibition with a companion website that challenges audiences to examine biases and consider the responsibilities of citizenship. The exhibition aims to be a modern version of the town common, bringing neighbors together to consider ways to build community and consider the consequences of our choices and actions. The need for such an exhibit grew out of early experiences with students who had taken the FHAO journey and asked: How can I make a positive difference in the world? To help students think about this question, the exhibit highlights four powerful stories about the meaning of civic participation and the critical need to promote a just society. One story is “Crisis in Little Rock,” which focuses on efforts to desegregate Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957—efforts that resulted in a severe constitutional crisis. Students learn how courageous choices made by young people changed U.S. history, inspiring others around the world. The exhibition has been shown in cities across the country, most recently in downtown Boston at the main branch of the Boston Public Library. More than 100,000 people visited, including 10,000 students who were led on tours by trained volunteers. The next destination is Cleveland, Ohio, where it will be hosted by the Western Reserve Historical Society from October 2009 through Jan 2010.

Another resource is the interactive website “Be the Change: Upstanders for Human Rights.” The website explores the stories of five extraordinary people who won the Reebok Human Rights Award for work they did while in their teens and 20s. The website is rich with resources for teachers and gives students

Continued on next page

connection points between the passions, influences, and motivations of the five Upstanders and their own lives. Although the award winners are impressive because of their accomplishments, students learn they are also everyday people who have chosen to participate. There are multiple ways for students to interact with the website, including posting answers to the same questions posed to the Upstanders. Students can also connect with a growing global network of peers who care about creating a more just world.

Be The Change: Upstanders for Human Rights

The stories of five Upstanders committed to social justice and human rights are profiled in the interactive website, "Be the Change: Upstanders for Human Rights."

www2.facinghistory.org/campus/BeTheChange.nsf/home?openform

Choosing to Participate in Schools

Many FHAO classes and students conclude their study by asking what they can do now to make a difference. Teachers lead students in investigations of essential questions such as: Where do I have the power to change? What is my Universe of Obligation? How can I make a difference? The following are some examples of how teachers and students have responded

At The Engineering School, one of three small schools converted from Boston's Hyde Park High School, Darlene Marciano believes it is important to help her students reflect on the impact of their choices and actions on those around them. Marciano created a writing project that would facilitate her students' reflection on their experiences on the Boston subways, known locally as the "T." She wanted them to address questions such as: How do people see me? How do I see myself? Where do I have the power for change? The most important thing for Marciano was "students tuning into their own choices and behavior and considering how it affected others.... I think schools need to do a lot more of this type of work." She worked with a writing coach, Sage Marsters from WriteBoston, to create a curriculum for her ninth grade Humanities class that emphasized literacy skills in addressing these issues. They focused on the students' experiences on the T since "many students ride the T every day—and this is usually not a passive ride. Amidst all the activity, students must make

complex choices about how to engage with the public and who they want to be."

One particular Facing History resource resonated: Jesús Colón's story "Little Things Are Big." Colón shares his internal struggle as a Puerto Rican man about whether to offer help to a white woman with her luggage and children on a late night subway ride in New York City and how identity influenced his decision. Students analyzed the story and visited the Choosing to Participate exhibit, which also features Colón's work. The story helped them explore how stereotyping, labeling, and prejudice operate in their own world.

Marciano scaffolded the writing process by explicitly focusing on skills such as observation and the use of dialogue. She created a process for students to focus on moments of civic participation they've experienced on the T. The result was a collection of personal narratives on a wide range of experiences from being wrongly accused by police to witnessing an act of violence to a lesson learned from witnessing an act of love. The students addressed personal choices they are faced with in their daily lives and questions such as: How does identity affect the choices we make and who we are? What can we learn from choices we regret? How can writing be a form of participation?

Students discovered different ways that writing can be a form of participation. Several narratives were published in a local student-run newspaper that is distributed citywide. The class used their work in a presentation for their school-wide humanities exhibition night and built a mock T stop to display their work. The T stop was then displayed in their school's lobby for the rest of the year. Their teachers wrote that the students have begun "to see themselves as people who make powerful choices every day, and they are using their writing to think through their choices."

As Stephanie Papas, a World History teacher at Logan High School in Union City, California, created curriculum to address state standards on the "Rise of the Democratic Ideal," she wanted to make the curriculum relevant to her students' lives. Papas teaches students of many different cultural backgrounds and found that FHAO supported her work addressing issues of identity, membership and participation to build her learning community.

Papas uses FHAO on-line modules, including "The Weimar Republic: The Fragility of Democracy," which focuses on the history of the Weimar Republic (1919-1933.) This creative and crucial period of the 20th century serves as a significant case study and raises crucial issues that resonate with our own time such as: How should a democracy respond to collective violence? Papas helps identify the "tragic flaws"

of the period as a cautionary tale of how and why a democracy can fail. She discusses whether the issues in the Weimar Republic are relevant to problems that we face in the 21st century and asks students to use their historical investigation to answer questions about their own values and beliefs: What rights do I value? If there's something I do not like, how do I change it? How can I make a difference? They draw on their knowledge of the Weimar Republic to grapple with what can strengthen and weaken democracy.

As the culmination to her work last year, Papas took advantage of Facing History's speaker network to host a guest speaker, Carl Wilkens, who spoke about his choice to make a difference in Rwanda. The FHAO network brings speakers into classrooms to serve as another medium for helping students connect history to the moral choices they make in their own lives. Wilkens was the only American who chose to stay in Rwanda through the 1994 genocide, and was able to save more than 200 children living in an orphanage in Kigali during the conflict. His story is a powerful example of an individual's choice to be an Upstander. Papas says his visit "was a highlight of the year."

Papas is using interest in the 2008 presidential election to hold a school-wide mock election for which students are creating political pamphlets outlining differences between Democrats and Republicans. Students will vote using an on-line system. Papas is excited to see how this activity "will allow for a larger conversation about who participates, who doesn't, and why? Who has access? Who has time?" She expects them to draw on lessons learned about the fragility of democracy in their historical case study to "create a lot of inroads for deeper discussions."

New York City's Facing History School (FHS), a small public CES high school created with FHAO as a lead partner, uses a curriculum that is rooted in history and choice making. The school is structured to connect academic exercise with practice. Students first experience the FHAO journey with a course titled "We and They," required of all ninth graders, which focuses on issues of identity and membership. As one student said, "Before you can do any work, you need to know who you are." Another discussed how "...we discuss serious topics that other high school students usually make fun of." This work is infused throughout students' four years at the school. Choosing to Participate has focused the school on the various forms that community service can take.

According to Jeffrey Galaise, coordinator of the FHS community service program, one goal is to help with the transition to college and another is to show students that "... if you do the right thing and commit yourself to your environment, it will open doors for you." The program will require 400 hours of commu-

nity service to graduate. Students who complete this requirement by their senior year participate in a year-long class called Senior Institute. The second half of the year involves an independent internship with organizations such as the Good Dog Foundation that trains dogs for use in therapy at various places, including children's hospitals and elderly facilities. Teacher Emily Haines discussed other developing plans including alternative Spring Break service learning trips to the Dominican Republic and Costa Rica.

To emphasize the importance that choosing to participate has for their community, each year the FHS gives awards titled "Choosing to Participate Awards" to one student in every grade. Students win the award for being leaders in their school or for service to the larger community. Danielle, Olivia and Nicholas, who spoke about the meaning of choosing to participate in the introduction, are last year's winners. Olivia recruited students to a school-wide committee that focused on improving the school environment. Nicholas and Danielle are leaders in the student government. When asked how the FHS has impacted their dreams for the future, all three confidently share their hopes and plans to attend colleges and universities such as Yale, Temple, Smith, and Boston University.

At Beachwood High School, outside of Cleveland, Ohio, Gregory Deegan saw that after studying Facing History and Ourselves in his Human Rights class, his students "were chomping at the bit to do something." Deegan's class now culminates with a "Choosing to Participate" week. Students form groups to investigate problems and issues that they think need to be addressed. FHAO supported his goals by helping him give students a vocabulary and language to engage in difficult topics. He feels that the Scope and Sequence engages students in authentic discussions about what it means to live in a Democracy. He uses Facing History Resources such as the video "Not in Our Town," which depicts the ways that Billings, Montana stood up to hate crimes, to shape discussions about choices that people had in history and about the choices they have today.

For the last week of the semester, student groups work to make the entire school aware of their projects. In the preceding month, they meet with teachers and the school principal to make them aware of their plans. They create signs, pamphlets, and tables with information around the school and are required to connect with other students who are not in the class to explain and perhaps defend their work. They prepare by discussing how to find conversation points that help engage others instead of shutting them down. An example of a project is a student who visited an orphanage while traveling in Brazil and formed a

Continued on next page

Facing History and Ourselves Website and Resources

The website www.facinghistory.org, offers a wealth of information, readings, curriculum outlines, downloadable study guides, and online discussion forums to educators internationally. Upon completion of a professional development seminar and certain qualifying workshops, educators receive complete access to FHAO's online educator resources; borrowing privileges from FHAO's extensive lending library of videos, DVDs and books; access to our regional speakers' bureaus; and one-on-one assistance from a FHAO program associate for individualized consultations on curriculum planning and classroom concerns.

FHAO's program, resources and pedagogy support and compliment the Coalition of Essential Schools' Common Principles and efforts to create personalized, equitable, and academically challenging schools for all young people.

Resources from this article include:

On-line Modules:

Choosing to Participate: Facing History and Ourselves:
<http://ctp.facinghistory.org/>

Includes Jesús Colón's story "Little Things Are Big":
ctp.facinghistory.org/stories/little_things_are_big

The Weimar Republic: The Fragility of Democracy:
www2.facinghistory.org/campus/weimar.nsf/
Welcome?OpenForm

To see all FHAO on-line modules:
www.facinghistory.org/resources/modules

Video resources:

Not In Our Town: see www.pbs.org/niot/; also available from the FHAO lending library.

group to raise funds for play equipment. Deegan said that the FHAO curriculum helped his project to teach "all the skills that Social Studies teachers talk about promoting."

One group's work did not stop with the end of the school year or with students graduating and leaving for college. Over a year and a half ago, students learned that local businesses were throwing away significant amounts of food that was past the sale date but still usable. The students contacted these businesses to donate the food, which they then brought to a battered women's shelter. When the original group members graduated, students just beginning in Deegan's Human Rights course agreed to take over. The pride is evident in Deegan's voice as he explains that students who are new to the course are inspired to participate by what they have heard. On a Thursday night, after a long

day at school and on the phone explaining his work, Deegan was headed out again to meet the present group members in the parking lot of their school and help bring the donations to the shelter which has come to depend on their help. The choice of one small group of students to participate has been carried on by those coming after them.

At Wildwood School, an independent K-12 Essential school and Small Schools Network Mentor School in Los Angeles, teacher Tassie Hadlock-Piltz used FHAO material to help create a Human Rights class that has become the required capstone Humanities class for all seniors. The course introduces the fundamentals of human rights in theory and as practiced throughout the world. It begins with a focus on the human rights provisions of the United Nations' Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and culminates with an action project requiring students to investigate an issue that manifests itself in their communities. Examples of issues they have looked at are educational inequality, sweat shops, and the abuse of local taxi drivers. Hadlock-Piltz emphasizes that she uses Facing History resources "not to get depressed about abuses but to look at examples of healing and reconciliation, such as South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, to see how to move beyond hopelessness." The class participated in the launch of the Be the Change website and gained inspiration from the stories of the Upstanders.

One outcome of this approach was when students at Wildwood advocated for the formation of the Human Rights Student Task Force. The group developed over the last five years and is now the most active club at the school. Hadlock-Piltz says "that as a CES school, we believe that students are the participants and leaders who set the agenda for the group." The group created an internal leadership group for which it "has become an honor to be a member." The Wildwood Human Rights Student Task Force has taken on many interesting projects such as a "Movies That Matter Festival." Wildwood students invited students from other schools, showed movies such as *China Blue*, which looks at the garment industry in China, and led reflective discussions. One of their most ambitious projects was hosting a "Camp Darfur" day at the school.

According to the website of Stop Genocide Now (www.stopgenocidenow.org) "Camp Darfur is an interactive awareness and education event that brings attention to the ongoing genocide in Darfur, Sudan." The group provides canvas tents that represent what more than 2.5 million internally displaced persons in Chad and Darfur are living in. Tents house exhibits on the genocide in Darfur and historical genocides such as in the Holocaust, Cambodia, and Rwanda. Hadlock-Piltz is clear "that while nothing can get

close to understanding the experience of the refugees" the goal is education and making students aware of the choices to participate that are available to them.

Members of the student task force educate themselves and then work in the tents as other students visit. This year, Friday, November 21st will be devoted to Camp Darfur. The group plans to have classes from the entire upper school visit. At certain points during the day, they will gather all those attending to hear testimonies from children around the world who have been victims of conflicts. The task forces members work to become educators for the day and to emphasize a global context for Choosing to Participate.

How did Sunny, who spoke about expanding his Universe of Obligation, arrive at his beliefs? He explains that his life experiences, including separation from family members and emigrating from Pakistan in 2005, laid the foundation. It wasn't until being in a Facing History class that he was able to appreciate what education made possible for him: "I thought education was just another way of making money. Now I realize that education is the key that will make my life positive."

A senior at Boston International High School, a school for recent immigrants of high school age, Sunny was part of a project in Jocelyn Stanton's classroom called Digital Storytelling. The project is the result of a collaboration of FHAO with the Pearson Foundation (see www.digitalartsalliance.org) that teaches students to write, organize, shoot, assemble and edit their own curriculum-based digital films. Stanton focused her class by framing their pieces on moral dilemmas in the students' lives. Sunny created a piece called "Together We Can Make a Change," in which he addresses the question of whether or not he was obligated to include Pakistan in his universe of obligation. Sunny wrote: "I kept asking myself: am I, as a citizen of Pakistan living in this country, obligated to my country of origin? As violence in Pakistan erupted and I saw and heard the violence in the news, I wondered if I should include Pakistan in my Universe of Obligation? After making the movie, I concluded that Pakistan was just the beginning. Instead, I realized that my Universe of Obligation includes everyone: in my class, in my community, and in the world."

Thanks to Margot Stern Strom for her inspiration and creation, to Marty Sleeper and Marc Skvirsky for support and feedback, to Facing History colleagues past and present, and to the educators and students who gave their time and input.

Sunny's experience is validated by Stanton's thoughts on her work with Facing History. She believes that students "become conscious about the choices they are making by really slowing down to process of choice making itself." She believes that young people feel respected when educators bring tough, intellectual conversations to them: "Students feel this is real. That this is what they go through, too." Their Universe of Obligation can grow through learning about the struggles of others. Sunny's words, digital narrative, and writing exemplify this possibility. His thinking has grown and evolved as he has taken the FHAO journey. Striving to be an Upstander and choosing to participate is now a part of his identity.

Conclusion

The impact of this work for students is seen in their words. After visiting the Choosing to Participate exhibit Sunny felt compelled to create a painting titled "Our Colorful World," featured on the cover of this issue of *Horace*. Writing about it, Sunny says, "I decided to make a painting of Upstanders who want to turn this world into An Ideal World by adding others in their Universe of Obligation. As I started to work on my artistic project, I discovered that I, too, am one of those Upstanders who have this dream to turn this world into An Ideal World and Colorful World where there is love, peace, and equality."

As we move forward in the 21st century knowing and confronting the collective violence in our past and pitfalls for democracy in the future, the value of investigating choosing to participate in our schools is clear. As Margot Stern Strom has written "The educator's task—to shape a humane, informed citizenry—has never been more urgent or more vital to the preservation of democratic values and human rights." Another Facing History student adds, "If one by one, hundreds of children learn the evils of hatred in history, then learn to face and change that history in their own world through art, language, and service and begin to build communities of educated committed citizens, who is to say that Facing History cannot be the catalyst for an end to prejudice, violence, and injustice?"

Jeremy Nesoff is a program associate at Facing History and Ourselves. He is a graduate of the Principals Residency Network and was a teacher and administrator in two small schools: the New York City Museum School and the Compass School (a CES school). *Horace* Volume 23, Number 4, features his article "The Belmont Zone of Choice: Community-Driven Action for School Change," available at www.essentialschools.org/cs/resources/view/ces_res/421. He can be reached at jeremy_nesoff@facing.org

The Coalition of Essential Schools: Common Principles

Demonstration
of mastery



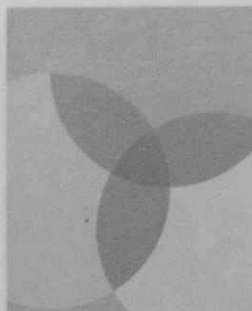
Commitment
to the entire
school

A tone of
decency
and trust



Goals apply to
all students

Resources
dedicated to
teaching and
learning



Less is more,
depth over
coverage

Learning to
use one's
mind well



Personalization

Student-as-
worker, teacher-
as-coach



Democracy
and equity

The Coalition of Essential Schools

Imagine schools where intellectual excitement animates every student's face, teachers work together to improve their craft, and all students thrive and excel. For 25 years, the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) has been at the forefront of making this vision a reality. Guided by a set of Common Principles, CES strives to create and sustain personalized, equitable, and intellectually challenging schools.

The CES network includes hundreds of schools, 26 Affiliate Centers, and individual affiliates. Diverse in size, population, and programmatic emphasis, Essential schools serve students from kindergarten through high school in urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Essential schools share the Common Principles, a set of beliefs about the purpose and practice of schooling. Reflecting the wisdom of thousands of educators, the ten Common Principles inspire schools to examine their priorities and design effective structures and instructional practices.

CES was founded in 1984 by Theodore R.Sizer and is headquartered in Oakland, California. Please visit our website at www.essentialschools.org for more about CES's programs, services, and resources.

Horace

CES publishes its journal *Horace* quarterly. Combining research with hands-on resources, *Horace* showcases Essential schools that implement the ten Common Principles in their structures, practices, and habit, and *Horace* explores specific questions and challenges that face all schools in the CES network.

Subscriptions to *Horace* are a benefit of affiliating with CES National as an individual, school, or network friend. We invite you to visit the CES website at www.essentialschools.org for information on affiliation and to read *Horace* issues from 1988 through the present.

Horace features the writing of CES network practitioners: these are your stories about your work. Jill Davidson, editor of *Horace*, welcomes your comments, issue theme and story ideas, and other feedback via email at jdavidson@essentialschools.org.

Lewis Cohen
Executive Director

Jill Davidson
Publications Director

Having the Courage To Act on Your Beliefs: *Horace* Interviews Marcy Raymond and Dan Hoffman on The founding and Influence of Metro High School

Metro High School, in Columbus, Ohio, is a public high school emphasizing math, science, and technology in a small, personalized learning environment. Originally conceived through a grant from CES and supported with technical assistance from CES's Small Schools Network, Metro is an unprecedented partnership of CES, Battelle Memorial Institute, The Ohio State University (OSU) and the Educational Council, a central Ohio non-profit supporting education in 16 public school districts in Franklin County. Drawing on years of Coalition experience in Ohio, Marcy Raymond and Dan Hoffman led the design and planning for the school in accordance with CES principles and practices. After securing the initial planning and implementation grant from CES, Raymond and Hoffman forged partnerships with Columbus-based science and technology enterprise Battelle, OSU, and the Educational Council to create a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) school centered on CES instructional strategies that would draw students from across the 16 public school districts in Franklin County.

Both in the school's strategic design phase and in ongoing efforts since the school opened in the fall of 2006, Raymond and Hoffman have sought to position Metro in a favorable light and engage policy makers and partners to create the conditions necessary for the school to be successful. Their efforts have resulted in the creation of a thriving small high school that has received considerable state and national attention, and the development of legislation to support the creation

of additional STEM schools across the state of Ohio.

Marcy Raymond is the principal of Metro High School. She has provided leadership in the field of education and strategic school improvement for 19 years, most recently working as a senior program officer for KnowledgeWorks Foundation.

Dan Hoffman is currently the assistant superintendent of Reynoldsburg City Schools. He was formerly the principal of Reynoldsburg High School and also director of the Ohio Center for Essential School Reform, the CES Affiliate Center in Ohio.

Brett Bradshaw, senior director of strategic communications at CES, interviewed Raymond and Hoffman in September 2008.

Brett Bradshaw: When you thought about creating Metro, what was your vision for what a school should be, and how did that vision inform the ways you went about establishing the school?

Dan Hoffman: We created a three-point message during the early founding of Metro to be able to share our story in a concise way. In the middle of the message triangle was our desire to found an intellectually vibrant, highly personalized small school. That's what we were after. Then our three talking points were, first, that we needed certain autonomies to do that. We wanted everybody to know that this school



was not going to be part of a larger system that would inhibit us. A second talking point was that we were going to attack the transition years. We planned to go hard after the senior year and hard after the ninth grade year to ensure that students emerge successfully from those years. The third talking point was that we planned to put Metro in a special location with special partners.

Marcy Raymond: We were seeking a partnership-based school. And as a partnership-based school, we were looking at how to create a regional draw that would assist the entire school community through the education of the youth, the training of the teachers, and the best practices that could be shared in the learning community. We wanted to look at ourselves as a part of a bigger community, and how we could create a school that is best able to help to facilitate partnerships throughout Franklin County.

Hoffman: We knew with the initial grant that we received from CES that we could start thinking about a school. However, because the planning grant wasn't enough to actually start a school, we knew right away that we had to get some people in this game. We developed that three-point message and that tipped us off to a set of partners that were big players: The Ohio State University and Battelle. I think it's clear that the work at Metro has captured the attention of the state. The governor's wife has been here and, as Marcy said, both the House and Senate representatives have been here. Battelle's been a huge influence. And the work has influenced House Bill 119 which provides some

statewide STEM funding that's being matched by the money that the Gates Foundation gave Battelle to get involved in this work. There's a whole unit at the state Department of Education of about a dozen folks employed primarily to promote STEM initiatives in the state of Ohio. We think Metro had a lot to do with attracting that attention.

Bradshaw: You mentioned a couple of key elements of school design and instruction that you wanted to be fundamental elements of the school: autonomies, transition years, intellectual vibrancy, and personalization. What were the political considerations in your minds about how to represent those to partners? What were the political considerations that went into that thinking?

Raymond: Context is the first element to consider. What is the context in which you're going to place this intellectually vibrant school? We have a significant number of charter schools in Ohio that have not always operated in concert with the local districts. And because of that, and the resulting tension between local districts and the slice of students they lose to charters, we said early on, "This has to be either a public school or a public school option." That was one consideration that was very important to us at the beginning.

Hoffman: The politics of the charter school movement were clearly at work here. We actually proposed in the beginning to be a charter school sponsored by [the] Columbus [City Schools], in which we would have become their first charter school. I think they would do it differently now, but the politics at the time caused them to back away from that. Another consideration was the politics of public school competition. As Marcy said, we were able to sell the idea of Metro to the 16 superintendents in Franklin County because of the promise of sharing what we discovered. The mantra around here is "small school, big footprint." That sold the local superintendents and helped disarm the politics of public school competition.

Bradshaw: What was your strategy for influencing Metro's major policy players and community partners to embrace your vision, given that selling that vision required real work?

Raymond: It's important to look at the content that would cause somebody to want to have a new school. In this era of accountability and student performance, we know that there were issues in math and science education. It became very clear very quickly that we needed to look at science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. But before we could try to sell that concept to somebody, we had to figure out what the school was going to become within this STEM niche that was emerging.

Ohio House Bill 119

A description of Ohio House Bill 119 from the Ohio STEM Learning Network's website: "Am. Sub. H.B. 119, Ohio's '08-'09 biennial budget, created the STEM Subcommittee of the Ohio Partnership for Continued Learning (STEM Subcommittee), and charged it with awarding grants for the establishment of up to five STEM Schools, serving grades 6-12, in regions that have assembled a strong base of K-12, higher education and business partners. The budget allocated \$6 million over the biennium for this purpose.

"Separately, the STEM Subcommittee was also empowered to fund STEM Programs of Excellence throughout the state, serving grades K-8. Am. Sub. H.B. 119 calls for STEM Programs of Excellence to adhere to the same design principles as STEM Schools. The budget allocated \$6,566,000 for the establishment of "STEM Programs of Excellence." (See www.osln.org/about-osln/battelle-pcl-connection.php for more.)

Hoffman: The STEM niche is what pushed the partners over the edge. They were talking to us prior; in particular, Battelle was in the mix because we were looking at the space at our public science museum downtown, and that's really what got us in the conversation there. And then Battelle started talking STEM. We listened and said, "You know, we can do that. This can still be a small, highly personalized, intellectually vibrant school that leads with the STEM disciplines." And so that's what we did. The other thing you should know is that we took the elevator to the top floor in every organization. We did not spend a lot of time with people that couldn't make decisions and that was key. We were with the CEO of Battelle. We had the attention of the president of the Ohio State University, who assigned us three deans to plan with us, and we actually brought them out to the CES Small Schools meeting in Tacoma, Washington in 2005. It was important to us for them to see that this is larger than just a few folks in Ohio wanting to do something like this. The trip to Tacoma was educational to the Ohio State deans in particular who just weren't aware of the small schools movement in the country. We dealt with executives who could make decisions on the spot, and they were doing that with us. Within a matter of ten days we were getting answers on money and space issues.

Bradshaw: Tell me about the ways that educators at the school, students, family members, and others in the Metro community have engaged policymakers and politicians to sustain the school.

Raymond: At the state level, we're the first recognized STEM school in the state of Ohio. The state was able to build on our plans and what we had accomplished

in that first year to help to formulate the policy that allowed for the creation of five additional STEM schools. And because we had already been in practice, the actual policy didn't turn out looking anything like what they thought that they were going to create on the policy level in the state of Ohio. Our students testified to the education committee. Both the House and Senate education subcommittees visited the school. We had a lot of influence on the way that the state of Ohio's most recent education funding legislation developed, and how it has been passed and enacted. It's House Bill 119, and there are five STEM schools on the docket that will open soon as a result. As a school, we would not have been part of that conversation had we not been out there already talking with people about how this is something that is necessary, and about how we're using best practices. Research capacity exists here. Our partners are highly engaged. There need to be more opportunities for other small schools like this in the state of Ohio, and I think had we not already been out there politically active in that regard, we might have just been another nice school, and the legislation would have gone in a whole different direction.

Bradshaw: What has the school community done specifically to have an impact on how people perceive the school? How has the reputation of Metro been formed, and specifically, what have you done to influence that formulation?

Hoffman: Well, Metro is very highly regarded. People are talking about it. People are hitting the Web site. As an example of its influence, we just passed a bond issue in Reynoldsburg to build some new high school space. We brought the architectural team here to look at the way they've organized space. I think it's now a beacon in the state for these other five projects, and can be a beacon nationally. And we always say, "You can't replicate a school, but you can learn from its design ideas." And so I don't think there's going to be one just like it anywhere, but certainly in Reynoldsburg we intend to steal some of Metro's best ideas, and I think a lot of school districts are looking to do the same.

Raymond: We recognized early on that when you are a demonstration school, you have to act like a demonstration school. The way we set the school up and the facility itself replicates what it is we're trying to do; this is a wide open space with a lot of big glass windows so that people can see what's going on every minute of every day. Because we're open and transparent, we can then invite people in to see what it's like, how it functions, how classes are different, how instruction is different, how relationships are different, and what it feels like to be in a different kind of environment. We've had 400 schools visit our school in two years. We are not afraid to share what our kids

The CES Small Schools Network

The CES Small Schools Network (SSN) is a learning community of more than 50 CES schools—experienced schools, new schools, and conversions—that share effective practices and provide each other with support and technical assistance to create and sustain effective and equitable small high schools. The initiative, supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, creates the space for experienced CES schools to mentor design teams through the process of creating new small schools. Metro High School joined the SSN in 2005 and received technical assistance from its mentor, Federal Hocking High School of Stewart, Ohio, prior to and beyond its opening in 2006. For more information on the SSN, see: www.essentialschools.org/pub/ces_docs/ssp/ssp.html

Ohio STEM Learning Network

Ohio is emerging as a leader for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education nationwide. Visit the Ohio STEM Learning Network online for a "STEM 101" overview, examples of exemplary STEM practices from schools in Ohio and elsewhere, and more.

www.ohiostem.org

are doing, what a STEM school really is, and how we operate, which is very interesting to this community.

Hoffman: The other thing that we did that I didn't necessarily agree with at the time, but in retrospect I think was a good move, was to have a public relations firm help us with a lot of our work in the early going, things like development of a logo and some of the messages, and our opening meeting. One of our sponsors pretty much insisted that we do this. And so we had an external group help us with our early PR and while I wouldn't have spent my money that way, in retrospect, it really did put a professional sense on this, and I think that part of the good impression was the professionalism of communications and everything as we launched.

Bradshaw: Marcy, how have you been able to balance your role as an instructional leader at the school with the need to be a public relations specialist? Can you talk about the balance of focusing both internally and externally?

Raymond: It's hard, and I don't know that I do it exceptionally well. It's very difficult to do. My primary purpose has to be the school, the growth and development of each of the children that are here, the growth and development of the teachers that are here, and the coordination of family understanding and access. So that has to be first, and sometimes that causes me not to be able to do some of the things that I probably would like to do or should do with people talking about the school and sharing information. I think we got by pretty good. We did recently hire another person to help to train for the internal capacity about communicating internally so that we have—because the demand and the number of things that are asked of us has increased probably 80 percent over the last year and a half, so that we can help Reynoldsburg better. Amy Kennedy is our new assistant principal, and I anticipate by October or November that I'll be able to help other schools and people inside and outside of our community and the country more than I am currently able to do because

of the constraints of being in a small school. As a small school leader of both the instruction and the facility, you have to know how to do it all. If the walls need painting, I have to paint the walls.

Bradshaw: Currently, what are your challenges and battles, and who are your allies? How are things going to protect and sustain what you've got?

Raymond: I think that the battles are relatively small. They tend to be things that we can anticipate and work on before they become huge brouhahas. We tend to try to get out in front of problems. We are an educational option according to the state law, and as an educational option, we are not part of any specific district; we are part of all of the districts. We're employing teachers in five different districts, and the MOU [memorandum of understanding] about how teachers are hired to work here is different in each one of them, so those kinds of things jump out as potential barriers, or at least things that could trip you up if you weren't very careful

Metro High School

Metro High School is a small public school located on the Ohio State University campus that emphasizes college readiness in math, science, and technology. In ninth and tenth grades, the student experience focuses on learning that promotes performance and mastery of a foundation curriculum. Students must meet high performance standards in mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts to advance. Eleventh and 12th graders will participate in independent research projects, group projects with other students, and community internships at "learning centers" around the community. Metro High School opened as an Essential school in 2006 with 100 ninth graders and is adding a grade per year to graduate its first class in 2010. For more, please visit www.themetroschool.org.

and mindful. We have great partners, so that makes it easier. They want the school to be successful, so that again helps. Good will carries you far, and we've been able to sustain good will here. We've tried to help, not hurt, anybody and tried to show mutual benefit every minute of every day with every partner. If they can't see that something's benefiting them, then it's very difficult to want to stay in for the long haul.

Bradshaw: Why do you think it's important for CES practitioners to think of themselves as politically active?

Raymond: One of the things that we ask of all of our CES colleagues is that we are generalists, and as

Continued on next page

a generalist if you are not able to see the context in which you are working, then it's very difficult to actually get things done. And I think that as we try to promote using our minds well, that's not just for getting the students to use their minds well; it's also for all of us to use our minds well, and we cannot operate in a vacuum. We have to operate within the political context.

Hoffman: All schools everywhere are part of a system, and all systems have politics and if you don't play, you don't do very well in the system. It's a matter of recognizing that schools in general are political. They are part of a larger system, and with that go politics. One of the things that was politically sensitive very early was our relationship with our largest school system, Columbus Public. And I think one of the things that we learned early is we have to try to gain some understanding of where they've been, where they stand, and how they see it. In the early planning and in some of the early approaches, we were pretty sure we had the right idea. But they weren't so sure, and it took us a while to really begin to understand why they would be reluctant. We just couldn't understand why a district would not jump all over this. The learning that I had out of this in the early planning was that as you approach people, try to understand and think from their perspective as well. That was really true with Battelle also. We had to wrap our heads around why does Battelle want to get involved with this, what do they want out of it, what's the mutual benefit? We actually went through an exercise in the early planning to say, "What are you giving us and what are you getting from us?"

Bradshaw: There's a metaphor that's often used, particularly in CES, about flying below the radar. Can you talk about what the pros and cons are, as you see them, for Metro either flying above or below the radar?

Raymond: I'm wondering if we're not flying both at the same time. It just depends on what the radar is looking for. You know, is it looking for wind or is it looking for rain? I think every school actually does both. I don't think that it's healthy to try to purposefully slide below the radar. I don't think that it's healthy to try to stir up controversy. We've had very good success with our testing and the performance of the kids on the testing, but we didn't go out and say, "We're going to be the gurus of testing." What we did was we helped the kids to use their minds well. We did not teach to the test, but we taught the things that the kids needed to know and be able to do on the test. We did it very non-traditionally and we did it the way that we thought was best for children and it worked, and the good thing is that the test scores went up and were really good. I think that if we would have jumped out and said, "We're going to be

Related Resource

For more stories of CES schools and related organizations that have created better conditions for teaching, learning, and developing Essential schools and the networks that support them, read *Horace* Volume 21, Number 4, "Using Advocacy and Communication to Create and Sustain Essential Schools," available online at www.essentialschools.org/pub/ces_docs/resources/horace/21_4/21_4_toc.html

this school and we're going to do it without regard to any rules," I think we would have been in trouble and we didn't do that. The Carnegie Unit is another one that comes to mind. The state of Ohio requires students to have seat time in order to receive a credit and we don't think that that's necessarily the best way to go. We're more a performance-based school. But if we didn't pay attention to that rule and we went completely outside of it, then everybody who looks at us could say, "Yeah, but you don't follow that rule." So we followed it. We didn't just jump out there and say, "We're not going to do this and we're not going to do that." What we did was what we thought was best within the context of what we're allowed to do. And we are a little bit above the radar because we're a demonstration school. We're out there all the time and people are looking at us constantly, trying to poke holes sometimes, trying to find the benefits sometimes. But we're not bringing up the things that would cause controversy before we know what we're doing.

Bradshaw: I think there's a point there about visibility. What do you think people can learn about making themselves visible and the relationship of that to being able to influence the process and have an impact on the environment in which they operate?

Hoffman: One of our advantages was that we were really transparent about what we were not going to negotiate, and I think that helped us. The notion of starting small and staying small, that was a fight in the early going when we had high demand to get here and people suggested, "Well, let's just make it a little bit bigger." The notion of open enrollment and enrollment by lottery where there would be equal access to all kids in the county was a fight because Ohio State had its eyes on the best and brightest young scientists in Franklin County and they wanted to bring them up here on campus. So I think being above the radar screen on the non-negotiables helped us retain the kind of school that we had dreamed of.

Bradshaw: Certainly there seems to be a relationship there with how successfully you've been able to influ-

ence people about how they see the school.

Raymond: We are a principle-based school. There are certain things that we are going to fight hard for and we're going to make them work because we know them to be good practice. And there are things that we'll change along the way, but we're a highly principled school and I think that allows you to be very strategic. You choose what will work with your school and what won't work with your school and you're able to articulate why one thing would work versus another.

Bradshaw: Lastly, what do you think school leaders, teachers, students, and members of the parent community need to be able to do this influence work effectively? What do they need to be effective in influencing people that have a say over how the school operates?

Raymond: A dogged belief in what you're doing. You cannot waver. You have to truly believe from the inside out that what you're doing is going to be the best benefit for the people that you're working with and you have to work on it every day, every minute, every hour.

Hoffman: I think it's the vision, and I think Marcy's right on the combination of vision and passion, that you see clearly where you want to go and you know how to get there and then you're unrelenting in the pursuit. And so I think it's a combination of both vision and passion. If you look at the history of CES starting with Ted [Sizer], there was a vision and there was a passion. And if you look at all the successful schools we have, you can generally identify somebody that had the vision and somebody that was very passionate. You could go around the country and identify folks that have done good work because of the combination of those two things.

Raymond: I think it takes courage. It takes courage to be able to stand up for what you're doing that's good and to take the hit sometimes when you do things that aren't so good. You have to have the courage to be able to act on your beliefs.

New Small CES Schools Launching in 2008!

The next generation of CES schools is here! This fall, three new high schools created through the CES Small Schools Network opened their doors, and six existing schools joined the Network. These schools, both new small schools created from the ground up and existing small schools, will join more than 50 other exemplary schools in the CES Small Schools Network and will receive mentoring and ongoing professional development to support their growth and success.

In the Fall of 2008, the following new schools opened:

Capital City Public Charter Upper School
(Washington, D.C.)

Global Neighborhood Secondary School (Floral Park, New York)

Native American Community Academy
(Albuquerque, New Mexico)

In fall 2008, the following schools joined the CES Small Schools Network:

Alma D'Arte Charter School (Los Cruces, New Mexico)

Big Picture High School (Bloomfield, Connecticut)

East Bay Met (Newport, Rhode Island)

Greer Middle College (Greenville, South Carolina)

High School for Recording Arts Los Angeles
(Hawthorne, California)

Multicultural Indigenous Academy (St. Paul, Minnesota)

For more information on these schools and the CES Small Schools Network, visit:

www.essentialschools.org/pub/ces_docs/ssp/ssp.html

Speaking for Democracy

by Andrew Barron

My co-teacher, Donnie, and I were in costume. He was Malcolm X. I was George Wallace. In character, we spoke passages from our most famous speeches. By the end of the third minute of class, I was declaring, "Segregation today . . . segregation tomorrow . . . segregation forever!" And Donnie was warning, "White America, wake up and take heed, before it is too late!" When we asked the students what they thought of our production, they circled one theme:

"I thought you sounded stupid," one student told me.

Both speeches were rich with the high rhetoric of the Civil Rights era, I thought, and asked, "Why?"

"Because you had a southern accent."

"What about Donnie?" I probed.

"He sounded smarter because he didn't have an accent."

"So you decided he was smarter based on how we talked?"

"Yes."

This was the discussion that began our class, a class designed around the idea that if we are to be judged by how we talk, we have it in our interest to practice the way we speak. It was the summer trimester at Eagle Rock School, a small, tuition-free, residential school in Estes Park, Colorado. In the summer, teachers are encouraged to teach classes that might fall outside the traditional subject matter, and students are encouraged to take risks on classes they might otherwise skip.

Rhetoric was once a staple of the school system. It is a discipline with a long and storied past with its roots in the seminal moments of democracy. In the incipient democratic societies of ancient Greece, rhetoric grew out of the new need to persuade large groups of people to come to a consensus. As Jay Heinrichs

wrote, while no one can attribute the success or failure of a democratic society to the quality of its speakers, in the case of Syracuse, the ancient Greek fledgling democracy begged mighty Athens for a manual on rhetoric.

In democratic schools, we ask for the participation of the students. We demand it. And we have research to back up our claims that democratic classrooms and schools help ease the volatility of adolescence, boost self-esteem, and prevent frustration. Yet some students may come to the task a bit like Syracuse, begging for some instruction on how to speak confidently without risking public embarrassment.

The first challenge of our class was to purge any hesitation students might have about speaking publicly. Everyday, we would finish class by having a few students give impromptu speeches on topics they drew out of a hat. Some of the topics were silly, some serious, but all lent themselves to quickly-formed arguments. I explained to them, "Read the topic, form an opinion, and begin. The rest will come as you proceed." While this exercise was not intended to do anything more than shake loose their nervousness, it became a powerful experience for our students. As one student told me, "After I did a few [impromptu speeches], I felt like, if I can talk about something I don't even care about, then it's easy to talk about something I do care about."



Yet, many students struggle to find something they care about. Most often the case is not that my students are too heartless or selfish to care about worldly issues. Rather, they have never been asked to form an opinion, or they have never done the research that might lead them to strong feelings.

The latter was the case for Brandi, who lamented early in our writing process, "I don't care about anything." As this is true for almost no one and certainly was not true for this warm, soulful 15-year-old, I politely disagreed with her and asked her about some of the world's persistent issues: poverty, wars, politics, and free speech. While the students' assignment was to write and present a speech on any topic of their choosing, all of my students gravitated toward important current affairs. They could have easily chosen trite, tired topics, but instead they grappled with the death penalty, HIV/AIDS, and Mexican-American identity. I was not surprised that they chose such rich topics. It makes finding evidence for a speech easier. And, more important, a controversial and timely topic makes a more interesting speech. All of my students shared the fear that they would begin to write only to find that they had nothing to articulate.

I sat Brandi in front of an online archive of Nicholas D. Kristof's multimedia reports. Kristof reports on some of the world's most urgent issues by telling personal stories. The Monday after I talked with Brandi about her search for something to care about, she proudly told me that she had read an article in the newspaper about prostitution in Thailand, and she knew what she wanted to speak about. Of course it is not always so easy, but when I brainstorm with my students I emphasize that anything they would like to change is a thesis statement waiting to happen.

Students who write speeches for public performance write better than those who write papers for private grading. They pick sides. They see the other side of their argument and argue against it. While it may seem simple that every essay should make an argument, new writers often struggle with this concept. As Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein remind us in *They Say/ I Say*, "To make an impact as a writer, you need to do more than make statements that are logical, well supported, and consistent." Interesting writing pushes up against the other side and explains why one might care to side with the writer.

I have taught students who write thesis statements that do nothing but inform the reader that China is, in fact, a country of more than one billion people. No student, however, would want to read a paper with such a mundane thesis statement in front of his or her classmates. The audience holds power over the writing process. While composition teachers often tell students to think about their audience in a hypothetical way,

speechwriters have to think about the audience in a real and consequential way. The natural consequence that holds every speechwriter accountable is the fear of public humiliation. That fear, if we are to believe oft-cited surveys on the subject, exceeds even death as a motivator. Those surveys often claim it is public speaking that people fear, but surely no one fears being a successful public speaker. No, the fear is that they would fail at speaking, that they would bore their audience or worse. And so, with that fear as a motivator, my students revised as never before. They asked me to help them practice after class, and when I made suggestions about grammar or their use of sources, I was no longer an antagonist ruining their papers. They were the workers, and I was their coach, helping them write a better speech. In the end, they were just as invested in demonstrating their mastery as I was.

Public speaking, though featured prominently in many states' standards, is rarely a required part of any high schools' curriculum. Standards include it as part of Language Arts, but the art goes largely ignored to allow for more time to prepare for AP or standardized tests. Teaching rhetoric consumes precious time. Most schools, including our own, have found ways to include the standard in small ways into every class. Rhetoric is everywhere and, therefore, nowhere. Secondary schools followed the lead of major universities, where, around the turn of the 20th century, rhetoric was absorbed into departments of English. English became literature, and literature, preoccupied as it is by the written word, leaves out the art of the spoken word, according to Jay Heinrichs. In other schools, public speaking has become a specialized sport in the form of Speech and Debate teams. These teams prepare a select few but neglect the masses.

Today, English, language arts, and humanities teachers have a new set of challenges. Though public speaking may figure prominently in the standards, it defies mass standardized assessment. Imagine thousands of video entries flooding the inboxes of state assessment boards. And so, teachers have to choose between teaching posture and poise and reviewing comma rules.

For similar reasons the PLACE test, Colorado's state test that all English teachers must pass, does little more than stab at the skills needed to teach speechmaking. One of the questions among the few that dealt with the topic asks what a particular hand gesture might imply. Such standardization is crude and unhelpful. It no more qualifies a teacher to teach public speaking than knowing the symptoms of appendicitis qualifies one to perform an appendectomy. The failure is not in our ability to test public speaking. Our failure is our inability to see rhetoric as an essential teaching tool to motivate and empower students.

Continued on next page

Minnesota State Standards for 9-12 Language Arts: Speaking, Listening, and Viewing

The student will speak clearly and effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences and actively listen to, view, and evaluate oral communication and media.

A. Speaking and Listening

Standard: The student will demonstrate understanding and communicate effectively through listening and speaking.

The student will:

1. Distinguish between speaker's opinion and verifiable facts and analyze the credibility of the presentation.
2. Deliver a speech in a logical manner using grammatically correct language, including vocabulary appropriate to the topic, audience and purpose. [Author's note: How often do Language Arts teachers make time to have students deliver speeches?]
3. Understand the relationship between nonverbal, interpersonal, and small group communication.
4. Describe the role of communication in everyday situations (e.g., advertising, informal social, business, formal social, etc.)
5. Understand the effects of media on society and culture. [Author's note: This standard is essential to building an informed electorate, but when and how is it assessed?]
6. Identify and understand essential elements, skills and implications of persuasion, argumentation, and debate as essential oral skills.
7. Apply assessment criteria to self-evaluation of oral presentations.

Source: <http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/groups/Standards/documents/LawStatute/000269.pdf>

It has been years since Donnie and I taught that class on speech making. Yet, as I laid out my year long plans for my current English class, I remembered Brandi smiling after she delivered her speech. "I have never done anything like that before," she told me. She was experiencing the adrenaline rush that comes from conquering fear.

Teaching the spoken word is emerging as crucially important at Cristo Rey Jesuit High School, where I currently teach. Cristo Rey Jesuit High School serves under-resourced students from Minneapolis's toughest neighborhoods. For many of my students, their ability to stay quiet and go unnoticed is a long-practiced survival strategy. This strategy, however, leads neither my students nor our democracy to success.

Our school has a work program that sends all of our students to corporate internships. They must interact with their supervisors, their co-workers, and customers with professionalism and clarity. The students, like most teenagers, are not accustomed to being asked their opinions. But the truth is, though practiced in reticence, they long to be asked, and, once they know it is safe, would love to learn how to express it well.

This election season, as I watched the convention speeches and debates of our two candidates for president, I remembered showing my students speeches from bygone election seasons. Together, we extracted meaning from what they said, and more importantly, how they spoke. The rhetorical devices used by the great speechmakers in American history—anaphora, chiasmus, peroration—are designed to manipulate their audiences. There is great power in seeing the mechanics of those phrases meant to stir our emotions. As we discussed these devices and saw them in the mouths of Jesse Jackson, John Kerry, and George W. Bush, my students felt like they had been let in on the secret language of political speeches. All speeches are designed to manipulate, they learned, and they learned how the speechwriters went about the task. Members of an informed electorate must not only understand the facts; they must know how politicians can persuade us to ignore the facts.

Andrew Barron started his teaching career at Eagle Rock School. He earned a Masters of Education at Harvard Graduate School of Education and currently teaches ninth grade English at Cristo Rey Jesuit High School in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

References:

Graff, G., & Birkenstein, C. (2006). *They Say / I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. New York: Norton.

Heinrichs, J. (1995, July-August) "How Harvard Destroyed Rhetoric." *Harvard Magazine*, 37-43.

Where To Go For More: Resources for Education for Democracy

Advancement Project

Advancement Project is a useful resource for classrooms, independent studies, and other investigations in the realms of social justice and equity in the United States. Advancement Project partners with community organizers nationwide on campaigns such as Voter Protection, Reconstructing Justice Post-Katrina, and Quality Education for All, bringing communication tools and legal expertise to leverage local work. The organization's website features the Community Justice Resource Center—a collection of newsletters, tools, funding sources, and more that can benefit students' engagement in social justice matters.

Advancement Project
1730 M Street NW, #910
Washington, DC 20036
telephone: 202.728.9557
email: ap@advancementproject.org
www.advancementproject.org

Close Up Foundation

The Close Up Foundation offers instructor-guided Washington DC-based trips to middle and high school students aimed at engaging their civic energy and awareness. Students, teachers, and parents meet with members of Congress or Congressional staff members, discuss issues with policy experts, and talk with journalists about how the media shapes policy. The Close Up Foundation also offers a textbook, *Current Issues*, involves high school students in the production of a C-SPAN television show, and provides scholarship funds for students in need.

The Close Up Foundation
44 Canal Center Plaza, Suite 600
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
telephone: 703.706.3300 / 800.CLOSE UP
email: info@closeup.org
www.closeup.org

Everyday Democracy

Known formerly as the Study Circles Resource Center, Everyday Democracy helps diverse members of communities to think, talk, and work together to solve problems. Everyday Democracy works with neighborhoods, cities, towns, regions, and states to help communities pay attention to how racism and ethnic differences affect the problems they address. Everyday Democracy's resources on transforming dialogue into change include facilitation and discussion guides and stories of successful community conversations, organization, and action. Some resources are available in Spanish.

Everyday Democracy
111 Founders Plaza, Suite 1403
East Hartford, Connecticut 06108
telephone: 860.928.2616
email: info@everyday-democracy.org
www.everyday-democracy.org

First Amendment Schools

First Amendment Schools: Educating for Freedom and Responsibility is "a national reform initiative designed to transform how schools teach and practice the rights and responsibilities of citizenship that frame civic life in our democracy." Essential schools are well represented among First Amendment Schools' Project and Affiliate K-12 schools. The website offers an ample resources section, a helpful start for all educators and students investigating democratic participation.

www.firstamendmentschools.org

Putting the Movement Back Into Civil Rights Teaching

Putting the Movement Back into Civil Rights Teaching, published by Teaching for Change and the Poverty & Race Research Action Council, provides lessons and articles for K-12 educators on how to go beyond a "heroes approach" to the civil rights movement in the southern United States in the second half of the 20th century. The book features sections on education, labor, citizenship, culture, and reflections on teaching about the civil rights movement, and includes interactive and interdisciplinary lessons, readings, images, and interviews. The accompanying website provides sample lessons beyond those included in the book, examples of classroom use, and additional resources designed to engage students' sense of personal power in creating positive change in their world.

www.civilrightsteaching.org

Teaching for Change: www.teachingforchange.org

Poverty & Race Research Action Council:

www.prrac.org

CES Resources

"Democracy and Equity: CES's Tenth Common Principle" *Horace* Volume 14, Number 3, January, 1998.
www.essentialschools.org/cs/resources/view/ces_res/114

"Democratic Leadership in Coalition Schools" *Horace* Volume 18, Number 3, Spring 2002
www.essentialschools.org/pub/ces_docs/resources/horace/18_3/18_3_toc.html

"Using Advocacy and Communication to Create and Sustain Essential Schools" *Horace* Volume 21, Number 4, Fall 2005
www.essentialschools.org/pub/ces_docs/resources/horace/21_4/21_4_toc.html

24.3 FALL 2008

Education for Democracy

- 02 Educating the World: Essential Schools as Agents of Change and Influence by Lewis Cohen, Coalition of Essential Schools
- 05 Civil Rights and Social Justice: A Path to Engagement and Transformation by Flo Golod, Southside Family Charter School
- 10 Education and Democracy: Back to the Future by George Wood, Forum for Education and Democracy
- 12 Choosing to Participate by Jeremy Nesoff, Facing History and Ourselves
- 18 Having the Courage to Act on Your Beliefs: *Horace* Interviews Marcy Raymond, Metro High School, and Dan Hoffman, Reynoldsburg City Schools
- 24 Speaking for Democracy by Andrew Barron, Cristo Rey Jesuit High School
- 27 Where to Go for More: Resources for Education for Democracy
- 28 Go to the Source: More about the Schools and Organizations Featured in this Issue

Notes on This Issue

Today's ninth grader will be 50 in 2045. While that may seem like the distant future to them, those of us who are closer to 50 than 14 know that time marches on swiftly. Right now, those young people are deeply engaged in the process of forming their adult selves. Our students will come into their maturity in the middle of the 21st century. They are tomorrow's community, state, and national leaders. They are tomorrow's parents, teachers, and lifeline to the generation that follows.

The stories in this issue of *Horace* delve into the process of creating schools that foster political awareness and that take seriously the mission of creating responsible, active citizens and leaders of our democracy. These stories describe ways to help this century's citizens find their best civic selves by teaching and modeling democratic participation.

Many thanks to Lewis Cohen, Flo Golod, George Wood, Jeremy Nesoff, Marcy Raymond, Dan Hoffman, Brett Bradshaw, and Andrew Barron for sharing such compelling descriptions of democracy-building in action within the CES network. We depend on and learn from your efforts to create the demand for and fulfillment of the best future for every one of our children and, because we are all in this together, every one of us.

Jill Davidson
Editor, *Horace*
jdavidson@essentialschools.org

Go To The Source: More about the Schools and Other Organizations Featured in this Issue

Schools

Beachwood High School
25100 Fairmount Boulevard
Beachwood, Ohio 44122
telephone: 216.831.2080
www.beachwood.k12.oh.us/bhs/index.html

Boston International High School
25 Glen Road
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts 02130
telephone: 617.635.9373
www.boston.k12.ma.us/schools/internationalHS.asp

Cristo Rey Jesuit High School - Twin Cities
2924 4th Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55408
telephone: 612.545.9700
www.cristoreytc.org

Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center
2750 Notiaiah Road
Estes Park, Colorado 80517
telephone: 970.586.0600
email: info@eaglerockschool.org
www.eaglerockschool.org

The Engineering School
655 Metropolitan Ave
Hyde Park, Massachusetts 02136
telephone: 617.635.6425
engineering@bostonpublicschools.org
www.bostonpublicschools.org/node/434

The Facing History School
525 W. 50th Street
New York, New York 10019
telephone: 212.757.2680
email: fhs@facing.org
www.fhschool.org

Federal Hocking High School
8461 State Route 144
Stewart, Ohio 45778
telephone: 740.662.6691
www.federalhocking.k12.oh.us/extra/hs/index.htm

Greenville Technical Charter High School
P.O. Box 5616
Mail Stop 1201
Greenville, South Carolina 29606
telephone: 864.250.8844
www.gtchs.org

James Logan High School
1800 H Street
Union City, California 94587
telephone: 510.471.2520
www.jlhs.nhusd.k12.ca.us

Mapleton Expeditionary School of the Arts
8990 York Street
Thornton, Colorado 80229
telephone: 303.853.1270
www.acsd1.k12.co.us/schools/mesa-a.html

Metro High School
1929 Kenny Road
Columbus, Ohio 43210
telephone: 614.247.2276
email: fries@themetroschool.org
www.themetroschool.com

Southside Family Charter School
2123 Clinton Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404
telephone: 612.872.8322
info@southsidefamilyschool.org
www.southsidefamilyschool.org

Wildwood School
Secondary Campus
11811 West Olympic Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90064
telephone: 310.478.7189
www.wildwood.org

Affiliate with CES National

If CES stands for what you believe in—personalized, equitable, intellectually vibrant schools—we invite you to affiliate with CES National. Affiliating with the CES network as a school, organization, or individual gives you a number of benefits, including subscriptions to *Horace* and our newsletter *In Common*, discounted fees and waivers to our annual Fall Forum, and eligibility to apply for research and professional development grants, and more. For more information about CES National Affiliation, visit www.essentialschools.org

Other Organizations

Facing History and Ourselves
16 Hurd Road
Brookline, Massachusetts 02445-6919
telephone: 617.232.1595
www.facinghistory.org

Forum for Education and Democracy
P.O. Box 216
Amesville, Ohio 45711
telephone: 740.662.0503
and
1307 New York Avenue NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20005-4701
telephone: 202.478.4572
www.forumforeducation.org

New York Performance Standards Consortium
317 East 67th Street
New York, New York 10021
telephone: 212.570.5394
email: info@performanceassessment.org
www.performanceassessment.org

Ohio STEM Learning Network
c/o Ohio Business Alliance for Higher Education and the
Economy
41 South High Street, Suite 2240
Columbus, Ohio 43215
telephone: 614.228.6084
www.ohiostem.org

Reynoldsburg City Schools
7244 E. Main Street
Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068
telephone: 614.501.1020
www.reyn.org

WriteBoston
7 Palmer Street, 2nd Floor
Roxbury, Massachusetts 02119
telephone: 617.541.2616
www.writeboston.org

Choosing to Participate

Continued from page 17

References:

For a complete description of Facing History Ourselves see:
Martin E. Sleeper and Margot Stern Strom "Facing History
and Ourselves" in Maurice Elias and Harriett Arnold,
eds, *The Educator's Guide to Emotional Intelligence and
Academic Achievement* (Corwin Press, 2006) 240-246.

Helen Fein, *Accounting for Genocide*, (Free Press, 1979), 4.

Samantha Power, "A Problem from Hell" *America and the
Age of Genocide*, (Basic Books, 2002), XVIII



Coalition of Essential Schools
1330 Broadway Suite 700
Oakland, California 94612

Tel 510 433 1451
Fax 510 433 1455
essentialschools.org

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Providence, RI
Permit No. 421

This Year in Horace

24.1: Lifecycles of Educators: Essential School Staff Development

Horace examines the career directions of Essential school teachers and education leaders, focusing on professional learning communities to address the challenge of developing the capacity of educators and administrators to sustain success, create improvement, and start new schools.

24.2: Wellness and the Mind-Body Connection

Horace investigates the connections between mind, body, and learning, focusing on topics such as food and nutrition, the role of play in learning and schools, organized sports, wellness, personal fitness, care of the self, time spent outdoors, meditation, spiritual practices, and attention to emotional and psychological needs.

24.3: Education and Democracy

Horace looks at civic engagement to understand the ways that educators, students, and communities that support schools involve themselves in politics and policy creation to create and sustain personalized, equitable, and academically challenging schools for all students. And *Horace* asks, what role do Essential schools play in developing students who will participate in and shape our democracy through the 21st century?

24.4: Cycles of Inquiry and Improvement

Horace collects perspectives on schools and school systems that are committed to continuous improvement, analysis, and refinement. This focus will be on the ways that CES educators create cycles of inquiry and action. How do we know that academic challenge, relevance, and deep learning are happening in Essential schools, and how can we sustain those outcomes?

Cover image: "Our Colorful World," created by Ibtesam "Sunny" Anjum, Boston International High School

The national office of the Coalition of Essential Schools gratefully acknowledges support from the following:

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the San Francisco Foundation, and our many school, organization, and individual affiliates

Educating the World: Essential Schools as Agents of Change and Influence

by Lewis Cohen

Schools face a relentless torrent of demands without receiving the kinds of support they need and deserve. So it is not easy to expect that they would voluntarily add to their ever-growing lists of responsibilities. And yet ask we must. Essential schools have the responsibility of educating not only their own school communities, but also the larger community about the value, relevance, and requirements of a student-centered education.

Academics and activists can write and speak about schools that are engaging and intellectually challenging, but their words do not match visiting such schools. Experiential learning matters just as much for adults as it does for students. And so it falls to Essential schools to provide opinion and policy makers with the images and experiences of what works, what is possible, and what it takes.

The harmful consequences of not engaging the larger community are evident to us every day. Educators have largely ceded the public debate about education to others. It is certainly true that everyone from parents to policymakers has much to contribute to creating good schools. Yet having attended school, or having children that attend school, does not, as many seem to think, make one an expert.

The art of good teaching is complex. A lack of understanding of this complexity leads to many simplistic policy prescriptions: test-driven accountability, "magic" teacher-proof curriculum, merit pay, paying students for performance, and running schools like businesses. The proponents of these popular fixes for schools largely share the common characteristic of being non-educators. None of these reforms address the nature of teaching and learning, nor do they reflect the growing support among educators for personalization, real-world learning, and performance-based assessment.

My work with the school board in Oakland, California gives me some insight into the affection

Resources for Influencing the Discourse from CES

CES School Study Tour, Greater Boston Area February 9-11, 2009

Do you want the opportunity to see for yourself? CES National is offering a school study tour of several exemplary CES small schools located in the greater Boston area. The tour is open to educators, parents, students, and anyone interested in experiencing Essential schools in action. The CES School Study Tour begins in Boston, the birthplace of the Boston Pilot Schools, and includes visits to CES small schools. You will gain new insight into CES best practices and take back tools and skills to share with your own schools. The Boston Arts Academy, Fenway High School, Francis Parker Charter Essential School, The Met, Peace Street Campus in Providence, Rhode Island, Samuel Mason Elementary, and Mission Hill Elementary are among the schools confirmed for the tour. For more information, please visit www.essentialschools.org/pub/ces_docs/ssp/p_d/winter09.html.

CES ChangeLab

Through school tours, discussion boards, and "Ask a Mentor" panels, CES ChangeLab expands the reach of the physical Mentor schools to the larger CES and educational communities. Take a behind-the-scenes look and see how these thirteen Mentor Schools exemplify CES principles in action.

www.ceschangelab.org

National Exhibition Month

National Exhibition Month, a nationwide campaign that occurs every May, highlights and promotes exhibitions as a more effective and comprehensive way of assessing student performance than standardized paper and pencil tests. In 2008, close to 100 schools and organizations across 25 states participated, recognizing and documenting student exhibitions, submitting letters to the editors of local papers, hosting public events to showcase exhibitions, and educating media and local leaders about the benefits of exhibitions.

www.essentialschools.org/exhibitions.html

policy makers have for the simple solution.. We would present detailed plans for improving instruction, and the board would rubber-stamp them after five minutes of discussion. But get into a dialogue about a construction project, or who is getting the contract for yearbook photos, and the board meeting might well last past midnight. School board members gravitated to issues they felt they understood. When it came to an in-depth discussion of the real work of schools, they deferred to the professionals. That's what makes test scores so appealing. They're up, they're down,

and suddenly the complex nature of student achievement seems simply quantifiable.

So it falls to you to reverse this course. You cannot simply content yourselves with educating your students, though this remains your most important responsibility. But unless you are resigned like Ted Sizer's Horace to compromise what you know is good for your students, you must begin to demystify constructivist education for the larger public.

Many CES schools do this effectively, particularly those that engage in public exhibitions of student learning. Well-designed exhibitions reveal students thoughtfully engaged in authentic tasks, evaluated on a range of criteria that have obvious utility long after the "test" is over. Exhibitions give real meaning to the notion of accountability and standards by demonstrating to the community what students know and are able to do. Outside experts and other witnesses to these demonstrations of mastery leave with a strong sense of whether the school is adequately preparing students not just for matriculation but for life.

Over the last several years, hundreds of CES schools have participated in National Exhibition Month, deliberately reaching out to a wider audience and exposing that audience to this powerful experience. This effort has made a difference. In conjunction with the efforts of others, we have helped to shift the conversation about test-based accountability. Earlier this year, Democratic Presidential nominee Barack Obama participated in a student's exhibition during Exhibition Month at Mapleton Expeditionary School of the Arts (MESA) in Thornton, Colorado. In his speech following the exhibition, he said, "We also need to realize that we can meet high standards without forcing teachers and students to spend most of the year preparing for a single, high-stakes test.... But we need to look no further than MESA to see that accountability does not need to come at the expense

of a well-rounded education. It can help complete it—and it should."

The effectiveness of the National Exhibition Month campaign owes much to local efforts that came before. The New York Performance Standards Consortium's work to obtain a waiver from New York State's high stakes Regents exam showed the effect that schools can have not only on state policy but on educating a national audience about critical issues.

While exhibitions are a wonderful occasion to invite the community into your school, classroom visits can be effective, too. For most adults, their experience in school was largely confined to the "sage on the stage," a teacher lecturing in front of neatly arranged rows of students at their desks. Look at any Hollywood movie with a depiction of a classroom and you will see what a stranglehold this iconic image of schools has on our collective psyche. Now imagine the impact on a visitor, no doubt haunted by memories of their own "boring" classes, to a classroom where highly animated students are deeply engaged in tasks they and the visitor find relevant.

Recently, Greenville Technical Charter School, a CES Small Schools Network Mentor school, was one of several schools that ran demonstration classrooms for some 300 North Carolina opinion leaders. The setting was a conference on redesigning high schools and came about because a group of non-educators had seen demonstrations of student-centered learning and concluded that it was important for leaders from all sectors in the state to have this experience in order for them to understand the need not merely to "fix" high school, but to transform it. Day-long school visits that are annually part of CES's Fall Forum create additional opportunities for schools to open their doors to interested visitors in ways that contextualize and allow feedback, reflection, and increased understanding.

Such school visits and study tours have had major impact, galvanizing non-educators to envision transformed schools in their communities. Stories of such efforts to mobilize community support to enact significant policy changes necessary to create the climates in which Essential schools can thrive are cornerstones of the CES network's recent achievements. "Oakland's Community Propels Change for Equity," published in *Horace's* Summer 2002 edition and "The Belmont Zone of Choice: Community-Driven Action for School Change," featured in the Winter 2007 edition of *Horace*, describe communities that organized for personalized and equitable educational opportunities for students who were poorly served by their districts.

In this issue, you will read about schools that empower their students to be change agents. The Forum for Education and Democracy's George

Related Resource

"Making the Pendulum Swing: Challenging Bad Education Policy in New York State" is part of *Horace's* Fall 2005 edition, Volume 21, Number 4. The entire issue, "Using Advocacy and Communication to Create and Sustain Essential Schools," is a valuable resource for Essential school educators and others seeking to improve communication and advocacy skills toward the goal of influencing politics and policy to create better conditions for students, schools, and their communities to thrive.

www.essentialschools.org/pub/ces_docs/resources/horace/21_4/21_4_toc.html

Continued on next page

Wood regards 2001's No Child Left Behind legislation with wary and wiser hindsight and offers key questions for educators aiming to influence public policy. Other contributors share the ways curriculum and skill development can empower students, including Southside Family Charter School's twenty-year track record of developing student activists for social justice. And Dan Hoffman and Marcy Raymond share their experiences with the way Metro High School is shaping Ohio's policy and public discourse on schools.

I hope these inspiring stories, along with the others contained here, will spur you to take action in your own work. This is a time of great change. It is no time to compromise what is right for our children.

Lewis Cohen is the Executive Director of the Coalition of Essential Schools, focusing on strategic planning and alignment, relationship building, and advocacy. Previously, Cohen was an assistant superintendent in the Oakland Unified School District in charge of policy and legislation, communications, and personnel, a legislative analyst for the City of Oakland, and a documentary filmmaker and investigative journalist for public radio and television.

Related Resource

To read "Oakland's Community Propels Change for Equity," featured in *Horace* Volume 18, Number 4, Summer 2002, visit www.essentialschools.org/cs/resources/view/ces_res/267.

For "The Belmont Zone of Choice: Community-Driven Action for School Change," *Horace* volume 23, Number 4, visit www.essentialschools.org/cs/resources/view/ces_res/421.

Plan to Join Us at Fall Forum 2009 in New Orleans!

The Coalition of Essential Schools is delighted to invite you to Fall Forum 2009 in New Orleans, Louisiana! Mark your calendars now: November 5-7, 2009.

Fall Forum 2009 is a unique opportunity for educators, activists, and students from around the country to support the reinvention of New Orleans schools in the wake of the Hurricane Katrina disaster.

Fall Forum 2009 celebrates CES's 25th anniversary, drawing on our strength to face present and future challenges with renewed energy, invention, and capacity.

Fall Forum 2009 is for you, the CES network. Make plans to join us. Sign up for Fall Forum 2009 announcements and information bulletins at www.essentialschools.org/fallforum.

Civil Rights and Social Justice: A Path to Engagement and Transformation

by Flo Golod

"Wow! You kids know so much. I never knew anything about the civil rights movement when I was your age. In fact, I didn't learn much about it in college either, until now."

A 20-year-old education major at Hamline University in St. Paul wrote these words on an evaluation of a presentation made by children. The children, students at Southside Family Charter School in Minneapolis are at the oldest 15; most are ages 11 to 14.

These kids are the same mix of races and incomes as the rest of urban Minneapolis. Enough of them are poor that the school qualifies for various programs designed to address poverty. Many of them had difficulties at other schools and were enrolled by frustrated parents, hoping for a fresh start.

When you listen to Family School kids articulate the lessons they've learned from the school's civil rights curriculum, it's clear that demographic descriptors often lead to low expectations. These kids are articulate,

knowledgeable, and deeply engaged in their study of the civil rights movement. They bring the same competence and ability to their study of Native American history, treaty rights, and current challenges. Ditto their knowledge about environmental racism and their activism on behalf of a better urban and global environment. And by the way, they are eager to talk with you about the political implications of redistricting, their community garden and the importance of composting, and legal challenges facing youth.

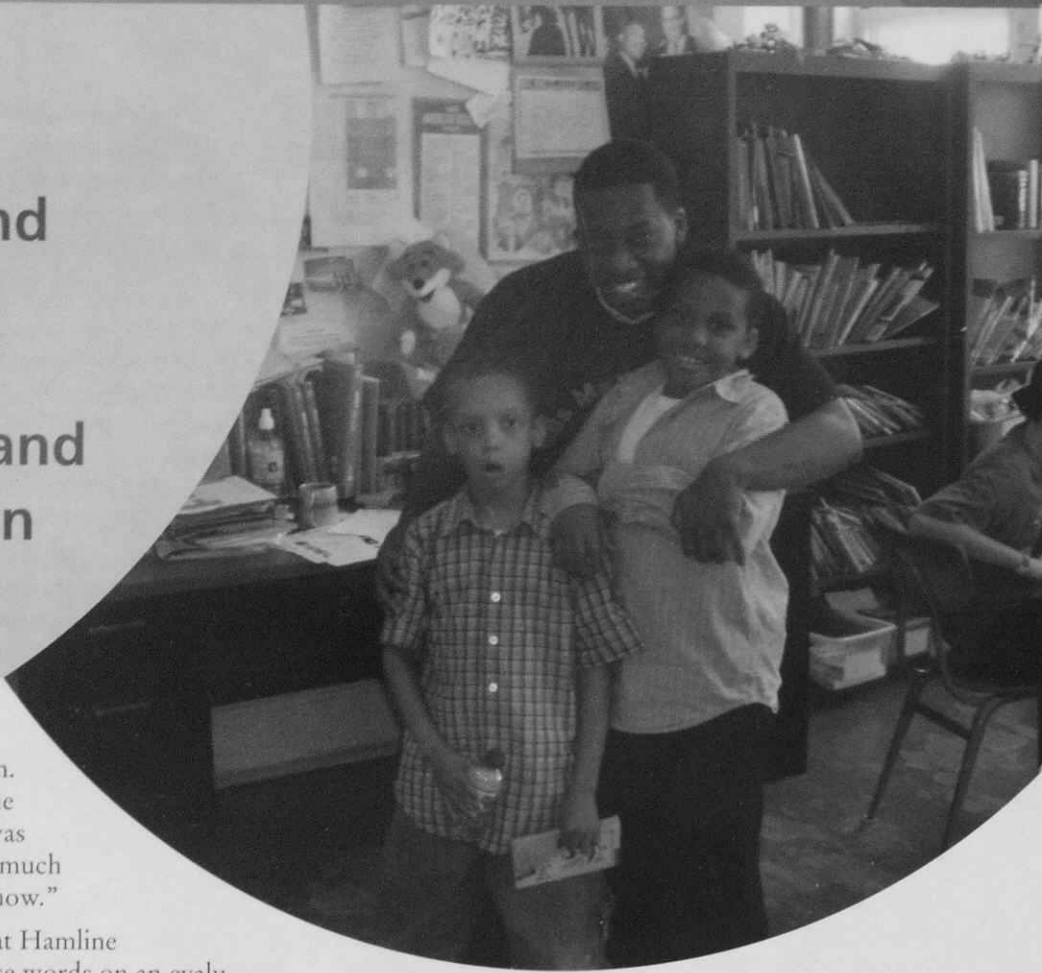
I have been part of the Family School family for more than half of my 60 years on the planet. I was a parent when my daughter started school there in 1974, the school's Executive Director for 20 years, and for the last seven years, I have served as a consultant helping out however I can. The school educated my two kids, laid the foundations for their moral and political convictions, and provided me a community to test my ideas about the world, engage in the ongoing, difficult work of consensus decision making, work through enormous conflicts, and celebrate huge achievements. Next year, my granddaughter will enter kindergarten at the school, beginning a third generation of our family's deep devotion to this remarkable little school with its well-earned big reputation.

The original leadership for the school's social justice curriculum came from Lead Teacher Susie Oppenheim

Continued on next page

Southside Family Charter School at a glance:

- 94 students
- 73 percent eligible for free/reduced lunch
- 46 percent white
- 44 percent African American
- 7 percent Hispanic/Latino
- 2 percent Native American
- 1 percent Asian
- Founded in 1972



who, for 35 years, has poured her creativity, her radical politics, and deep love of children into the curriculum, working with generations of students and teachers to build a school that embodies her vision. One of Susie's enduring contributions to equity education is the Civil Rights Curriculum and Study Tour. Under her guidance, students in grades six through eight study the civil rights movement and, every three years, students, teachers, and volunteers take a 12-day bus tour through the southern United States where they meet people who risked their lives challenging Jim Crow laws when they were as young as our students. Kids share what they learn in a Civil Rights History presentation made to diverse audiences, including college students like the young woman from Hamline, quoted above.

"The inspiration for the civil rights trip and other study tours we do came when I realized that the best possible teachers for us—and I mean adults as well as students—are the people who are actively engaged in changing the world," explains Susie. She and the other teachers and administrators of Southside Family Charter School have built the school's reputation on the foundation of a commitment to social justice. As the term enjoys broader currency, it threatens to become another smiley face on the educational buzzword chart. But at Family School, social justice means more than youth engagement and a basic commitment to equity issues. It means that children themselves learn by doing social justice work, and do so well in their academics because they have learned that education is about them, about the roots of racism and its local legacy, about the reasons nearly half the houses in their neighborhoods are foreclosed, about the systemic reasons their mothers are poor and about why asthma rates are so high in big cities.

They also know what needs to be done to change the picture; action is central to the curriculum. It is the dynamic interplay between learning and doing that makes the Family School pedagogy so compelling. Kids learn environmental science in the classroom from texts, experiments, and guest speakers. Some of the speakers are from a local environmental group, Environmental Justice Advocates of Minnesota (EJAM), a multiracial organization founded by Congressman Keith Ellison before his historic election as the first Muslim to hold national office in the United States.

The kids were so taken with EJAM and its dynamic speakers that they developed an environmental rap for their presentation at the EJAM conference. It starts out:

We will work hard. (We will work hard.)
To turn the tide. (To turn the tide.)
We'll love our Earth. (We'll love our Earth.)
Stand by her side. (Stand by her side.)

Ya'll already know what's up
The government's corrupt
Our system really sucks
For big bucks they're killin' our people
P.O.P.s, P. C. B.s—somehow it's all legal.

The voice of children is indeed a gift to the whole world. While the environmental rap may not make platinum, its righteous rhythm has crossed state and generational lines. Students rapped for Kwame Leo Lillard (who led sit-ins in Nashville as a member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee known as SNCC in 1960) on their recent trip to Nashville. He was so taken that he set up a meeting with Professor Robert Wingfield at Fisk University. Wingfield researches environmental toxins and their disparate impacts on people of different races in Tennessee. He too loved the rap, which he will share with activists young and old in the south.

POPs are persistent organic pollutants, organic compounds that are resistant to environmental degradation through photolytic processes. PCBs (Polychlorinated biphenyls) are one class of POPs and have been banned due to their toxicity, but are still present in the environment at dangerous levels.

Listen to Southside Community School's students talk about their environmental justice insights, and hear their rap! Download it here:

www.southsidefamilyschool.org/pages/uploaded_files/01%20Environmental%20justice%20rap.mp3

"In so many social change situations, the intergenerational model was crucial," remarks Susie. "When adult activists see young people actively engaged in nonviolent social change, it makes them think differently about their own movement and its possibilities."

Classroom learning, intergenerational dialogue, and action combined enliven even the most challenging educational pursuits—science education, for example—as third, fourth, and fifth graders learn basic biology and botany lessons through texts, experiments, and field trips. Their field trips take them to the Two Ponies Farm (in Plymouth, Minnesota) owned by an organic farmer who is leading local efforts to push through food safety and organic-friendly legislation. Students learn about sustainable and non-sustainable agriculture in the classroom. They learn the principles of organic farming and what

practices deplete soil and cause erosion.

When they visit the organic farm, they see these principles in action and, because organic farmers are eager to spread the good news, they patiently offer students opportunities to actually work the farm while they are there.

Family School offers students further opportunities to build on this learning by taking responsibility for the community garden down the street. Students plan, plant, weed, and harvest the garden. They cook at school, using garden produce, and share their meals with other students and parents. They take home recipes to pleased and surprised parents.

I remember the day we hired Brynne Macosko (now Paguyo), a creative and idealistic young woman just graduated from college. Fifteen years later, Brynne has integrated her scientific curiosity, her environmental passions, and her art into a vibrant pedagogy that kids love and parents value. A practicing artist, she integrates art with basic skills to engage children and deepen knowledge. Eliza Goodwin, the school's current Executive Director, and parent of fourth grader Tyler, remarks, "Brynne can blend really rigorous academics with a kindness and joy that gives kids—even those who struggle with schoolwork—a confident sense of themselves and internal motivation to succeed."

Taking their environmental science lessons to scale, Brynne collaborated with another teacher to help students develop a presentation about environmental justice and what kids and adults can do to achieve it. Inspired by the effectiveness of the Civil Rights History Presentation, the Environmental Justice Presentation is also touring other schools, colleges, and community and faith groups.

This active learning draws a full intergenerational circle around the life of the school and the develop-

ment of each child. As kids learn from adults, or older youth, they in turn become teachers. As the young woman from Hamline noted, they often know things much older students don't know because of their exposure to the Family School big world.

When Victoria, age 12, brought home study packets about the Civil Rights movement, her mother, Debra Pruitt, started studying along with her. Debra is the older sister of two young men who graduated from the school in recent years. She said that her brother Johnnie, now 25, quizzed his young niece about her Civil Rights trip. Still engaged after 10 years since he took the study tour and curious about how the curriculum and the tour have evolved, Johnnie exclaimed, "Wow, we didn't learn that when I was there."

According to Debra, "He's still interested in history and we all learn right along with her."

Shannon Jones enrolled her son Hassan in Family School after an unhappy start in an area public school. "He did well academically but I was always getting calls and complaints about his behavior. The class was big and chaotic, and the school took no responsibility for how that affected him. By the end of the year, he was coming home and saying he was dumb." Hassan has blossomed at Family School, says his mother. "He is enthralled by the lessons about the Civil Rights movement. He's so excited that he went on-line to learn more. And he loves the environmental lessons, and is always talking about ways we could clean up the city." Hassan and his family are able to put those lessons into action; Family School students take home lessons about composting and recycling and actually provide their families with tools to make environmental consciousness a part of family life.

One of the beauties of intergenerational learning is that it honors the achievements and wisdom of people who don't make it into history books. By engaging directly with community activists, civil rights workers, and other freedom fighters, the kids learn that "real people" make history and just how this happens. Victoria's mom Debra observed, "I learned about Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King in school, but I never heard anything about the other people like Kwame Leo Lillard. There were a lot of people who made that movement happen but we didn't study them in school."

When Hollis Watkins, now in his 60s, tells our children about how he came to be Vice President of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee at age 17, they remember and they pay close attention to any mention of SNCC. Mr. Watkins is the founder and leader of the Southern Echo, a multi-issue African American leadership and environmental group. He hosts the Family School contingent when they take

Versions of the Civil Rights History Presentation and the Environmental slide show will be available on our website at some time in 2009. But media cannot capture the interactions between students and audiences. If your school, organization, or conference would like to invite our students to present, please contact us. Distance is an obstacle that we relish overcoming. We'll work with you to make it happen.

Southside Family Charter School
2123 Clinton Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404
telephone: 612.872.8322
www.southsidefamilyschool.org

Continued on next page