

'SMALL' REVOLUTION IN NEW YORK CITY

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To read the papers, one might think that the only things going on in New York's schools this year were condom distribution, curricular struggles over defining the family, and the firing of a Chancellor. Actually, however, over the 1992-93 school year a fantastic development has unfolded -- a move that could eventually change the contours of secondary education, not only in New York but across the nation. While the squabbles were being recorded on the front pages, 37 new small high schools were quietly taking shape, all scheduled to open in September, 1993 -- with another 14 projected to begin the following September. Each will be small -- some of them tiny, in fact, by New York City standards -- and at least some will be innovative, non-traditional places explicitly designed to respond to the urban adolescents of today.

This article tells the story of these developments, and they are reported from dual perspectives: that of an outside observer of the events, and that of a very actively engaged participant in them. One of us is the principal-designate of one of the new schools opening in September, and the other is a scholar/analyst of school reform observing these events from 40 miles away. We want first to describe how the idea for these schools emerged, and then to tell in detail the story of just one of the 37, The Legacy School for Integrated Studies. Things are reported as they stood as of several months ago (May, 1993) when this article was written.

The story begins in the Spring of 1992, when several initiatives surfaced, working independently of one another to put forth the idea of

launching small new high schools. But it was not until August of 1992 that it was announced that New York City's Schools Chancellor was seeking to create 30 small high schools over the next three years. (Berger, 1992a) Some would be themed, some would be selective in some way, some would represent unusual auspices and sponsorship, but *all* were to be small, and special arrangements would link each school to an unusual extent with some group outside itself. The idea was recommended by a number of conditions and developments, and it has yielded some remarkable planning processes and novel school designs -- of which The Legacy School of Integrated Studies is one.

The insistence on smallness comes in response to a growing consensus among researchers and reformers to the effect that all students -- but most especially disadvantaged students -- are likely to perform better in downsized, less compartmentalized and bureaucratized schools. (Bryk, Lee, & Smith, 1990; Gregory & Smith, 1987; Walberg & Fowler, 1987; Wehlage et al., 1989) There is also a growing sense among educators that small schools work better for teachers, and thus for innovation. And it did not hurt either that small schools may also be a solution to the City's burgeoning space needs. Since previous efforts to downscale New York's large high schools had encountered many obstacles (McCabe & Oxley, 1989), why not try new schools? Thus, the idea was to supplement New York's 124 "behemoth" high schools -- some with enrollments approaching 5,000 -- with 30 additional schools, ranging in size from 300 to a maximum of 1,000 students. (Berger, 1992b)

The specialization or focus feature was recommended by several kinds of experience, including the success of magnet schools in improving student achievement (see, e.g., Blank, 1990; Raywid, 1989), and the recently substantiated accomplishments of career academies. (Crain,

Heebner, & Si, 1992) The adoption of a central focus was also recommended by the successes of New York's alternative schools which emphasize the importance within a school of a shared perspective or belief system. A recent Rand study that has proven influential concluded that themed or focused schools "are probably the best form of school for the vast majority of students now served by New York City's zoned comprehensive high schools." (Hill et al, 1992: x)

The 30 new schools -- a total that has grown steadily and is currently projected at 51 -- also reflect a remarkable array of sponsorship and collaborative partnership arrangements. One that is already under way (the Metropolitan Corporate Academy) was launched in partnership with Goldman, Sachs, a major financial house. Two others are being started by a socially active church group, the East Brooklyn Congregations (The High School for Public Service in Bushwick and The High School for Public Service in East New York). At least one is being established in collaboration with a union (The Local 1199 School for Social Change) and several will have college partner- collaborators (e.g., The High School for Leadership and Public Service, and The Urban Peace Academy). Sponsor-collaborator interaction will differ from school to school, but in virtually all the contribution will be a matter of time and expertise as well as of money. Substantial continuing interaction of various sorts is a part of the plan.

These novel features and arrangements were recommended by a number of things. One is essentially the same challenge of urban education that is increasingly familiar across the nation: poverty, indifference, dropouts, violence. Another is the particularly demanding circumstances New York faces -- with growing enrollments, and trying challenges, such as an immigrant, often non- English-speaking influx of 30 to 40 thousand

students per year. (Wilner, 1991) And there can be little doubt that the deaths of three students at one of the City's vast high schools this year increased the appeal and urgency of the downsizing idea. On a longer term basis, several community school districts had been trying to develop smaller, focus schools and such schools were already in various stages of development in Districts 12, 3, and 5, as well as in District 4.

There had also been several private groups stimulating such a development in various ways. The Manhattan Institute for Policy Research has sponsored the team that helped lead the revolution of 20 years ago in the East Harlem schools. For several years now, this trio (Sy Fliegel, Cole Genn, and Carlos Medina) have been aiding districts in New York (and elsewhere) to develop just the sort of schools the 51 now projected will represent. The work of a prestigious monitoring group, New York's Public Education Association, has also contributed to the climate yielding the plan. The Association has now published four or five separate studies supporting small high schools. (Architectural League, 1992; Dolinsky & Frankl, 1992; Heinbuch & Frankl, 1992; McCabe & Oxley, 1989; Oxley & McCabe, 1990)

In addition, some influential figures within New York City's philanthropic community were exploring how to get broad scope events moving in the direction of such schools. The Fund for New York City Public Education, a coalition of foundations, helped launch the venture by inviting interested groups to develop plans for small innovative schools, and the Fund has promised \$1.5 million for the project (Berger, 1992b). When joined to the Chancellor's invitation for interested parties to submit proposals for new schools, the idea proved enticing to a large number of individuals and groups. The Fund for New York City Public Education received 280 proposals. Eventually it selected 16 "New Vision Schools," each of which was given \$25,000 in development funds. The Chancellor's

office also received proposals for new schools. In all, 51 school proposals were selected and pegged for 1993 or 1994 opening. The new programs will receive start-up funding from the City, and foundations are financing pre-opening summer workshops enabling the new staffs to begin working together. Otherwise the new schools are to operate on standard, less than lavish, New York City funding formulas.

As all of this suggests, the new schools were part of a number of simultaneous, initially independent initiatives that cohered into a broad, multi-faceted development involving a number of individuals and organizations. Among the new schools, one *set* is being sponsored by the New York office of a national reform group, the Coalition of Essential Schools. They assumed the responsibility of starting six new schools in 1993 and six more in 1994. Those opening in 1993 are: The Coalition School for Social Change, Landmark High School, Manhattan Village Academy High School, Vanguard High School, Manhattan International High School, and The Legacy School for Integrated Studies. Since it is one of these six Coalition schools that most concerns us here -- The Legacy School for Integrated Studies -- we want to describe the arrangement of which Legacy is a part, along with something of its extraordinary nature, before zeroing in on the one school.

The Coalition Campus Schools

The Coalition of Essential Schools is a national network of schools (until quite recently, of high schools only) committed to the nine fundamental principles enunciated by reformer Ted Sizer. These have to do with a focus on helping adolescents learn to use their minds well, limiting curricular range in the interests of depth, holding the same high goals for all students, personalizing teaching and learning, making students active

participants in their own education, and awarding diplomas on the basis of achievement and mastery.

Several years ago, Sizer supplemented the Coalition, which enrolls individual *schools*, with arrangements for enrolling *states* in an alliance that encourages individual schools to move in a Coalition direction. As of the past year, the Coalition's participation in New York City's small schools project has expanded the group's reform involvement to yet another level, the reform of a *city's* high schools.

The New York City arm of the Coalition of Essential Schools is an organization named the Center for Collaborative Education (CCE). This is a network of 15 schools, six elementary and nine high schools. The link initially uniting the two typically separated educational levels was Deborah Meier, the highly respected principal of Central Park East Secondary School (CPSS) who several years ago used some of her MacArthur Foundation 'genius award' money to launch the Center for Collaborative Education. (Meier's own background lay primarily in kindergarten teaching when she began Central Park East Elementary School in District 4 in the early 1970s. In the 1980s she extended the elementary school by undertaking a compatible high school.) By invitation, Meier's high school, CPSS, became one of the first members of Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools. In late 1991, the Center for Collaborative Education formally became the New York City affiliate of the Coalition, although the two organizations continue to operate somewhat autonomously, each retaining its own governing body and separate status. (CCE is governed by its 15 member schools.)

Half of the elementary schools in CCE are associated in one way or another with District 4's East Harlem educational revolution. The high school affiliates of the Center are linked in that all are alternative schools, which in New York were only schools enrolling students who have

encountered difficulty in their previous schools, but which now include a number of schools that accept a full range of students. Several things make such a group a rather unlikely source of anointed leadership in the design of new high schools. One is the prominence of the elementary school representation. Another is the fact that alternative schools have been more likely to be seen as relatively peripheral, marginal operations -- aberrations in a system rather than leaders of it. Their novel practices have more often been viewed a matter of necessary accommodations to a low level student population than innovations to be emulated elsewhere. Relatedly, tradition in education assigns teacher and school statuses according to the ability and promise of the students involved: a school where large numbers of the students are at risk is not generally accorded very high professional status. Any one of these several factors would alone make it most improbable for the Center for Collaborative Education to find itself in a prominent leadership role, sponsoring not just one but eventually a dozen of the new high schools. Yet that is exactly what has happened: The key leadership roles in the Coalition sponsorship of the new schools are occupied by the alternative school directors, all members of the Center for Collaborative Education. And this sort of sponsorship is something of a revolution in its own right!

The decision to highlight the Coalition connection in the sponsorship of the new schools has been a wise one. First, Sizer's reform Coalition enjoys considerable national stature and status -- offsetting both CCE's more limited geographic scope and the 'alternative school' status of its members. Equally important, the Coalition of Essential Schools had pioneered strategies for freeing innovative schools from the constraints of state regulation. In New York, the Coalition had already reached a "Partnership Agreement" with the State's Commissioner of Education, to the effect that

except for minimum competency testing requirements, the Essential Schools will be free to restructure the curriculum and the school within state and federal law without submitting individual requests for variance from the Commissioner's Regulations. (Partnership Agreement, 1990: 10-11)

Indeed, New York State's 13 Coalition schools were the first "partners" in the State's effort to decentralize school control, and of these 13, four were Center for Collaborative Education alternative high schools. The Partnership Agreement extends the same autonomy advantages to the new Coalition schools -- which all of the 12 "Campus Project" schools will be. (Within New York City they will also all be affiliated with the Alternative Schools Office -- a decision yielding them a freedom from bureaucratic interference within the City that is roughly analogous to the freedom from State interference obtained from the Partnership Agreement.)

In the winter of 1992, the Coalition of Essential Schools submitted a proposal to the Chancellor to sponsor 12 new small high schools, to be known as "Coalition Campus Schools." The underlying purpose was to provide a way to restructure the City's existing high schools by substituting within them small, independent schools. The plan for bringing off this demonstration in restructuring went like this: The CCE member schools would design the new high schools, select and induct the new directors, and act as partners to the new schools once begun. The purpose was to enable new small schools intent on building strong instructional programs to get off to, and then sustain, a good start. But the ultimate aim was even broader than creating 12 schools, including a way to adapt existing buildings to current needs. In fact, it is this intent which supplied the name "Coalition Campus Schools." The proposal, growing out of practice launched two decades ago in District 4, is that a school building house not

just one school but several. Moreover, they should typically be schools of different educational levels (elementary, middle, and high schools), and if there is room, various community services might have office space in the building as well. But each of these schools and offices is to be separate and autonomous -- with the *building* serving as the campus.

The "campus school" idea had several dimensions. According to the plan, each of the new schools would have a partner school which would provide as much advice and support as was sought, from director to director, staff to staff, and students to students -- although CCE descriptions are always quick to point out that there will be no status and power discrepancies or any other patronizing implications in this arrangement.

The hopes and aspirations underlying the venture are revealed in the project's 10-page description. The authors are far from modest in their expectations as to what the Coalition Campus Schools Project will accomplish:

"create a new kind of educational complex consisting of a network of autonomous schools as well as other service institutions." (p. 1)

"offer opportunities for both training and retraining of teachers for new educational roles." (p. 1)

"provide a powerful platform for policy change that can systematically impact high school education in New York City and other urban centers." (p. 2)

"redesign the use of the typical large high school building..." (p. 2)

"take the successful experiences of the small 'alternative' Coalition schools ... as a strategy for transforming a few large high school buildings." (p. 2)

"explore a way of producing revolutionary change as rapidly as possible, by side-stepping resistance..." (p. 4)

mount "a pioneering effort to create new schools and support existing schools by joining them together." (p. 5)

So the Coalition Campus School Project is intended as a research effort, a school transformation effort, a demonstration of new use of existing school plant facilities, a means of spreading the lessons learned by the alternative schools, a model for teacher education and staff development, and a model for creating and sustaining new radically restructured schools.

Work on the project began in the Spring of 1992, when the CCE school directors began considering the myriad questions involved: How would directors and teaching staff be selected? How would students be recruited? Where would the new schools be housed? How could program planning proceed and a school identity begin to take shape before the staff was in place -- but in such fashion as to permit full staff participation and ownership when this group became final? How could the necessary supplies and materials be ordered and obtained in time? And as the months went by, another set of questions began to loom larger: how to prepare for the opening of the *second* set of Coalition Campus Schools in 1994, while planning for the first set, to open in 1993?

The summer of 1992 went to planning the planning -- i.e., to determining the procedures to be followed in identifying school sites and in selecting directors for the new schools. The Fall was spent on interviewing candidates to run the new schools. Unlike the New Visions selection process which sought to identify exciting ideas for new schools, the CCE process was, by agreement, to seek school directors. They posted and advertised the openings, asking those interested to supply not only a resume but also a

statement of their views on education. Since these schools were already committed to membership in the Coalition of Essential Schools, and to affiliation with the City's Alternative Schools Office, it was necessary to find people representing orientations compatible with the principles and functions of these two organizations. Resumes and statements were carefully reviewed prior to interviewing promising candidates. The interviews were conducted in early winter and the directors named in January. All have been previously associated with an alternative school and/or a Coalition school. The director-designates have spent the time since their appointment trying to elaborate program plans and select staff.

This, then, is the context from which The Legacy School for Integrated Studies has emerged. The events described provided the backdrop for the development of the new schools opening in New York in September of 1993. We shift now from a focus on citywide developments, and the emergence of the entire set of schools, to examining the start of just one of them. Since it is a story that one of us has lived quite directly, and observed from a much more immediate perspective, we want to tell it as a personal story. It is the story of Haven Henderson and it unfolds here in the conversational format in which we first began talking about this article.

The Legacy School for Integrated Studies

RAYWID: What is the Legacy School for Integrated Studies to be?

HENDERSON: It will be a secondary school committed to providing an intellectually responsible education particularly sensitive to the issues faced by people of color and the poor. There are a lot of such issues, so the concern obligates us to do a lot of things -- to giving students a thorough grounding in

science and technology, for example, as well as to helping them gain a strong sense of being part of the world in which we live -- with entitlements within it as well as responsibilities to it.

RAYWID: Is there any special significance to calling it "The *Legacy* School?"

HENDERSON: Indeed there is. What the African-American intelligentsia has contributed to our culture and society provide the context for a lot of what youngsters will study. This is certainly not *all* they will study, because we want them exposed to other perspectives and matters too. But we want our students to know the intellectual contributions of their people. They need to know that we *have* intellectuals, first of all -- and that they come in all shapes and sizes, ranging from conservative to radical. We will be exposing contrasts among them, as well as between African-American and other perspectives. The idea is to examine the history and problems our people have contended with, even though we don't want to confine students' learnings exclusively to this perspective. The preoccupation many minority teen-agers share regarding their own racial backgrounds will provide one of the themes or unifying threads of our curriculum.

RAYWID: I want to ask a lot more about Legacy, of course, but first I'd like to understand what moved you to want to do it. Have you always wanted to be an educator?

HENDERSON: I now know that answer to be yes, but it took a while for it to emerge. I spent my early adulthood as a professional activist all over the country -- North Carolina, Virginia, California. I was very politically active in organizing workers and doing voter registration and organizing tenants and

things like that. But eventually I realized that wherever I went to organize people and work with them, I always found myself setting up educational programs -- be they evening literacy programs for adults, or after school programs for kids, or daycare centers for the little ones. Still, even after recognizing that that was what I was doing, I was somewhat wary about committing myself strictly to the field of education.

RAYWID: Why the hesitation?

HENDERSON: Well, even today I continue to have serious reservations about the ability of public schools to provide students of color, and poor students in general, the kind of education that would allow them to understand who they are in this society and how society supports racism and white supremacy. Private schools, where I did my first teaching, are another story. But I'm still not always convinced that the public school system -- arguably an inherently racist institution -- can teach students powerful ideas about their own social condition. For a long time I thought it would be far better for students of color to opt out of the public schools and for Black people in particular to educate their own children.

RAYWID: Had you always felt this way?

HENDERSON: Yes. I had had some difficult moments as a child -- including being taunted out of taking the violin lessons I loved by cousins who teased me about being a white girl. "You sound white," they teased. "You talk white. You have an education like a white girl. You're white." That bothered me so much that I dropped the violin lessons. I don't think my Mother ever sensed the dilemma I was facing as a result of the particular, largely white school I

was in: on the one hand, I had some educational opportunities that my relatives who lived across town didn't. But on the other hand, because they didn't share these advantages, I didn't want them either.

RAYWID: I can understand the ambivalence that could create. But where was the racism on the school's part?

HENDERSON: I first became fully conscious of it one day when I was in seventh grade. There was a humanities teacher who always announced the score when she gave back a student's test paper. When she handed white students their papers it was usually with a smile and a nod of approval. But when she returned Black students' papers, it was usually with a comment that was somewhere between neutral and condescending. I suddenly realized it, and realized that my teacher was irritated at my success rather than pleased by it, when she handed me a paper and in an annoyed tone said "Haven, your score is higher than the other kids!" That's when I realized that there was an expectation that the highest scores were supposed to go to the white kids.

RAYWID: That's certainly a tough lesson for a child. How did it affect you?

HENDERSON: It made me very competitive. I was determined to get higher grades than the white students, and I did that through junior high school. When I got to high school, though, there were no white students to compete with. And I realized that school had little relevance for me anyway. It was not until I was in college and became involved with the liberation school movement that education struck me as very compelling in terms of what it could do for people.

RAYWID: I want to ask you what it can do -- and just what you want Legacy to do for your students. But before doing so, let me find out about your background as an educator. What kind of experience have you had?

HENDERSON: Even though I initially turned to other things afterward, I had majored in education as an undergraduate. But I was teaching in my activist days even before entering college. Altogether, I've been in education for 20 years. And I've taught in everything from elementary schools to adult programs, and at all levels in between. I've also taught ESL [English as a second language] students, as well as American-born youngsters.

RAYWID: That's quite an impressive span. Would you elaborate a bit on the part of your background that qualified you particularly for the directorship of one of the new Coalition Campus Schools?

HENDERSON: For the past six years I've been at Central Park East Secondary School. At CPESS, I was first called Director of Special Projects and more recently, Director of the Senior Institute consisting of the eleventh and twelfth grades. When I went to CPESS it had only been under way for two years and there were only a seventh and an eighth grade. It was my job to help design the final years of the high school. We wanted to replace the custom of graduating students according to the number of credits they'd racked up, with one that would require them to show they'd learned something in the process. So I helped work out the portfolio system for assessing readiness to graduate, and I helped design the program that would enable youngsters to complete the portfolios.

RAYWID: That sounds like a marvelous job -- and wonderful preparation for the one you're moving to.

HENDERSON: Yes, it was wonderful. For my first year at CPESS, I was just trying to get to know the kids and the staff, and doing a lot of reading and discussing with Debbie Meier, the director of CPESS. We visited several schools, including Walden III, an alternative school in Racine, Wisconsin, where they were using a portfolio system of assessment. We brought back their system, together with arrangements we found operating in other schools, and combined and re-worked them to meet our circumstances.

RAYWID: OK. That's interesting to know, not only about you, but also about CPESS history. But let's get back to Legacy and your views on what it can and should do for your students.

HENDERSON: We want to encourage students to see themselves as full human beings living in a particular socio-economic, political system that has evolved to what it is today. We want them to understand that it is a system that can be changed through social activism. We want to teach our kids to really use their minds effectively -- so they don't have to see themselves as lesser, as do so many poor and minority youngsters in our society. We want them to realize that without the development of their intellects they cannot begin to embrace and own their power.

RAYWID: That's a tall order. Maybe we ought to begin to look at how you plan to bring it off.

HENDERSON: Well, you've probably already picked up the Coalition of

Essential Schools flavor in what I'm saying. The Coalition is convinced that teaching youngsters how to use their minds, and instilling effective 'habits of mind,' is the essence of educating them. I am completely sold on this. If it is to matter, education must engage students with content in such a way that they exercise their intellects. Of course, it also ought to be *important* content, as well as content that catches their interest and provokes them to think. But that's our general strategy.

RAYWID: Then curriculum is important. It's not just a matter of how you present and have students deal with content?

HENDERSON: Absolutely it's important. There's no point in developing a set of capabilities without conveying some sense of what they ought to be applied to, and for what purposes.

I see the Legacy curriculum as consisting of three strands: One is science and technology. The second is helping students see themselves as in and of the world -- as belonging in the world, and the world belonging to them. The third strand is developing a strong academic and social self-concept, through learning about adolescence in other cultures and through coming to understand themselves both as individuals and as persons of color.

RAYWID: Have you worked it out yet how to accomplish this?

HENDERSON: Well, we're beginning to. I've figured out some directions and parameters this Spring, but I purposely wanted to wait until the full staff could sit down together to work it out in any detail. Presenting them with a completed plan wouldn't have been a very good way of giving them a stake in the new curriculum. So we're about to begin working on it.

RAYWID: I understand that your curricular efforts have to be channeled by special start-up demands. Can you explain those?

HENDERSON: In a really ideal world, a staff would always be able to start a new junior-senior high school one grade at a time, beginning with the seventh grade and adding a new one each year as the kids progress. But we don't have that luxury. For complicated political reasons, we had to start both the junior high and the high school at the same time. So we began in September with a seventh grade and a ninth grade.

We want to be able to offer them a cross-disciplinary curriculum -- being a school "of Integrated Studies." This year we'll begin with a core curriculum of one year's duration. It enrolls both the seventh and the ninth graders. Next year we'll do two such curricula, one for what will then be seventh and eighth graders and one for the ninth and tenth graders. Eventually what I hope to see, however, is one three-year core curriculum for grades seven to nine, with cross grade-level enrollments; then two years of electives for tenth and eleventh graders; and a final twelfth grade year with three purposes for students: preparing for college or work, designing and completing the final graduation project, and giving back to the school community by developing projects supporting younger students.

RAYWID: I'd like to focus for a minute on the curricular themes you mentioned earlier. Given your emphasis on dealing with the "Legacy" of children of color, I was surprised to see science and technology as a theme. Do these areas figure prominently in that legacy?

HENDERSON: I had initially thought in terms of a theme linked more directly

to the social world -- like examining the meaning of democracy in our national heritage. But I realized one day that our entering seventh graders would graduate in 1999: right on the edge of the 21st century. And the more I thought about it, the more it seemed to me that that demanded a more forward-looking, future-oriented curriculum.

Actually, what I have in mind would focus heavily on the interconnections linking environment, technology, and society. The curriculum would not just consist primarily of a preoccupation with science and technology, but rather of an examination of just how these are linked to history, literature, economics, politics, religion, and so forth.

RAYWID: How about the second curricular theme you spoke of -- teaching kids to become citizens of the world. Would you elaborate a bit on that?

HENDERSON: Poor and disenfranchised youth have great difficulty in seeing themselves a part of the decisions that shape the world. Their position in the world has given many of them perceptions of not belonging, feelings of hopelessness, and cynicism. If they are ever to become contributing citizens, genuine participants in our society, they've got to come to see themselves as an integral part of the world -- and as potentially effective actors within it.

This is going to call for careful, systematic examination of a number of the socio-political issues of our time, such as why is it that some groups suffer low prestige in America? How did this come to be? What kinds of social and political change has attempted to alter it and what kinds appear most promising for doing so?

RAYWID: How about the third curricular strand you mentioned: developing a strong positive self-concept?

HENDERSON: This is something that a lot of adolescents have trouble with. But it is a particular problem for youngsters of color. For so many of us, so many factors combine to tell us that we're marginal in society and not worth much. It can be and often is a real struggle to convince kids who've learned the lessons well that they were the *wrong* lessons: that they have intellects and that these can be honed to the point of real power and effectiveness.

What it's going to take to accomplish this kind of re-education is some knowledge and understanding of adolescence -- here and in other cultures, some individual self-study, and a lot of work in developing thinking skills and good habits of mind and work.

RAYWID: What part of your past experience have you drawn on most extensively so far as the director of Legacy?

HENDERSON: Well, having opened new schools before has been a big help. But I suspect that my CPESS experiences are those I'll be drawing on most often in the long run. My dreams and ideas for Legacy have really grown quite immediately from reflecting on my experience at CPESS. Legacy is based to a large extent on my critique of my own work at CPESS.

RAYWID: Is the Legacy plan modelled on CPESS?

HENDERSON: There will be some similarities, partly because a lot of what is being done at CPESS is really in the forefront of what's being recommended nationally to improve all schools -- for instance, down-sizing and personalizing the large high school, finding better ways to assess student learning, involving staff differently. So a lot of the features will look familiar.

We'll also have advisories, service learning, internships, a common unified curriculum for all students. And we'll be working closely with a college. But our program will undoubtedly differ from CPESS's because there will be different personalities involved, and as the Coalition emphasizes, a school must represent its own staff's perspectives and decisions.

RAYWID: How about the way you're putting Legacy together? For instance, will you have a Senior Institute?

HENDERSON: I must emphasize first that my answers about Legacy are all very tentative, for two reasons. First, as this conversation is taking place [in May], the Legacy staff hasn't even sat down together to review these ideas. In fact, we don't even have a full staff yet. The second reason why tentativeness is necessary is that I hope we'll learn a lot from our first year or two. So what seems like a good idea now may turn out to have bugs that need correcting. That's why my only really firm commitment at this point is to tentativeness and to making whatever changes appear necessary.

With that kind of qualification, I can tell you what looks now like a promising structure. CPESS has a three-part, 2-2-2 configuration, comprised of Division 1, which consists of seventh and eighth graders who share a curriculum, classes, and advisories; Division 2, consisting of ninth and tenth graders who similarly share these things; and the Senior Institute consisting of kids who are finishing high school.

As I've already suggested, I'm thinking instead of a 3-2-1 configuration for Legacy, with seventh to ninth graders sharing a common core curriculum; tenth and eleventh graders pursuing electives, including advanced academic work, internships, and college classes; and a final year of preparation for the graduation project.

RAYWID: What kinds of traits did you look for in prospective Legacy teachers?

HENDERSON: I really had three major criteria in mind. I was looking for people who were knowledgeable about the principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools, and who were in sympathy with them. My second criterion was experience. Down the pike, I expect that requirement to change. But to begin I thought we needed teachers with a minimum of five years of experience. And then I wanted people who seemed to have internalized a number of attitudes and assumptions. I watched for a commitment to heterogeneous grouping in preference to tracking. And I looked for a commitment to an anti-racist environment. And I kept an eye out for an inclination to assume that decisions would be reached together and that things would be done collaboratively. Excitement, and an eagerness to have at it was a bonus.

RAYWID: How did you find such people?

HENDERSON: According to our agreement with the Chancellor, we began with standard hiring procedures and all the openings in the new schools were posted and advertised. We collected a lot of resumes in response, and I went through them carefully. I called and talked with the people who had submitted promising statements and had them come in to CPESS for at least a half-day visit. I asked a lot of questions about their teaching styles and their views about pedagogy. Then I'd have them sit in on some CPESS classes and we'd talk about their questions and reactions. The next step was to go and watch them teach, which was usually done together with another prospective

Legacy teacher.

At this point, the next step was for a promising candidate to come before the Personnel Committee I set up, consisting of two teachers who served on the Legacy planning team, three CPESS teachers, a union representative, and myself. But before the Committee interviewed a candidate, they carefully reviewed the resume and the statement of educational philosophy we had requested of each. They also reviewed the observation notes we'd made while watching the candidate teach. Then the Personnel Committee tailored questions for each candidate, based on what they had read and on a list of 14 or 15 areas that we had identified as important. Most questions put to candidates were of a scenario type, asking the person to decide what to do under the circumstances described.

All in all, to get 8 -10 teachers, I probably called and talked to 30, and we interviewed about 20.

RAYWID: It certainly sounds like a thorough process. But I am interested in your mention of a union representative on the Personnel Committee. What was the reason for that?

HENDERSON: One of the things the Coalition Campus Schools Project is committed to looking at is the way current practices and arrangements affect innovative new schools. Ultimately we're interested in institutionalizing departures. So we asked that a union rep sit in on all of the hiring committees for Coalition Campus Schools. It's important for the UFT [United Federation of Teachers] to be able to assure its members that staff personnel committees are a desirable alternative to mindless centralized hiring -- that they empower teachers and make an important contribution to good schools. The union first needs to see such practices at work if they are ever to accept

and help institutionalize them.

RAYWID: That certainly makes sense. But so much now for the way you've gone about staffing. Since all of these schools are schools of choice, how did you handle the challenge of recruiting *students*? It must have been difficult without a school to be able to point to and let them come visit.

HENDERSON: Yes, recruitment took a lot of my time this Spring. Some of the questions of how to go about it were settled when it was decided that the building which eventually would house the Campus Schools was Julia Richman High School. Once that was decided, we had an obligation to the Julia Richman population, since the shutting down process of Richman was to begin this year by admitting no ninth grade freshman class -- and next year taking on no ninth or tenth graders, etc. This meant that the students who would otherwise enter Richman as ninth graders had to be accommodated elsewhere. These youngsters come primarily from Districts 4 and 5, Central Harlem and East or Spanish Harlem. So we extended special arrangements to them. We guaranteed that any student from District 4 or 5 who made Legacy his or her first choice would automatically be admitted. Legacy will have no admissions requirements anyway -- no test scores or grade averages -- but this was a special promise to District 4 and 5 youngsters. If we're number one for them, they're in.

But we knew that even so, we might not get all the 150 students we wanted, so we had to go out and recruit. We focused our efforts on Districts 4 and 5, although we also contacted others. Altogether we contacted the superintendents of six districts and we met with the supervisors of guidance in each one. We also visited schools and held multiple meetings with counselors, and we spent time in classrooms and met with parents at parents

meetings and in fact sponsored several parent meetings of our own.

RAYWID: OK, now that you've got your teachers and your students, and an idea of what your program should look like, what are the next steps?

HENDERSON: Well, we've got a lot of planning to do, and a lot of getting used to each other as a staff. That will begin very soon now, and it will continue over the summer. It'll begin right after school ends with a two-day session for the directors of all six Coalition Campus Schools. Then the full staffs of all six schools will meet together as a large group. Both these sessions will deal with issues and challenges and principles common to the whole set of schools. After that, each will be doing its own planning individually. Legacy staff will have some evening meetings in June, then work together the first two weeks of July, and come back together for another session over the last two weeks of August. By the end of that time, I hope we'll have the curriculum pretty well sketched out for the year and that we'll have put together the materials we need to make it go.

RAYWID: When will you be able to get in and set things up at Julia Richman?

HENDERSON: Oh that won't happen for several years, when Julia Richman High School has officially been shut down. Meanwhile, we'll be in temporary quarters downtown.

RAYWID: Do you think you'll really be maintaining close connections with your CCE partner school?

HENDERSON: Yes, even though we'll be on 13th Street and CPESS, our partner

school, is on 103rd, there'll be fairly frequent meetings and, I suspect, a lot of calls as well. Given my six-year association with CPSS and Debbie Meier, I'm not worried about losing touch. And I'll also have another source of help. Legacy is fortunate enough to be one of the 16 "New Vision" schools, and I suspect that our association with that group, and with the New York City Fund for Public Education, will also provide a lot of help and support.

RAYWID: I'm glad you mentioned the "New Vision" schools, because we've not talked about their sponsorship yet. Legacy will really have three sponsors, won't it: the Board of Education, the Coalition of Essential Schools, and the New Visions Schools project. The role of the first two is fairly clear in what we've said, but what's been the role of the New Visions project and the New York City Fund which established it?

HENDERSON: The New Visions project has been the attempt of New York's foundations to support the idea of small, new, creative schools. They announced a competition for proposals conceptualizing new schools, and they selected 16, each of which received a \$25,000 planning grant. The New Visions proposals selected were quite varied, but all featured the creation of personalized school environments. The New York City Fund for Public Education will be sponsoring periodic meetings for the 16 New Visions grant recipients, and it has promised assistance in linking interested New Visions schools to potential partners in the business world.

RAYWID: That should help considerably. But tell me, how do you feel at this point? Are you nervous about opening?

HENDERSON: I'm very excited about it. It's not often that a school with the

hopes of Legacy has started off with so many advantages -- including the blessings of The Establishment. "Nervous" is not the word -- partly because it's not the first time I've started a school, but even moreso because I'm certain the partnership arrangement with a CCE school is going to save each one of the new schools from the more costly mistakes. We're all going to be meeting together fairly often too. So between your partner school, the full CCE membership, and the other New Visions schools, I'm expecting a lot of advice and answers and support. And I'm looking forward to a year from now when those of us in the new schools will be welcoming and assisting the 1994 crop!

Conclusion -- and Beginning

It seems safe to assume that there will be unanticipated problems in launching The Legacy School for Integrated Studies, and in the five other Coalition Campus Schools and New York's 31 additional new, small high schools. But it would be hard to find a more careful plan of assistance and support in meeting and coping with such challenges. And it would be hard to find anywhere a more extensive, better designed and coordinated effort to do what is widely agreed to be imperative: nothing less that the transformation of the education system of the cities.

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