Engaging Educational Leadership and the Coalition of Essential Schools in Appalachian Ohio

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Despite its inherent transformational capacity, day-to-day educational practices have not changed since the late 19th Century, resulting in processes that do not uphold democratic values. (Sizer ,1984; Wood, 2005). This study seeks to answer the following research question: how did an educational leader use the Coalition of Essential School's (CES) model to develop institutional norms to address social inequity? The Coalition's termination in 2017 prompts concern; if a nonprofit organization committed to "student-centered, equity-driven learning" cannot persist, education and democracy are in jeopardy (What We Do, 2017). The Common Principles (2017) and the works of Sizer (1984) and Wood (2005) were used to triangulate the in-depth qualitative interview of Dr. Wood. Three themes emerged from such data: understanding the Common Principles, living the Common Principles, and equity with the Common Principles. These findings ultimately reveal a growing disparity between ideals, implementation, and outcomes. Consequently, active democratic citizen preparation rests with all of us, all facets of education and other societal institutions.

Despite its inherent transformational capacity, day-to-day educational practices have not changed since the late 19th Century (Sizer, 1984; Wood, 2005). The traditional structure–grouping students by age to passively consume content in about 45-minute intervals of an eight instructional period day–still serves as the foundation of today's high school. Coupled with funding depending on property taxes, such processes do not uphold democratic values; not everyone has an equitable opportunity to learn. Dr. Wood, former principal and superintendent of Federal Hocking Local Schools, sought to address these issues not simply by reforming the high school but transforming its structure and daily procedures (Wood, 2005).

This study aims to understand how said district-level administrator incorporated the Coalition of Essential Schools' conceptual framework into the everyday practices of a secondary school in rural Appalachia. The Coalition argues that their conceptual framework has the potential to ". . . positively influence the conditions in which all schools operate, serving as examples of and advocates for education policy that supports meaningful teaching and learning that allows all students to use their minds well in school and throughout their lives" (*Vision*, 2017).

Statement of the Problem

Student merit is often based on the ability to take tests, regurgitating rather than applying information. In addition to disregarding various types of learners and their subsequent modalities of learning, this creates a disconnect once a student graduates from high school, feeling ill-prepared for civic engagement and daily life like household responsibilities and financial literacy. Notwithstanding state standards, discrepancies in educational opportunities emerge based on context and positionality as those with most economic revenue and/or in suburban areas have greater likelihood of "achievement" based on latter parameters; zip codes are often used to predict ACT scores. How, then, can education be a public good if such discrepancies arise? How is this democratic? Every United States citizen is said to have an equal opportunity to education, yet, in practice, it quickly showcases that equal doesn't necessarily mean equitable. Due to the latter social processes and tensions, this study aims to answer the following research question: how did an educational leader use the CES model to develop institutional norms to address social inequity?

Background of the Study

In order to understand the Coalition, it is important to understand the context of its founder. Theodore (Ted) Sizer's 52-year relationship with education began as a training officer in the U.S. Army, where he was inspired to pursue and obtain a master's degree in teaching in 1957 and eventually a doctorate degree in both American history and education four years later. He then served Harvard, the alma mater of his graduate-professional career, as an instructor and eventual dean of its Graduate School of Education in 1964. After acting as Philips Academy's headmaster from 1972-1981, Sizer taught at Brown University for 16 years, founding or co-founded several projects like the Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School, the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, and the Forum for Education and Democracy (Ilg, 2019; Founder: Ted Sizer, 2017). With publications sprinkled throughout his career, Sizer strongly advocated for "radical school restructuring," supporting personalized instruction and flexibility within schools, due to deficits emerging from traditional education (2017). In his work, Sizer (1984) not only critiques such a landscape but serves as the basis of an organization that would become the symbol of his career.

Emerging from such analysis, Sizer and his respective colleagues founded the Coalition of Essential Schools at Brown University in 1984 (Coalition of Essential Schools Timeline, 2016).

The Common Principles also arose from *Horace's Compromise* (1984), outlining the basis of "Learning to use one's mind well" through "Resources dedicated to teaching and learning"; the last principle was added 13 years later (Table 1). CES separated from Brown University, became an independent nonprofit, and moved to California in 1998. The Coalition's network grew from a dozen to over 600 partnering districts, or "Essential schools," during the new millennium and approximately 1,000 essential schools at its height (Ilg, 2019; About CES, 2017; Brezinski, 2019). Whether in rural, urban, or suburban areas, these Pre-K-12 institutions utilized ". . . small, personalized learning communities in which teachers and students know each other well in a climate of trust, decency and high expectations for all" and strove to be ". . . places of powerful learning where all students have the chance to reach their fullest potential" (2017). The Coalition of Essential Schools became a trailblazer in ". . . creating and sustaining personalized, equitable, and intellectually challenging schools," advocating for school reform and just learning for 33 years (2017).

This study, as a result, is particularly significant because the Coalition of Essential Schools ceases to exist. While its partnering schools may still abide by and implement its framework, a lack of funding ultimately terminated this organization in 2017. Wood mentioned that the Coalition wouldn't trademark, market, or sell anything per Sizer's vision. Consequently, grants, membership fees, and its annual conference, known as the Fall Forum, were the sole sources of revenue. The standards movement, Wood explained, made it "much harder for schools to get money to go to such conferences—they can only go if they could prove it was going to raise their test scores, which [the Coalition was] never about. Attendance [at] conferences started to drop off." Further, the Gates Foundation Small Schools Network Grant of 18.7 million was not fulfilled by the benefactors, which lead to additional issues since individuals were hired and under contract for such work on small schools (Coalition of Essential Schools Timeline, 2016). Wood noted that CES website is to be deactivated 2022. At that point, the only lasting, tangible trace of the organization resides at Brown University. If a nonprofit organization committed to "student-centered, equity-driven learning" cannot persist, education and democracy are in jeopardy (What We Do, 2017).

Table 4

The Common Principles

Principle	Description
Learning to use one's mind well	*The school should focus on helping young people learn to use their minds well. Schools should not be "comprehensive" if such a claim is made at the expense of the school's central intellectual purpose.*
Less is more: depth over coverage	*The school's goals should be simple: that each student master a limited number of essential skills and areas of knowledge. While these skills and areas will, to varying degrees, reflect the traditional academic disciplines, the program's design should be shaped by the intellectual and imaginative powers and competencies that the students need, rather than by "subjects" as conventionally defined. The aphorism "less is more" should dominate: curricular decisions should be guided by the aim of thorough student mastery and achievement rather than by an effort to merely cover content.*

Goals apply to all students	The school's goals should apply to all students, while the means to these goals will vary as those students themselves vary. School practice should be tailor-made to meet the needs of every group or class of students.
Personalization	Teaching and learning should be personalized to the maximum feasible extent. Efforts should be directed toward a goal that no teacher have direct responsibility for more than 80 students in the high school and middle school and no more than 20 in the elementary school. To capitalize on this personalization, decisions about the details of the course of study, the use of 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.
Student-as-worker, teacher-as-coach	The governing practical metaphor of the school should be "student-as-worker", rather than the more familiar metaphor of "teacher as deliverer of instructional services." Accordingly, a prominent pedagogy will be coaching students to learn how to learn and thus to teach themselves.
Demonstration of mastery	Teaching and learning should be documented and assessed with tools based on student performance of real tasks. Students not yet at appropriate levels of competence should be provided intensive support and resources to assist the quickly to meet standards. Multiple forms of evidence, ranging from ongoing observation of the learner to completion of specific projects, should be used to better understand the learner's strengths and needs, and to plan for further assistance. Students should have opportunities to exhibit their expertise before family and community. The diploma should be awarded upon a successful final demonstration of mastery for graduation: an "Exhibition." As the diploma is awarded when earned, the school's program proceeds with no strict age grading and with no system of "credits earned" by "time spent" in class.
A tone of decency and trust	The tone of the school should explicitly and self-consciously stress values of unanxious expectation, of trust, and of decency (fairness, generosity, and tolerance). Incentives appropriate to the school's particular students and teachers should be emphasized. Families should be key collaborators and vital members of the school community.
Commitment to the entire school	The principal and teachers should perceive themselves as generalists first (teachers and scholars in general education) and specialists second (experts in but one particular discipline). Staff should expect multiple obligations (teacher-counselor-manager) and demonstrate a sense of commitment to the entire school.

Resources dedicated to teaching and learning	*Ultimate administrative and budget targets should include student loads that promote personalization, substantial time for collective planning by teachers, competitive salaries for staff, and an ultimate per-pupil cost not to exceed that at traditional schools by more than 10 percent. To accomplish this, administrative plans may have to show the phased reduction or elimination of some services now provided to students in many schools.*
Democracy and equity	*The school should demonstrate non-discriminatory and inclusive policies, practices, and pedagogies. It should model democratic practices that involve all who are directly affected by the school. The school should honor diversity and build on the strength of its communities, deliberately and explicitly challenging all forms of inequity.*

(Common Principles, 2017)

Relevant Literature

There are numerous publications that center around reform and moral obligations in the field of education. Yet, *Horace's Compromise*, *Time to Learn*, and *Education for Everyone* are three significant works and theoretical underpinnings of this research (Sizer, 1984; Wood, 2005; Goodlad et al., 2004).

Horace's Compromise

Despite many concerns that plague education, one pivotal question heavily weighs upon teachers: how many human beings do I know at once well enough in order to teach them well?" (James, 2013). Some might argue such a feat is impossible, but Sizer emphasizes it is imperative for rigorous education, "You have to have the conditions of learning for the kids, and the conditions for teaching of the teachers such that each child's individual development is understood." (2013). *Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School* emerged from "A Study of High Schools," an ethnographic research project investigating education at various sample public schools in the United States. With particular focus on secondary schools, Sizer ultimately illuminated how the American high schools are structured in a way prevent educators from doing their job effectively, making compromises that often have damaging results (Sizer, 1984; Fiske, 1983; Brezinski, 2019). A heavy student-to-teacher ratio would cause Horace Smith, a fictional English teacher that is composite of such ethnographic accounts, to stratify tasks based on the inescapable fact that time was not on his side, working way over 40 hours a week but forced to choose between what is expected and what is feasible. Consequently, a preliminary draft assignment for a total 120 students in a semester would easily take Horace 10 minutes per student to read and deliver feedback, totaling 20 hours on one sole task. Instead of spending half of the traditional work week on that single assignment, Horace allocated time at the extremes—those who are gifted and those students who need more extensive scaffolding—while remaining individuals receive less attention (Sizer, 1984; Brezinski, 2019).

Students within this structure then perceived education as passive, sitting quietly while "…knowledge just happens to them" and later recited the content (Sizer, 1984, p. 3). Combined with a focus on subject areas, this triad signified the subtle intricacies of learning and their

increasing complexities affecting teaching meanwhile hierarchical bureaucracy urges standardization of an otherwise fluid, context-specific process. Seeking order in an often disorderly educational process influences students and teachers' agency and motivation, valuing predictability over adaptability. Thus, Sizer concluded his analysis with five necessary resolutions to improve high schools:

1. Give room to teachers and student to work and learn in their own, appropriate ways.
2. Insist that student clearly exhibit mastery of their school work.
3. Get the incentives right, for students and for teachers.
4. Focus the students' work on the use of their minds
5. Keep the structure simple and thus flexible. (p. 215)

He acknowledged that such feats are easy to put on paper compared to the deeply entrenched expectations of what school should be, emulating 19th century practices of industrialization (Brezinski, 2019). However, restoring responsibility of adolescents' education to teachers and students themselves would reinstate high school's purpose: preparing youth to use their mind (Sizer, 1984).

Time to Learn

Federal Hocking High School augmented the latter argument in Wood's (2005) *Time to Learn,* a case-study of said Appalachian school that made significant structural changes to better fulfill their public duty in cultivating engaged citizens. This secondary school then modeled its daily procedures around a "*community* of learners," rather than 'the *institution* of high school" (p. 10). Focusing on the particular, or adolescents, allowed Federal Hocking to realize their jumbled schooling experience, spending 5,000 hours in a landscape that compartmentalizes content in eight period days with little to no continuity between said courses, let alone connections to adolescents' context. It is possible for an individual to learn a little about each subject, skimming the academic surface, but equally as likely that informational morsels remain as such, never fully digested because they're regurgitated for standardized tests. Graduation is not only influence by the latter, but students' ability to complete 20 credits, or five courses per year. Wood posited such a requirement, "Rather than discuss what should be learned in algebra to equal a high school credit for graduation, the issue becomes just ensuring enough time spent in the math classroom to fulfill the 120-hour criterion" (p. 16). Along with educators teaching more than one content area and instructing a maximum of 150 students per day, time becomes a valuable, yet fleeting commodity (Wood, 2005; Wood, 2010)

Addressing these stressors, along with disengagement and anonymity among students, FHHS instituted a block schedule in the late 1990s, reducing the number of courses per day as well as making room for community building. Four block periods led to less transitioning between subject areas but providing increased personalization and depth of content. Students and teachers had an increased likelihood of developing rapport, notwithstanding time to establish relationships during Advisory and an extended lunch time. In addition, advisory served as a foundation for mentorship by giving each student a direct adult contact—whether a librarian, administrator, counselor, teacher, or even janitor—while unified, hour-long lunch gave students flexibility to communicate to friends and teachers and use resources that they might not have access to at home. This astute focus on time, consequently, aided FHHS in fostering a close-knit, less hectic learning environment adolescents had a sense of belonging and their guiding adults are "…[committed] to knowing their students well" (Wood, 2005, p.59).

Wood infused this case study—which has additional context-specific examples of transforming FHHS—with logistics of understanding such reform and functional methods to overcome hinderances to change, in addition to strategies for sustaining obligations of student-centered learning. Otherwise, high schools would continue to be "…sorting machines, determining who goes to which college and who goes to work," with higher and higher standards that perpetuate discrepancies among achievement (p. xxi). Without rethinking organization, high schools would continue to fail to fulfill its democratic mission of fostering citizens.

Education for Everyone

Goodlad et al. (2004) posited the socio-political connotations of the latter in *Education for Everyone*: *Agenda for Education in a Democracy*. Acknowledging the various ways to educate toward democratic behaviors and cognizance, this work centered on inherent ideas and lessons learned over acting as a 'how-to' guide. Universal schooling originally functioned as an apprenticeship of democracy, preparing and securing individuals for such a societal organization which then stabilized democracy itself. This symbiotic relationship illuminated public schools' significance in establishing *the public*, let alone serving it (Goodlad et al., 2004; Cremin, 1990). Even though every culture has ongoing education for everyone, such schooling, in practice, is restricted and stratified because it is "an enterprise of the formal political structure" (Goodlad et al, 2004). Since public schools indeed inform and reflect the public, they cannot disregard existing social institutions influence. These continue to explain:

> [Schools] are embedded in a vast and complex social, political, and economic surround. They interact with that surround continuously. Schools affect their cultural context, and their context in turn affects them. It is not possible to have good, healthy, democratic schools in an environment that is hostile to such qualities. (p. 33)

The act of teaching is a civil, moral endeavor as a result, and play a role in the mission of schooling:

1. Enculturating the youth into a social and political democracy
2. Providing access to knowledge for all children and youths
3. Practicing pedagogical nurturing with respect to the art and science of teaching
4. Ensuring responsible stewardship of the schools (pp. 29-32).

Literacy, for instance, is not simply an acquisition of decoding knowledge but rather a critical literacy that ultimately supports tenants of self-governance, like considering multiple perspectives, evaluating an argument and its data's legitimacy, or notating what is omitted. In order to advance democracy, education must safeguard the afflictions that endanger democracy itself, urging for a renewal instead of a surface-level reform (Goodlad et al., 2004; Goodlad, 1994).

Methods and Procedures

Utilizing a single-significant case design, this study explores Dr. Wood's integration of the Coalition of Essential School's (CES) model, specifically the Common Principles, into Federal Hocking Local Schools. Investigating this former principal and superintendent's narrative will offer ". . . insights that stand alone as important" to education and educational leadership (Patton, 2015, p.274). Notwithstanding its low sample-size, single-significant cases impact every profession, field, and discipline (p.276). Wood's unique positioning augments current scholarship

regarding educational systems' pursuits of democratic citizenry, "[equipping] all students with the intellectual, emotional, and social habits and skills" to actively contribute to an equitable society (*Vision*, 2017). Thus, such testimony becomes tangible because it was lived; this case not only uncovers real decisions in their context, but ". . . the investable ambiguities and uncertainties involved in making judgement in an uncertain, complex, and dynamic world." (Patton, 2015, p.275)

Participant

Wood's educational legacy spans over two decades, serving as a former teacher, professor of education, schoolboard member, among many other roles (National Education Policy Center, 2020). His passion for education also led to several books—*Many Children Left Behind* (ed. Meier, 2004), *Schools that Work* (1993), *Time to Learn* (2005)— and academic articles pertaining to democracy and education (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2020). Despite being Wildwood's Secondary School founding director, his unique positioning centers on his 27-year-involvement with Federal Hocking Local Schools and CES; he was principal and superintendent of this rural, Appalachian Ohio district and eventually chairman of the Coalition's executive board from 2012-2017 (Lancer letter: Report to our community, 2019; Wood, Farewell, 2017). This then fosters a distinctive lens not only concerning an overarching organization and its operations, but that of a public school and its application of CES' framework since 1994. Even though Wood became principal of Federal Hocking in 1992, the school district didn't join the Coalition until two years later.

Research Analysis

This study consisted of one audio-recorded, in-depth interview. During the conversation, the primary investigator handwrote notes on the questionnaire, which served as conversational guide, to capture the full verbatim account (Miller, 2000). Questions on the interview instrument were developed from the Common Principles, seeking further clarification of such values as well as their application in Federal Hocking's context.

Using the transcription services of Temi.com, Dr. Wood's testimony resulted in a 46-page document that not only was reviewed by the primary researcher but used for initial and second cycle coding. These timestamped accounts assisted the researchers in line-by-line coding: annotations that seek to describe and/or capture the essence of a line of data (Saldaña, 2009). Such notes either mirrored in vivo coding—participants' language used to illuminate their perspective—, descriptive coding—words or phrases that embody the main topic of piece of data—, or simultaneous coding—overlapping ". . . two or more different codes to a single qualitative datum" (pp. 48, 62, 70). Next, second-cycle coding categorized 396 individual codes with shared meanings or connections into 23 code families. These categories were then printed and cut into 23 pieces as the primary researcher physically organized said groupings. In addition to code weaving, the primary research question guided such organization, causing 14 of the code families to become three overarching themes. This process involved putting "key code words and phrases into narrative form to see how the puzzle pieces fit together" (Saldaña, 2009, p.187). Writing variations of the same sentence highlighted their connectivity by notating a process, larger theme, and/or just cause and effect (2009).

Trustworthiness

The single in-depth interview cultivated thick description, causing the research team to engage in multiple peer-debriefing sessions (Glesne, 2016). The Common Principles (2017) and the works of Sizer (1984) and Wood (2005) were used to triangulate this data. This illuminated various intricacies of perspective and offered a robust compliment to the qualitative interview (Glesne, 2016). Having multiple data sources, consequently, aided the research team in deeply understanding context in order to produce trustworthy interpretations (Patton, 2015).

Results

Wood's testimony illuminated various components of education—the overall institution, state requirements, and daily micro-level proceedings to name a few. However, when triangulated with the Coalition of Essential Schools' and Federal Hocking's respective documents, three themes emerged: understanding the Common Principles, living the Common Principles, and equity with the Common Principles.

Understanding the Common Principles

Dr. Wood's 25-year experience implementing the CES model indeed showcased his familiarity with the Common Principles, further explaining each of the 10 components that uphold the Coalition's vision. Each principle received a name, rather than a number, to further signify their interdependence. Even though most pursuits involve two or more Common Principles, Wood emphasized one pervasive sentiment that underlies all of them: "learning to use one's mind well" (*Common Principles* ,2017). He considers it the foundation of all educational procedures and the sole purpose of a school. This designates "learning to use one's mind well" at the beginning of the Common Principles because it is an overarching perspective of learning and teaching, not memorization. Wood elaborates:

> You're not just chanting things back to teachers. You're not just racing through exercises, but you're spending time in class, not outside of class, *in* class, working on the work. [In] 40 minutes you can basically tell a kid a couple things and they go home and work it out on their own. They're not using your minds well. They're just getting the information and going and doing it. The only way [teachers] know [students'] minds is to take time to get to know them, to listen to them, to watch them work, [and] to see them at work.

Notating time and place also highlight context's significance; having school in the evening could feasibly work in a city yet might be difficult in a rural setting. "Learning to use one's mind well," consequently, applies to implementation. Wood further underscores such with the following question: "How do well intentioned people take these principles in the context within which they find themselves and put them to work?"

Since "the Coalition was not a program by design,*"* the Common Principles serve as a guide and are flexible in implementation compared to practices, which remain unchanged by classroom or school environment. Due to their adaptability, an ongoing cycle of action and reflection is required when utilizing the Common Principles. Teachers and educational leaders are, as Wood states:

> constantly thinking about, again, back to context, 'What's the context? Where are we? How can we use that context to personalize the curriculum at the same time holding kids

all to the same set of standards and goals*?'*

The Common Principles, therefore, intricately correspond and communicate with one another while also promoting educators' critical lens. Wood argues, "Teaching in a Coalition school is a lot harder than teaching in another school [because] it requires you to think deeply about curriculum. What are the things we're really going to dig into?"

Living the Common Principles

The latter routine of praxis signifies that the CES framework isn't simply followed, but rather lived. Sustaining the school's mission and culture becomes the main responsibility of faculty, who are considered permanent residents. Since the student population is transient and advances to eventually graduate, faculty must revisit the CES framework to evaluate if and how the 10 Common Principles are upheld. An administrator must, as Wood notes:

> respond to these principles with [her/his/their] staff, then they'll respond to them with students. This highly-personalized job requires an educational leader to model the desired behavior. Otherwise, the administrator is failing…because if [she/he/they] don't have that [norm] for the staff, they're not going to pass it on to the kids. Period.

Acknowledging the significance of the latter, the Common Principles are "a constant conversation" at Federal Hocking Local Schools. Planning period meetings are utilized for such contemplation and dialogue while Wood served as principal of the secondary school, going through the 10 values to review their meaning and implementation as well as how they might impact Federal Hocking's aspirations. Dr. Wood describes this process further:

> We chose to do is always say, 'Okay, what do we know about the Common Principles? How do they inform our practice?' Schools spend a lot of time thinking about what they do, but not enough time about why they do it.

Faculty then develops "translation pieces for students" from such contemplation. Since "holding onto the mission is the job of the faculty," students perform the Common Principles, "[experiencing] them by what they live.*"* The Operating Principles and Lancer Habits of Mind and Heart are overarching dispositions and characteristics, while scheduling, advisory, and portfolios are practices in which secondary students do the Common Principles.

      Operating Principles and Lancer Habits of Mind and Heart. Aspirations of "[helping] all young people become productive and engaged citizens" propel Federal Hocking's Operating Principles and Lancer Habits of Mind and Heart (2017). The first guiding document isn't simply do's and don'ts, but rather a four-pronged approach to their mission, notating how children learn to then formulate optimum educational landscapes. For instance, in order for students to "receive ongoing feedback, see and share models of expected outcomes, feel competent and not overwhelmed, and are provided with time for monitored practice," classrooms, schools, and the district have varying responsibilities (Federal Hocking Operating Principles, 2017). Classrooms must be "child-centered, flexible learning environments with multiple resources and technologies, and full of displays of student work" (2017). Schools need to "[focus] on the whole-child, her/his social, emotional, physical and intellectual well-being" (2017). Thus, the district would be committed to "supporting the development of an infrastructure where teachers and students have access to current technologies, learning tools, and the world beyond schools" (2017). Instead of a flowchart or numbered diagram, these values are listed as a succession from the individual learner to the school district. This micro- to macro-level organization showcases how the

Operating Principles compound, bearing strong associations to one another rather than notating a linear causation.

Lancer Habits of Mind and Heart augment the latter principles by notating desired student traits (Figure 1). Persistence, respect, responsibility, care, and problem-solving not only signify diligence and compassion, but a commitment to developing the entire child (Lancer letter: Report to our community, 2019). While there are academic connotations, Lancer Habits of Mind and Heart desire to cultivate ways-of-being that persist beyond institutional walls, emphasizing continuous practice; establishing habits denotes subsequent action in order to be fulfilled. These translation pieces, subsequently, reinforce the CES model. The concurrent, yet interdependent design of Federal Hocking's Operating Principles and Lancer Habits of Mind and Heart coincide with CES' goal of "[equipping] all students with the intellectual, emotional, and social habits and skills to become powerful and informed citizens who contribute actively toward a democratic and equitable society" (*Vision*, 2017).
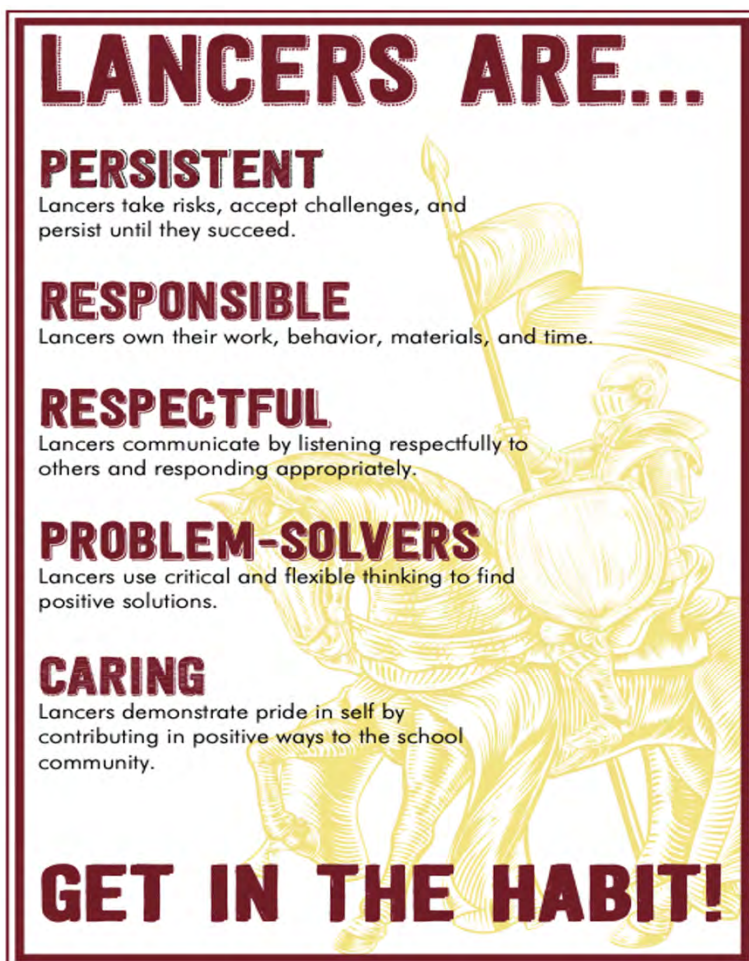
Scheduling, Advisory, and Portfolios. Federal Hocking students' embodiment of the CES framework continues with scheduling, advisory, and student portfolios. Instead of taking classes based on a predetermined list or route, students select courses with their parent or guardian during a yearly, after-school event solely focused on scheduling. Dr. Wood elaborates:

> You can't just send in a schedule. You have to come to a scheduling meeting with your son or daughter, you have to hear the staff talk about what the options are, and then you sit and work on a schedule with your child. And it's not just, 'I want these eight classes.' It's, 'I want this class first period, first semester. I want this one second--I want to build a schedule.' While this process is conducted on first-come, first-serve basis, the school acknowledges people live very, very busy lives so it'll make another time for [parents and/or guardians] to come in.

Attendance, consequently, an issue as 90% of students plan for the upcoming year during this event; Wood further explained, "Kids are on [their parent or guardian]: 'I [don't] want to get closed out of this course. I want this schedule. I want you to be here" This is a stark difference from parent-teacher conferences which serve as a periodic check-in regarding student progress and often vary on attendance rates. Wood continued, "[Scheduling] is about something real important like what your life could be for the next year…Parents we never see any other time come to that because their kid wants them there." Scheduling bridges school and home life, signifying families as "…vital members of the school community" (Common Principles, 2017). Wood concludes, "By bringing parents into that process, they're collaborating with us on what their child's education will look like."

Figure 1

Lancer Habits of Mind and Heart

LANCERS ARE...

PERSISTENT
Lancers take risks, accept challenges, and persist until they succeed.

RESPONSIBLE
Lancers own their work, behavior, materials, and time.

RESPECTFUL
Lancers communicate by listening respectfully to others and responding appropriately.

PROBLEM-SOLVERS
Lancers use critical and flexible thinking to find positive solutions.

CARING
Lancers demonstrate pride in self by contributing in positive ways to the school community.

GET IN THE HABIT!

(Lancer letter: Report to our community, 2019)

Connection and teamwork also are components of advisory, or first block. Faculty are regarded as "generalist first… and specialists second" especially during this introductory period; Wood explains that educators "[share their] general wisdom about the way the world works" (Common Principles, 2017). For instance, automotive care, etiquette, and finances are some of the many topics that could be considered for advisory's content. Developing life skills in advisory emphasizes a commitment to the entire school, as Wood expresses:

> Everybody shares the management of the social emotional wellness of children. Everybody's responsible for that, not just the counselor, not just the principal. Everybody. And it happens in advisory, right, which meets for an hour every day. It's not just home room for 10 minutes. It meets. It's got a curriculum and everybody shares in that curriculum. This structure is there all the time for [faculty] to work together on mutual agendas.

> Along with content, progressing through mutual agendas requires a demonstration mastery; "teaching and learning should be documented and assessed with tools based on student

performance of real tasks" (Common Principles, 2017). Portfolios, consequently, are one pivotal instrument that signifies such attainment, exhibiting students' preparation for the next step. Wood further describes this process:

> [Federal Hocking students] present them at three points in the school career. They present one in eighth grade that demonstrates their proficiency and readiness for high school. They present one at the end of division two, which is ninth and tenth grade, which demonstrates they have the skills to move on into division three-- the senior institute, which is eleventh and twelfth grade. And at the end of that, they present a portfolio to the faculty [to demonstrate] they've met not only all the credit requirements, but they've also have the skills to graduate.

This ongoing evidence in conjunction with project-based learning are ways in which Federal Hocking students attain their high school diploma. Wood continues to articulate this active knowledge acquisition below:

> If you walk into classes here, you will see students actually doing real work...They're writing a piece of writing. They're sharing a piece of writing. They're doing a lab. They're working on mathematical principles as teams. They're actually doing stuff, not just sitting passively.

Therefore, the Common Principles require action and embodiment; they must be lived.

Equity with the Common Principles

These ten values ultimately desire to promote equitable learning opportunities in pursuit of a just society (What We Do, 2017). However, "Goals apply to all students," "A tone of decency and trust," and "Democracy and equity" are three pivotal facets of this mission (Common Principles, 2017). Tailoring school practices "…to meet the needs of every group or class of students" for goals attainment acknowledges positionality and context (2017). Students are held to the same expectation, yet require varying levels of support to acheieve it. Wood articulates, "Its differentiation in the name of scaffolding…you differentiate so everybody can get up to the same standards." "Goals apply to all students" appears in Federal Hocking's use of portfolios and lack of ability grouping, which wasn't initally welcomed; Dr. Wood received pushback for ending such academic segregation in order to fulfill this Common Principle (2017). Wood shares that it is "a difficult one to pull off in schools because every parent thinks their child is gifted. Every parent thinks their child deserves a special class or a segregated class by ability." However, as Wood pointed out, talented and gifted kids will "still be talented and gifted, just in a different way." A room doesn't preclude one's merit or capacities of achieving a goal.

With aforementioned expectations, tolerance, fairness, and generosity should be "explicitly and self-consciously [stressed] by the school (2017). "A tone of decency and trust" then mimics the golden rule (2017). However, Dr. Wood makes a distinction:

> You've just got to try and treat everybody as fairly as you can while recognizing [that] fair doesn't always mean equal. Because kids come from different backgrounds, they have different needs, different stressors.

At Federal Hocking, this principle appears in lived and imagined space; students not only come and go for internships but can use any part of the facility during their hour-long lunch.
Spatial links continue with scheduling as mentioned under the preceding section (Bailey et al., 2012). Wood continues to outline this yearly event:

> Everybody comes to the same room. Everybody sits with their child. Everybody hears the same rap from the teachers, from the principal …and then everybody goes to work [on scheduling]. Got a question? [The advisor] comes over and helps them.

Parents and guardians aren't simply in the school-- they're deemed "key collaborators" in the educational community (Common Principles, 2017). Such examples of choice and connection emerge from Wood's notion, "We believe you'll do the right thing until you prove us wrong. And when you prove us wrong, we figured that's probably just a mistake and you'll get better." Therefore, "A tone of decency and trust" highlights students' "right to be and become" (Common Principles, 2017; Bailey et al., 2012).

Aforementioned actualizations of dignity propelled the development of the tenth Common Principle: "Democracy and equity" (2017). Rounding out the original nine values in 1997, this addition arose from partnership schools' concerns of equity and democracy. Practices that "…involve all who are directly affected by the school" highlight context's and the particular's importance (2017). Filling faculty vacancies at Federal Hocking is a prime example of this Common Principle. Students are not only considered but consulted during this process. Wood articulates,

> Students have equal say in the hiring [of] new teachers. [Applicants are] going to be interviewed by kids, [who are] going to watch him or her teach. They're going to have an equal voice in that."

Accordingly, "devolving authority to the lowest possible level" spreads power to empower individuals. Wood notates the difficulty placed on the administration when making decisions. Leadership should think, as he explains, "'Is this a decision everybody can make or only I can make? Is this a decision which we have any latitude? And is this [a decision] anybody gives a damn about?'" Coupled with "A tone of decency and trust," pondering levels of care, control, and input become easier (2017). Wood concludes,

> John Dewey once said, 'Teachers are the senior members of the community.' And by that they're given certain authority because they've been around a few times. [Therefore] Kids don't get to choose whether or not they're taking an English class. They do get to choose how they tackle the assignments.

Devolving responsibilities resembles a balancing act, trying to find harmony among tensions. Federal Hocking ended tracking to "build on the strengths of the [community] and deliberately and explicitly [challenge] all forms of inequity" (2017). This decision initially spurred micro-tensions from upcoming seventh-grade parents, who were expecting the former classroom structure associated with secondary school. Wood "spent a lot of time listening to people" and referring to research, but ultimately notated the collective when addressing the initial pushback. Wood reflects, "I'm not going to change the whole system because you, one parent, objects. You need to understand that. That's not democratic. We worked hard on this system." Upholding "Democracy and equity," then, not only incorporates "A tone of decency and trust" but also "Goals apply to all students;" inclusive pedagogies and policies involve tolerance and the varying approaches to respect individuals lives (2017).

    "Other schools:" the traditional landscape. When discussing equitable practices, Wood often contrasted them with techniques or mentalities associated with traditional education. Most schools appear similar "like they've been dropped in and they just [exist] separate of context or place." Outward appearances or layouts of such physical structures suggest uniformity; education looks the same regardless of location. Consequently, educational organization and procedures follow a similar thread: students are grouped together by age to complete an eight-period day,

going from one teacher to the next to receive deposits of information. Wood further describes this below:

> It was Ernest Boyer once said that 'High schools are places where adolescents go to watch adults work.' They sit and watch. Watch that guy try and entertain me for 40 minutes. He's going tell me a lot of stuff. He's going to lecture me a lot and then I got to go try and digest it later.

This assembly-line instructional style, among other facets, creates friction as technological advances and society shift with each generation. Wood posits, *"Curriculum is not usually something [teachers are asked to] think a lot about because it's kind of laid out. Well I teach English nine, what's English nine, whatever the district says it is."* Instead of addressing structural issues, most schools rely on short-term reform opportunities, solely focusing on action rather than its motivations. Wood explains, "A lot of schools...buy *the* program, they put *the* program into place and it's going to solve everything. And when it doesn't, they go buy *another* program." This perpetual cycle heightens tensions within the classroom as instructors may incorporate practices that contribute to social inequity like ability grouping, which Wood considers is "the biggest form of inequity in public schools." When discussing a neighboring district, Wood states

> I guarantee you …they've got all sorts of phasing and tracking. I can tell you most of the kids from [the poor areas] are in the lower tracks and the kids from the rich suburbs of [the neighboring district] are in the upper tracks.

As a result, knowledge acquisition varies based on positionality; class impacts learning opportunities, which may then influence subsequent life prospects and choices.

Discussion

This study was not focused on an unpacking of the framework, but how the participant (i.e., the single significant case) as an educational leader unpacked, implemented, and experienced the framework in his role as a superintendent. Alternatively, coinciding with education's multifaceted nature, this study showcases the growing disparity between ideals, implementation, and outcomes; why we educate may not permeate the who and the how. *A Nation at Risk* (1983) seems to linger along with regimens and practices rooted in the industrial age, further equating learning as a competition with focus on outcomes instead of perceiving its transformational capacity and moral dimensions of citizenry and humanhood.

Implications

Based on the work of Dr. Wood and the Coalition of Essential Schools, research, practice, and policy are implicated in this study. Scholars, educational leaders and advocates, and public servants should consider the following recommendations.

Research implications. Additional investigations of schools implementing the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) framework should occur. This would result in an increased understanding of the different ways the Common Principles were applied to varying contexts. Future research, for instance, could focus on how "Learning to use one's mind well" is foundational to the remaining nine principles, as well as the purpose of schooling (Common Principles, 2017). Further, prospective studies should examine student perceptions of this Common Principle, let alone recent high school graduate's view of "Learning to use one's mind

well" in everyday life.

Practitioner implications. Due to the Coalition's decline, further considerations of democratic educational practices are needed in hopes to prepare students for active democratic citizenry. Practicing educators should pay particular attention to "Personalization," "Tone of decency and trust," and "Student-as-worker, teacher-as-coach" (2017). Educational leaders should explore and embody "Tone of decency and trust" and "Goals apply to all students" to promote teacher and student agency and dignity. Such efforts would further support learning environments for youth. Wood concludes, "they are the ones we are creating a community for, and it's with them that any effort to rethink schools must start" (2005, p. 29).

Policy implications. The current educational landscape resembles much of its predecessor and perpetuates social inequities. There must be increased concern and analysis of structural practices and their persistence as they are out of date and context. Wood expanded on this notion when explaining how building on the community's strengths explicitly challenges inequity; ability grouping often carries class and race connotations, while weighted classes outwardly show a course's value. He argued,

> Don't do things that cause inequities. That's the problem of schools. We spent so much time trying to figure out, well, 'how can we be more equitable?' We've already set up structures that are completely inequitable. Stop doing-- All you have to do is stop doing stuff...It's really that simple. Stop doing bad things.

Thus, policy makers should consider the Common Principles when enacting future legislations, seeking to restructure education rather than simply reforming it.

Conclusion

The aforementioned inquiries are imperative considering the increasingly polarized climate of the Unites States. Civic unrest grows as individuals are not prepared for active citizenry, which further deteriorates democracy. Folks are not ready for the responsibility of such nor know how to participate in the public arena due to a limited formal experience. Schooling underscores competition amongst peers rather than a collective perspective; 'Us v. them' takes precedent over a reflective mentality to benefit others, society, or democracy. Active democratic citizen preparation, therefore, rests with all of us, all facets of education and other societal institutions. Otherwise, tensions and frustrations will continue because these systems perpetuate helplessness, feeling ill-equipped for basic civic engagement.

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