

HORACE

Looking Back on 15 Years of Essential School Designs

Schools look far different now than they did in the 1980s, when Horace began to recount the effects of the Coalition's Common Principles. In her farewell issue the editor reflects on several of these fundamental shifts.

BY KATHLEEN CUSHMAN

I DIDN'T KNOW MUCH about education reform when I wrote my first issue of HORACE, in autumn 1988. I was a working journalist with a couple of kids in the local public school, and though I saw the truth of TedSizer's critique in *Horace's Compromise*, I couldn't say much else about why schools operated the way they did, or how they might do things differently.

Naiveté proved an asset, though, as HORACE became my regular task over the years to come. As I went about talking to those who worked in Essential schools around the country I had to keep asking, "What's that you're doing?" and "Why do you do it that way?" Soon

I learned to ask another question, "How do you know if it works?"

Whether I was talking with students or teachers, principals or superintendents, parents or college admissions officers, those questions gave me a way to begin exploring the universe of school. They complicated things I used to think were simple; they simplified things I used to think complex. As I prepare now to move on to other work, I see that they also gave me an "essential" habit of mind that would serve any writer well.

But looking back over my 60 issues of HORACE, I also can see that the answers to those questions have perceptibly changed during my

Two Tributes As the Editor Retires

For well over a decade Kathleen Cushman has given Horace Smith a voice. She has crafted our schools' individual stories, gathering their messages into usable form and thereby giving shape to our collective effort. She kept us from feeling alone. She reminded us that we were part of a national movement, one which was driven not by a detailed master plan but by common convictions and by the witness of hundreds of schools in their own expression of those ideas. She allowed us to learn from each other, to make colleagues across thousands of miles. She told our story to the world at large. In these precious ways she reminded us that each of us is Horace Smith and that all of us are Horace Smith. We are everlastingly grateful.

—Ted Sizer

I shall miss Kathleen, and her cheery, enthusiastic but skeptical and persistent voice. Issue after issue she has pushed us to notice our work—to attend to the details. She

has reminded us over and over that the real work is in those details—how we go about it, not just our lofty (and important) principles. The two are inextricably bound together. How to get the ratios down to 80, much less 40–50, which might make a difference? How to carry on sustained conversation over years and not get exhausted and burnt out? How to find time? How to keep records? How to, how to, how to. Never in recipe-like fashion, but always through stories, with their ups and downs, trade-offs, dilemmas and worries. That's the work Kathleen did for us. She was a school person's reporter, in the best sense.

But there was also the person—the Kathleen who popped in with a big smile and a few warm words, as she went about gathering her stories. The whole thing worked because the warmth and affection she felt for us and our schools came through both in the work itself and in her own presence. Thank you, Kathleen.

—Deborah Meier

In a High-Stakes Testing Environment, Performance-Based Assessment Gains Respect

Essential schools around New York took alarm when their state commissioner of education recently required all high school students to pass before graduation five rigorous, curriculum-specific exams previously given only for the "Regents diploma." Such one-time, high-stakes tests do an injustice, Essential school leaders argued, to schools valuing depth of learning over coverage of material—especially when students were already completing a demanding series of juried graduation portfolios. Out of the controversy grew the New York Performance Standards Consortium—40 public high schools serving diverse students in diverse communities and showing excellent rates of attendance, graduation, and college acceptance under a performance-based assessment system. Below, its members describe the system and why they (along with other like-minded schools) deserve waivers from their state's Regents requirement.

What Is a Performance-Based System?

Nine components provide evidence that Consortium schools utilize a *system* of assessment, rather than a single instrument or test. Embedded in the way the school is organized, that system underpins the school's culture and makes clear to the public what the school values. Together its checks and balances help schools make informed and multi-dimensional decisions with respect to students. The components:

- Alignment of curriculum with state standards
- Cumulative documentation
- Consortium-wide rubrics for competent, good, and outstanding work
- An instructional model based on active learning
- Multiple means to express and exhibit learning
- Mechanisms for corrective action
- Professional development as part of the school culture
- External review of student work
- External review of the assessment system.

How the Consortium Assesses Its Students

Consortium schools require students to engage in time-intensive, in-depth research projects and papers. The rigorous performance tasks involved, they assert, require students to "think like historians, solve problems like mathematicians, conduct experiments the way scientists do, critically interpret works of literature, and speak and write clearly and expressively." In the tradition of the doctoral defense, students must orally present and defend completed work to external assessors.

"Assessment drives curriculum and instruction," the Consortium cautions, and whatever its form, preparing students for it takes time. Readyng students for even one Regents exam, in English Language Arts, requires 33 hours per term (three 44-minute periods a week for 15 weeks), the Consortium figures—leaving insufficient time for the 55 hours per term that its schools currently spend with students preparing portfolio projects involving reading, writing, analysis, and presentation skills. "What would you drop to provide the extra time?" Consortium members ask. Then they turn the tables: "Would you require Regents schools to administer performance assessments?"

For more on The New York Performance Standards Consortium, contact Ann Cook at Urban Academy, 317 East 67th Street, New York, NY 10021.

tenure with the Coalition.

When I ask "What's that you're doing?" these days, I'm likely to get an answer that thirteen years ago was only a gleam in Ted Sizer's eye—breaking a huge comprehensive high school into small, autonomous units, for example, or requiring seniors to complete independent projects before graduation.

When I ask "Why do you do it that way?" the answers more often cite disaggregated data on how students are doing—and they often come from groups of teachers who work regularly with each other as "critical friends" to improve their practice.

And to answer "How do you know if it works?" more school people now invite me to look at students' portfolios, witness their presentations and exhibitions, and judge for myself what they know and are able to do.

Changes like these come slowly, go deep, and affect the whole culture of schooling. And because so



HORACE

HORACE is published three times yearly by the Coalition of Essential Schools. For individual subscriptions (\$25 a year, payable to CES), write CES Subscriptions, P.O. Box 910, Oxon Hill, MD 20750-0910 or call 1-800-62-HORACE.

For a list of back issues or for information about the Coalition, write to CES Publications, 1814 Franklin St., Suite 700, Oakland, CA 94612; www.essentialschools.org

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Kathleen Cushman

much remains to accomplish, we sometimes forget how far our Common Principles have brought us since the start. So for my last issue as editor, I offer here a selective look at fundamental design changes in the Essential schools I've been watching all these years. Though space does not permit naming all those who deserve it, the spirit of all your work resides in each example.

Graduation by Portfolio

Central Park East Secondary School was once the celebrated exception to the public high school routine of cashing in a pile of course credits for a diploma. Now scores of Essential schools around the country have followed its example, requiring students to assemble and defend their work in graduation portfolios.

Many extend the requirement to younger students, making portfolio reviews part of each year's promotion process or a midpoint ritual halfway through the high school years.

Making time for these person-intensive systems poses problems for schools in states where a single high-stakes test determines graduation. In New York, such schools have formed a political coalition to push for waivers from the state's tests, creating an alternative system whose checks and balances more than satisfy the need for external review. (See sidebar at left.)

Small Schools from Big Ones

Again, New York led the way when Essential school activists there persuaded the city to dismantle two huge comprehensive high schools and reopen them as clusters of small, autonomous schools. Several large-scale longitudinal studies then charted student outcomes in those small schools and others starting up throughout the city; and their strikingly positive findings drew national attention.

Now the same strategy has

gained support in other districts worried about research that poor and minority students, especially, fare worse in large schools. Notably in Chicago and Oakland, California, community pressure provided crucial leverage as regional CES Centers lent expertise and resources. (See sidebar, page 6.)

Creating separate schools that share administrative support under one roof, many have observed, seems to work better than merely dividing existing schools into "academies" or "houses" based on curricular themes. The latter approach too easily creates a subtle hierarchy of

selection, in which some students receive a better deal than others.

How Time Is Used

The school day and the school year look rather different now in many places than when I began visiting schools. Long-block class periods have swept the country, helping Essential schools increase time for in-depth or integrated curriculum while reducing the number of students a teacher must come to know.

More schools now also build common planning time for teachers into the school day and year. Some, like the schools of the Southern

'Thinking in Questions' Brings a Spirit of Equity to Community-School Relationships

What can our school do about unexcused absences? How do I know if my child is making enough progress? How much should teachers have to work outside the school day? Putting questions at the heart of curriculum, instruction, and school governance opens up the change process to fresh design solutions.

The Right Question Project has worked for the past decade to empower people in school communities to formulate their own questions, regardless of their own educational or literacy background. Practice in this skill makes people better able to think and act for themselves, asserts director Dan Rothstein, so they can hold themselves and their institutions more accountable. Whether that happens in parent-teacher conferences or in setting whole-school priorities, it can breathe a new spirit of equity into the relationships between schools and communities.

Whatever the issue at hand, Right Question's question-formulation technique follows a simple four-step procedure. First, participants *brainstorm* and record their questions without stopping to analyze, explain, or answer them. Then they *prioritize* by selecting the three most important questions, and choosing one of those three to focus on. (At this point they discuss the differences between yes-or-no "close-ended" questions and "open-ended" questions whose answers require more explanation. They explore the advantages and disadvantages of each type, and practice turning yes-or-no questions into open-ended ones.)

The third step asks participants to *branch off* their chosen question to brainstorm more questions about it—getting closer to an answer and discovering new questions as well. Finally, they *prioritize again*, choosing three questions from their latest list and beginning to think strategically about a plan of action.

Taking a group of up to fifteen people through the process can be slow and painful, Rothstein says, but it pays off. "The simple step of coming up with their own questions often leads people to feel much more confident acting on behalf of themselves and their families," he notes. "Given the opportunity, they learn from each other. And when they decide on their own course of action, they are more likely to follow through." Many CES schools consider the technique "essential."

For more information, write the Right Question Project, 2464 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02140; telephone 617-492-1900; or visit www.rightquestion.org.

Maine Partnership, schedule several weeks in the summer for curriculum development or other professional teamwork.

A few Essential schools are even tackling the thorny task of revising the traditional school calendar in various ways, to encourage year-round professional development opportunities while reducing summer learning losses. The equity gained for students whose summers hold little enrichment makes a powerful case for changing a system based on outdated assumptions.

More Personal Structures

So many Essential schools now organize students and teachers in ways aimed at increasing personal

attention that one often forgets how recently the practice took hold. But cross-disciplinary teacher teams, advisory groups, and other such structures were rare when I began following the Coalition's work. Growing from the middle school reform movement, they caught on in high schools eager to reduce student loads for teachers and to increase learning by knowing their students better. (See sidebar, page 7.)

Teachers in Conversation

Early in the Coalition's history, with a grant from Citibank, several yearly cohorts of Essential school teachers came together to form a pioneering network of "critical friendships" that CES called its Citibank Faculty.

They received training that allowed them to go back to their own and other schools and help coach colleagues in Essential school strategies. As the grant expired, the new Annenberg Institute for School Reform hired the group's leaders to form a similar network called the National School Reform Faculty. That group now operates independently, with its base at the Harmony School, a longtime Essential school in Bloomington, Indiana. A large percentage of its members teach in Coalition schools, and as in the original Citibank Faculty network, they carry on a lively electronic exchange of professional conversation that spreads their ideas and experiences across cyberspace. (See sidebar,

Teachers Reach Across Boundaries for Support and Inspiration

Ever since e-mail made its appearance in the late 1980s, Essential school teachers across the country have shared a lively dialogue about their professional concerns. Reprinted here with permission are two such missives by Christelle Estrada, a teacher from Pasadena, California who is spending this year in Utah, and Peggy Silva, who teaches at an Essential school in New Hampshire.

Accountability is also often defined in a somewhat moralistic way (the heart of this "tone," however, seems to me to be more economic); that is, "You teachers are accountable for making sure our children learn." Learning is somehow equated with numbers, scores on tests which value discrete and simplistic, often irrelevant pieces of information, not understanding.

The content of standardized tests is not questioned. Why? Because publishers have lobbied legislators and are backed up by the cult of the expert (or those who somehow know the canon of their content knowledge and construct the tests).

I am suggesting a different definition of accountability, one that puts equity at the heart of its meaning: *Accountability is a public commitment to the good of all children.* Now if the commitment is public it means for everyone (not just the reductionist solution of blaming teachers) and if it is for *all* children, then the way resources continue to be allocated based on test scores (reward, punishment, vouchers, privatization) [is] perpetuating the kind of society that keeps the poor poor and the rich very rich. . . .

Of course the questions are key. And we have been asking the kinds of questions that want to place blame. We cre-

ate more structures to punish and reward kids and teachers and principals and schools. The market economy, gone berserk! Privatization taking the place of the common good and public commitment!

What then shall we do?

—Christelle Estrada (Pasadena, California)

What struck me as I read Christelle's letter was how private our conversations are. As teachers we know our work, progress, frustrations, failures well. We understand the effectiveness of measuring student learning and the total inadequacy of a single number as a tool for improving that student learning. What we lack is a public voice. We allow others to control the conversation. We need to tell the stories constantly to an audience of parents, legislators, etc. . . . How do you get the word out?

I believe that every school district should have a regular column in a local paper that moves beyond the public relations of reporting on the Fun Fair or the fourth grade science fair. The author of this column would be a teacher, or many teachers, each passing the baton to another. The mission of such a column would be to be provocative, to ask people to think, and sometimes to gather for text-based discussions. . . . I even have a name for the column I want to write: "Going Public." I haven't figured out how to add that to my daily juggling. However, I do believe that we who do the daily work are too publicly silent about the effective strategies of that work. What are others doing to tell the stories of your schools?

—Peggy Silva (Souhegan High School, Amherst, NH)

page 4.) Just as important, many gather regularly with colleagues in their schools to critique their own teaching practices, look closely at student work, and build professional community. That reflective culture can thank the Coalition for its early inspiration and nurture.

Integrating Curriculum

As more teams of teachers breach the boundaries of academic departments, they have opened the door to courses that cross disciplines as well. Everywhere in Essential schools these days are units driven by "essential questions" like "Whose country is this?" or by themes like "crime and punishment." While a decade ago teachers interested in this approach had to write the curriculum themselves, the Internet now teems with good examples, complete with reading lists, lesson plans, and sample student work.

Pushing against this fertile work is a powerful testing industry whose exams typically reflect conventional subject-area divisions. But even there, an initiative as respected as New Standards has established cross-curricular standards in "applied learning," lending weight to a range of assessment techniques.

Senior projects—investigations and presentations that often cross disciplines in areas of a student's particular interest—have also gained enormous popularity and respect in the last decade. Ten years ago such work showed up only in a few pioneering high schools; now, even the federal and state education departments are pushing them as a way to keep seniors engaged intellectually while their high school years wind down.

Because the arts are often short-changed in schools with scarce resources, the Boston Arts Academy, which integrates the performing arts into a demanding academic curriculum, offers an especially encouraging example. Before graduating,

A Multilingual Essential School Develops Language by Crossing Boundaries

All 350 students at the International High School in Long Island City, New York are recent immigrants with very limited English, but the rich and coherent curriculum they follow here treats this multilingual population as an asset, not a deficiency. In heterogeneous groups, taking interdisciplinary courses organized around themes such as "Motion" and "Origins," students maintain and develop proficiency in their native language while they acquire near-fluency in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing English.

"Language skills are most effectively learned in the context of meaningful activities," says principal Eric Nadelstern, pointing out as well that fluency in a language other than English is a resource for the student, the school, and an increasingly interdependent society. International students play out these principles by taking on content-area projects in small groups, where no student lacks the support of a peer who speaks the same language. They create written texts and presentations in both their native language and English. They venture into community-based internships where they can practice their growing bilingualism and realize its value in their lives. And because International shares a campus with LaGuardia Community College, most of them take at least one college course by the time they graduate, further bridging the transition to a successful future.

To learn more about International High School, write Eric Nadelstern, Principal, 31-10 Thomson Avenue, Long Island City, NY 11101, or telephone 718-482-5455.

students must write an actual grant proposal for their own arts project, and many of them win funding from community partners.

College Admissions

Essential high schools take a risk with college admissions when they strip down the curriculum, group students heterogeneously, and use rubrics and written comments rather than conventional rankings and grades. But some have found that new ways to report student progress actually give colleges a clearer idea of what applicants really bring to the table.

The transcript of the Francis W. Parker Charter School simply lists, without grades, the courses a student has taken. With the document goes a narrative summary of academic achievement, drawn from the assessments teachers write at each term's end. "Colleges have proved more interested in students who

work hard and engage in their courses than in possibly more academically talented students whose assessments reveal less motivation and effort," says the director of student services at this Massachusetts school. "They know what it takes to succeed in their colleges."

Even in very large-scale settings, schools are finding ways to present student achievement more authentically. California's Transitions project, working with Hoover High School in San Diego and others, has created transcripts that accurately represent academic progress in a cross-disciplinary curriculum, in a form acceptable to the highly standardized University of California admissions process.

K-12 Articulation

Many more districts have now begun to build coherent curricular pathways from a child's earliest grades through high school.

Small Autonomous Schools as a District Policy: The Oakland Plan

About three years ago, several parents met in an Oakland, California church to share their concerns about their children in one of that city's overcrowded, year-round multi-track elementary schools. Aided by Oakland Community Organizations (OCO), a faith-based, nonprofit community organizing group, their concerns and actions spread to other members of their parish. OCO widened the discussion to include many other schools in Oakland's low-income communities, and began to organize politically to move the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) and the City of Oakland to end overcrowding and find sites for new schools.

BayCES, the Coalition's regional Center in the San Francisco Bay Area, recognized the opportunity to create new schools in a way that reflected the knowledge gained through a decade of its school restructuring work. The three-way partnership that emerged between OUSD, OCO, and BayCES resulted in a new policy committing the Oakland district to opening ten new small, autonomous schools within three years. A request for proposals went out in late 2000, targeting neighborhoods with overcrowded or year-round, multi-track schools and giving high marks to school design teams with active parental and community-group participation and support. Four design teams that applied will open their new schools in fall 2001; they were chosen by a review team that included members of OCO, OUSD, the Oakland teachers union, and BayCES.

"We feel fortunate that the community was actually out ahead of us in supporting and demanding small schools, because that meant our expertise and experience could really help them achieve their goals," said BayCES research director Herb Childress. "We're working now to help OCO broaden their organizing around the high schools. Given the community demand for change, the district now wants to break its six large, underperforming high schools into many smaller learning communities."

Some core areas of Oakland's New Small Autonomous (NSA) policy include:

Diversity and Consistency

- Each NSA school must create its own vision and philosophy. Some may emphasize traditional approaches to education, while others are more progressive, emphasizing community issues such as multiculturalism and social justice. Elementary schools may add preschool programs to provide early school experiences for children.

- All schools will be small, ranging from 100-400 students at the elementary level to 250-400 at the high school level.
- All aim for lean, academically oriented programs with high expectations for students, a broadly shared vision, consistent teaching and parent connections and involvement.
- Each NSA school pledges to offer an intimate, caring and safe learning environment where every student and family is known well.
- Each school is expected to help students achieve to high standards and guarantee achievement of higher-order literacy in language and mathematics.

Choice

- Each NSA school will be a school of choice for students, parents and teachers. Choices will be based on interest in the unique program and philosophy of each school.

- Each NSA school will create and schedule extensive parent, community, and student outreach and orientation sessions during a spring enrollment period to ensure that all community members are aware of their options and able to choose the best school for their child.

- Children will be able to enter NSA schools when 1) a parent, advocate, or organization sponsors the student, or 2) a public agency,

counselor, or community organization refers the student, or 3) they demonstrate their own commitment to the program.

- Each NSA school will be responsible for selecting its own teachers. To work at an NSA school, a teacher must 1) be appropriately credentialed, 2) choose to work there, 3) demonstrate alignment with the school's philosophy, theme and approach to teaching and learning, 4) be offered a position by the leadership structure of the school.

- All NSA school staff members must be committed to the philosophy of NSA schools and meet the required qualifications as set forth in the district position descriptions.

Admissions

No NSA school can refuse any student who wishes to attend and whose parents or primary caregiver can show that they know and understand the unique aspects, trade-offs and responsibilities of attending that school, except in cases where the demand for admission exceeds the number of spaces available. In such cases, schools will use an equitable selection process, such as a lottery.

Concern about overcrowding led community members to link with teachers unions and the regional CES Center, gaining the district's commitment to opening ten new small schools over the next few years.

In smaller places like Northport, Michigan, this has given rise to a district-wide exemplar of Essential schooling. In more populated districts, some fine Essential schools (like Louisville's Brown School) house kindergarten through grade 12 under the same roof. Groups of small schools that occupy the same building (as in New York and Chicago) often create a natural partnership in which students move up into a like-minded sister school. And some large urban areas (like Philadelphia and Los Angeles) are encouraging schools in the same "feeder pattern" to share curricular approaches and professional resources. When it works, it joins teachers, students, and families in a mutual enterprise of learning.

Community Connections

Schools like California's Oakland Tech and Boston's Fenway High School are among the many that have forged sustained connections with their communities, yielding demonstrable advances in student learning. At Fenway, for example, area hospitals welcome student interns, who then incorporate their work experiences into substantive research papers. In Oakland, students collaborate with University of California graduate students on city-planning projects that directly affect their own urban neighborhood. Many New York City Essential schools are among those nationwide that now require community internships for graduation.

School Governance

Choice among public schools was a rarity in 1988, but since then Essential schools from coast to coast have joined the move to sidestep traditional district bureaucracy by becoming charter or district pilot schools. Close to 1,800 such schools now operate in 36 states, under performance contracts detailing the school's mission, program, goals, students served, methods of assessment, and ways to measure success. Charter schools are usually accountable to their state or local school board to produce positive academic results and show fiscal responsibility; in return, they exercise increased autonomy. Such freedom has considerably helped schools like New York City's International High

Connecting and Reflecting in the Advisory Group

Many Essential schools use the advisory group structure as a way of increasing the personal connection among students and between students and the teaching staff. At New Mission High School in Boston, where "advisory" opens and closes every day, students begin the morning meetings with a ten-minute ritual that Essential school teachers often use themselves to build professional community. At the day's beginning, the group shares verbal "connections"—setting goals and strategies, recording them in journals, and occasionally discussing them in the group. At day's close, the group takes ten minutes for "reflections"—revisiting the goals set in the morning, and doing a homework reminder. Though both practices follow a similar format, connections are more emotional in their tenor, and reflections more analytical as the student rethinks the day past. David Perrigo, who directs New Mission, offers these guidelines for the rituals, which follow the same format:

Connections (mornings): *"How am I feeling, and why?"*
"What would be good for other people to know about my general state of being today?"

Reflections (afternoons): *"What worked well about my day today, and why? What did not go well, and why? Was I successful completing my goals today? What helped and what got in the way?"*

For more information, contact David Perrigo at New Mission High School, 67 Allegheny St., Roxbury, MA 02120; 617-635-6437.

- The group picks a student facilitator for the day (usually in a predetermined order).
- The facilitator pulls the group together in a close circle, with no students scattered around the room.
- The facilitator asks, "Who is missing?" and the group acknowledges any absences.
- The facilitator requests, "All distractions aside, please," and waits for all present to focus their attention.
- The facilitator says, "Connections [reflections] are now open."
- People speak one at a time, indicating when they have finished by saying "I'm done," "That's it," or the like.
- No one interrupts, comments, or has side conversations.
- After each speaker, a pause of at least five seconds allows the contribution to be considered and respected before the next person speaks. Silence is okay!
- No particular order of speakers is followed, and no one is forced to speak, but everyone is encouraged to contribute at least several times a week, if only to say, "Good morning, everyone."
- When it seems that everyone has spoken who wishes to, the facilitator asks, "Would anyone else like to connect [reflect]?" If no one chooses to speak after a few seconds, the facilitator says, "Connections [reflections] are now closed."
- Connections and reflections should typically not exceed ten minutes; a group that loves to talk should be coached to become disciplined in the use of the time.

Ten Years of Horace, Available Now in Five Volumes

The Coalition has published five spiral-bound volumes containing ten years of HORACE (from 1988 through 1998), arranged by theme for easy reference, and with discussion prompts at the end of every issue:

Volume 1: Teaching, Relationships, and Critical Friendships (includes issues on critical friendships; looking collaboratively at student work; networks; peer coaching; collaborating with parents; equity and democracy; and more)

Volume 2: Curriculum, Assessment, and Whole-School Accountability (includes issues on "Less Is More"; developing curriculum; increasing rigor; integrated curriculum; math & science; arts & languages; technology; school libraries; advisory groups; standards; work-based learning; documentation; performances and exhibitions; research supporting Essential School ideas; and more)

Volume 3: School Structure and Design (includes issues on small schools; new schools; getting reform started; reform in elementary schools; "what works, what doesn't"; heterogeneous grouping; school-to-work; advisory groups; schedules; school culture; student roles in reform; equity issues in school design; and

research supporting Essential School ideas)

Volume 4: Leadership in Essential Schools (includes issues on involving key stakeholders; managing the change process; principals' changing roles; teacher leadership & renewal; critical friends groups; involving students in reforms; democracy and equity; school culture; academic standards; start-up schools; breaking the barriers to change; "what works, what doesn't"; research supporting Essential School ideas; and more)

Volume 5: Policy and Essential Schools (includes issues on school networks; K-12 pathways; creating change across a district; state systems and change; national standards and assessments; lessons of reform; breaking the barriers to change; small schools; school-to-work; teacher education; reform and college admissions; documenting whole-school change; demonstrating student achievement; democracy and equity; research supporting Essential School ideas; and more)

The set is \$90 (plus \$20 shipping and handling) and comes with permission for schools to copy from it to advance their discussions about change. Individual volumes can also be bought separately for \$20. See www.essentialschools.org for more information, or send orders to CES, 1814 Franklin Street, Suite 700, Oakland, CA 94612; telephone (510) 433-1451, fax (510) 433-1455.

School, which otherwise labor to maintain their Essential school characters under the press of restrictive state and local regulations.

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Distance learning, with teachers and students mining the Internet for instruction in math and languages, global science experiments, exemplars of student work. (The Coalition's own website is a good example.) School-based teacher education programs, where practicing teachers supply expertise and counsel to aspiring ones, merging theory with practice. (Again, the new CES University supports this phenomenon's growth.) My list could go on for eight more pages, with far more examples and names than one issue of HORACE could contain.

Instead, let these few stand for all your brave advances, and many more to come. As I move on from this beloved work I salute you all, who are my heroes. You have changed the face of schooling in our time. *Bravo.* □

Kathleen Cushman is now story director of *What Kids Can Do*, a new national non-profit organization based in Providence, Rhode Island (www.whatkidscando.org).



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