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ABSTRACT
Presented is an independent evaluation of a Title I cooperative effort to create a "model school" in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area of New York City. Project Beacon of Yeshiva University, the local school board, and P.S. 129 sought to develop innovative approaches, improve student achievement and instruction, and rehabilitate dropouts. The project involved a saturation program for the entire fourth grade, a learning center for retarded readers and behavior problem children, a special science program, inservice training, and the establishment of a local governing board. On the whole the findings were disappointing. The various features of the saturation effort either did not meet stated goals and expectations, or failed to materialize. Reading and achievement scores of fourth graders did not improve. Despite numerous shortcomings in the learning center component, the evaluator suggests that a well-planned replication might assess the effectiveness of that concept. Specific recommendations for improving the project are included. For a history and description of Title I, 1955-1968, in New York, see UD 007 904. (NH)

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Evaluation of
ESEA Title I Projects
in New York City
1967-68

Project No. 06D68

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IN AN INNER CITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: P-129-K

by Nathan Kravetz

October 1968

The Center for Urban Education

Center for Urban Education
105 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10016

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IN AN INNER CITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: P 129K

Nathan Kravetz

Evaluation of a New York City school district educational project funded under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (PL 89-10), performed under contract with the Board of Education of the City of New York for the 1967-68 school year.

Educational Research Committee

October 1968

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INTRODUCTION

The problems of education are intertwined with the problems of our society to such an extent that measures to remedy or ameliorate the one call for similar measures for the other. Yet the most optimistic among us find that the multiple character of our social problems offers too many targets and too little hope for prompt solution. In regard to education, the aim rather must be at the institutions nearest and most amenable to change -- the schools. The hope is that society will reflect its schools instead of vice versa. Perhaps improved schools, successful schools, will produce the remedy for other current social ills. Poor people living in the ghettos tend to have poor schools, and something must be done about these schools. Little hope can be extended to the masses of disadvantaged black children through solutions that take only a few of them to a distant school for several hours a day. Less hope is possible through a program that invites middle-class white families to send their children in inadequate schools away from home. "Inadequate" means that children do not learn in these schools -- not just that the schools are dilapidated, overcrowded, poorly furnished with materials, and staffed with few experienced teachers. The schools are poor because the children in them make no progress in the skills that form an education: reading, linguistic expression, mathematics, social studies, science, and artistic appreciation.

The parents know this. The larger community is aware of it. The nation at large is reminded of it, and the platforms of political parties periodically embody a recognition of it.

The problem of poor schools is acknowledged, but the remedy is a source of debate. As Kenneth Clark states, in Dark Ghetto: "The schools in the ghetto have lost faith in the ability of their students to learn and the ghetto has lost faith in the ability of the schools to lead."[1] Bloom, Davis, and Hess argue that "What is needed to solve our current as well as future crises in education is a system of compensatory education which can prevent or overcome earlier deficiencies in the development of each individual. Essentially, what this involves is the writing and filling of educational prescriptions for groups of children which will enable them to realize their fullest development.[2]

Such an approach centers on what poor children meet every day -- the school in their own neighborhood. They cannot all leave it. They must live with it, and it must take on a different meaning in their lives. The school must provide its children with a program for academic excellence.

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[1]Clark, Kenneth B., Dark Ghetto (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 139.

[2]Bloom, Benjamin, Allison Davis, and Robert Hess, Comparative Education for Cultural Deprivation (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), p. 6.

It is with these concerns and with these attitudes toward the solution of educational problems that Project Beacon of Yeshiva University undertook to work at P.S. 129.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to extend my thanks to all those in P.S. 129 and the Learning Center established there by Project Beacon, the supervisors, teachers, office staff, and parents who invited me to join them in their deliberations and discussions. They spoke freely and expressed their interest in the evaluation's objectivity. Individual members of the school's governing board, members of the local school board, and the district superintendent's staff were completely cooperative and candid.

Mention must also be made of Dr. Sol Gordon, Mr. Al Butler, and others of Project Beacon who, though under pressure, cooperated with this evaluation on a completely professional basis.

Special commendation is due Mrs. Violet Longobardi, Project Beacon secretary, and Mrs. Jacqueline Jackson and Miss Elaine Carwin, evaluation research associates, for their help in the accumulation of much of the basic data of this study.

CHAPTER I

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

This project, titled "Academic Excellence in An Inner City Elementary School: P-129-K," was organized by the staff of Yeshiva University's Project Beacon in conjunction with members of Local School Board Number 16 and the superintendent of the district. Project Beacon's aim in P.S. 129 was to "rehabilitate a problem school" and convert it into a "model school." The project was supported by a Ford Foundation grant of $39,000 for planning and supplementary materials, and a Title I allocation of $101,682.

P.S. 129, which is in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area, is five stories high, old, physically worn, often vandalized. It has a relatively small playground, and a register of 1,216 pupils in grades pre-K to six. Most of the pupil and community population are black, as are about one-third of the teachers.

In this neighborhood, generally, are found small brownstone-type houses, tightly set one against the other. The streets are dotted with occasional small food stores, beauty salons, store-front churches, and various types of repair and semi-industrial shops. From time to time, one sees small signs attached to gates, fences, or buildings asking the neighbors to "watch" their language, to keep their neighborhood clean, to be good citizens.

Here and there, a vacant lot serves as a place for unwanted articles: newspapers, broken bottles, rusting auto parts, and land-locked flotsam and jetsam.

Dr. Abraham P. Tauchner, superintendent of District Number 16, together with the local school board, agreed that P.S. 129 would be suitable for the placement of the Project Beacon program with its goal of developing academic excellence. Dr. Tauchner stated later, to the writer, that although test results showed achievement levels at P.S. 129 in the upper third of schools in District 16, a project for academic excellence was appropriate in this school, in view of what Dr. Tauchner regarded as the overall needs of its students.[1]

The specific objectives of the program were:

(a) to provide innovative approaches for the development of a "model" elementary school.

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[1]In the testing program of April 1967, the following median reading scores were obtained by pupils of P.S. 129 on the Metropolitan Achievement Test: Grade 2: 2.4 (Norm 2.7); Grade 3: 3.4 (Norm 3.7); Grade 4: 3.7 (Norm 4.7); Grade 5: 4.7 (Norm 5.7); Grade 6: 5.4 (Norm 6.7).

(b) to improve pupil educational achievements.

(c) to improve instruction.

(d) to rehabilitate dropouts.

The project was to achieve the above objectives through a complex of five programs:

1. The Saturation Program. This program was conducted in the entire fourth grade, involving 157 pupils. The program sought to combine multiple educational services which, it was hoped, would produce cumulative academic gains. The elements of the program were: (1) heterogeneous grouping, (2) an experimental curriculum, (3) individualized and small group instruction, (4) smaller classes, (5) special talent grouping, (6) intensive guidance services, and (7) greater parent involvement. It should be noted at this point that no strong rationale was provided for placing the "saturation" program in the fourth grade. Nonetheless, all of its component parts offered promise and its usefulness was accepted by all.

The five teachers to be used in the fourth-grade program had been trained by Project Beacon, prior to placement in the school. A sixth teacher was to serve as curriculum advisor. In addition, a team consisting of a member of the Project Beacon faculty and four graduate students was to offer guidance help to both school personnel and the children. The school staff was to receive special training, materials, and intensive attention throughout. Family assistants and teacher aides, recruited from the community, were to assist teachers and parents.

2. The Learning Center. This Center, in rented quarters a few blocks from the school, was organized to provide a concentrated experience for children who were severely retarded in reading and who also displayed behavior problems in school. The Center was located outside the school because there was insufficient space for it within the P.S. 129 building.

The Center was staffed with Project Beacon personnel trained to diagnose and teach children having serious reading disabilities. It was fully equipped with reading aids, games, art materials, and books. Instruction was given individually and in small groups of about five or six pupils to a teacher.

A major aspect of the Learning Center was the system of "contingency management," an "earn-while-you-learn" procedure. Pupils were rewarded for both achievement and behavior with points which were later convertible to more tangible items, such as games, watches, transistor radios, purses, and jewelry; pupils with enough points might choose such rewards as Chinese dinners, movies, or articles of clothing. Underlying the award

system was the thought that immediate, tangible rewards would be more real and meaningful to economically deprived youngsters than praise or promises of deferred recognition. It was felt that the children would see a direct relationship between cause and effect when their actions or achievements were awarded points; and when they could keep track of an accrual of points that led towards a reward of their own choosing.

It was originally planned to institute four ten-week cycles in the Center so that a total of one hundred pupils might be served. This plan was modified as will be described later in the report.

High school dropouts, young men of the community, were to be recruited as aides in the Center (as well as in other parts of the total school program). They were to be paid for their services. A general assumption underlying the program was that these aides would gain useful knowledge and skills in the course of their work, and would, at the same time, provide a useful service to the Center.

Teaching methods utilized programmed reading kits, packages, and books, as well as materials to motivate children to learn to read.

3. The Science Program. This program consisted of the introduction of McGraw-Hill kits and workbooks, developed for individual study at each pupil's own rate and emphasizing methods of individual exploration, discovery, and critical thinking. The object of introducing these individualized science activities was to stimulate the child's thought processes and create a desire to learn through exploration and experimentation.

4. The Decentralization Program. Through this program, which utilized the assistance of the local school board, a governing board for P.S. 129 was established. The governing board consisted of a representative of the local school board, the district superintendent or his representative, the school principal, a teacher selected by the teachers, a parent selected by the parents, a community leader selected by the parents, the project coordinator, and the project director.

The governing board was to meet regularly, at stated intervals, and it was planned that it would:

(a) arrange for the establishment of educational goals and standards.

(b) evaluate the program, the training, and the services performed by Yeshiva University.

(c) plan and approve budget allocations and expenditures.

5. In-Service Training. This aspect of the program was intended to train teachers at P.S. 129 in new teaching methods, involve them in new curriculum design, and orient them to the effective use of paraprofessionals from the community.

Provisions for inservice training were to include all-day workshops, seminars, demonstration lessons, grade conferences, and individual teacher conferences with consultants and specialists. The major portion of this training was to be conducted on a daily basis by the P.S. 129 assistants to principal, the project coordinator, and the curriculum advisor of Project Beacon. It would be the task of the project coordinator to observe and evaluate teacher performance.

The total school faculty was also assured in April 1967, through a bulletin of the district superintendent, that the school as a whole would benefit from the additional services that would result from the assignment of Project Beacon personnel. These benefits would include the possibility of having smaller classes, additional services for disruptive children, and talent groups in art and music. In addition, it was stated that the "program would begin in the lower grades; curriculum implementation and pupil services in all grades."[2]

By the opening of school late in September (delayed due to teachers' strike), the project began to function. Meetings were held with the already appointed school governing board, and a weekend institute with Yeshiva University personnel was held for board members and all the teachers of the school (regular and new). The Learning Center was set up, and the staff began its training. Recruitment and training of fourth-grade teachers had not yet been completed but was continuing. In November, a project coordinator, Mr. Al Butler, was appointed.

Dr. Gordon, as project director, was available from two to three days each week. Mr. Butler divided his time between the Learning Center and the school.

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[2] Bulletin of the District Superintendent (No. 16), undated, reporting on a planning meeting held on April 14, 1967.

CHAPTER II

EVALUATION DESIGN

Given the various facets of this project, the evaluation considered faculty, parents, pupils, and the procedures instituted as part of the project. Since the objectives of the project stressed academic excellence, it was important to determine the amount of academic gain, primarily in reading, achieved by the pupils on whom the project was most highly focused. Specifically, this meant the fourth-grade pupils, for whom a "saturation" program, with specially trained teachers had been organized.

Several factors made it inappropriate to utilize pre- and post-test analysis for all the pupils. There were many new entrants as of this school year. Further, various pupils entered and left the fourth grade during the year. Thus, only those pupils who participated in the April 1967 testing and who were still in the school for the April 1968 testing were used to study achievement gains. This "stable" group in grade four numbered 92.

For comparison purposes, an analysis was made of the grade three "stable" population, numbering 100 pupils, and of the 74 "stable" pupils of grade five.

Similar studies of academic achievement were made for the pupils in the Learning Center cycles, of which there were only two instead of the originally scheduled four -- the first cycle consisting of grade five pupils, the second of those from grade four.

The pupils of both cycles of the Learning Center were interviewed by two research associates in order to obtain information on their attitudes towards the Center, contingency management, their own program, and the school in general.

Another aspect of the Learning Center evaluation focused upon the feelings and attitudes of the parents whose children were assigned there. Accordingly, individual interviews were conducted by trained research associates who were empathetic and concerned and who were knowledgeable about the community.

A questionnaire was also circulated to parents of fourth-grade children to obtain their views of the Saturation Program. Nearly 150 questionnaires were mailed -- using school records for addresses and identification -- but responses were received from only 12 parents. (Over 30 envelopes were returned with the stamp "unknown at this address.")

A questionnaire was also distributed to the entire teaching staff of the school to determine their views: the extent of their support for

the program, their estimates of specific program elements, and their suggestions for modifications and future components of the program. From the faculty of about 55 teachers, 23 responses were received. Of the five Project Beacon trained teachers placed in the fourth grade, two returned completed questionnaires. (Interview guides and questionnaires are included in Appendix A.)

Throughout the evaluation period, which began in February and extended through June 1968, observations were made in the Learning Center and in the fourth grade, as well as (less intensively) in other classes in the school. Particular attention was given to the class of first-cycle children who had returned from the Learning Center and who were once again in the regular school with their own teacher.

Considerable attention was paid to the functioning of the school's governing board. The evaluation director attended eight governing board meetings during the evaluation period; the first of these was on March 4th. He took notes, followed the sequence of major considerations, and observed the relationships which were expressed. He observed the functioning of the board and noted the contributions and discussions of its members with regard to Project Beacon. Later, interviews were held with individual members of the board to obtain their views of the project and of the board's effectiveness.

The evaluation director conducted other interviews as well. In all, the following persons were interviewed: Dr. Sol Gordon, Project Beacon Director; Mr. Al Butler, Project Beacon Coordinator; Mr. Sol Botkin, Principal; Mrs. Mildred Gorelick, teacher of P.S. 129K, as well as its UFT representative and governing board member; The Rev. Dr. V. Simpson Turner, governing board member representing the community; Mrs. Ella Thompson, family assistant, Parents Association President, and Chairman of the governing board; Mrs. Myra Stillman, McGraw-Hill author and Science Consultant to the program; Dr. Abraham P. Tauchner, Superintendent, District 16; and numerous teachers of various grades in the school.

The evaluation director, in addition to class visits, attendance at governing board meetings, and interviews, attended a teachers' meeting at which the question of continuation of Project Beacon at P.S. 129 in 1968-69 was discussed and then voted upon.

Finally, test procedures and evaluations being conducted concurrently with the present study by the staff of Yeshiva University were reviewed by this evaluator and will be discussed in further sections of this report.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS

A. FOURTH GRADE SATURATION PROGRAM

Program Implementation

As already noted, this program consisted of seven features, each of which was implemented as follows:

1. Heterogeneous Grouping. All indications, including teacher interviews and classroom observations, confirmed the fact that the children in the five fourth-year classes were not homogeneously grouped and that each class represented a wide range of ability.

2. Experimental Curriculum. All classes on grade four were given new materials in reading (Science Research Associates and Sullivan-Behavioral Research Laboratory Programs) and for science (McGraw-Hill Kits). The teachers of these classes had not previously taught with these materials, and the curriculum therefore required special learning and study on their part. The project also provided teachers with materials for teaching Negro history and African culture.

A mathematics tutoring experiment with thirty fourth-grade pupils was undertaken by Yeshiva University. On a pre- and post-test study, the University's researchers determined that tutored children made greater gains in arithmetic than nontutored children regardless of whether the tutored children were given a tangible reward or merely praised verbally.

The assignment of an additional teacher as a specialist for curriculum development proved relatively meaningless, since this teacher was frequently assigned to cover classes for absent teachers or was utilized for other purposes.

3. Individual and Small Group Instruction. In all the fourth-grade classes, individualized instruction was given in reading. Most of the teachers indicated that in other areas of study such instruction was not possible. This lack was, perhaps, most keenly felt in the area of science where individualized and small group instruction were necessary for the effective use of the new materials. The science materials themselves presented a serious problem for a number of children, since the graded workbooks accompanying the science kits were not appropriate for the children's reading levels. Also, the

teachers' lack of experience with the kits generally led them into a whole-class rather than an individualized approach.

In some of the fourth-grade classes, teacher inexperience coupled with the presence of several unruly children made an individual approach difficult. However, such obstacles to individualization did not constitute serious problems in regard to reading, where appropriately graded programmed or boxed materials were available, and where children were helped to find their own levels of success.

4. Smaller Classes. While Project Beacon did provide extra personnel and special emphasis in certain areas and on certain grade levels, the general promise of schoolwide reductions in register was not met. Class sizes throughout the school were relatively unaffected.

Registers in grades four and five were somewhat reduced, temporarily, when some pupils on these grades were shifted to the Learning Center. Grade four registers were higher than had been anticipated and too high for effective implementation of the Saturation Program.

5. Special Talent Groups. The formation of such groups in music and art for talented pupils, while mentioned in the initial project description as as goal of the Saturation Program, did not materialize.

6. Intensive Guidance Program. While a guidance program was organized, as were certain mental health services, neither activity was implemented as had been intended, as part of the fourth-grade Saturation Program. Some guidance services were made available, through the school guidance counselor, to children in kindergarten and grade one. Other children were referred to outside agencies for help. But, in the fourth grade, no intensive guidance services were provided.

7. Greater Parental Involvmment. For the fourth-grade program, two family assistants -- parents and community residents -- were hired. Their task was to help in the classrooms, to make home visits, to facilitate parent-teacher conferences, and to "open" the school to the parents to a greater extent than it had been. An additional function of these assistants was to escort children to and from the Optometric Center in Manhattan for eye examinations, glasses, and, coincidentally, to a restaurant for lunch.

Interviews with the family assistants, as well as with teachers, made plain that there was a real need for their services.

While this form of parental involvement did not result in better attendance at school meetings, contacts between the family assistants

and parents in the community were helpful to individual children and to their families.

The family assistants, who were women recruited from the community, constituted one of the stronger features of Project Beacon's efforts in this school. The provision of more such family assistants, with the inclusion of a few men, would have been desirable. There was a need for the kind of help that might have been offered by young Negro men, with some orientation in social work, health, and guidance techniques.

In regard to other forms of parental involvement, with the exception of the family and community contacts initiated and maintained by the family assistants, the project appears to have made no appreciable difference. Of the 23 teachers who responded to the questionnaire on the project, 16 said the project had not led to greater parent involvement in the school, one teacher said it had, and six said they did not know. Most of the teachers indicated their belief that greater involvement would be desirable and specified this need in such areas as: service as school aides, increased contact and communication with the children's teachers, and homework help to their own children.

Of the 12 fourth-grade parents (out of 150) who responded to their questionnaires, six indicated their belief that they had had more school contacts during the current year than previously, five said they did not, and one did not respond to the question. Parents noted that they visited the school when they were asked to come for conferences with teachers (four) or to deal with complaints or problems concerning their children (three). Three parents also indicated that they visited the school to confer with the guidance counselor. Six parents said they had attended school meetings called to explain the project's objectives; five said they had not.

A dance program, in which many children participated, brought a large number of parents to the school. It would appear that parents visited the school less frequently for educational or informational meetings than for such programs as the dance performance in which their own children were involved.

In short, the problems of contact and communication with parents and the general lack of involvement of large numbers of parents are serious ones, and as yet unresolved.

Pupil Progress in Reading

Since reading growth was a major goal of the Saturation Program, a study was made of the reading achievement scores of 92 of the fourth-

grade pupils. (These 92 pupils constituted the stable population that had been tested at P.S. 129 in April 1967 and in April 1968.)

For this grade four group, the median reading achievement scores were as follows:

April 1967: 3.7 (Grade Norm 3.7)
April 1968: 3.8 (Grade Norm 4.7)

Thus, 92 pupils showed a gain of one month over their median scores of one year earlier. However, where, as third graders, they had been at the grade norm, now, as fourth graders, these children were nine months below the expected grade norm.

It seemed of interest to ascertain what other, comparably stable groups had done in the same time. Thus, the third-grade children (100 cases) were studied. Their median reading scores were:

April 1967: 2.7 (Grade Norm 2.7)
April 1968: 3.5 (Grade Norm 3.7)

The third grade pupils, given practically no attention by the project either as to teacher training, grouping, or materials, gained a total of eight months over their previous median score. As second graders, they were reading at grade level; now, as third graders, they were two months below their grade norm.

Speaking from these data, it would be difficult to ascribe success in reading and achievement to the fourth-grade Saturation Program. While teachers believed they noted increased pupil motivation, apparent progress in the ability to use programmed reading materials, and other indications of development, these types of improvement did not show themselves in the median scores.

A concurrent study by Project Beacon evaluators of fourth-grade scores at P.S. 129 and those of a fourth grade in a "comparison school" indicated no statistically significant difference. This study expressed the hope that significant differences may be established between the two groups of children when they complete the fifth grade. It is difficult for this evaluator to share this hope on the basis of the evidence now available.

The Project Beacon evaluation also compared the "class quality" of P.S. 129 fourth-grade classes with "comparable" fourth-grade classes of another school. Two observers, trained and statistically reliable in their definitions of observed child behavior, did random Point-Time samplings in both schools, using a scale of established

criteria from earlier studies. Out of twenty different comparisons, the fourth-grade classes at P.S. 129 were ranked superior in 14 instances. The fourth-grade classes of the comparison school were not superior in any instance. Class functioning and teacher quality in the P.S. 129 fourth grades were also deemed, by the Yeshiva University evaluators, to be superior to those in the comparable school.

These results, at least on the surface, speak well for the effectiveness of the relatively untrained, inexperienced Project Beacon teachers. But one may ask how comparable the two schools under observation were as to pupil characteristics, curriculum and materials used, grouping practices, etc. In any event, granting the accuracy of the Yeshiva evaluation, it is evident that, in this instance, there was no overt relationship between observed classroom quality (including teacher functioning) and the pupils' achievement scores in reading.

B. THE LEARNING CENTER

As has been stated earlier, the Learning Center was established by Project Beacon away from P.S. 129, with its own staff and materials. The teachers, graduates of the teacher training program at Yeshiva University, had little formal teaching experience, no previous training in contingency management, and little familiarity with programmed materials. Established in the Junior Academy, a neighborhood private school located four blocks from P.S. 129, the Learning Center required installation of lighting, painting, and transfer of furniture and equipment from P.S. 129.

Lunch service was not available, nor was regular custodial service. The teachers accompanied the children to P.S. 309, nearby, for lunch. Teachers also assumed various of the clean-up duties in addition to their teaching responsibilities in the Learning Center.

Staff orientation and instruction had been conducted by Yeshiva University, during a three-week period in September, prior to the actual initiation of the P.S. 129 project. In these orientation sessions, emphasis was placed on the utilization of teaching materials, on the principles of contingency management, and on role-playing sessions to sensitize teachers to varying points of view and behavior patterns.

First Cycle

Following observation by Project Beacon staff members of over 60 fifth-grade children who were 1.5 or more years below grade norm in reading, 24 were chosen for the first cycle at the Learning Center.

This first group was divided into four classes: two of boys (seven and six pupils each) and two of girls (six and five).

The average M.A.T. reading score of the students in April 1967 was 3.1. They were described by Project Beacon staff as "functional illiterates" -- that is, these children could not use reading as a communication skill. Though judged "illiterate," these children were not considered mentally retarded. A majority displayed behavior problems and the need for special motivation and instruction.

An essential feature of the Learning Center, in addition to its small group organization, was its adherence to the extrinsic motivation system called "contingency management." This system enabled children to work and be commended by concrete or material reward, rather than merely by verbal praise. Children were awarded points for completion of tasks and for good behavior. "Bank books" were kept for tallying points, and prizes, from which the children could make their own choices, were awarded for specified numbers of points won.

The teaching day included time for work with programmed materials in reading (Sullivan Workbooks, Science Research Associates Reading Laboratories, and others), spelling (Science Research Associates Spelling Laboratories), art, science, physical education, writing, and games.

The program for the first cycle, consisting of 24 pupils from grade five, began on November 8, 1967, and continued for 13 weeks until March 1, 1968. The Center's original plan had been to serve 100 children in four ten-week cycles. Actually, it served 43 children in two cycles, the second of which consisted of 19 fourth-grade children, and continued for 12 weeks.

Attitudes of the Children. One form of evaluation of the Learning Center would be to refer to the children's good attendance record, maintained at an average of 96 per cent. The attitudes of the children are reflected in such attendance. In interviews with 21 out of 24 children (12 boys and 9 girls) of the first cycle, after they had returned to P.S. 129, all stated that they had liked being at the Center, primarily because they had "had fun winning prizes." Five referred to the prizes as the best feature of the Center. Their approval of prizes for good work in school was nearly unanimous, and all reported receiving rewards which included radios, games, cameras, jewelry, and clothing. Yet when asked if they thought children should get prizes all along in school, eight boys and four girls said "no"; four boys and four girls said "yes."

Most of the children (14) recognized that they had been assigned to the Learning Center because of reading difficulties, two said they

didn't know why they had been assigned, and one said the teacher "picked on me." Nine of the youngsters selected reading as the best part of the Center, and selected the Sullivan workbooks (in the area of reading) as their favorites over other types of programmed materials offered them. Asked if they thought they had learned more at the Center than before they went there, 13 said "yes," and seven said "no." Fourteen said they had improved most in reading, six said in arithmetic.

When asked to compare present school progress with their progress before entering the Center, eight (six boys and two girls) said they were doing better work now at P.S. 129. Twelve (six boys and six girls) felt that they were not doing better work at P.S. 129 after having been at the Center. Thirteen of these children reported arithmetic as the subject on which,they felt, they needed most help now; five mentioned the continuing need for help in reading.

Attitudes of the Parents. Sixteen of the parents of this first cycle of children were interviewed by two research assistants, young Negro women experienced in working with children and parents. Eight of the parents indicated knowing that the reason for their children's selection for inclusion at the Center was related to retardation in reading. The others said they did not know why their children had been chosen. Most reported that their children had benefited from the Learning Center experience, referring to improved reading skill, better behavior, and increased interest in school. Two indicated that they could not see any evidence of benefits in any area. Major parent criticisms referred to "not enough math," "no homework," and "the idea of prizes."

With regard to prizes for learning, nine parents approved, five did not; the others indicated some reservations. Asked about their reaction to the length of the session (13 weeks), seven said it was just right, eight said it was too short, and one said it was too long.

In general, both the pupils and their parents favored the Learning Center, although each group had some reservations about the contingency management program -- the parents being quite divided in their approval of it; the pupils having enjoyed it while at the Center, but expressing mixed reactions as to the advisability of awarding prizes all along in school.

Reading Scores. In this first cycle of children, a stable population of 16 was found. Their median achievement scores on the M.A.T. reading test are as follows:

April 1967: 3.2 (Grade Norm 4.7)
April 1968: 3.8 (Grade Norm 5.7)

The gain over one year, including the Learning Center experience, was six months. All continued to read below grade norm, and the deviation from the norm for the group median was now two years.

In the group of 16, 12 showed gains in reading achievement, ranging from two months to one year and seven months. Two children showed no change in reading test scores over the year, and two lost one and two months respectively over the period.

During this period, 74 stable children in regular fifth-grade classes at P.S. 129 gained two months (1967 median, 4.2; 1968 median, 4.4). There was no special program in these classes. On the basis of this comparison, the program offered to the first cycle of students at the Center appears to have introduced gains which they might not have made had they remained in regular classes.

However, in an achievement study carried out by the Project Beacon staff, it was determined that there was no statistically significant difference between the first-cycle Learning Center children and a comparable low-achieving group that had remained at P.S. 129. The diversity of findings indicates a present lack of clarity as to the effectiveness of the Learning Center program and permits no specific judgment at this time.

At this point, mention must be made of a situation involving parents of the first-cycle of children, which caused difficulties for project personnel as well as for P.S. 129 itself. When it was almost time for the first-cycle children to return to P.S. 129 and for a new group of pupils to come to the Center, parents of the first-cycle children began to organize to demand that their children be allowed to continue at the Center for the rest of the year. Meetings were held, letters were written, and picketing was planned. Upon the intervention of the district superintendent and the project director, the first-cycle pupils finally were returned to P.S. 129 after 13 weeks, and a second cycle was begun in March.

As a consequence of the strong feelings engendered by this conflict, the Learning Center lost the services of two of its experienced faculty and was obliged to assign the project coordinator and the director to the Center for a longer period of time than had been planned. New staff could not be hired and trained at this late date, so responsibilities were re-assigned and the second-cycle pupils were grouped into three, rather than four, classes.

Second Cycle

For the second cycle, the program and experiences were essentially the same, though there were some modifications. The most important was

the selection of children for the Center through the recommendation of the fourth-grade (Project Beacon) teachers, rather than only through observation and a study of reading scores. This change was adopted in response to a request of the P.S. 129 staff, who felt that teachers' recommendations concerning pupil selection had not been utilized in forming the first cycle. Changes were also attempted in the contingency management program, since it had become evident that it was necessary to unify teacher criteria for rewards in order to enhance pupil motivation. Diagnostic studies of pupils by Project Beacon personnel and reorganization of curriculum, as well as of use of materials, resulted in greater individualization of children's programs.

Problems of control and order were serious at the start of this second cycle, and required much attention of the project coordinator. In time, however, with some shifting of staff, these problems were overcome.

Attitudes of Children. As with the first-cycle pupils, 16 children of the 19 in the second cycle were interviewed for their reaction to the Center experience. All sixteen said they liked being in the Center because of prizes and sports. (The reference to sports is to be explained by the fact that the spring weather permitted more outdoor games.)

Most said they had been assigned to the Center to learn to read better; three said they did not know why. In ranking the best features of the Center, five chose sports, four reading, and four art; three children said they liked their teacher and three liked the smaller classes; only two children chose prizes as the best feature.

This second-cycle group reported they had learned more at the Center than at P.S. 129. (In the first group, a majority of the children made the same assessment.) The approval of the second-cycle children was unanimous for the idea of prizes for good work in school. As to the desirability of receiving prizes throughout school, seven said "yes" with conditions ("only if good"; "only if earned"); nine said "no."

All the second-cycle children said they thought they were doing better work at the Center than they had done previously at P.S. 129. This is in decided contrast to the first group, where 12 out of 20 interviewed were not encouraged by their own progress at the Center. Thirteen of the second cycle said that they had improved most in reading; others mentioned writing and arithmetic. Nine said they still needed help in reading; five children noted a need for additional help in arithmetic (despite the fact that they did feel they had improved to a degree).

Attitudes of Parents. Ten parents of children in the second cycle were interviewed. Their comments generally paralleled those of the first group. This time, none of the parents said they did not know why their

children were in the Learning Center. The reasons cited were reading problems and misbehavior. Of these second-cycle parents, eight felt their children had gained in the Center; one said "no," and one did not know. Some parents said their children evidenced an increased interest in school and read more and better. Eight parents approved of the prize system.

With regard to the length of the session at the Center, some parents thought it was too short (5) or just right (4). There was no feeling expressed that the twelve-week session was too long.

It was clear that there was general enthusiasm for the program among parents and children. Effectiveness, in terms of increased learning, was felt by pupils and parents.

Teachers in the Center believed that the use of programmed materials stimulated the children in their studies, and that their use, once order had been established in this cycle, indicated evidence of the children's interest and attention.

Reading Scores. A Project Beacon staff member conducted an informal study of the reading status of the fourth-grade children in the second cycle. Each child was tested individually in March and in June to determine dominances, acuity, coordination, conceptual development, and functional reading levels. In March 1968, descriptions of the children's reading level ranged from "nonreader" to third-grade level. In June 1968, the same evaluator noted that there were no "nonreaders" and that improvements in reading level were evident for almost all the children. One child originally reading at grade one level was still on that level, but all the others had made some gains in reading ability as determined by individual evaluation.

The second cycle had only five "stable" members in it. The norm for the grade in April 1968 was 4.7. At that time, the median for the stable fourth graders (92 cases) was 3.8. The median for the five "stable" pupils in the second cycle was 3.0. No valid generalization can be made concerning reading achievement gains from the scores achieved by this small number of stable children.

Although the Learning Center was generally deemed successful by the children who attended, as well as by their parents, it cannot be as enthusiastically judged in terms of M.A.T. reading scores.

On the basis of the reading achievement results seen in children of both cycles, this evaluator would not consider the gains definitive in favor of the Learning Center over the possible effects of a tutoring program, of regular classes taught by more experienced teachers, or of other experimental conditions.

Contingency Management. The value of the contingency management principle seemed to need further testing. Since the project did not

encompass a control operating without contingency management, there was no evidence to indicate how a similar learning center that did not offer prizes for learning would fare.

Summation. It is the evaluator's considered judgment that as complex a program as that planned for the Learning Center cannot fairly be evaluated until it has had at least a year's experience and when its personnel are familiar with its objectives, procedures, and teaching materials. A well-planned replication of this program with the proper controls might offer a fertile field for evaluating the effectiveness of the entire Learning Center concept as well as of its component parts.

C. THE SCIENCE PROGRAM

This program was not launched until late in the spring due to difficulties in receiving and distributing the related materials, kits, and workbooks. Originally, the project had intended to saturate the entire school with the McGraw-Hill science program. Two factors operated against this initial plan. The governing board decided on a more tentative, limited, experimental dissemination and use of the science materials. Also, a number of teachers on the P.S. 129 staff were apparently either unprepared for or unenthusiastic about undertaking this intense kind of science program. Ultimately, about 15 classes throughout the school utilized the science materials. The participating classes included the fourth-grade classes in the Saturation Program plus classes on all other grade levels in which teachers indicated willingness to work with the new materials. Observation by the evaluators, confirmed by interviews with teachers using this science material, indicated that the material was inappropriate for the children using it. The workbooks for each grade were much too difficult for the children of that grade to read or follow. Many teachers found that they were unable to utilize the individualized, exploratory, and experimental approach upon which the program was predicated, because of the inability of many children to read the directions and follow the instructions in their grade workbooks.

An intensive curriculum development project to adapt these workbook materials to the children's reading levels might have made it possible to utilize the program effectively toward reaching the stated objectives. Since no such curriculum revision effort was undertaken, the materials were, for the most part, not geared to the children's reading levels and not used to their maximum effectiveness. Therefore, the Science Program cannot be considered successful to any appreciable degree.

D. INSERVICE TRAINING

An integral part of any school rehabilitation program is teacher orientation and inservice training. Plans for this part of the project

included seminars with visiting consultants, demonstration lessons, and individual guidance and consultation. Beginning with the preliminary weekend teacher workshops of September, it was anticipated that there would be a continual follow-through according to plan.

Many factors, including lack of sufficient personnel at P.S. 129, unavailability of Yeshiva University consultants, and lack of additional requested staff assignments at P.S. 129 served to create a hiatus between the teachers' expectations and their ultimate realization. These factors resulted in a lowering of morale and a withdrawal of cooperation.

However, project personnel, including the director and coordinator, as well as the P.S. 129 school supervisors, continually sought to make themselves available to individual teachers throughout the school. In February 1968, the P.S. 129 teachers were invited to attend noon-hour meetings with specialists in linguistics, psychology, science, and mathematics. In addition, various consultants brought in by Project Beacon taught such subjects as art to some classes or conducted research projects in mathematics with groups of children. Teachers on various grades met periodically under school auspices and were given curricular materials on mathematics and on Negro history. Additional materials that were requested by teachers were supplied. Project Beacon staff members offered reading readiness programs to two of the kindergarten teachers.

Yet, these efforts seem to have had little impact. In short, through observations, classroom visits, conferences with consultants, and teacher interviews, this evaluator judged that the inservice training efforts failed to meet the promises made in the initial project plans.

Inservice training also implies the development of adequate and constructive communications between teachers and other professionals working together. Teacher interviews, questionnaire responses, and observations indicate that such relationships did not develop. Worse, the ensuing indifference on the part of some of the teachers, seemed to be converted before June to open hostility toward the project and its personnel.

E. DECENTRALIZATION

The form of decentralization employed in this project was to be accomplished by the establishment of a local governing board consisting of a parent, a community leader, a representative of the local school board, and five professionals. The governing board was to: (1) arrange for the establishment of educational goals and standards; (2) evaluate the programs, the training, and the services performed by Yeshiva University and (3) plan and approve budget allocations and expenditures. The governing board was, however, not autonomous and was responsible to both the local school board and the district superintendent.

This writer began the study of the project in February 1968 and attempted to learn what had gone before. Minutes of the governing board were graciously made available to him, and he was able to interview individual members of the board.

The earliest minutes reported on the meeting of November 1, 1967. It was evident that there had been meetings before that date, as well as discussions the previous spring before the project was initiated.

Meetings of the board were held regularly, at least once each month, to consider all possible aspects of the project. Problems and matters discussed ranged from personnel needs to the lack of a burglar alarm system in the school.

Usually, meetings of the governing board began with a report by the project director on current developments. These reports were often descriptions of satisfactory conditions, such as the fact that the children in this project had been given optometric service, statements about improvements in order and achievement at the Learning Center, and the utilization of materials by some teachers. The project director's report often included a statement of needs and lacks in space, personnel, materials, and time. He presented his suggestions for improvement and for moving toward the goals of the program.

Throughout the succession of meetings, the dominant figure in each session was the project director, who reported, discussed, defended, and recommended. There was little or no initiative taken on any project matters other than by the director. Members of the board generally asked questions to amplify their understanding and commented on the matters at hand. With one exception, all the members were relatively uncritical and yielding on most matters. A single board member, the community representative, tended to be more critical, often expressing doubt as to procedures and proposed actions, and questioning the progress that had been reported.

Having attended all the spring 1968 meetings of the board, this investigator can make the following statements:

1. The board seemed to operate without bylaws or rules for its own procedures.

2. The governing board did not establish clear-cut "educational goals and standards" as was the original intent of the plan.

3. On occasion, the board became involved in matters where its jurisdiction was not clear, particularly regarding the overall administration of the school and the concerns of Project Beacon.

4. The board served as an advisory council and sounding board for Project Beacon staff.

5. The board did make a kind of evaluation of programs, training, and services of Yeshiva University (as intended in the plan), although the evaluation team was itself composed, in part, of Yeshiva University employees.

6. Most board evaluations were generally made ad hoc in response to the project director's reports and without a long range plan for objective review.

7. In the area of finance, the board did approve some budget allocations and expenditures, but most of these monies were fixed costs related to personnel, materials, and services. Decisions on uses of foundation funds were generally made by the director and reported to the board.

Thus, the governing board governed relatively little. It was frequently a forum, and at times a skirmish area, though definitely not a battlefield. It served as a meeting ground for discussion of the project, but it had no power over the project (except for one "controversial" incident, limiting the extent of the Science Program) or over the school. It was a delegated off-shoot of the local school board and without operational autonomy. Thus, as a decentralization program, the governing board experience probably exposed its members to a condition of nondecentralization, if anything.

Individually, the members of the board expressed their general satisfaction with Project Beacon in their school. However, in regard to their participation on a governing board in a decentralized status, they indicated some frustrations over the absence of financial and executive powers. They realized that this board was under direct control of the local school board and the district superintendent.

Most of the regular teachers of the school, though represented on the governing board by their UFT delegate, had little interest in its activities and were clearly unaffected by it. The teachers who were interviewed or observed in informal coffee-hour discussions, and who spoke in the final faculty meeting, made few or no comments about the governing board. They tended to focus their discussion, either critical or positive, upon the project itself and often upon persons responsible for the project.

A final comment on the decentralization program, i.e., the school governing board. Though the major goals of this portion of the project were not achieved, a byproduct of importance seemed evident. The members of the board -- school personnel and parent and community

representatives -- seem to have had an experience from which they will proceed constructively. The end-of-year discussions about a "school-community committee" and about requests for new school development funds were hopeful ones. The portents are at least favorable that these past experiences will now serve as guidelines, reminders, and cautions in the development of actual decentralization and collaboration between the school and its community.

F. PROJECT ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

The first major objective of Project Beacon was to convert P.S. 129 into a model school. This stage was seen as lasting approximately two years. It was this first two-year phase, then, for which the project was organized and began to operate.

However, there were immediate areas of disappointment and dissatisfaction. Space which had been requested had not materialized, nor had funds for full time psychological, medical, and social work personnel. The school had been vandalized, and equipment and materials which had been stolen were not replaced; a requested guard and protection alarm system were not made available.[1] While these events are not related directly to Project Beacon, nevertheless their unfavorable effect upon P.S. 129 as a whole must influence the efforts of the Project and the morale of its staff. More specifically, the loss of needed equipment and materials impeded the carrying out of the plans.

By November 20, 1967, in his Report to Teachers of P.S. 129, Dr. Gordon wrote: "We accept the criticism of many teachers that there has not been sufficient communication between us and the staff. . . . I want to remind you that if the teachers and the governing board are not satisfied with our performance at the end of the school year, I am expecting that you will vote not to have us return."

At the March 4, 1968 meeting of the Governing Board, the director indicated his doubts about the continuation of the program as originally planned. Several of its current personnel would not continue; Ford Foundation funds would probably not be available; district support would probably not be significant.

When, on May 17, 1968, the P.S. 129 teachers met at a staff conference, they were addressed by Dr. Gordon and by Mr. Sol Botkin, principal of the school. The teachers were told that it was up to them to decide whether the project should continue for 1968-69. Project Beacon would not return if the teachers objected. The final teacher vote was 9 for the project's continuation to 31 against.

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[1]Letters from Dr. Sol Gordon to Dr. Abraham Tauchner, district superintendent, June 26, 1967, and to Dr. Bernard Donovan, Superintendent of Schools, August 6, 1967.

A review of the project's organization and initial steps indicated that a number of negative factors existed from the start. Some of these persisted throughout the entire program:

1. Facilities, rooms, and space to accommodate all projected activities were inadequate.

2. Guard and burglar alarm systems were not available to protect school equipment and materials, a factor not directly related to Project Beacon but affecting the project because of its demoralizing effect on the entire school.

3. Complete staff (project coordinator, school aides, full-time psychological, medical, social work personnel) was not assigned to meet the needs of the school's population.

4. Science materials did not arrive until February due to delays in delivery by the publishers.

5. Faculty orientation, interest, and commitment were not given prompt followup and then maintained.

6. Reduction in class size was not accomplished as promised; many of the project's goals were dependent upon close teacher-pupil relationships which were precluded by the existence of large class registers. Specifically, both the Science Program and the Saturation Program in grade four were adversely affected by the large registers.

The above details indicate the organizational base from which the project began and within which it operated. On all these matters, the several parties concerned -- Project Beacon, the local school board, and the district superintendent -- might have developed positions of choice; i.e., to proceed or not to proceed; to modify plans and goals or not to modify them; to accept serious odds and attempt to succeed, or to seek more adequate resources under more favorable conditions so as to avoid the experience of one more program failure in the inner city.

Such decisions, if the matters were considered at all (and there is no substantial evidence that they were), were not made, and the project operated through June 1968 essentially on the basis of its original plan. Such changes as were made usually modified in minor ways initial goals or expectations.

REACTIONS TO THE PROJECT

From an overall view, it can be said that the project was usually seen favorably by the parents who were aware of it, by those whose children

were directly involved (as in the Learning Center), and by those who served as board members and as school aides.

The school administration was in favor of the project's goals, but objected to the practices of project personnel, particularly when the administration's own authority and responsibility seemed to be infringed upon, or when there appeared to a circumventing of standard school line and staff operations. Each of the school supervisors stated separately that his own experience and "know-how" as well as that of many teachers in the school had not been called upon, recognized, or used.

Speaking for himself and for the local school board, the district superintendent criticized the absence of a "total Yeshiva University involvement" in the project. The program was described as "nebulous," and major positive results of its activities were not seen. Promises made at the start were not kept. Too few experienced staff were brought in. Overall supervision of the project was inadequate. For these reasons, the superintendent stated that he could not recommend to the local school board the assignment of equivalent funds (or a sizeable allocation) for the 1968-69 year.

Along similar lines, the single community representative on the governing board, the Rev. Dr. V. Simpson Turner, was a critic, doubter, and dissenter both at meetings of the board and in a later interview with this evaluator. He accepted the goals of the project, particularly as regards the closing of the "reading gap," but indicated that promises made for the project did not materialize.

Dr. Turner pointed to the lack of teaching experience of most Project Beacon personnel and particularly to their inexperience in the black community. He felt that the governing board was not consulted on program directions and changes. He spoke very favorably of the activities of the project coordinator, Mr. Butler, since he felt there was a need for a Negro male figure in a role of authority -- and he approved of the Learning Center program.

Two major criticisms made by Dr. Turner were the absence of more parents and community members on the governing board and the board's lack of independence. He referred to the noninvolvement of mature community people who were "in the know," who could advise in the planning and operation of the project.

"We didn't all fail," he said. "The professionals who did not consult us on critical decisions, who thought they had the answers -- they failed."

It is difficult to evaluate the role of the P.S. 129 teachers in the total operation of the program. Many said they had nothing to do

with it, and that it had nothing to do with them. Several referred to promises made and not kept. Teachers had a sense of being "in" or "out," and many felt no relationship to or communication with the major programs that were in progress; some expressed the thought that the children in their classes seemed to feel the same way.

Essentially it was possible for most of the school's teachers, except for those in the fourth grade, to be isolated and uninvolved, as they might choose. Inservice training and utilization of consultant services were optional, and often involved a sacrifice of the teacher's own free time. Science materials could be used or not, and in many classes they were not provided,by decision of the governing board.

A special feature of some of the teacher unrest and malaise was the eventual personalizing of their hostility. In all contacts and communications of this evaluator with teachers, instead of stating their criticisms in objective terms related to the details of the project, they attacked personalities. It seemed obvious that a lack of rapport, and a failure of communication and shared responsibility had developed to an unhealthy point. The vote against the project was emotionally charged and directed.

Yet there is an area of optimism within the teacher group at P.S. 129, which is to be seen in the repeated assertion that "we could do it as well ourselves." To an outside observer, this is a healthy sign. By expressing confidence in their own professional capacities to bring academic excellence to their school, they are now directing a challenge at themselves to make good. In collaboration with a ready administrative staff, and in the light of their experience, they now have the opportunity to prove that a faculty can plan, organize,and achieve realistic goals. This should be the opportunity, also, for leadership and intensive effort by school supervisors for the coming year.

CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations, specific to the Project Beacon effort, are in order on the basis of this evaluation:

1. The initial project description stated that "A Saturation Program will be conducted in the entire fourth grade, and will involve 157 pupils." No clear or adequate rationale was offered for the placement of this program in the fourth grade. In view of the numerous difficulties manifest in this aspect of the program, it is recommended that a "saturation" program, if established, should be focused on the young children in kindergarten and grade one. There is general agreement among educators and clinicians working with young children, that crucial learning experiences are operative at this level, providing for future growth, and minimizing the needs for later remediation or compensation.

2. While the failures of the Science Program were due essentially to the inappropriateness of the workbooks, the evaluator questions the choice of science as the most likely area for emphasis in this particular school. The recommendations therefore are twofold:

   A. If science is to be the area of emphasis, a curriculum development project, engaged in cooperatively by teachers and specialists, should adapt available written materials to meet the special needs and reading levels of the target population.

   B. As an alternative to a science program, there would be equal rationale for a creative writing program, a sequenced program in economics, or an experimental social science curriculum. Any of these would deal with areas close to the children's lives and needs.

3. The entire concept of contingency management has not been adequately tested in this project and should, in the evaluator's judgment, be given a well-planned tryout with experienced teachers in a carefully sequenced situation with adequate controls.

4. The establishment of a governing board should be accompanied by thorough planning as to rules, bylaws, and areas of function, limitation, and initiative. It should provide for the exercise of parent, professional, and community consideration, judgment, and decisions.

5. The training of community people as paraprofessionals should be continued and accelerated. Such assistants serve pupils, teachers, and families. Moreover, the program provides important work, with pay, and

brings parents and community into closer contact with the school.

In terms of replicating a school-university project, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Establishing and maintaining effective channels of communication. Procedures for continuous and adequate communication must be developed and incorporated into the structure of such a project. It should be implicit that communication and information are to be presented clearly, in both directions, between planners and other personnel. Specifically, communication channels should include small- and large-group meetings, individual interviews and briefings, the preparation of "in-house" bulletins, and the careful keeping of records and minutes. Information to the public and press releases are also vital, and the responsibility for their preparation and use should be judiciously assigned.

2. Providing for a continuing program of staff training, supervision, and evaluation. A program of continual training, supervision, and evaluation must be established. This would require selection and orientation processes agreed upon by school and university staffs. It would include a sequence of training activities, demonstrations, observations, and seminars planned in terms of the position in the program of teachers and other personnel.

An important factor in the growth of professional as well as of other school personnel is prompt and adequate recognition of individual work and achievement. It should be considered a prime responsibility of supervisors and administrators to be alert and responsive to this aspect of human relations.

Coupled with activities for training and recognition of personnel development is the fundamental task of supervision. A clear definition must be given to this task and placed in the hands of specifically designated individuals, who because of their experience, professional expertise, and personal skills in relating to others, can serve the interests of the project. It is their responsibility to know and interpret the professional status of their colleagues, and to provide those services of consultation, training, and evaluation which will be positive, constructive, and supportive. Supervisory services should be provided by persons agreed upon both by school and university staffs. Such services should themselves be reviewed and studied in terms of their effectiveness in reducing staff tensions, increasing security, and improving general competence.

3. Making available the adequate and continued service of specialists. Both school and university should provide full and continuous availability of specialists and project supervisors for all aspects of their program. There should be a minimum of part-time, or one-time,

participants.

The services of full-time specialists should enable a joint program to promote serious study of existing curricula, and to develop experimental and innovative approaches to curriculum and the organization of instruction. Such collaborative efforts of specialists, teachers, and supervisors, should also concentrate on revisions and improvements in teaching methodologies.

These developmental activities should also incorporate specific designs for objective evaluation and further study.

4. Involving appropriate and representative professional and community personnel. In all jointly organized and operated programs in the inner city, attention must be paid to the involvement of adequate and appropriate personnel. Black and Puerto Rican professionals should be included at all levels. Communities should be called upon to provide paraprofessionals and school aides, both for initial training and for service. These individuals should also be seen as primary sources for reference, information, and contact with the community at large, and with its various agencies and institutions.

A school and university program can hope for success only with the full involvement of community and professional persons, whose service in planning, operations, and in appraisal is invaluable. Continual communication with, and utilization of, human resources must be established and maintained throughout all aspects and stages of the program.

APPENDIX A

A1

CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION

Title I Evaluations
Project 06D

To: Teachers in P.S. 129K

From: Nathan Kravetz, Evaluation Director

Re: Evaluation of Project Beacon Program at 129K

As you know, we have been studying the project at your school since early March. Many of you may wish to voice your reactions to and observations of the program. This will be fulfilled in two ways. The questionnaire below is being sent to all teachers in the school. During the coming weeks we shall conduct more detailed interviews with many of you (with your consent) for additional information.

In both instances all your answers and comments will be held in absolute confidence. Only I and my research staff will ever see any of this material, and none of it will ever be attributed to a specific individual in any of our reports.

Thank you for your cooperation in this important phase of our study.

1. Grade you are now teaching: _____ Male: _____ Female: _____

2. Present license and status: _____

3. Your service in this school: This term only _____
   Since September 1967 _____ Since February 1967 _____
   Since September 1966 _____
   From 2 to 5 years: _____ 6 to 10 years: _____ 11 years + _____

4. With regard to the activities of Project Beacon in 129, have you been directly involved? YES _____ NO _____ DON'T KNOW _____
   If YES, in what ways? _____

   _____

5. Have you been affected or involved indirectly?
   YES _____ NO _____ DON'T KNOW _____
   If YES, in what ways? _____

   _____

   _____

6. Has your teaching benefited from the activities of Project Beacon?

YES _____ NO _____ DON'T KNOW _____

If YES, in what ways? _____

_____

_____

If NO, why do you think so? _____

_____

_____

7. Have the children in your class benefited from the Project Beacon program?

YES _____ NO _____ DON'T KNOW _____

If YES, in what ways? _____

_____

_____

8. Have there been gains in READING by your children as a result of Project Beacon activities?

YES _____ NO _____ DON'T KNOW _____

If YES, why is this so? _____

_____

_____

9. Have you noted improved achievement in academic areas other than reading?

YES _____ NO _____ DON'T KNOW _____

If YES, in which subjects? _____

_____

10. Have the children been hindered or affected adversely by Project Beacon activities?

YES _____ NO _____ DON'T KNOW _____

If YES, in what ways? _____

_____

_____

11. Have there been changes in pupil attitudes toward school and toward learning?

YES _____ NO _____ DON'T KNOW _____

If YES, in what ways? _____

_____

_____

12. What specific in-service training activities of Project Beacon have you participated in?

List: _____

_____

How would you rate their overall effectiveness?

Check one: Outstanding _____

Strong _____

Average _____

Somewhat ineffective _____

Very ineffective _____

What was the most useful in-service program or session? _____

_____

What was the least useful in-service program or session? _____

_____

13. Has there been increased parental involvement related to your class or affecting it, as a result of Project Beacon?

YES _____ NO _____ DON'T KNOW _____

If YES, in what ways? _____

_____

_____

How would you rate the value of this increased involvement of parents? Check one:

Helpful to the teacher and resulting in desirable pupil growth. _____

Helpful to the teacher with little evidence of pupil growth. _____

Not helpful to the teacher but resulting in desirable pupil growth. _____

Not helpful to the teacher and with little evidence of pupil growth. _____

14. What would be the most useful form of parental involvement in the school?

_____

_____

_____

15. What is your estimate of the effectiveness of the PS 129 school governing board?

_____

_____

_____

16. Have you noted a change in discipline problems this year?

YES _____ NO _____ DON'T KNOW _____

If YES, have problems: increased? _____ decreased? _____

Why? _____

_____

_____

17. Have there been additional materials available for teaching as a result of Project Beacon activities?

YES _____ NO _____ DON'T KNOW _____

If YES, how effective have these materials been? (Consider availability, quality, appropriateness, etc.) Check one:

Very effective _____

Moderately effective _____

Slightly effective _____

Ineffective _____

Why? _____

_____

_____

18. How do you think the parents of your children feel about the Project Beacon activities?

	ALL	MOST	HALF	FEW	NONE
Enthusiastic					
Positive, but not enthusiastic					
Slightly positive					
Slightly negative					
Strongly negative					
Don't Know					

19. What do you consider the most valuable features of the Project Beacon activities at 129?

_____

_____

_____

20. What are the major weaknesses of the program? _____

_____

_____

21. How would you rate the following aspects of the Project Beacon program at P.S. 129?

	Very effective	Moderately effective	Slightly effective	Ineffective	Don't know
Learning Center					
School Governing Board					
Family Assistants					
Guidance Specialists					
Heterogeneous Grouping					
Experimental Curriculum					
Special Talent Groupings					
Science Program					
Other (specify:)					

22. What recommendations would you make to improve the program?

_____

_____

_____

23. Do you think the program should be: (check one)

Continued as is _____ Continued with modifications _____

Expanded _____ Abolished _____ Undecided _____

24. Do you wish to add comments or stress some points about the Project Beacon Program?

_____

_____

_____

Use reverse side to continue.

PLEASE RETURN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IN ATTACHED STAMPED ENVELOPE.

A7

CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION
33 West 42nd Street
New York, N.Y.

June 14th, 1968

To: Parents of P.S. 129, Grade 4

As you may know, P.S. 129 has had a special program since September, 1967. This has been done to improve the children's learning and to make P.S. 129 a better school in as many ways as possible.

Since the work at P.S. 129 has used federal funds in part, the Center for Urban Education was asked to study the project. It is our wish to find out if the project has been a success. We can only do this if parents of children in the school give their opinions and information.

We hope you will fill out this questionnaire to help us make the best possible judgement.

Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed stamped self-addressed envelope. Thank you.

Dr. Nathan Kravetz
Evaluation Research Director
Center for Urban Education

CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION

Parent Questionnaire

1. How many children have you now at PS 129? _____

(Please check the space for each child):

Pre-kindergarten	Boy_____	Girl _____
1st grade	Boy_____	Girl _____
2nd grade	Boy_____	Girl _____
3rd grade	Boy_____	Girl _____
4th grade	Boy_____	Girl _____
5th grade	Boy_____	Girl _____
6th grade	Boy_____	Girl _____

2. Are your children doing well in their school work?

Yes_____ No _____

3. If NO, which of your children are not doing well in their school work?

Grade _____ Boy_____ Girl_____

With what subjects are they having the most trouble?

_____

_____

4 Why do you think your child is not doing well in school work?

_____

_____

5. What special help has your child had in school this year?

_____

_____

6 Have you been given the information about the special program at PS 129 this year? Yes_____ No _____

7. Do you know what the Learning Center is?

Yes_____ No_____

CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION

Parent Questionnaire

8. What do you know about the Learning Center?

_____

_____

_____

9. What do you know about the special program in the 4th grade?

_____

_____

10. What do you know about special programs in other grades?

_____

_____

11. Do you know of new materials being used in the 4th grade?

Yes_____ No_____

If YES, what new materials are being used?

_____

_____

12. Do you know of new materials being used in other grades?

Yes_____ No_____

If YES, what new materials are being used?

_____

_____

13 Have you had more contacts or visits to the school this year than the year before? Yes_____ No_____

If YES, for what purposes did you go to the school?

_____

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Parent Questionnaire

14 What kinds of school contacts or visits did you make:

	More Often	Less Often	Same
Meetings			
Workshops			
Complaints			
Help the teacher			
Help the children			
Individual conferences:			
with a teacher			
with a counselor			
with assistant principal			
with principal			
with others			

15 Have you attended parent meetings to learn about the special program in the school? Yes_____ No_____

16. Do you know about the PS 129 governing board?

Yes_____ No_____

Have you attended meetings of the governing board?

Yes_____ No_____

17. What information have you about the governing board?

_____

_____

18. What do you think of the idea of a school governing board?

Approve_____ Do not approve_____

Why?

_____

_____

All

CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION

Parent Questionnaire

15 Have you attended parent meetings to learn about the special program in the school? Yes_____ No_____

19 What is your opinion of the special program at PS 129 this year?

It is a success. _____

It is a success in some ways, but not in others _____

It has made no difference in the school._____

It has made the school worse this year than before _____

Give the reasons for your answers_____

_____

_____

20 What would you suggest to improve the special program at PS 129 for next year?_____

_____

21. Do you think the school is better this year than last year?

Yes_____ No_____

In what ways is it better?_____

_____

In what ways is it not better?_____

_____

22. What would you suggest to improve the school as a whole?

_____

_____

Thank you Sign your name if you wish _____

Interview Guide for Pupils in Learning Center
First Cycle

Name of Pupil_____

1. Were you in the Learning Center? _____

2. How long did you stay there? _____

   Was this too long a time? _____

   too short a time? _____

   just right? _____

3. Did you like being there? Yes_____ No_____

   Why?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

4. Why were you there?

   _____

   _____

5. What do you think was the best part of being at the Learning Center?

   _____

   _____

6. What was the part you didn't like? Why?

   _____

   _____

Interview Guide for Pupils in Learning Center - First Cycle

7. Tell me about how you were taught there.

8. Did you learn more there than you did at P.S. 129 before you went there? Why?

9. What do you think about getting prizes for good work in school?

10. What prizes did you get?

11. How did your parents feel about your being at the Learning Center? What did they say?

12. What do you think should be done to make the Learning Center better?

13. Would you rather be back here or at the Learning Center? Why?

14. What kind of work is your class doing now?

Interview Guide for Pupils in Learning Center - First Cycle

15. Are you doing better work here than you did here before you went to the Learning Center? Why?

_____

_____

16. Which subject have you improved most in? _____

17. Which subject(s) do you need to have a lot of help in?

_____

Why?

_____

_____

18. How is the teaching different in this class from when you were in the Learning Center?

_____

_____

19. Do you get prizes for doing well now? _____

20. Should you get prizes all along in school? Yes_____ No _____

21. What do you think would help children learn better?

_____

_____

22. What do you like best about your class now? Why?

_____

_____

23. What do you like least about your class now?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Interview Guide for Pupils in Learning Center - First Cycle

24. Does it help you when there are two or three adults and the teacher in the room?

Yes _____ No_____

Why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

25. How do your parents feel about your class and the work you are doing now?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Interview Guide for Pupils in
Learning Center
Second Cycle

Name of Pupil _____ Date _____

1. How long have you been at the Learning Center? _____

2. How long will you stay here? _____

3. Do you think this is

too long a time? _____

too short a time? _____

just right? _____

4. Do you like being here? Yes_____ No _____

Why? _____

_____

_____

_____

5. Why are you here?

_____

_____

_____

6. What do you think is the best part of being at the Learning Center?

_____

_____

Interview Guide for Pupils in
Learning Center
Second Cycle

7. What is the part you don't like? Why?

8. Tell me about how you are being taught here.

9. Are you learning more here than you did at P.S. 129? Why?

10. Do you get prizes for doing good work? Yes_____ No _____

11. What do you think about getting prizes for doing good work in school?

12. What prizes have you received?

Interview Guide for Pupils in
Learning Center
Second Cycle

13. How do you parents feel about your being at the Learning Center?

What have they said?

14. How do your parents feel about your class and the work you are doing now?

15. What do you think should be done to make the Learning Center better?

16. Would you rather remain here or go back to P.S. 129? Why?

Interview Guide for Pupils in

Learning Center

Second Cycle

17. Are you doing better work at the Learning Center than you did at P.S. 129 before you came here? Why?

18. Which subjects have you improved most in?

19. Which subjects do you have to have a lot of help in?

Why?

20. How is the teaching different here from when you were in P.S. 129?

21. What do you like best about your class and what they are doing now at the Learning Center now? Why?

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Interview Guide for Pupils in

Learning Center

Second Cycle

22. What do you like least about your class at the Learning Center?

_____

_____

_____

23. What do you think would help children learn better?

_____

_____

_____

_____

24. Do you think you should get prizes all along in school for doing good work?

Yes_____ No _____

Why?

_____

_____

_____

25. Does it help you when there are one or two adults and the teacher in the room?

_____

_____

_____

A21

CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION

Project 129K — Learning Center, First Cycle — **PARENT INTERVIEW GUIDE**

Name of child who was in L.C.: _____

Other children in family in 129 now: _____

_____ _____

1. Do you know why your child was chosen for the L.C.? _____ Why? _____

2. What were the activities there? What did the children do? _____

3. What were the best parts (strong points) of the L.C. program? _____

4. What were its weak points? Where did it seem to fall down? _____

5. Did your child benefit from his experiences in the L.C.? Yes _____ No ____

   Explain: _____

6. Did your child gain in reading skill as a result of the L.C. Yes _____

   No _____ How do you know? _____

7. How did the experience affect his reading habits? Does more reading _____

   Goes to library for books _____ Reads the newspaper and magazines _____

   Other _____

Project 129 K Learning Center, First Cycle PARENT INTERVIEW GUIDE

8. Did your child receive prizes or rewards while he was in the L.C. Yes _____

No _____ If yes, what were they. _____

If no, why not? _____

9. What do you think of this method of teaching children? Approve _____

Disapprove _____ Why? _____

_____

10. Were you as a parent involved in the L.C.? Yes _____ No _____. If yes,

in what way? _____

_____

11. Was the time your child spent in the L.C. just about right _____,

too short _____, too long _____?

12. What is your general feeling about the L.C.? Approve _____ Disapprove _____

How was it run? " _____ " _____

How the teaching was done? " _____ " _____

How the children felt about it? " _____ " _____

How the parents were involved? " _____ " _____

13. Would you want another child of yours to attend the L.C. Yes _____ No _____

Why? _____

_____

14. Additional Comments about the L.C. _____

_____

_____

15. Additional comments about the school (129) and new programs there this year:

_____

_____

APPENDIX B

Staff List

Dr. Nathan Kravetz, Evaluation Director
Associate Professor of Education
Lehman College
City University of New York

Mrs. Jacqueline Jackson, Research Associate
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Lehman College
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