

HORACE

Creating a Climate for Change: Essential Schools in Louisville

Classroom change can't happen across a district unless its leaders lay the groundwork, by setting up structures that support teachers in trying out new ways. In Louisville, a superintendent with Essential School ideas has been doing just that, and schools are poised for the even harder task ahead.

THE SCENE: AN ATHLETICS awards banquet at Fairdale High School in Jefferson County, Kentucky, about a year ago. Principal Marilyn Hohmann is sitting next to the district superintendent, Donald W. Ingwerson. She is a scrappy, compact, red-headed dynamo with fire in her blue eyes; he is serene, white-haired, a kindly, almost ministerial countenance belying the bulldog tenacity that lies beneath. He turns to her mildly. "If in ten years I can come into this high school and not recognize most of its administrative or teaching practices," he says, "I will consider our work to be a success."

Fifteen years ago this Louisville school district was in a crisis of the worst order. The decline of factory work had left the region with tremendous unemployment. Louisville's schools, with mostly black students, were run separately from those of surrounding Jefferson County, whose students were mostly white, and the systems were under court order to merge and desegregate. Overloaded with administrators, the bureaucracy of the merged system sagged to the breaking point. Anger and alienation ran high in the community.

Today, the same district has created conditions and incentives many point to as a nationwide model for school reform. In his ten years as superintendent, Don Ingwerson's ultimate goal has been

children's classroom success, but he sees classrooms as only one link in a chain of success that involves the entire community. To turn Jefferson County into what he calls "a learning community," Ingwerson's administration made structural changes that laid the groundwork for change across the district. When in 1990 Kentucky legislators radically rewrote the laws governing its entire educational system, Jefferson County was where they turned for advice. And yet even now, forward-looking educators in this district consider that the most important reforms—those that take place between student and teacher in the classroom—still wait to be made.

The vocabulary of reform in Jefferson County is familiar—it speaks of restructuring schools; of participatory, site-based management; of professional development for teachers, business-school partnerships, and parental choice. But it is particularly striking how thoroughly this school district has made its own the articulated goals of the Coalition of Essential Schools. Don Ingwerson passionately shares TheodoreSizer's conviction that all children can learn; one hears that phrase everywhere, from central office budget discussions and school board meetings to athletic banquets and job apprenticeships. The metaphor of "student as worker" forms the theme of a district-wide staff development

Jefferson County's Profile

Student Enrollment: 93,000

(includes preschool and adult high school)

Per-Pupil Expenditure: \$3,815

160 schools, including 88 elementary, 23 middle, and 20 high schools, plus 29 special and technical schools

Kentucky ranks 39th in the nation on school spending; Jefferson County's spending falls 4th in the state

effort. Performance-based assessments that ask students to demonstrate competence are increasingly required in all schools. Little wonder that of Jefferson County's 20 high schools, six have been members of the Coalition of Essential Schools since 1986, and five more have recently joined. And although each of these schools differs considerably in just how and how far it reflects Essential School principles, together they form a valuable picture of the practical and political process of "going Essential" across a district.

The Ground Rules of Change

An outsider exploring Louisville's schools for evidence of important classroom-level change will find only scattered examples of Essential School principles in fully articulated form. But administrators like Debbie Riggs, who coordinates the Coalition's efforts in the district, see no cause for discouragement in this. Perhaps the most effective way to get schools to explore Essential School principles, she notes, is very simple: let them do it their way. Teachers and principals should see the Coalition not as a program but as a process, she argues, not as a monolithic model but as a framework for discussion.

At the same time, Don Ingwerson's administration began early in his term to put in place

several key practices that prepared the ground for substantive change at the classroom level. First, he "flattened the pyramid" of administrative bureaucracy so that school principals report directly to him, and gave them far greater autonomy in how they run their schools. Second, he regularly got teachers out of the classroom and into situations where they might observe and discuss new ways of teaching. Third, he leaned heavily on Louisville's business community to put money, equipment, and expertise directly into the schools. And finally, he gave schools wide freedom to try new things, often as magnet or "learning choice" schools specializing in a particular area, and he let parents and students choose to attend schools out of their neighborhood as long as a proper racial balance was maintained.

"The result has been a lot of 'little tries'—niches of innovation that lead to bigger changes," says Pat Todd, a 20-year teaching veteran who is now Director of School Restructuring for the district. "I like to call it a 'centralized decentralized' reform agenda." Todd works out of the Jefferson County Public Schools Gheens Academy, a stylishly remodeled brick elementary school building that is the center of the system's professional development efforts. (See separate story, page 3.) Begun in 1983 with a \$600,000 grant from Louisville's Gheens Foundation, the Academy appears to be at once catalyst, conceptual center, and communications hub for much of Jefferson County's school change. "Our job is to start things," says Terry Brooks, its director.

"We get them going and give them away." He grins. "We comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable."

What this means in practice is that Jefferson County teachers have a place to go to talk, listen, and try out new things. "We're aiming for nothing less than an internal transformation of every school and every individual in our system,"

says Pat Todd with no trace of irony.

Just what that transformation consists of, however, can prove a delicate question for teachers determined not to be the dupes of yet another scheme for quick-fix school reform. "The biggest hurdle we face with respect to the Coalition of Essential Schools," Todd says, "is to get people to realize it

The biggest hurdle is to get people to realize the Coalition isn't a kit you can adopt, but a philosophy of how kids learn.

isn't a kit you can adopt, but a philosophy of how kids learn, how adults and kids interact." That philosophy can influence the way teachers explore any of the newer ideas that present themselves to educators, whether or not they emanate from Essential School



HORACE

HORACE is published five times yearly at Brown University by the Coalition of Essential Schools, Brown University, One Davol Square, Providence, RI 02903. Subscription is free. Publication of HORACE is supported by a grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

Editor:
Kathleen Cushman
Managing Editor:
Susan Fisher

principles. So on a typical day at Gheens Academy, a group of ninth-grade English teachers meet to discuss writing across the curriculum; another team is developing exercises for cooperative learning; individual teachers use the Curriculum Resource Center to prepare classroom materials; and beginning teachers meet with their mentor teachers to hash out problems in their classes. A "student as worker" study group, continually shifting in its membership, is planning a special summer school session in which new interdisciplinary curricula and exhibitions of mastery can be tried out in classroom practice with the help of seasoned Essential School people.

One Leader, or Many?

How much is Jefferson County's spirit of change due to the influence of a single leader? Virtually everyone in this system credits Donald Ingwerson with the dramatic differences this district has seen in the decade since he took the superintendent's office. Taken alone, the extraordinary length of his tenure has provided a stability crucial to the district's progress. But a closer look reveals just how Ingwerson has operated—not through charisma or high-decibel demands, but through a quiet, persistent refusal to give up, and the seeming ability to make individual people feel personally responsible for the schools' success.

The first challenge Ingwerson faced was a polarized and suspicious school board, weary from years of strife and saddled with a complex and top-heavy bureaucracy. "I spent my first year listening, *forging relationships with the staff*, and streamlining the bureaucracy," he says. But the bigger job was even more fundamental: the teachers and the administration did not share the same vocabulary or the same motivations. "Teachers were concerned with students and with union issues; principals were

concerned with management," Ingwerson says. "We began a five-year plan to create a common vision, centered around how to help children be successful."

At the same time, the superintendent got out into the community, speaking to church and business groups of his conviction that every child can learn. "That was a new idea to many of them," he

comments. "They hadn't experienced it in their own lives, perhaps." During his first year, he went "toe-to-toe" with the business community, he says: "I embarrassed them into appointing me to their committees. Then I took every opportunity to ask them point-blank what *they* were doing to help our children." Whether the answer was to donate used furniture or

The Infrastructure of Innovation: Jefferson County's Staff Development Academy

How does a district foster change and growth across its entire public school system, not just in a few "special" schools, or with a few extraordinary individuals? Jefferson County decided a decade ago that the answer lay in linking school improvement explicitly to the professional growth of teachers, administrators, and support staff. With the help of a \$600,000 grant from the local Gheens Foundation, the district established a Professional Development Academy which since 1983 has become the heart of Jefferson County's system. The chief objective of the JCPS/Gheens Academy, as it is known, was to foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship that would permeate every school, and to provide an infrastructure to support such change.

Forging links with the Coalition of Essential Schools was only one step the Academy took toward that end. In addition, it encouraged schools to become "professional development schools," early examples of school-based participatory planning. It set up a system of "learning choice schools," which target certain curriculum areas (such as mathematics or technology) for special emphasis. And it urged middle schools to enter on the pioneering national Middle Grades Assessment Program.

As well as linking Jefferson County to these national efforts, the JCPS/Gheens Academy provided technical assistance and services to anyone in the district who could use it, including private and parochial school teachers, university faculty, and student teachers. An education library, a curriculum resource center, a special education materials center, a computer education support unit, and a grants assistance office are some of the resources available through the Academy.

A key focus of the Academy is on working with principals and other administrators. Its "leadership academy" aims both to provide development and support for current principals and to identify and educate potential principals in matters from teaching to organizational effectiveness.

Gheens has sponsored teacher study groups, travel grants, mentorships for beginning teachers, and many other short-term projects. "A school system works in three ways: maintenance, incremental improvement, and innovation," says Terry Brooks, its director. "Our job is innovation."

Brooks calls the \$400,000 annual commitment of Gheens Foundation money "venture capital," *small in proportion to Jefferson County's \$380 million annual budget* (which contributes 88 percent of the Academy's cost). But it is money that helps leverage other direct and indirect support for the school system, through business partnerships and other foundations. In the meantime, Gheens is busy monitoring and evaluating its own work, hoping that results will show that private funds can help substantially—not to accomplish a "quick fix" of a troubled school system, but to build a stable and continuing infrastructure to support long-term change.

equipment to schools, to form job internships for students, or to donate money for special causes, the strategy has clearly worked; over 700 business-school partnerships on every scale now exist in Jefferson County schools.

"Don is a master at bringing people along," says Fairdale's Marilyn Hohmann. "He won't take no for an answer from the school board, but he never forces an issue. He'll go back a dozen times if he has to, discussing ideas for change until people feel comfortable with the concepts." In fact, Ingwerson's

style reflects an abiding, almost religious faith that no limits can block progress if sufficient will is there. "I go to meetings where the problems are so huge that you could easily cry doom and gloom," he says serenely. "I just ask, 'What would you do if you had no limits, if you could wipe the slate clean? Could you get the job done if you had a billion dollars?' Very often, the answers are right in front of you. The limits are illusory—it's the motivation that's missing. The longer you're in a job, the more narrow your scope of what's

acceptable tends to get. We need to take off those blinders to really get hold of our problems."

Most of the county's schools have now voted to make all key decisions by participatory management.

While insisting that every person in the district take active part in the reform process, Ingwerson also made it easier for them to do so. He eliminated an entire level of middle management jobs—regional superintendents, directors of instruction, coordinators of supply services—placing many of those people into jobs opened by attrition, but saving a million dollars to use for other purposes. He concentrated all staff development activities in the new Gheens Academy. He identified certain people as system-wide "lightning rods" to trouble-shoot problems in areas such as supplies and maintenance, then gave principals carte blanche to call him if they didn't get results in 24 hours. And in every school whose faculty so voted, he authorized decision making by participatory management, involving faculty and parents in key decisions concerning virtually every aspect of schooling. Of the county's 160 schools, 130 already have voted to govern themselves this way, and the rest appear to be lining up to join them.

Principals and teachers both are warm in their praise for the moves. "The best job in Jefferson County right now is to be a principal," says Jim Sexton, whose position as executive director of high school principals was eliminated, and who now heads Eastern High School. "You know you're responsible for making things better, and it's enjoyable." He particularly cites the wide latitude principals have in making management decisions

Starting Over from Scratch: Kentucky's Education Reform of 1990

In a stunning decision that forced educational change of an order rarely seen in this country, Kentucky's Supreme Court in 1989 ruled the entire state public school system unconstitutional because of substantial inequities in the level of school funding in different districts. The state was told to throw out its laws on education and to rewrite them in a form that would guarantee the same level of opportunity for every student. The result was the groundbreaking Education Reform Act of 1990, known as House Bill 940, which went far beyond equalizing funding to require dramatic changes in management, curriculum, and assessment practices.

In the process of researching the Reform Act, the legislative task force called on many educators with close ties to the Coalition of Essential Schools, including Frank Newman, president of the Education Commission of the States, and Grant Wiggins, whose work on exhibitions of mastery has shaped much of the Coalition's thought. Their influence is clear from the shape of the final Act; it calls for statewide performance-based assessment of students by 1995-96, mandates more opportunities for teachers to improve their classroom instruction, and requires school-based decision making, including parent participation, in every district. By 1993, a "model curriculum framework" will be provided by the State Board of Education to local schools; its emphasis is on developing the following abilities:

- to use basic communication and math skills for situations students will encounter throughout their lives
- to apply principles from math, sciences, arts, humanities, and practical living studies to situations they will encounter throughout their lives
- to become self-sufficient individuals
- to become responsible members of a family, work group, or community
- to think and solve problems in school situations and in life
- to connect and integrate experiences and new knowledge with what one has previously learned, and build on past learning experiences to acquire new information through various sources.

Schools that increase their proportion of successful students—defined as those who make a successful transition to work, post-secondary education, and the military—will receive financial rewards, and school staff members will decide how those funds are to be spent. Those in trouble will embark on a crisis program, working with "distinguished educators" and special funds to bring about more rapid change.

Cross-Disciplinary Teaming and Active Learning: The Middle School Model

Ever since it sprang from a major study of American high schools and the publication of TheodoreSizer's book *Horace's Compromise*, the Coalition of Essential Schools has seen itself primarily as a high school reform movement. But some of the healthiest examples of Essential School principles and pedagogy can be found at the middle school level. A well-established national movement toward "developmentally appropriate" education in early adolescence has led to widespread acceptance in middle schools of cross-disciplinary and team teaching, strategies to promote active and collaborative learning, and personal attention to individual students' progress.

Far from being an exception to this middle school reform trend, Jefferson County is one of its leaders. Nearly all of its 23 middle schools have already gone through the schoolwide soul-searching involved in the Middle Grades Assessment Program (developed by the Ford Foundation and North Carolina's pioneering Center for Early Adolescence). The changes that followed were subtle at first, as teachers began to see themselves as the architects of change in their schools. But they soon burgeoned into a thriving culture of empowerment; middle school teachers are among the most energized and satisfied people working in this school district today.

"The best middle schools are a combination of the best elementary and the best high school people," says Barbara Staples, a 24-year teaching veteran who works at Conway Middle School, which reflects many Essential School principles though it is not a CES member. In its sixth year of change since teachers there voted to restructure their school, Conway is organized around seven interdisciplinary teams of four to six teachers each. Each team has a common planning period, its own budget, and the flexibility to schedule to meet its students' particular needs. Most teams serve one grade level only, but one is a multi-age group, and another focuses primarily on the arts.

Perhaps because they were not wedded to the more specialized subject-area focus of the conventional high school curriculum, Conway teachers were able to work closely in these teams on setting new learning goals for their students. "Before this, most of us were typical junior-high teachers," Staples says. "Students didn't come first; we just wanted them to stay in their seats." She credits principal Dennis Boswell with pushing teachers to take new risks in the classroom, and to open themselves up to suggestions and non-evaluative coaching by their peers.

"At the start of the school year we all go on a two-day staff retreat at an out-of-town hotel," she says. At one such gathering, Staples and co-teacher Susan Sharp led a workshop on "student as worker," and when school started they made themselves available to other teachers who were trying out new ideas in the classroom. Conway has a grant for two "coordinating teachers" who take others' classes during such times, underlining the school's commitment to classroom-level change.

"The system is built on respect, on working with someone's strengths," Staples says. "There is a *personal* aspect to being willing to try all this—the team is truly a family. Even a conservative teacher is often willing to try something new just to keep the flow of the group going."

Cross-disciplinary teams meet daily to plan curriculum and activities, but Conway's departments also meet monthly—both to discuss active learning as it applies in their disciplines, and to ensure a sense of continuous subject-area progress across the grades. "At the high-school level this kind of thing will take on its own form," Barbara Staples says. But for an example of how to structure a school around cross-disciplinary learning, she believes, high schools could do worse than to look at Conway's plan. And the experience has clearly given Conway's teachers new energy and professional pride. "After 24 years I don't know the meaning of burnout," Staples says. "Teaching is more wonderful every day."

within their schools. In his first year as principal, for example, Sexton's teachers told him tardiness was their single biggest complaint; without delay he instituted a strict "zero tolerance" policy for lateness to class, and has reduced the problem by 60 percent.

"The only mortal sin in this district is not to be collegial," Marilyn Hohmann says. "The more you share decision making with teachers, the more they act that way with kids in the classroom. It's a lot easier to tell people what to do and

then pretend they do it." Jim Sexton agrees; the more responsibility he passes on, he says, the more effective his school is. "Next we're going to try arena scheduling," he says, "where the kids will design their own schedules around the particular teachers they want. It's a way of involving kids in their own destinies, and puts pressure on teachers to improve their classes if they want to attract students." Though such tactics do not in themselves reflect Essential School ideas, they can open schools to the

notion that students are active and questioning workers, not passive recipients of whatever is fed them.

When principals are resistant to innovation, Ingwerson has a reputation for swift action. "He doesn't fire people," Hohmann says. "He moves them to less demanding jobs." Principals are evaluated, Jim Sexton notes, by peer groups of three or four, and encouraged to develop new skills through Gheens Academy's leadership programs for current and aspiring principals.

The district also works hard to coach teachers, and to prepare them for positions of leadership within and outside the school. Those teachers who attend workshops at Gheens Academy, for example, will often later lead their colleagues in staff workshops on the same subjects. The teacher evaluation process exerts another steady pressure to try new ideas. "Teachers are required to make an individual growth plan for themselves," says Kathryn Hopper, who is principal of Waggener High School. "When I evaluate them, we confer first on what their goals are, then after the observation we confer again, and write a narrative evaluation. Every principal and assistant principal in the district is trained in this kind of clinical supervision." Teachers like the evaluation process, they say, because it honors their own perceptions and personal style. "It's a system that's built on respect," says Conway Middle School teacher Barbara Staples. (See separate story, page 5.)

Who Tries It, and How?

"Districtwide, most teachers still see the Coalition as somebody else's program, not something that has to do with them," says Kathryn Hopper. At Waggener, which is known for its programs for gifted students, some teachers think the Coalition's ideas work only for the most able students. But when Hopper was assistant principal at Fairdale, she says, "we came to the Coalition because its ideas work for at-risk kids." Earlier, when she taught at Seneca High School,

Hopper helped develop a ninth-grade Essential School team specifically for problem students; she now feels that a heterogeneous group works better.

The fact is that almost every Coalition member school in Jefferson County is going about things in its own fashion and at its own pace. Fairdale High is a beehive of individual and team innovations, from a ninth-grade team of seven teachers and 130 students to an interdisciplinary American studies program for juniors, organized around "essential questions." At Eastern High, Jim Sexton searches out teachers certified in several fields as a tool to get the number of students a teacher sees in a day down to a manageable level. The school, a county magnet for math, business, and technology, was just selected to receive a major IBM grant through the Coalition, aimed at developing a curriculum based on graduation exhibitions. Iroquois High School has some team teaching now, but next year it will inaugurate a new longer-block schedule that invites much more. (See separate story, page 7.) Students at Seneca High, the county's liberal arts magnet school, take three interdisciplinary, thematic, team-taught courses each year as well as their regular math and language courses. And at Waggener, individual teachers are beginning to come up with imaginative interdisciplinary performance-based projects and share them with others throughout the district.

"I don't put teachers into a program," says Waggener's Kathryn Hopper. "I just let them see a new method of teaching." Her attitude is shared by most of the county's other principals; in fact, to be much more directive would be difficult, given the trend toward participatory management in this district. In addition, Jefferson County's climate of change and choice makes it more attractive for a school to differentiate its program

from others, not to imitate another's path.

Given all this, the district's Coalition member schools may seem more a patchwork quilt than part of a formally designed and integrated pattern. As yet, Jefferson

Largely because of Gheens Academy study groups, Essential School ideas are slowly spreading. Even teachers who resist "Coalition" may nonetheless be trying out new ways.

County has no fully articulated example of Essential School principles at work. Largely because of the Gheens Academy, however, the underlying ideas behind the Coalition are slowly spreading. Even teachers who speak disdainfully or defensively about "Coalition" may nonetheless be trying out cooperative learning or abandoning lectures in their classrooms, unaware that these ideas are shared by many schools in the Coalition. As the state moves toward required performance-based assessments, teachers are even more likely to adopt ideas like exhibitions when

Almost every Coalition member school in Jefferson County is going about things in its own fashion and at its own pace.

Write to Us . . .

HORACE welcomes letters from readers addressing issues in past or coming editions. Send letters to: Editor, HORACE, CES, One Davol Square, Providence, RI 02903. Please include your name, address, and telephone number for factual verification. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity.

they encounter them in workshops and seminars. Programs offered by CES's home offices at Brown University also add enrichment to the local menu of development opportunities. Next year, for example, eight CES-trained Jefferson County teachers and principals will be working with their peers on Essential School ideas, as Citibank Coalition Faculty and Thompson Fellows.

An important link in the chain of reform is how new teachers are trained in university education programs. Here too, the county is taking major steps that favor Essential schooling; the University of Louisville will conduct a teacher education course at Fairdale High School next year, with Fairdale staff serving as instructors along with professors. "It's unheard of for high schools even to be *talking* to universities as much as we do, much less helping them redesign their curriculum," says Marilyn Hohmann.

What's Left to Do?

Ten years after its new superintendent arrived, Jefferson County looks and feels like an entirely different school system in some important ways. The district's administrative structure has changed; people are talking in new ways to each other. Teachers and principals feel a new sense of ownership, and businesses are more involved in the schools than they have ever been. A tone prevails of choice, diversity, and innovation.

The district is not without its problems: racial tensions persist; old classroom habits of passivity are slow to change; the elite "advanced" students still follow a separate track of self-fulfilling privilege. A relatively small percentage of teachers actually participate in Ghens workshops on curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment; and schools vary as to how systematically the ideas are shared with other teachers back at school.

One School's First Step: Changing the Schedule to Get the Numbers Down

In a bold step designed to dramatically reduce the number of students teachers see in a semester, Iroquois High School will launch a "Macro-class Optional Program" in the coming school year. The program redesigns the school's schedule into three 100-minute blocks, punctuated at midday by a 70-minute lunch and activity period. During its first year, it will coexist alongside the traditional six-period Iroquois schedule, with teachers moving freely from one to the other; but after three years Principal Stuart Watts expects all Iroquois students to be in macro-classes. "The longer blocks provide a format in which our commitment to Essential School principles can grow and thrive," he says.

"This gets teachers down to being responsible for 75 kids over the course of a semester," says Watts. Though it also means 25 minutes more teaching time, 96 percent of Iroquois faculty voted for the new system, in which they teach a maximum of three classes per day. Teachers may also teach two classes and sponsor activities, or team with other teachers in interdisciplinary classes. About 20 percent more classes can be offered under the new procedure, which decreases the number of students in each class. The length of the school day and the calendar year will not change.

Modeled after educator Joseph M. Carroll's "Copernican Plan," the new system works by separating subjects into intensive one-semester units, rather than spreading them out over the school year. In the first half of the year, a student might take only English, math, and a foreign language; in the second half she could switch to social studies, science, health, and music. At the end of the year, she will have accumulated six course credits, and Carnegie unit requirements will have been met. Still, Theodore Sizer cautions, nothing about the Copernican schedule guarantees depth in the curriculum, which he believes cannot come with focusing only on coverage.

Watts hopes that the longer blocks will foster more opportunities to integrate community resources and job partnerships, and more attention to measuring student progress on an individual level. "We have a lot of challenges in this school," he says, "including attendance rates, dropouts, and a very high percentage of at-risk and ESL kids." An emphasis on demonstrated mastery—rather than a checklist approach to minimum competency—will characterize Iroquois macro-classrooms.

	MACRO		TRADITIONAL	
7:50				
8:00	M-1 (105 min.) 7:50-9:35		T-1 (50 min.) 7:50-8:40	
			T-2 (50 min.) 8:45-9:35	
10:00	M-2 (95 min.) 9:40-11:15		T-3 (50 min.) 9:40-10:30	
			T-4 (50 min.) 10:35-11:25	1st Lunch T-Lunch (25 m.) 10:35-11:00
11:00	2nd Lunch M Lunch 11:20-11:45	Activity/Study 11:20-12:00	Study (35 min.) 11:25-12:00	T-4 (50 min.) 11:05-11:55
12:00	Act./Study 11:50-12:30	3rd Lunch M/T Lunch (25 min.) 12:05-12:30	Study (35 min.) 11:55-12:30	
	M-3 (105 min.) 12:35-2:20		T-5 (50 min.) 12:35-1:25	
			T-6 (50 min.) 1:30-2:20	
2:00				
2:20				

There is the ever-present resistance of the rank and file to what some regard as an elite vanguard of change. To carry off a more sustained commitment to bringing every teacher along would require expenditures that this county—which spends near the top in a state that falls 39th in the nation's school spending—may not be willing to make.

But a stable infrastructure of support has been devised at the upper levels of this system, without which fundamental changes from the bottom up cannot possibly take place. Don Ingwerson's remark to Marilyn Hohmann at the athletic banquet last year is a sober recognition of just how long it takes to get to the hardest part of school change—what goes on in the classroom between teacher and student. In that realm, this superintendent believes, Jefferson County's task is just beginning.

"We must get to the point where the child is going to school because

At the upper levels of this system a stable infrastructure of support has been devised, without which fundamental changes from the bottom up cannot possibly take place.

he wants to learn," he says. "Our job is to motivate that spirit of inquiry, to carry it into the ways we assess student performance." That spirit must be nurtured very carefully, he warns, starting with an absolute commitment to involve parents in what their children are doing, to give them enough choices about their children's schooling that they are invested in the results. "The glue that holds the system

together is very sensitive to temperature," he says. "If you get too confident, if you try to launch something when it's too hot, the whole thing will blow up in your face."

What he hopes to see in the next decade, the superintendent says, is more team efforts both in and out of the schools—"parents and children in the classrooms, kids coming and going." He wants "a higher standard of learning, of teaching, of behavior, and more individual standards and ways of working with kids. We need to move to personalize our system, to get the number of students a teacher sees down to 80 in a day. We won't accomplish anything until we know what we want to do with the job—until the fundamental question is what results in better student learning," Ingwerson concludes. "The child is not there for the school; the school has got to be there for the child." □



HORACE

Coalition of Essential Schools
Brown University
Box 1969, Brown University
Providence, RI 02912

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Providence RI
Permit No. 202