Meg arrives at Lindlewood High School at 7:50 a.m. It is a crisp Monday morning and the October leaves swirl around Meg's feet as she approaches the building. Meg is animated as she enters the lobby; many of her friends are there to greet her. "Hey Meg! Wasn't that a great party at Bill's Friday night?" "Yeah, it really was," Meg responds. She and her friend begin to compare notes on the party when the Vice Principal, Mr. Emerson, interrupts. "Ladies, please move along to homeroom. The bell is about to ring." Both girls grin. "Sure thing, Mr. Emerson."

Meg moves down the hall to her homeroom — 25 juniors placed alphabetically by their last names. Meg rushes through the door just as the 8:00 bell rings. Made it! Meg chats with her homeroom buddies while her homeroom teacher, Ms. Paul, takes attendance. Ms. Paul quiets the room as the loudspeaker begins its static crackle as an introduction to the announcements: "Teachers, please note: the boys' soccer team will be excused at 1:45 this afternoon. Juniors: PSAT's will be given November 11th, registration is due by the end of this week. Students are reminded that it is their responsibility to keep litter out of the halls and classrooms. Let's keep our school clean."

The 8:10 bell rings. Meg rushes to her locker, grabs the books she will need for the morning and proceeds to Pre-Calculus with Mrs. Watkins. Mrs. Watkins is a bright-eyed woman in her late forties. The 26 juniors in the class settle down immediately. Mrs. Watkins does not tolerate disruption. "Were there any questions on the homework?" she inquires. It becomes apparent that, in fact, there were many questions. Mrs. Watkins addresses these questions in a lively fashion, interspersing explanations of the different problems with humorous commentary. Mrs. Watkins then begins to introduce new material. She barely finishes when the bell rings at 9:00. "Do the odd problems on page 142 for homework," she yells over the rustle of papers and slamming of books. Meg and her 25 classmates get up to leave, jostling in the doorway with the first arrivals for the incoming math class.

Three minutes later, Meg arrives in the room of Mr. Brown for third year French. The class turns to the play they have been reading by Moliere; Meg is still puzzling over the trigonometry problem she got wrong.

By the end of the day, Meg has been to seven similar 47 minute periods, with a half hour for lunch at midday. During each period a different subject is addressed by a different teacher, with a different group of 20-25 students. Meg's teachers have seen five different classes of approximately 25 students each within their respective subject areas. In addition, each teacher has one 47-minute preparation period, and one school duty period in which he or she covers a study hall, monitors the bathroom, or does some other equally onerous task. All teachers at Lindlewood High School have similar schedules.

One day a mayoral candidate, who has announced himself as "the choice for education," arrives at Lindlewood. As he explains to Mr. Emerson, it has been quite some time since he has been in a high school. Would it be possible for him to follow a single student for the day? The Vice Principal finds this a somewhat novel request. You never can tell what these visitors will want to see, he thinks to himself. But Lindlewood has nothing to hide, so Mr. Emerson agrees to the visitor's request. Meg Fulton is a nice girl . . . Mr. Emerson calls her to his office and introduces her to the visitor. Meg is not thrilled about being followed all day — she will probably have to talk to this visitor rather than to her friends — but having no legitimate objection, she shrugs in acceptance.

It is the end of the day. The visitor has followed Meg through what he found to be a bewildering array of courses. Was high school like this in my day? he asks himself. He recalls that it probably was. He guesses that he just had more
energy then. Meg is ready to take her leave; her bus will be arriving soon. She stands by the visitor awkwardly. "Thank you for being my guide today, Meg," he begins. "Oh, it was my pleasure, sir," she assures him. He thinks to himself, I'll bet, but says "Just one more question, Meg. Why do you think your school's schedule looks as it does? I mean, why seven 47-minute periods?" Meg looks at the visitor as if he has two heads: what a silly question. "What else could it be?" Meg asks. Meg's bus arrives and she rushes off before the visitor can pursue his question further. He shakes his head. It doesn't seem to make sense.

The visitor sees Meg's math teacher, Mrs. Watkins, coming down the hall. He moves to head her off.

"Thank you for letting me observe your Pre-Calculus class," he begins.

"I was happy to have you," Mrs. Watkins replies.

"How was the rest of your day with Meg?"

"Oh, just fine. But there is one thing that puzzles me."

"What's that?"

"Why is your school scheduled as it is? I mean, seven 47-minute periods. I can't sort out one class from another, and none of them seems to link together. Don't the students feel that way, too? It seems crazy."

Mrs. Watkin's brow furrows, "I don't really know why we follow such a schedule. Must be to accommodate all the different courses we offer. Every school I've taught in had a similar schedule, and I've taught for 25 years. Come to think of it, the school I went to had a similar schedule, too."

"Mine, too," replies the visitor.

"I guess, though, that a seven period schedule is not carved in stone. I mean," Mrs. Watkins continued, "I've never heard of an eleventh commandment, 'Thou shalt have a seven period schedule in every high school.'"

"Well, does a seven period schedule make sense educationally?" the visitor asks. "I mean, do people learn best in discrete blocks of 47 minutes?"

"Heavens, no!" Mrs. Watkins exclaims. "The class just gets started when it's over. It's a wonder the students learn anything at all."

"Would there be any incentive for you as a teacher to change Lindlewood's schedule?" asks the visitor.

"Oh, I should think so!" responds Mrs. Watkins.

"What kinds of changes

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<tr>
<th>SCHEDULE A</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monday</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30-8:49</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:53-9:41</td>
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<td>9:45-10:33</td>
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<td>10:37-11:25</td>
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<td>11:29-12:16</td>
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<td>12:16-12:46</td>
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<td>12:50-1:30</td>
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<td>1:42-2:30</td>
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"But I suppose the teachers of other disciplines have other ideas. H'm... We might have a schedule that gave teachers more planning time. And I'd love to be able to share that planning time with other teachers so that we could discuss what we're doing in our classrooms. Maybe we could even try to link our subject areas or team teach. A student's schedule might then look like this for Monday and Tuesday":

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHEDULE B</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-9:00</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00-11:00</td>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>Humanities</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00-12:00</td>
<td>Advisory</td>
<td>Advisory</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00-1:00</td>
<td>Lunch/Options</td>
<td>Lunch/Options</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00-3:00</td>
<td>Math/Science</td>
<td>Math/Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:00-5:00</td>
<td>Electives/Library</td>
<td>Electives/Library</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"What do you mean, priorities and assumptions?"

"Well, take a look at the first schedule you've drawn. If I asked people what the priorities were behind this schedule, I'll bet they would say "longer class periods" and a belief that there are four core subjects. And you're assuming that students need longer periods of time to really grapple with the core material. The second schedule you've drawn, on the other hand, represents a different set of assumptions about subject matter and learning."

"Fascinating," Mrs. Watkins murmurs. "But there are also compromises: For me to have a longer period of time in math, someone else might have to have a shorter period of time, or no time at all. It would be tough to get the whole faculty to agree on something like this."

"Would it be worth a try?" the visitor inquires.

"Quite possibly. I mean, a school really should know what its priorities are and be able to make them clear to its students. Right now, we're saying that everything is important - but then nothing is essential."

"Something you'd like to take on?" the visitor asks with a twinkle in his eye.

"As if I needed more work," retorts Mrs. Watkins. "But changing the schedule is an interesting idea... Maybe I'll work on some alternatives this evening..."

For copies of three alternative schedules that Mrs. Watkins designed based on actual Coalition school schedules, please write to: Susan Follett, Coalition of Essential Schools, Box 1938, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island 02912.
We are very fortunate to have attracted to the Coalition staff Robert McCarthy, a veteran high school principal and holder of a Harvard doctorate who just stepped down from the principalship of Brookline High School in Brookline, Massachusetts. Bob has worked extensively in leadership training as well as in high school reform, and he brings a wealth of experience to our effort.

NOTIONS ABOUT LEADERSHIP IN COALITION SCHOOLS
by Bob McCarthy

How green is the "grass" in "grass-roots" decision-making? How long does it take for the "roots" to establish themselves in order to survive a drought, a flood or a bitter cold winter? What about the landscaper? How much of an active role should he or she play? Should the grass be left alone from the beginning, allowing just the hardiest to survive? Or, should the new grass be protected from hostile elements, insects and choking weeds by the constant presence of the landscaper? If that be so, what happens if the landscaper departs? Will the new grass survive? For how long should people be told, "Keep off the grass"?

...Decisions about the details of the course of study, the use of the students' and teachers' time and the choice of teaching materials and specific pedagogies must be unreservedly placed in the hands of the principal and staff.

The fourth of the Coalition principles has profound consequences for the predominant leadership style in the nation’s secondary schools and, indeed, for most of the schools in the Coalition. What's a principal to do? If he or she makes all the decisions, the community may likely view him or her as "strong" and "effective," someone who "knows what's going on" and "runs a tight ship." If he or she works hard at gaining consensus, delegating and sharing authority, insisting that curricular and pedagogical decisions be made by teachers who are protected from the central bureaucracy, he or she may be viewed as "weak," "afraid to make a decision" and "wishy-washy." Besides, it is easier to make most of the decisions yourself: It's more efficient.

But many Coalition principals know, deep in their hearts, that in the crazy world of school change, "strong is weak" and "weak is strong." Teachers become well-skilled in avoiding the consequences of top-down decision-making. The changes of the "strong" decision-maker usually last as long as the decision-maker's presence in the organization. Once he or she goes, the change withers away like the grass of the landscaper who did not allow the grassroots to dig deeper on their own. Rather, these "landscapers," through constant monitoring and frequent watering, create shallow roots. The strong, in reality, are the weak.

The principal who carefully nurtures his or her school — encouraging when needed, backing away when necessary, becoming active when the time is right — creates a climate for change that encourages the development of strong roots through thoughtful decision-making. Therefore, when a decision is finally made, it's the school's — and not the principal's. The "weak," in reality, are the "strong."

This matter of school reform is a complicated business. Clearly, a principal cannot "allow" the school to join the Coalition, then walk away from the decision, exposing the seedling unprotected to the elements. Neither can he or she hover over the staff implementing the Coalition principles, clearing every decision the faculty makes and insisting on being consulted every step of the way. Constant attention develops shallow roots. The principal must let go.

We all need help. Whether it's the principal being asked why he or she is not more "involved" or a coordinator not feeling nurtured or a group of teachers desperately seeking guidance and leadership. We all need to define the parameters of our effectiveness as leaders — no matter what our role in a Coalition school. The Coalition of Essential Schools is as much about establishing leadership in schools as it is about sharing that leadership.
CLOSE-UP

CES CLOSE-UP

"The feel of a school, its morale, the subtle engagement of its students: these and analogous qualities have to be seen close up, on a regular basis."

In the previous HORACE [Vol. 4, No. 2], Ted Sizer discussed the need to create a "tight community of pioneers" who know each other well. He noted the critical importance of sensitively articulating what is evolving within and among the schools.

This supplement, which will be called CES CLOSE-UP, is an attempt to facilitate more familiarity among Coalition members. In this first installment of a three-month experiment in networking among Coalition schools, I am conducting phone visits to the Coalition schools, talking with principals, headmasters, coordinators and teachers about their schools and about the CES work. CLOSE-UP will consist of vignettes, and will offer a context for "understanding differences which can provoke new ideas."

Gary Obermeyer, Learning Options

Ballard High School
Louisville, Kentucky
Alexandra Allen, Principal
Norman McKenna, Coordinator
502-454-8206

A four-teacher team collaborates in a core curriculum for sophomores who experienced academic difficulty during their freshman year. Students take electives from the regular program, giving the teachers team planning time. Also recognized is the fact that the successes will not be lasting without school-wide change.

Doss High School
Louisville, Kentucky
Gordon Milby, Principal
502-454-8239

The school-within-a-school at Doss targets ninth-graders with a history of academic difficulty. After the first semester in the project, indicators show promise. Students are receiving 10-15% more passing marks than last year. There are fewer referrals and attendance is up.

Pleasure Ridge Park High School
Pleasure Ridge Park, Kentucky
Charles Miller, Principal
Ms. Janice Fish, Assistant Principal
Susan Garrett, Coordinator
502-454-8311

In a school-within-a-school, four teachers work with eighty ninth-grade students selected randomly from those who register for a geography course. They meet the first two and last two periods of the day, allowing mid-day electives and lunch with the rest of the students.

Another experiment, beginning next year, will team three teachers and 120 students in a four-period block. Of special interest to observers of the program is what happens to students after the school-within-a-school experience, particularly in patterns of attendance, single course failures and referrals to the principal or counselor.

Bishop Carroll High School
Calgary, Alberta, Canada
Bernard Bajnok, Principal
403-249-6601

"We have been a 100% Essential School from the day we started," says Bernard Bajnok. With a history of model schools’ work, independent learning is well established. Students work from learning guides based on curricula in each of seven subject areas. Individual learning plans are developed in consultation with a teacher advisor who works with them throughout the high school years. Recent attention has been given to development of the learning guides, giving students options for additional work in greater depth.
At Waggener, student-as-worker includes students providing essential services to the school. Two computer whizzes are completing a scheduling program for next year. Several are working in menu planning with the cafeteria staff. Still others are conducting needs assessments and working with appropriate staff members. “We are teaching that all the work of the school is important,” says Donna Ludwig.

Nancy Echlov reports that in the English, math, history and creative arts school-within-a-school, teachers are getting to know students better and having more fun. In a variation of the CES theme, they are engaging ‘students-as-searchers,’ investigating the nature of problems and the nature of learning. The final exhibition must cross over three disciplines and at least one part has to be written. A special block of time each Wednesday is provided for independent work and for consultation with teachers. Nancy reports that the students have been very good about using the Wednesday morning time productively. “Students come to school not because they have to, but because they want to.”

Implementation of interdisciplinary teaching began with one freshman-level course. Now expanded to the whole freshman class, this seminar meets one day per week. Two days are set aside for work in the affective domain. Also in place this year is a tenth-grade pilot project. Piloting is planned for the eleventh grade next year and for the twelfth the following year.

Two other expansions: faculty planning time will be gradually expanded as interdisciplinary teams meet daily, and exhibitions will be introduced in one course next year, extending to all grades over the next four years.
theme is justice and in science, it is energy and change. With a 'no frills' curriculum in humanities, "everybody teaches and everybody advises."

West Irondequoit High School
Rochester, New York
Eugene Horrigan, Principal
George Hammersta, Coordinator
716-266-7351

Implementation is on hold during a year of extensive building renovation which will provide a new science facility, library, conference room and writing lab. Part of the writing lab plan is that each English teacher will be assigned to the lab as their fifth assignment, thus reducing student contact to about 80 per teacher. George Hammersta reports that the staff is looking forward to more specializing and personalizing of learning for students, especially with a greater range of meeting spaces available.

University Heights Alternative School
New York, New York
Nancy Mohr, Principal
212-220-6397

Organized in February, 1987, University Heights operates on a consensus model of decision-making. Students are grouped in families of about 15 and remain with the same group throughout their four years. For the faculty, each day begins with a ten-minute meeting — a time for touching base, making announcements and addressing easily-solved problems. More complex questions are worked out through a two-week cycle of team- and whole-staff meetings.

Academic teams each consist of six or seven teachers and a maximum of about 90 students. Two-hour seminars are taught by three-teacher teams. Each team handles scheduling internally with the exception of physical education. One implication of the team structure is limited choice — less becoming more. As Nancy Mohr describes it, "We can't have the intimacy without limiting the variety we generally associate with high school curricula."

The Crefeld School
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Charles Como, Headmaster
Michael Patron, Coordinator
215-242-5545

This is a brand new staff looking at school-wide change. With no habits to break, comprehensive change appears possible. Agreement was reached on the basic structure of the curriculum, patterned largely after Central Park East. Also in progress is an effort to list essential skills, competencies and knowledge for a student transcript.

Elizabethtown Area High School
Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania
Dustin Peters, Principal
717-367-1521

Dustin reports a better faculty morale attributable to a district commitment to reducing class size at a time of rapid growth in the community. Student contact will decrease from an average of 150 to a range of 100-120. Due to an emphasis on English and on science, those class sizes will be reduced from 30 to 20.

Under consideration is a community service requirement for graduation. The change could come as early as the year after next. The idea fits with the district-wide community service focus. An essential ingredient already in place is an open campus policy.

Hope Essential High School
Providence, Rhode Island
Paul Gounaris, Principal
Albin Moser, Head Teacher
401-456-9329

The grading scale at Hope's school-within-a-school is A, B, C and incomplete — no failures. The purpose is to disallow both students and teachers from getting 'off the hook' with any major assignments. The scale acknowledges that no assignment is perfect, leaving an option for clarifying and requiring a resolution. Problems do exist. There is currently no time limit on assignments. Incompletes allow self-deception for some students who believe they will eventually earn the credit somehow. The dilemma for the teacher is whether to keep moving or to splinter the classes. Possible changes include breaking courses into half-year semesters and establishing make-up courses.
CLOSE-UP

Meridian Junior High School
Kent, Washington
Jack Ernst, Principal
Sally Estep, Lead Teacher
206-859-7387

Teams of four plan together daily for two-hour language arts/social studies blocks. Two regular education teachers work with a maximum of thirty students. One gifted and one remedial teacher each work with fifteen. A waiver process was used to accommodate staffing for the blocks. According to Jack Ernst, they are working through many little problems having to do with getting permission to do things differently.

CLASSROOM CLOSE-UP

RUSS BONANNO, English and History Teacher
Adelphi Academy, Brooklyn, New York

In Russ Bonanno’s seminars, students are workers. One of their tools is the ‘response journal,’ a place to keep reactions to readings, clarifying notes, personal vocabulary lists, exciting ideas and points about which they have doubts. Russ instructs them to put boxes around questions and to leave spaces for reflections beneath.

During seminar, students discuss the readings, working from their notes. Their job is to fill in the spaces with new understanding and insights. If they use their journals well, it is the primary source for review for final exams. Russ began grading the journals because some students needed the extra incentive. Grading matters less as the utility of the journal becomes more apparent. Now the grade is used only as an arbiter in the case of a close call on the final grade. Some students use the journal in other classes.

Another tool for the student-as-worker is a group process that Russ calls the ‘congress technique.’ He organizes the seminar group into two teams and appoints temporary chairs. He places questions from the readings, couched so that the answers are arguable, onto the board. Russ calls them “search and discover questions.” Teams brainstorm in preparation for questioning by the competing team. This questioning is limited only in that the chair calls on speakers and only one person talks at a time.

Russ’ role shifts from instructor to moderator to facilitator and, eventually, to observer. When Russ is successful at teaching the kids to handle their own learning, he is also a student observing the students as they learn while keeping a journal of his own.

“Coalition work has helped me rediscover the idealism and experimentation that I felt in my early years of teaching,” says Russ, reflecting on his background in dramatics. “I am a director. I work toward a finished production. I orchestrate the tempo and texture of the final performance.”

FRIENDS OF THE COALITION:
MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The Coalition of Essential Schools will host a national Fall Forum, October 27-29 in Providence.

Representatives from all the Coalition schools and from the central and regional staff will present a detailed picture of the on-going work of the Coalition.

Registration details will be provided in the next issue of HORACE.