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ABSTRACT

Modular building design is the architectural premise for a California school. Audiovisual instruction, and educational programs and curriculum, are discussed, as is future planning. The school is cne of twenty schools cooperating with UCLA and various foundations to stimulate and study educational innovations. (FPO)

Selected as a Demonstration School

National Commission on Teacher Education & Professional Standards
National Education Association

Banyan Elementary School
1120 Knollwood Street
Newbury Park, California

Arendt/Mosher/Grant Architects
1435 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, California

Timber School District
1748 Newbury Road
Newbury Park, California

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February 1967

"The organization of personnel, resources, time and space is more bound by tradition than inspired by mission. But the winds of inspiration are blowing ever more strongly." John I. Goodlad

There exists in the present educational climate an urgent need for improvement of established practices and mores. The advance of new knowledge, coming at an ever-increasing rate, coupled with pyramiding educational research, mandates reform of some present practices and dictates the need for innovation if the challenge of the future is to be met.

The Board of Trustees of the Timber School District and its staff is committed to pursue this challenge. The Board is dedicated to the task of providing tomorrow's educational program to today's students, and to that end Banyan Elementary School has been designed and constructed.

The Banyan School officially opened November 7, 1966, thus becoming the newest member of the expanding Timber School District. The District, which encompasses an area of nearly 30 square miles and includes the communities of Newbury Park and Thousand Oaks, now numbers six elementary schools and an intermediate school for seventh and eighth grade students.

The first Timber School opened its doors in 1888, with less than 30 pupils in attendance. There are currently more than 3,600 students in attendance throughout the District, and County and Regional planning experts anticipate increased enrollments for the next 20 years. An estimated student enrollment of 7,000 is forecast by 1970.

The Banyan School, located in the picturesque Potrero Valley area of Newbury Park, about 35 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles, presently has an enrollment of 240 students in kindergarten through the sixth grade, and will eventually accommodate a total of 704.

The story of the Timber School District is one of growth, planning and foresight. It is a story of innovation and of striving; an unstinting dedication to providing the best in education. Banyan School is an inspired step toward that goal.

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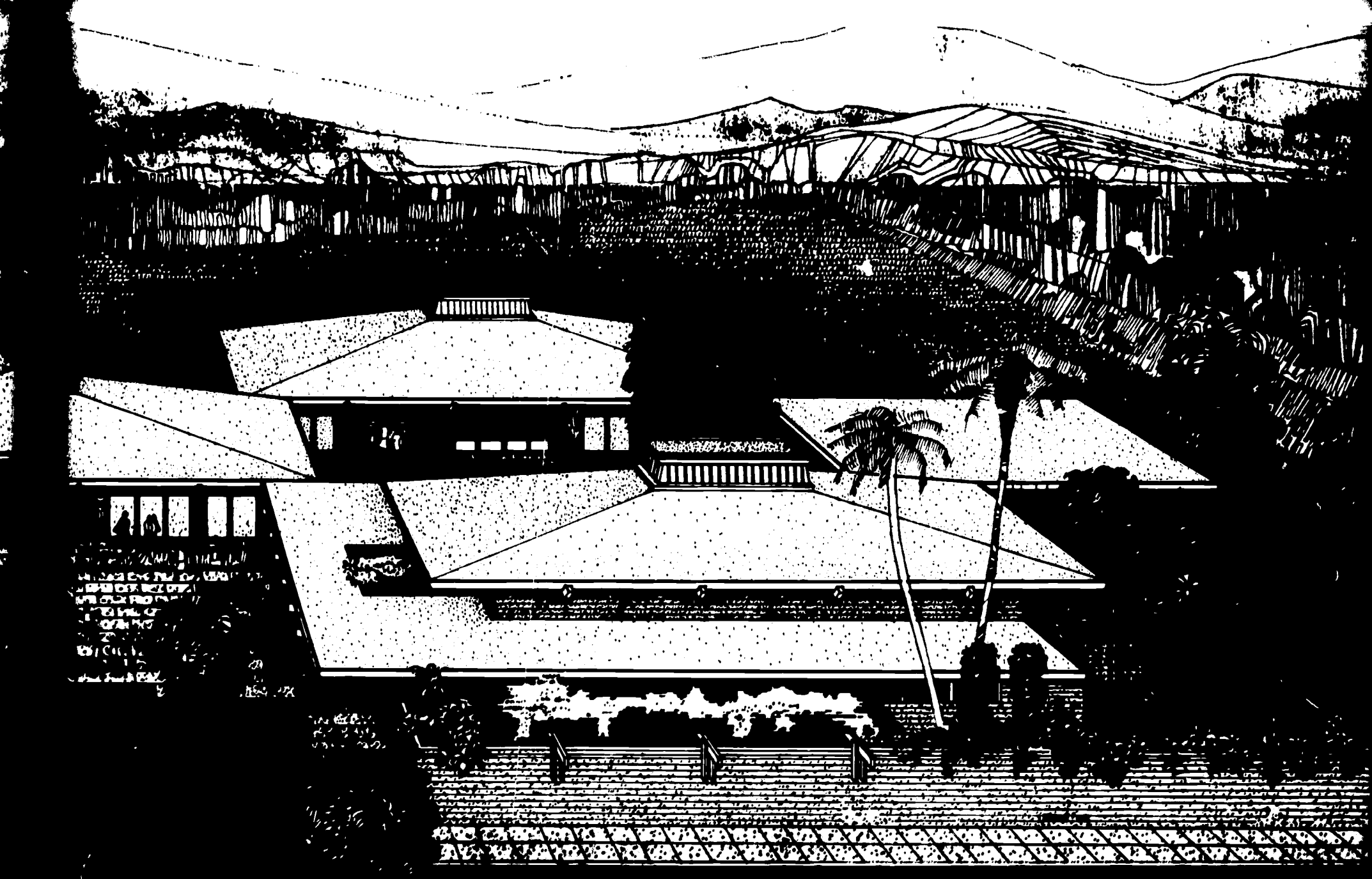
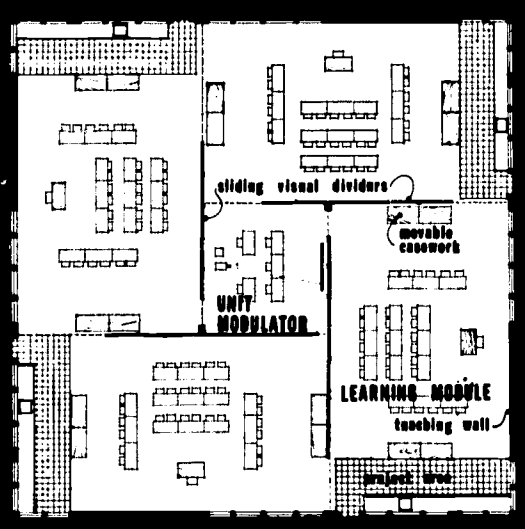
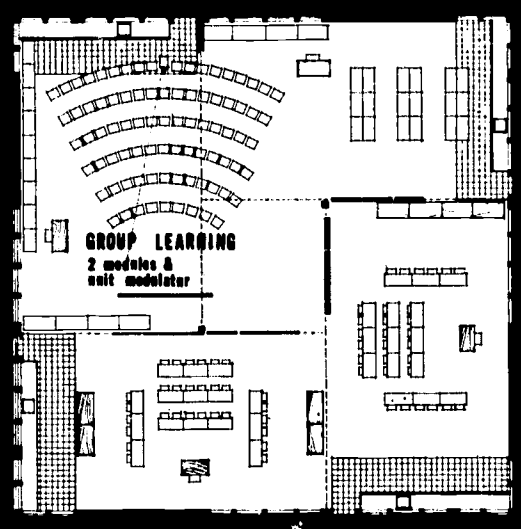
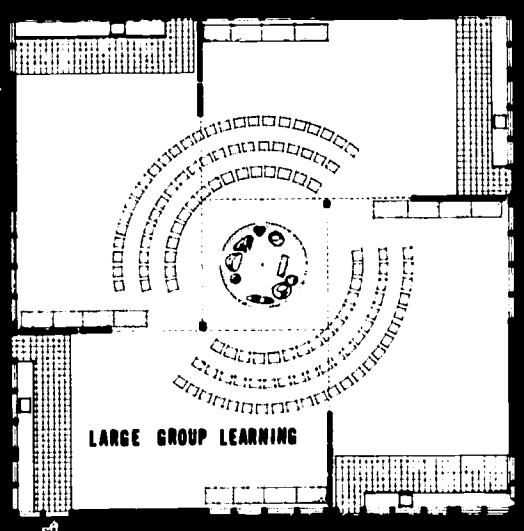
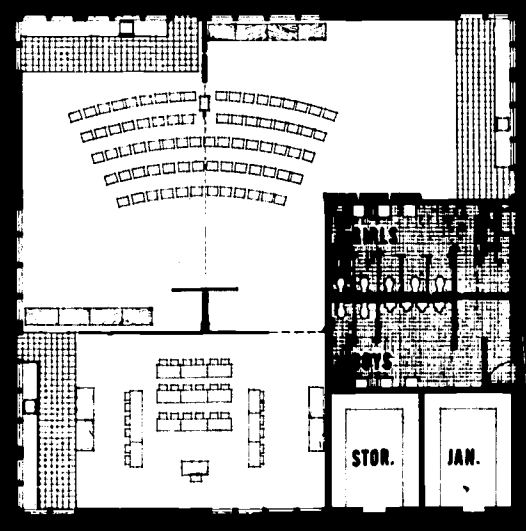



sliding visual dividers
movable casework
UNIT MODULATOR
LEARNING MODULE
teaching wall
project area


GROUP LEARNING
2 modules &
unit modulator


LARGE GROUP LEARNING


STOR.
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Concept

The use of expensive soundproof movable walls was first considered as the proper means of defining the basic instructional areas. As the plans evolved, however, concern developed that teachers might too easily retreat to a self-contained instructional space by pulling closed the soundproof walls and thus defeating the team concept of teaching.

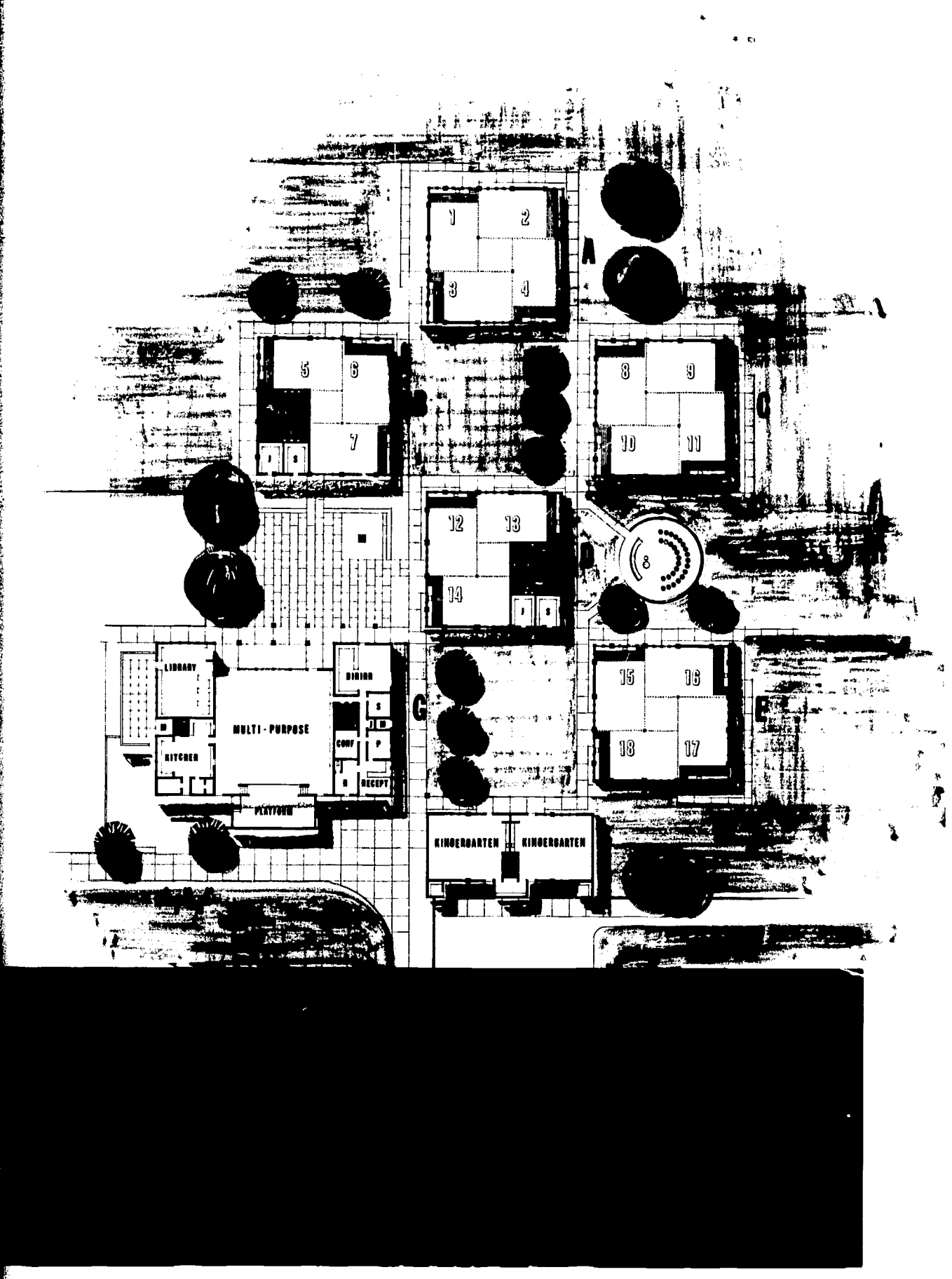
The completely open "big room" or "loft" concept used in some areas of the country as a team teaching space was also considered. It features three of four classes in one large carpeted room without any means of interior subdivision. This was ruled out as being visually too distracting, the space dull and uninteresting, and educationally substandard. The "big room" or "loft" concept has proven, however, that the acoustical environment of a large group teaching space can be effectively controlled by carpeted floors and acoustical ceilings.

The Banyan solution is based on the premise that the "big room" space must have the capability of being visually altered in order to afford a variety of spaces —large, medium, small and individual—in order to have the high degree of flexible and imaginative spaces that are necessary to conduct a stimulating and effective team teaching program.

To achieve this capability, the Santa Barbara architectural firm of Arendt/Mosher/Grant pursued a plan suggested by the District Planning Committee and designed inexpensive and easily operated sliding visual dividers surfaced with colorful chalk and tackboard. Divider panels were provided to screen only half of the basic instructional area, thereby making mandatory the flow of spaces within the pod. The "pinwheel" arrangement of the visual divider tracks makes possible many variable space divisions; subdividing, when desired, into small group learning areas, and, indeed, into individual areas, by movable cabinets on casters.

The color scheme employs the bold use of bright and lively colors varied from pod to pod to give the instructional areas individual identity and the child an important point of reference. The Vectrafiber carpeting sets the color scheme for each pod and helps greatly in the control of the acoustical environment. Additionally, the use of carpet adds a new dimension of flexibility to the space by the fact that large groups of children may gather in an area seated on the floor.

"Flexibility is the key feature of this school," explains Arthur N. Thayer, Assistant District Superintendent and Banyan's acting Principal. "We have endeavored to incorporate 'dynamic flexibility' while attempting to preclude 'built-in obsolescence.' We have here at Banyan a facility which is not bounded by the barriers built into the conventional schoolhouse, providing instead an area of almost unlimited mobility. This mobility will encourage greater interaction between pupil and teacher and between teacher and teacher. I cannot envision any new developments in educational techniques that could not readily be incorporated into Banyan because of our flexibility."

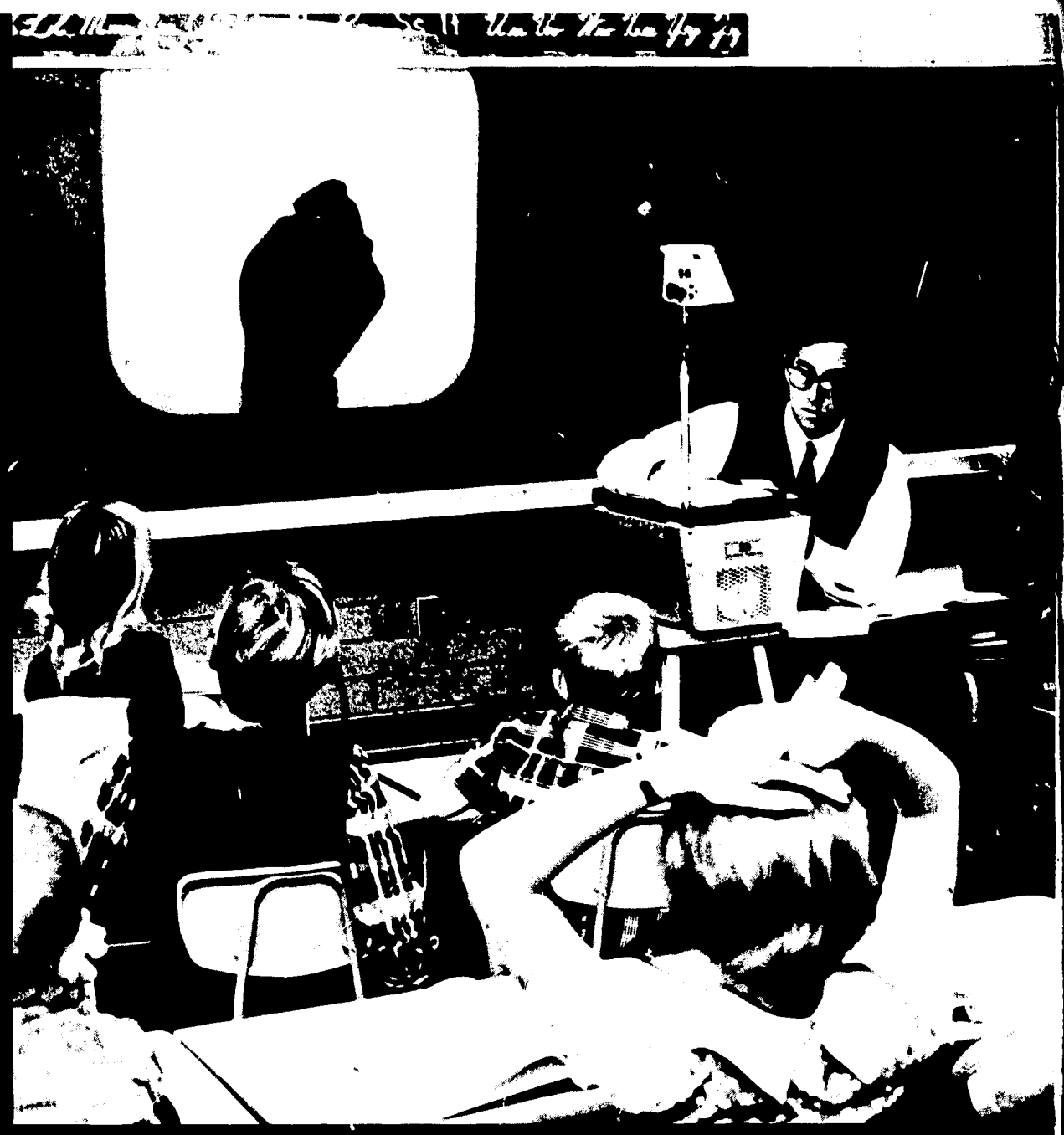


The basic instructional unit, or pod, is 64 feet square with permanent exterior walls of sandblasted lightweight concrete block for low maintenance. The windows are glare-reducing gray glass set in non-bearing window wall units with plaster in-fill panels. The roof system is composed of Douglas Fir glu-laminated beams spaced on a 16′ module with heavy wood decking spanning over the beams. The roof is colored crushed rock over built-up composition fiberglass roofing. The floors are concrete slab on grade covered with inexpensive Vectrafiber outdoor carpet. For comparative purposes this carpet has been installed on both carpet padding and on the concrete slab. The sliding visual divider wall panels are made of wood frames with pressed wood in-fill panels covered with vinyl corkboard and chalkboard.

The structural, mechanical, and electrical systems of the typical instructional units are similar and thus lend themselves to production line building techniques, *resulting in an appreciable cost savings.* The heating system is gas-fired and the lighting is fluorescent with non-glare Acrylic plastic diffusers. The school has an area of 37,308 square feet. Covered walks rather than enclosed walks were used—through the State Aid Square Footage Formula, covered walks count only as one-half footage, thereby allowing for more classroom area.

The construction cost including site work, site utilities, landscaping, erosion control, sprinkler systems, and fixed and movable casework was $672,211.30—a *figure which was approximately $140,000.00 under the allowance provided for construction by the California State School Building Aid Program.*

The financial yardstick applied to determine the amount of funds to be made available for the construction of Banyan was predicated on the State Aid Formula and on the cost of four conventional schools built within the District during the past two years—the happy result being that a more effective and efficient educational plant emerged for less money.

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"There is no miracle in a device. There is no substitute for teaching. There is no substitute for the contact of mind with mind. There is no miracle in education except the miracle of education itself."
—Lyman Bryson

Once the goals had been outlined, the approach determined, the plans resolved and the construction begun, the administration and staff of Banyan set themselves to yet another task: How can funds be saved and reinvested in additional teaching aids, audio-visual equipment and other devices to help teachers work more effectively?

The traditional approach would have been to explore the possibility of obtaining monies through one of the new Federal funding programs, or possibly seeking assistance through the Governing Board and the public via additional tax funds. Banyan, instead, chose a different approach—an approach which proved immensely successful, and an approach which could be emulated by any district in the country.

The administration and staff elected to carefully examine the furnishings to be purchased for the school, feeling that if they could preclude the purchase of "unneeded quality," they could invest the resultant savings in needed equipment. The following criteria were established:

- Does it contribute directly to educating the student?
- Is it necessary for efficient operation?
- Is it necessary in order to provide established district services?
- Is there an equally effective but less expensive substitute?

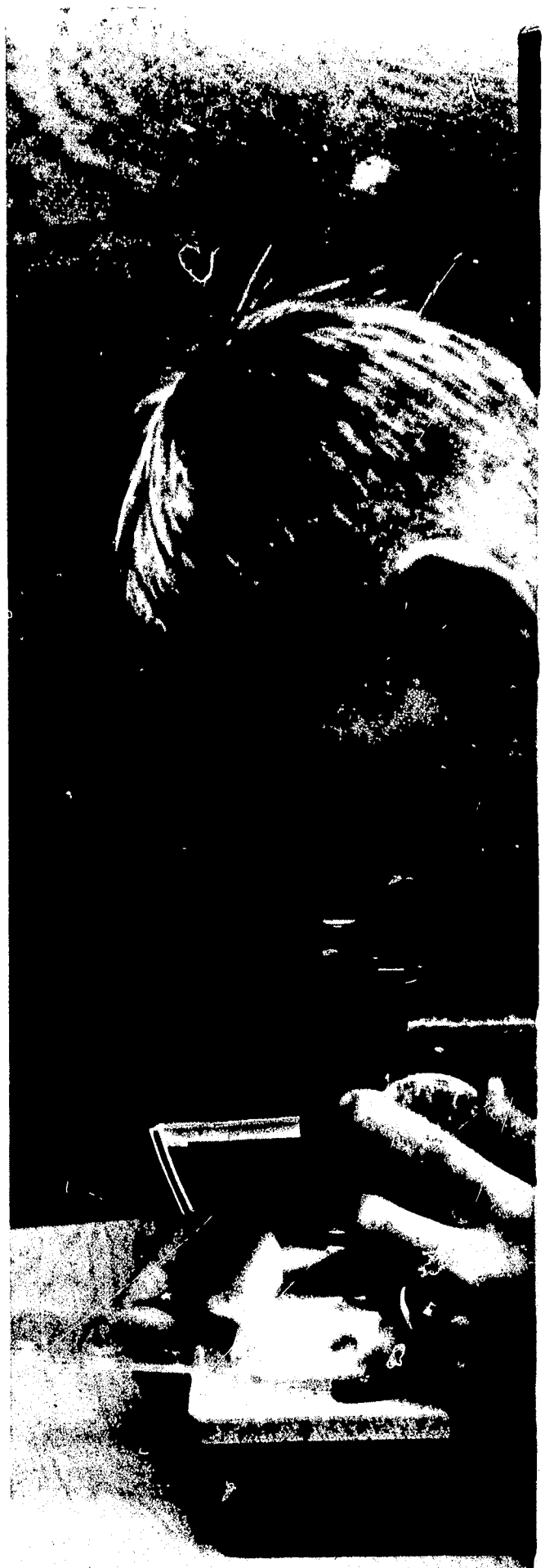
With these criteria in mind, the staff began revaluating the items which they had originally suggested be purchased.

The first casualties of this intense effort were trapezoidal tables and, surprisingly, the traditional lift-lid school desks. In their place Banyan purchased the open-book box desk which, in the opinion of the staff, was equally effective and cost six dollars less per unit. This six dollars, when multiplied by 704, resulted in a savings of $4,224.00.

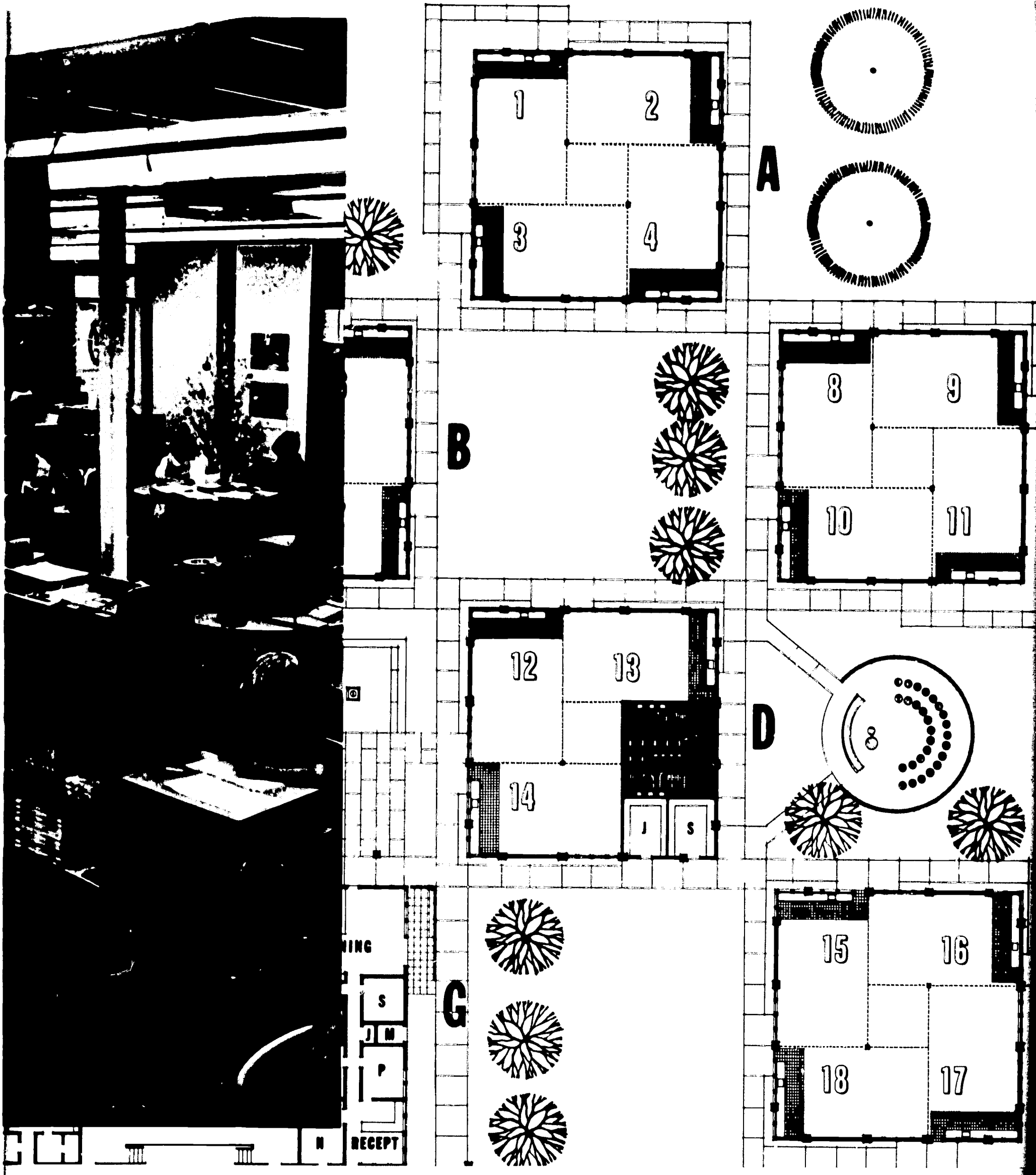
Since movable cabinets were incorporated as part of the architectural concept, and inasmuch as these cabinets have storage and filing space, and numerous tables provide writing space, it was decided that teachers' desks were superfluous. This determination resulted in an additional $2,000.00 savings at an approximate cost of $100.00 per unit for 20 desks. This procedure was effectively utilized on other "standard" items, resulting in additional savings.

Again as the result of the architectural design of the facility, another, yet equally meaningful, type of savings was also possible. With all of the pods either built around a central core area or not having interior walls, all equipment immediately became more readily accessible to other teachers, and, consequently, increased the "use value" of the apparatus. The teachers and administration of Banyan feel that through the process of careful evaluation and selection, they have been able to get more of what they wanted for the funds available.

Each pod now has a rear-projection 16mm movie projector, four tape recorders, two record players, four listening stations, three slide projectors, two filmstrip previewers, one language master, 15 microscopes and three overhead projectors. In addition, in the school there is an opaque projector, micro-projector, radios and portable lecturer. Much of this would not have been possible—at least not without the use of government funds or additional local taxes—if it were not for the planning and care exercised in the purchase of furnishings.



Program and Curriculum



The Banyan Concept promotes a program and a curriculum designed to develop a "Learner-centered" structure, encouraging individualized instruction and stimulating a one-to-one relationship between pupil and teacher, pupil and pupil and between teacher and teacher. Because of the physical design of the facility, this individualized relationship is imminently more possible than in the conventional schoolhouse; indeed, the Banyan design encourages such a relationship.

As with all aspects of the recently completed school, the program and curriculum are flexible and subject to alteration from time to time as implementation and application of the program reveals changing or shifting needs, calling for new emphasis or different direction.

Opening November 7, 1966 with seven teachers, three student teachers, one custodian, one secretary, a part-time noon duty aide and one principal, Banyan School has since added a part time library clerk, and a full-time teacher who completed her training as a student teacher at Banyan and joined the primary team. The following program has been implemented since that time:

The school is organized around a team hiearchy with two teams of volunteer teachers from within the District and one from a neighboring district. Each team has a team leader, paid $500.00 in addition to his regular salary. The team leader has more than six years' teaching experience. The rest of the team is composed of a teacher with three to six years' experience and a beginning teacher with no experience to two years' experience so that the total cost of a team is no more than staffing teachers in other schools in the District.

Special sub-projects which are underway include:

Inquiry Development Skills
Library Skills
New Spelling Technique
Perceptual Problems in Reading
Independent Study Skills

These experimental projects are currently in various stages of progress and implementation.

The school is also involved in the training of student teachers with California Lutheran College, and will conduct a teacher-intern program for the 1967-68 school year.

The school will be utilizing community volunteer teacher-aides, starting in January, to assist teachers in making instructional materials and devices, typing assignments, reading to children and other clerical tasks to allow the teacher more time to work individually with children.

Noon-duty aides are employed to free the teachers for a completely duty-free lunch period.

THE PRIMARY TEAM

The primary team is composed of four teachers (grades 1-3) and 113 students.

The basic organizational framework is built around team planning and multiple teaching organization on a multi-grade level with flexible grouping, when appropriate by achievement, interest and skill development, and with large group-small group instruction. True team teaching, cooperative teaching and self-contained forms of teaching organization are used when appropriate.

In Reading, the students are organized into four groups based upon diagnosis of the level of individual skill development. The lowest in achievement and smallest in number is a group of approximately 18 first grade stu-

Program and Curriculum

dents who have a high degree of perceptual problems in reading and are more immature in their overall physical and emotional development. The other three groups are basically what one would normally term a 1-2, 2-3 combination or multi-grade group with some students at a fourth grade level. These children are then sub-grouped by achievement and need. Groupings are frequently revaluated and children re-grouped when ready. Children are encouraged to proceed at their own rate with no ceiling on achievement level. A true nongraded philosophy permeates prescriptive decisions.

The Math program is basically a self-contained, graded program with one teacher at each grade level. The fourth teacher takes individual children and small groups for varying lengths of time for prescriptive remedial or enrichment work.

Social Studies, based upon the State Framework, is taught in units, in a basic, self-contained single grade level concept. The fourth teacher in the team teaches a multi-graded unit to a group of students who have difficulty in language arts, and places heavy emphasis upon development of perceptual and reading skills. These pupils occasionally work with other grade groups, dependent upon particular activities and their interest and abilities.

In Reading, Math and Social Studies, there is a team interchange of teachers for the groups in order that teachers are not identified as teaching only low or high achieving groups; the groups are then primarily taught as a self-contained unit to provide maximum security to students.

Music is taught in a true team situation with primary emphasis upon large group instruction. This is also true of literature, except for small group storytimes for less mature pupils and poor listeners.

The Science and Health program is correlated with the Social Studies unit and the Reading program; balance is emphasized, with attention given to both the physical and natural sciences. Cafeteria usage provides a background for natural on-going programs for health.

In the Language Arts, the focus is on oral and written communication, and this is closely related to reading.

Listening skills, appreciation of literature, and development of awareness and readiness are the primary interests of Storytime.

Spelling emphasizes retention and usage. Audio/visual devices are employed for drill and to free the teacher to further individualize the program.

The Physical Education program is a balanced one based on the County guide. It is basically self-contained at this time, but some subgrouping is done for prescriptive work on coordination problems.

THE UPPER GRADE TEAM

The upper grade team (grades 4-6) has three teachers and 95 students. The basic organizational framework is team-planning and teaching on a multi-grade level with flexible grouping; large group-small group instruction is coupled with independent study. Although the organizational structure is multi-graded, teams approach their teaching endeavors as though the school was nongraded.

In Reading, two teachers in a team situation guide approximately 71 of the students in a combination of textbook, independent reading and SRA. The third teacher is working with two groups of 12 multi-grade students in specified remedial skill development. The composition of these groups is constantly revaluated and adjusted as necessary.

Math is basically taught as a self-contained unit by each teacher, completely individualized by one teacher with some interchange of students based upon pupil need.

Social Studies is taught as a complete, self-contained, single-graded class because the State Framework emphasizes a grade level unit approach. Students are either sub-grouped or work on individualized projects, based upon interests. At the sixth grade, independent research and study are emphasized.

Music is taught in a team situation by one teacher in one large group and occasionally the students break into sub-groups with the other teachers. Teachers rotate primary responsibility based upon their particular strengths and the lesson to be taught.

Art is usually taught on a team basis, although some students work on independent projects.

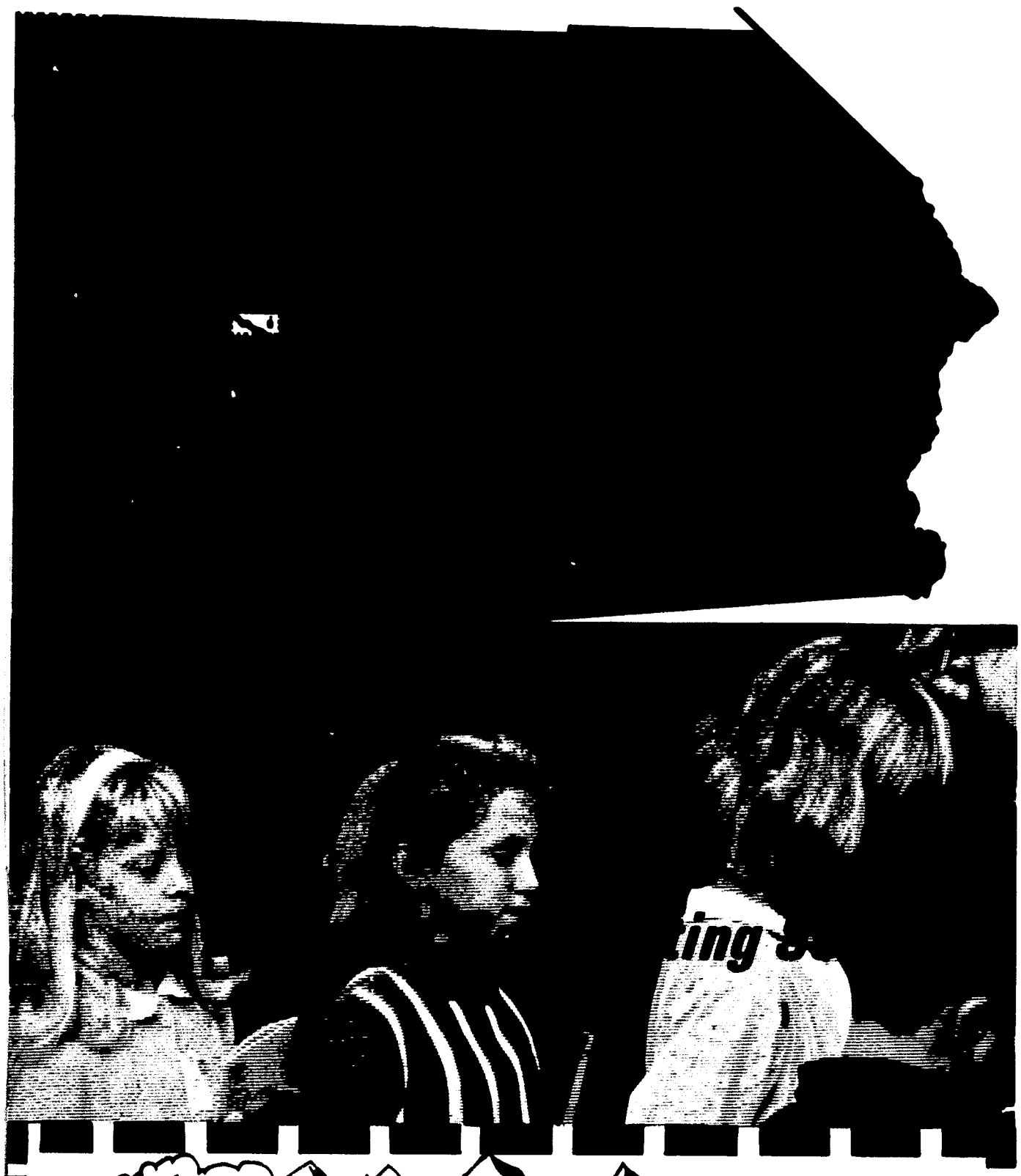
Science is taught in a team basis with one teacher giving basic instruction in a large group. Students are then sub-grouped for small group instruction and follow-up, based upon the interest levels of students. At the close of the period, they are usually reassembled into a large group for reporting and sharing of

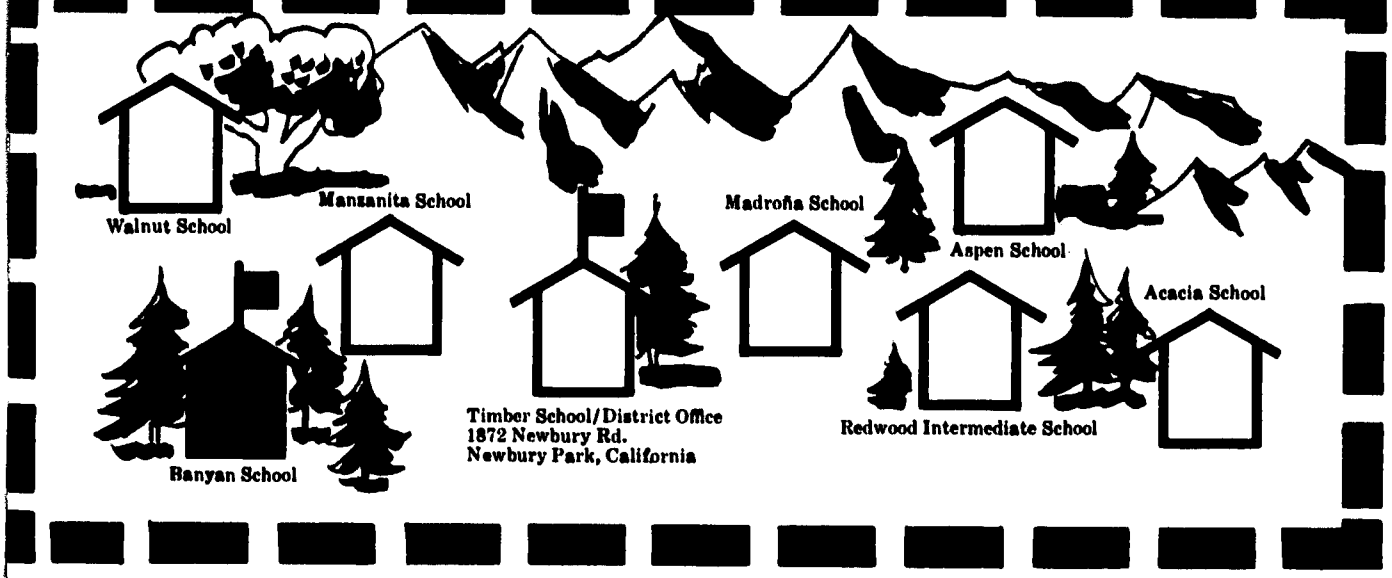
information and appropriate culmination activities.

Physical Education is taught in a true team-teaching approach. Regrouping is done periodically based upon skills, interests and the nature of the unit. It is completely multi-graded. Prescriptive activities are based upon diagnostic evaluation of the State testing program.

Spelling and English are generally taught on the basis of a self-contained single grade level, with some interchange of pupils for short-term skill development activities. The language master is utilized for individualizing the program and to free teacher time.

Each team has some common large group activities such as opening exercises, evaluation of the day, and some special social studies activities built around holidays and special events.





Banyan Elementary School is one of twenty members of the League of Cooperating Schools, a unique organization designed to generate and implement significant ideas for change in the field of elementary education. Through a cooperative tripartite structure, 19 Southern California public school districts, the U.C.L.A. School of Education and Foundation Resources, seek to stimulate innovative approaches to schooling and to study the effectiveness of these innovations in actual school practice. Through the League's linking network with other schools in the member districts, with non-participating districts through county offices, and with schools of the state and nation, findings can be broadly disseminated.

The specific goals and ambitions of the League include the following:

To provide a laboratory for studying educational practices and ideas, the change process, and processes of dissemination.

To provide a research base for educational decision-making.

To provide a setting for the appraisal of existing and long established educational practices as well as ideas for change prior to possible research or testing in one or more cooperating schools.

To facilitate the initial trial of school practices which already have stood some tests of experimentation but have not yet received widespread adoption in the United States.

To develop schools which increasingly can serve as models of good educational practices.

To effect such communication among participating schools that the experience of any one school in effecting educational change can be brought quickly to the attention of others within the League and subsequently to schools outside of the League.

To provide settings where teachers may be stimulated and supported in their efforts to use modern pedagogical practices in the educational process.

To provide settings for the preparation of highly skilled educational leaders.

To evaluate and develop curriculum materials, aids, and instruments of evaluation of common interest to participating schools.

The League of Cooperating Schools represents a wide variety of schools and diverse educational problems, providing a laboratory, constructed in manageable proportions, for the study and advancement of American schooling. The single school becomes both the experimental center for its district, and the experimental center on a specific problem for the League. The common bond is the cooperative agreement designed to utilize as effectively as possible the mutual interests and collaborative resources of the members as a unit within the League as a whole.

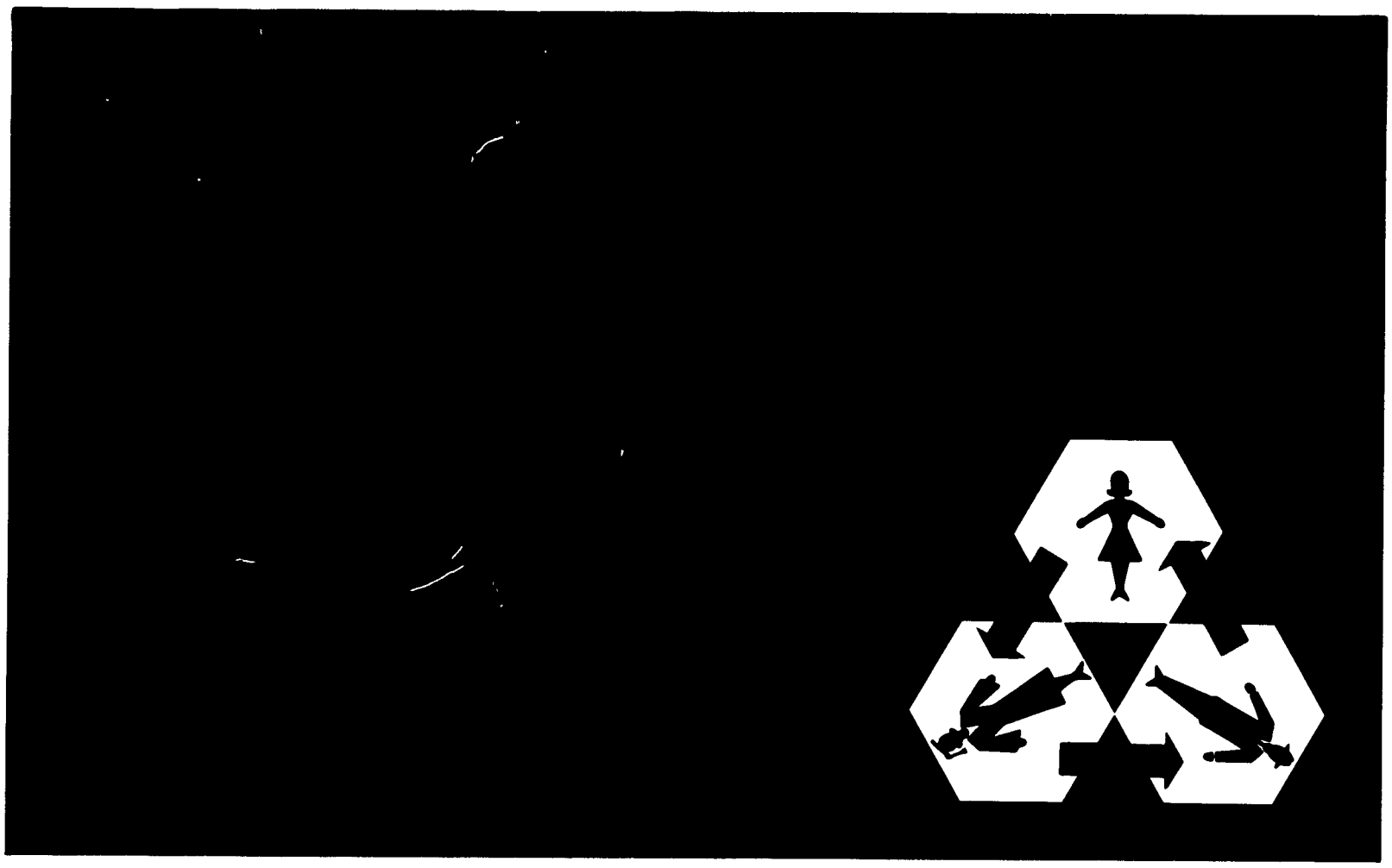
Initial program thrusts focus on three major areas: curriculum, school organization and instruction. Undergirding these activities is a research enterprise which has been designed to examine processes of change and to evaluate special projects.

The concept of the League of Schools envisions the possibilities for League schools to stimulate similar activities in many schools; for providing an unusual setting for the education of teachers; for finding out more about how best to conduct the educational enterprise; for the exchange of personnel and ideas, and for training research workers and educational leaders.

It is an enterprising and, indeed, a pioneering endeavor, calling upon the vitality of innovation, the zest of knowledge and the spirit of patience. It is meaningful collaboration among dedicated partners, and Banyan School and the Timber School District intend to contribute in full measure.

The "change effort" in education is still disparate and unmanaged. Our high-sounding aims and proposals for education must be brought down to the single school, permeating its daily goals and all the means for their attainment. Unless this occurs, there is not likely to be much productive communication or interchange between the world and the schools of 1980 and beyond.

The members of The League of Cooperating Schools plan to collaborate in the war against "rampant conceptual poverty about the change process in general." Perhaps, in a few years, we will know a little more about the factors likely to hamper or enhance the role of the individual school as a change agent and about the viability of the League as a strategy for educational change. We are proceeding, too, with the confidence that at least twenty schools, whatever their present stage of evolution, will become exceedingly productive places for the good human work that is education.



Planning For The Future

Uncertainty is necessarily the lot of the planner, since he deals with the future. Uncertainty can never be completely removed. However, it can be compensated for, and to do so is the continuing responsibility for those who plan tomorrow's educational programs. Primarily, this can be best achieved by insuring flexibility.

To say that there is uncertainty in tomorrow or virtue in flexibility is hardly novel. Reconciling the two, however, is a task calling for much diverse information and refined analysis. There exists an unfortunate tendency to continue doing what "has been done," or to go along with what "is being done."

It is to aid in overcoming this tendency, to compile information, develop programs and provide analyses that the energies and resources of the League of Cooperating Schools are dedicated.

The vast and rapid changes occurring at all levels of our society demand that assumptions, concepts, economic analyses, divergent estimates of potential values, etc., all be considered, examined and translated into an explicit educational concept capable of fulfilling the needs of the future, whatever those needs may be.

In making educational changes four groups must be considered: the school board, the school personnel (superintendents, principals, teachers), the parents of school children, and all of the others who constitute the general public.

A healthy attitude toward change and innovation must exist in a community—in the home, with the parent—for improvement to take place. A recent Gallup poll* indicates that parents across the country are ready to accept innovations which would substantially alter the present type of education at the elementary and secondary levels. The poll states: "Parents of school children reveal an amazing capacity to accept new educational ideas, even though some of them are far reaching in character."

The public, it seems, is willing, even anxious, for improvement through innovation. What then is the academic community doing to foster these changes? How are the problems being approached? Outlined herein is the approach and the goals of the Timber School District as exemplified by the Banyan Concept. This innovative concept was inspired by the challenge of the future.

It represents a departure from the status quo, and it is an approach which embodies almost unlimited flexibility; most of all, it is a vigorous, refreshing step toward tomorrow. Any organizational structure must bear in mind two practical problems in school organization: 1) the need to move students vertically from time of entrance into school until departure, and 2) the need to assign students to teachers and groups for instructional purposes to achieve maximum educational results. *To a great degree the overall plan of a school organization pre-determines how students are assigned to groups or classes.*

In determining the most effective method of organizing the Banyan School, John I. Goodlad's "Planning and Organizing for Teaching," NEA, 1966, was an invaluable guide. While planning for Model "C," as outlined by Goodlad, the initial stages of Banyan's development draw heavily upon Model "B."

	Model "B"	Model "C"
School Function	Schools are designed to cover and inculcate a specific body of subject matter.	Schools are learner-centered-designed to develop the learner as an individual and as a member of society.
	Model "B"	**Model "C"**
Means of Fulfilling Function	Subject matter should be identified and rigorously prescribed.	Focus should be on ways of knowing and thinking. Emphasis on he individual.
	Vertical	**Vertical**
Organizational Structure	Graded structure is modified into multi-graded plan or abandoned in favor of a nongraded plan. However, subject matter demarcations aer retained and often are used as bases for horizontal grouping.	Graded structure is ignored as meaningless or replaced with nongraded plan.
	Horizontal	**Horizontal**
	Departmentalization of instruction according to subject is common, particularly in and above upper elementary years.	Grouping patterns are flexible. Individual differences tend to be accounted for through intra-class provisions rather than through interclass provisions.
	Model "B"	**Model "C"**
Individual Differences	Individual differences in ability and accomplishment are recognized and the pattern of school organization seeks to differentiate progress accordingly.	Differences in many aspects of development are recognized and used in planning highly individualized programs.
Pupil Progress	Non-promotion disappears, but progress is stepped up for bright students who complete schooling in fewer years and slowed down for those who need more years to complete elementary and secondary programs.	Provisions are made for both differentiated rates of progress and variations in kinds of program, according to individual needs and abilities.

**The Instructor, Oct. 1966*

Future

Program Design

The goal of the Banyan concept is to design, implement and field test an organizational pattern for instruction which embodies:

A. *Multi-Age and Multi-Grade Assignments.*

Without a doubt, the physical organization of the Banyan School will often encourage that students be assigned upon a multi-age and grades pattern to the instructional cluster. It would appear logical then, that multi-grades be initiated as phase one with study to be given to a nongraded structure. For instance, in the skills area and with reading as an example, if the reading program were based upon an Individualized Reading Program, as outlined by Howes and Darrow*, where students select their own books and move at varying rates of achievement with guidance and help from different members of the team at different times throughout the year, grade levels become less important.

B. *Grouping.*

Within each team structure children can be grouped in many subject areas according to achievement, interest or problem level. Because of the building design and the team structure, children can be regrouped throughout the day in differing groups of students and in groups of differing sizes for large and small group instruction. Care will be given that each student has a close counseling relationship with at least one member of the team who is primarily responsible that he receives continuity and relatedness in his learning.

C. *Team Teaching.*

The program of team teaching envisioned in this school embodies three aspects. First, that there is a professional hierarchy of personnel with differing rewards and responsibilities. Second, there is a delineation of staff function based on differing responsibilities, preparation, experience, abilities and interests. Third, there is flexibility in interclass grouping that embodies all students based upon teacher utilization and the individual differences of the children assigned to the team.

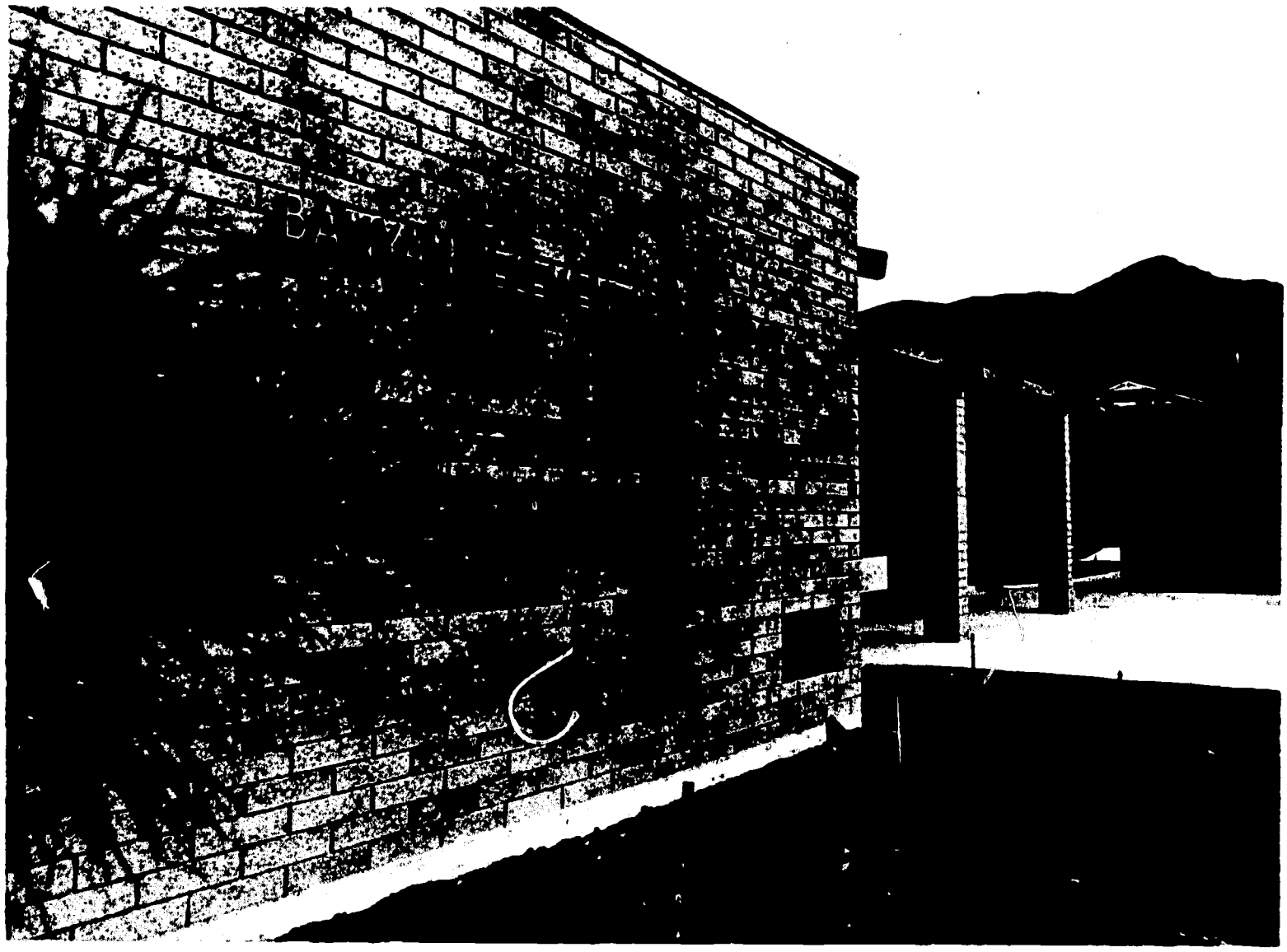
D. *Design, Implement and Field Test an Organizational Structure Which:*

(1.) Incorporates the best current research and practices on individualizing instruction; and
(2.) Best suits a school like Banyan, which has large open space, flexible grouping facilities, carpeting and acoustic treatments; and
(3.) Materially assists in the training of teachers and team leaders in cooperation with the college and university; and
(4.) Achieves the preceding goals and costs a district no more, once operational, than it does to staff a traditional program for an equivalent number of pupils, and
(5.) Can be adapted to other schools in the district and in the League of Cooperating Schools.

These plans and goals do not serve as an ultimate blueprint for future educational needs, nor are they so intended. But, they do represent an initial thrust which can serve as a measurable yardstick to be applied to the even newer innovations which are certain to emerge.

Banyan serves as an inspiration—an inspiration which will provide the educational community with added stimulus. The results are uncertain, but uncertainty is indeed the lot of those who deal with the future.

**Approaches to Individualized Reading; Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc.*



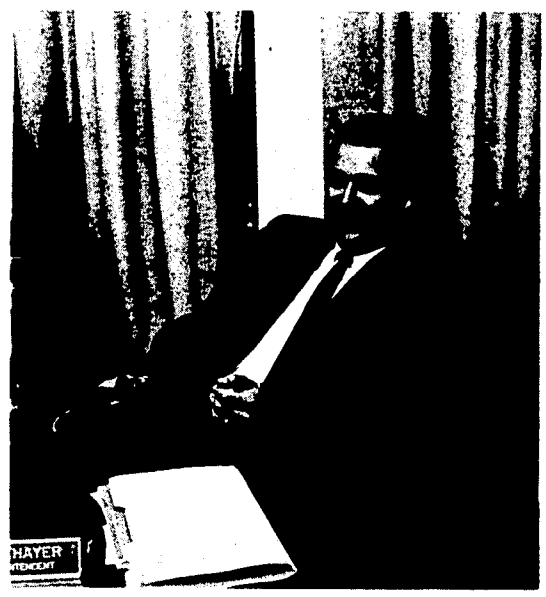
"I believe the Banyan School offers new dimensions in teaching and learning...because of its flexibility, there is no educational program that cannot be adopted quickly and easily.

"As educators, we must build upon the best of the past, have the ability to intelligently evaluate the present and the vision to boldly plan and implement programs for the future. We should continually be involved in upgrading American education."

Dr. Charles C. Carpenter, District Superintendent

"The Board of Trustees and the District Superintendent, through their dedication to the principle that school design should be flexible, have inspired the staff and myself to carefully evaluate the organization of Banyan. The League of Cooperating Schools has provided invaluable insight... we have established our goals, and while we know that Banyan is not yet a perfect model of the school of the future, we feel that we are on the right track. It has been said, 'that even if you're on the right track, you can get run over just sitting there.' We will continue to refine and improve the Banyan program...we will not just sit there. We hope to contribute our full share in forming 'the winds of inspiration'."

Arthur N. Thayer, Acting Principal



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