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ABSTRACT

The result of a five year project on alternative schools within the public school system of Minneapolis, Minnesota, this report provides a complete description of the project from the pre-planning and proposal stage through the final evaluation. The program was implemented in the Southeast area, a community consisting of several communities with different racial and socio-economic characteristics. It involved four K-6 alternative schools: a contemporary school, an open school, a continuous progress school and a free school. It also had one high school which offered options in school programs. All the schools emphasized cooperation between parents, administrators and teachers. Parent participation and community education were major components of the program. Since the five year federal project has ended, the local school board has voted to continue alternative education for all students in Minneapolis schools. (Author)

Southeast Alternatives

Final Report - 1971 1976

Prepared for the National Institute of Education

By the Minneapolis Public Schools
Writer: Anthony J. Morley

Special School District No. 1
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PREFACE

Five years have come and gone. In this brief span of time, the impact of Southeast Alternatives has been truly significant. The outstanding people of Southeast Alternatives, the creativity, the commitment to an educational model that provides for individual differences, the enthusiasm, the meaningful approach to changing times -- all these good things have enhanced education in Southeast Minneapolis. In fact, the experiences of this small community have enriched not only the Minneapolis Public Schools, but school districts throughout the United States as evidenced by the 7,000 plus educators and citizens who have visited SEA.

Where do we go from here? Was the experiment successful soley as a demonstration that offering parent/student choice among various alternative schools is a viable concept or did it, indeed, prove that comprehensive change can take place in a total school district. As Marshall-University, Marcy, Pratt, Tuttle and the K-12 Southeast Free School again rely solely on local school funding as of September 1976, many alternative enthusiasts will closely scrutinize the Minneapolis district's commitment to alternatives, to the involvement of parents and students in decision making, and to new models of governance. I believe that as Minneapolis schools continue to strive for quality integrated education, they can, must, and will remain a system where alternative education thrives.

What are the project goals of SEA, and how do we measure up after five years. The goals stated by the National Institute of Education are:

SEA GOALS

I. "Providing a curriculum which helps children master basic skills. . . . "

II. "The project will test four alternative school styles (K-6) and selected options in schooling programs for grades 7-12 articulated upon the elementary alternatives."

III. "The project will test decentralized governance with some transfer of decision-making power from both the Minneapolis Board of Education and the central administration of the Minneapolis Public Schools."

IV. "The project will test comprehensive change over a five year period from 6/1/71 - 6/30/76 combining promising school practices in a mutually reinforcing design. Curriculum, staff training, administration, teaching methods, internal research, and governance in SEA make up the main mutually reinforcing parts."

Certainly, there has been a commitment to the mastery of basic skills. After five years, both the citywide norm referenced tests and an independent outside evaluation team's objective based mathematics and reading testing program have indicated that students in all alternative programs are learning well and all compare favorably with city, state and national norms.

However, in my judgment, the goal that enhanced the whole alternative movement in Minneapolis most significantly relates to governance and decision-making. The S.E.A. project has involved parents, faculties, administrators and students in determining their programs. When parents, teachers, administrators and students have real choice, there is real commitment. When parents, teachers, administrators, and students share in the decisions that shape the educational programs, the entire community benefits from the unanimity of purpose. As a result, parent satisfaction runs from 75 to 98 per cent at the five schools. And at a time when school enrollment is declining in all other areas of the metropolitan area, all enrollments in SEA continue to rise. Parent and community volunteers flock to Southeast Minneapolis to become involved in one of the five exciting educational programs. The fantastic community participation in the schools enriches the educational experience for all concerned. To summarize the measure of success is reflected in the continued commitment of those who are involved.

One question I have been asked more often than any other -- What happens to the alternative movement now that federal funding has ended? Time will certainly be tell-tale -- but it is clear that alternative education for all students is a Minneapolis School Board formal commitment. In fact, the School Board unanimously approved the creation of a citywide elementary alternative educational system by September 1976. The impact of SEA throughout Minneapolis has been tremendous and will continue to flourish.

While I am looking forward with excitement to my new position in the Minneapolis schools, I am very sad to be leaving SEA. Great people have made SEA great! I cannot fully express how much of an inspiration the commitment, boundless energy, enthusiasm, and zeal of SEA'ers have been to me.

Without the initial wisdom, persistence, and direction of John B. Davis, James K. Kent, Harry Vakos, Nat Ober, Marsh Kaner, and Dick Allen, this project would never have been initiated. Ron Alvarez, project manager of our Experimental Schools Program, is a highly competent and humane person. He guided this project, helped its people, and believed in its cause. Tony Morley did a magnificent job of writing the final document. Better than anyone could be expected to -- he captured the "spirit of SEA". Thel Kocher deserves much gratitude for his review of this document. Rod and Sally French gave freely of their time to finish the task.

If we began reciting the litany of names of those who contributed vigorously to SEA, we could fill a book. Suffice it to say -- many great people have made SEA great and have made a distinct impact on the future of American education.

Dr. David W. Roffers
SEA Director 1975-76

July 1976

FOREWORD: FROM THE WRITER, TO THE READER

My assignment in this final report was to write "for the practitioner." I take that to mean anyone who is, was or might be involved with introducing alternative schools in an urban system. I hope that is a large number. If you are such a person, there is much you can learn from the Minneapolis experience with Southeast Alternatives.

Some will be disappointed because this report is rarely about kids and classrooms. Instead, it is much more about what happens to organizations and ideas when energy is set loose to change the system in which kids and classrooms must function. In selecting for an overview of five years and five schools, I have tried to do so in a way that reveals what made things happen in Minneapolis the way they did.

Of course, selection is a matter of opinion. There is considerable opinion implied or expressed in these pages. Except where it is attributed by quote or context to someone else, it is mine.

Readers who wish to consult the voluminous collection of SEA quarterly reports and internal evaluation studies may do so by inquiring to Minneapolis Public Schools, Office of the Superintendent.

For the record, I was myself an actor in this project during most of the years covered here. That makes me knowledgeable, but not detached. I am most knowledgeable and least detached about Southeast Free School, where I was principal for three years. You should read those sections with special care.

On names of individuals I have tried to follow a consistent arbitrary policy. The only names are administrators of schools or other project components, parents on the payroll as community people, and chairpersons of the Southeast Council.

I wish there could be names, right here, of all who contributed ideas, interview time, personal records, criticism, typing, and patience to help me get this job done. It would be an impossibly long list, but I do warmly thank them.

I apologize in advance for any factual errors, hoping all are minor. I should apologize for one egregious pun buried in the text, but instead offer an insubstantial reward to the first reader who finds it. I am proud to say that in this entire document there is neither a single he/she, nor any mention of the Bicentennial.

Anthony J. Morley
July, 1976

CHAPTER 1

PRE-HISTORY AND CONTEXT OF THE SEA PROPOSAL

Just after Christmas 1970, Robert Binswanger, in Washington phoned John Davis, in Minneapolis. More was involved than the renewal of old friendship and an exchange of holiday cheer. Important mail was on its way, said Binswanger. It would not go overlooked, said Davis. With that phone-call, we may say, began the active knitting together of the convergent interests and agendas which formed Southeast Alternatives.

Binswanger was the aggressive first director, of a new unit in the United States Office of Education, the Experimental Schools Program. He had come to Washington from a professorship at Harvard. He had an untried concept of Federal support for local reform to get on the road.

Davis was the nationally prominent superintendent of Minneapolis Public Schools. He had a big city district to keep educationally progressive in a time of political turmoil and disenchantment with public schools.

Not in on their phone talk, but soon to be invited, and crucial for any continuing conversation, were the parents and students of some Minneapolis neighborhood schools. In the running of those schools they had ideas for new things to get started, or old ones to get stopped.

Federal bureaucrats, top managers of urban systems, and neighborhood parents represent three quite different sectors of public education. In this instance their agendas could be made to serve each other. To understand in 1976 how that could be so in 1970, we need to see where the

various actors in these sectors were coming from at the time.

Washington

By alerting him to the mail on the way, Binswanger was personalizing Davis' copy of a five-page announcement sent to some 20,000 educators. Experimental Schools, the announcement said, would fund a few "large-scale experiments" in "comprehensive educational reform." Educators concerned for "total change" rather than "piecemeal" or "isolated" innovations, should submit brief letters of interest. Prospective experiments must include 2,000 - 5,000 students in a K-12 framework. Carrying out a central theme of reform, they should make "multiple use of promising practices and the products of research." Eight or fewer letters of interest would win 60-day planning grants, to prepare full-blown proposals. Five or fewer of these proposals would be funded, for 3-5 years. Careful evaluation of each project's process would shed light on whether the "comprehensive" approach was in fact effective for system-wide change. And at least in the districts funded, the programs would build "a bridge between basic educational research and actual school practices."

Those last words, paraphrased in Binswanger's announcement, were Richard Nixon's. The Experimental Schools idea was in favor during his first term. The President himself introduced it, prominently, in a Message on Educational Reform, March 1970. It fit well with several Washington priorities of Nixon's time.

For one thing, it reflected the management notion that good corporate change comes from a co-ordinated sequence of new-product and market research, pilot production, scale-up, and development. Why couldn't education follow this model?

For another, Experimental Schools honored the "new federalism" prin-

ciple that Washington might help, but could not lead, in local problem-solving. In the same vein, it signaled a departure from large categorical entitlements, promising more improvement than they could deliver, but delivering more money than Congress could ever cut off.

Even while retreating from massive efforts, moreover, the new program might show that Republicans were interested in "large-scale" innovation to address school problems. America's crisis in the classroom was not going unnoticed.

Finally, but surely not least, Experimental Schools was extraordinarily cheap. An appropriation of only $12 million, apparently, was going to be enough to get it started. On the cost side of a cost/benefit analysis, it was almost bound to look good.

Besides being politically acceptable in the White House and to the Office of Management and Budget, Experimental Schools had a certain intellectual stature, as well. There really was a problem, long recognized, about how to link educational research with significant practical reform. Reason would seem to require a connection. But practice revealed that it occurred only accidentally, at best.

On the one hand, there was lots of research. Thousands of small grants, from dozens of USOE divisions, went to hundreds of professors, for investigation along scores of different tracks. On the other hand, actual program change in school systems seemed largely dictated by fashion or fad. New wrinkles were typically adopted or rejected with little regard to their effect on each other or on the overall learning environment where they were being considered. And they often turned out to be wrinkles only, not significant change.

The problem was not that the products of research were useless,

critics thought. It was that there was no apparatus of discipline for bringing them together in conscious combination, nor for the more inclusive research needed to learn which combinations were effective for which purposes. The result was a succession of "this year's panaceas," as Binswanger liked to call them, each almost forced to pose as the "one best way" which school people longed for.

For several years prominent educators had been suggesting that one means to break this pattern would be a research co-ordinating institution independent of the various programmatic empires in USOE. Federally supported medical research had the National Institutes of Health. Federally supported schools research needed a National Institute of Education. Its purposes would be to co-ordinate research findings and research initiatives for systemic impact on American schooling.

One place where this idea was considered and advocated was among the Panel on Educational Research and Development of Lyndon Johnson's Science Advisory Committee -- well before Nixon, of course. It would take years of bureaucratic and legislative maneuvering to get an NIE established, everyone realized. But even before then there should at least be some programs in place which embodied and displayed the basic NIE purpose. Experimental Schools, along with its other merits, was conceived from the start as exactly such a program. Whenever the time was ripe for NIE to be born, Experimental Schools could be ready as a "vital, major, and k[illegible] component."

On the Educational R and D Panel, in Great Society days, was John Davis. Binswanger couldn't personalize all his 20,000 program announcements, but the one to Minneapolis he would have been foolish not to.

Minneapolis

John Davis thus heard about Experimental Schools with ready-made appreciation for its conceptual background, its actual director, and its potential future. He was intellectually convinced that American education needed the renewal that comes from risking new approaches. He understood that experimentation must be rooted in the system, not peripheral to it. What he had to ask now, at New Year 1971, was whether competing for a grant made sense in Minneapolis. He and four or five assistants sat down to brainstorm that question. Several factors made it obvious that their answer would be Yes.

One undoubtedly was the likely amount of money involved. Winners of this competition would certainly get several million supplemental dollars apiece. They would also come in for national recognition as vanguard districts. These were good things for any administration to lay before its board and taxpayers. And on the Minneapolis board in particular, at least a four-member liberal majority could be counted supportive for a good "reform" project.

More important, there was energy and leadership in the community which could be favorably tapped for innovation. From both the west and the southeast parts of the city -- upper middle class and university neighborhoods, respectively -- separate groups of parents were pressuring the Board already to provide some "open" education. Why not meet the demand and relieve the pressure by considering open classrooms as a promising practice?

Third, Minneapolis faced the challenge of ending de facto segregation, and possible polarization in the community as they went about it. In three successive hot summers, 1966-68, black rage had erupted in this

stronghold of liberalism, and once burned a block of north side stores. For the school system there was now a desegregation suit in court, and early threats of backlash politics against any move toward busing. Perhaps a well planned Experimental Schools project could be one avenue of peaceful integration, and help defuse the busing issue before it got hot. As it happened, two adjacent Southeast elementary schools were in the process of being paired for desegregation. With neighborhood support they had already begun an experimental ungraded "continuous progress" program. As it happened also, while one heavily black senior high was attracting some white transfers to its "magnet" program, the mostly white junior/senior high for Southeast had unexpectedly many black transfers.

Marshall-University High School (in Southeast) provoked thought on other grounds, too. As the name suggests, it represented a structural and programmatic combining of resources between Minneapolis Public Schools and the University of Minnesota College of Education.

Instrumental in forging that combination, only two years before, had been a leading member of the School Board. He was pastor of a popular Lutheran church in Southeast. In 1970 Marshall-University was a turbulent, troubled institution. It was struggling to become the high-school home for a volatile mix of town and gown, rich and poor, black and white, hippie and straight. To fulfill its planners' dreams, the school needed help. A weekend planning charette -- parents, faculty, and students -- had already inspired a position paper arguing that Marshall-U's programs must reflect the diverse styles and preferences of its community. Why not, suggested the Associate Superintendent for Secondary, make <u>that</u> the core of a proposal to Washington?

There was still one further point about this high school, not at all unimportant. Newly in charge there was James Kent. For the two previous years

(1968-70) Kent had been Davis' administrative assistant, brought in from outside the system. He had come from a doctoral program in Educational Administration at Harvard. Advising him in his program and thesis there, had been Robert Binswanger.

With so many pieces fitting nicely together, there was clearly no question whether to write Binswanger a letter of interest. There was not even much question whether Southeast -- Marshall-University's attendance area -- should be the "targeted population." It met Experimental Schools' formal criteria, and offered much else besides. It provided a natural K-12 framework, the high school and three elementary feeders. It had the right number of students, 2,500. Its 30,000 total population, like the students, showed an adequately heterogeneous mix of socio-economic statistics. It was already involved with school innovations, and some people were asking for more. There were many articulate residents accustomed to voice and influence in community affairs. One of them was a member of the School Board. There was an energetic administrator, known to Binswanger, close to Davis, and enthusiastic for school reform.

Binswanger's early-January visit -- part of a cross-country tour following up on his Christmas phone calls -- was scarcely necessary. The decision was made: to write a letter of interest, to sketch "alternatives" as the central educational concept, and to specify Southeast as the place where they should be tried.

Southeast -- the Neighborhoods

"Southeast" labels an old section of Minneapolis, just across the Mississippi, but a little downstream, from the downtown area. It's where the University is. It also has flour mills, acres of railway yards, and numerous light manufacturing plants. But the chief industry, chief place

of work, and chief identifier is the main campus of the University of Minnesota. From October to June, more people attend classes there than live in all of Southeast. That makes for a lot of stereo shops, restaurants, and clothing stores; a lot of small apartment buildings and rooming houses; and parking problems for blocks around.

Physically the area is roughly triangular, about three miles on a side, bounded by traffic arteries, the river, and a throughway along the west border of St. Paul. Freight yards, train tracks, and industry take up about a third of the total space. Except for the University campus, and two small shopping areas adjacent to it, the rest is residential.

This is the part people think of as "Southeast." It has identity as a whole, yet also comprises four distinct neighborhoods. In 1970 these were the elementary attendance areas. In the middle, drawing from them all, was Marshall-University High School.

Como

Tuttle school served the Como neighborhood, about 40 square blocks. It is a mixture of one and two-story single family homes, most of them 50-60 years old. There are a few larger houses older then that, and quite a few small duplexes or bungalows built since World War II. Como is on the other side of the tracks from neighborhoods by the University, and thus has fewer rooms or apartments for rent. Como is comfortable, but not affluent. It has long had an improvement association. With the aid of street repaving and code enforcement, it has been well kept up. In overall Southeast context it is relatively non-transient, non-professional, family oriented, and owner occupied. Probably for these reasons, Como's reputation is as Southeast's "conservative" neighborhood.

Glendale and Prospect Park

Two sharply constrasting sub-neighborhoods formed the merging attendance areas of Pratt and Motley schools. As mentioned already, in 1970-71 these schools were in the process of being paired. They would become one school, Pratt-Motley, with all primary ages in the Pratt building, and all intermediate in Motley. The children might be mixed, but the residential landscapes they came from were very, very different. Formerly preserved mostly for Pratt was the Prospect Park neighborhood. Formerly assigned to Motley, was the Glendale Housing Project.

As public housing goes, Glendale seems small, attractive, and humanely planned. It was built in 1952. The 184 units are two-story or lower, most of them in duplex combinations, arranged to minimize any barracks appearance, and sited away from dangerous traffic. There is yard space, grass, and trees. A new small park and community center is immediately accessible.

Nevertheless, most families in Glendale live there because they have to, not because they really want to. They are all tenants, not owners. The children most commonly call their home, unaffectionately, "the projects." This is the poor part of Southeast, not only in income, but in hope. Welfare workers and juvenile officers are well known and much reviled. There is a lot of moving in and out, but little moving up. White families are the large majority, often resentful of their 20-25% black and Native American neighbors. Motley school in 1970-71 was 86% AFDC students -- almost five times the next nearest Southeast elementary percentage. Glendale people have learned that they are "problems". Despite occasional efforts by residents and social workers, there has been no strong community organizing. For most tenants an "improvement association" here would be one that helped them move to somewhere else.

Virtually next door, but at the other end of a social spectrum, is Pratt's old neighborhood, Prospect Park. This is the only hilly section of Southeast. Its winding streets are "good" addresses. Along them live a lot of University faculty and other professionals. Their hillside homes are larger than in Como, and apt to be graced by tasteful planting or sophisticated architectural touches -- an artist's studio window here, a cantilevered redwood patio there. There are not many rooms for rent, and few multiple dwellings. An improvement association has been strong since before 1900. It argued in favor of building Glendale, and successfully resisted an Interstate highway plan that would have cut through the heart of the neighborhood. Real estate values and median income are the highest in Southeast. Prospect Park, if not a "moneyed" neighborhood, is socially and intellectually very respectable.

University District

Beginning near the main campus gate is an oblong of about 60 square blocks known as the University district. It runs between railroad tracks and busy through streets, from a small shopping district at the campus end to a large one on the edge of Southeast. Near the center of the oblong is Marcy School. Around it is a variegated and somewhat fragile residential neighborhood. There are many 75-year-old three-story homes which have been divided into apartments. Quite a number are ending their days as rooming houses, and some of these are just plain shabby. In the late 60's the University district was bisected, despite great community furor, by a depressed link of Interstate highway. Several blocks of single-family homes were sacrificed to the auto. Before and since then new construction has been almost entirely of small apart-

ment buildings, rented by students and young families. A good many of these may be poor, but they are not in poverty. Transiency is high, but so are educational levels and (especially for the non-transient) median income. There are always active organizations at work for protection of the community's character.

Southeast -- the Schools

In 1970-71 the schools of these areas, and the high school for all of them, showed some special features and problems, but were far from unusual. To an extent they naturally reflected their neighborhoods. To a greater extent they reflected the prevailing assumption that in curriculum, organization, and pedagogy one public school should be much like another.

Tuttle and Marcy, with total enrollment of 675, shared a single principal. They used a district-approved basal textbook approach, in graded, self-contained classrooms. Each had a typical, service-oriented PTA. "Governance" was the principal, reporting upward to the Associate Superintendent for Elementary. He divided his time between the buildings. With interested teachers from both schools, he had arranged visits to open-education programs nearby. At Marcy a few teachers, on their own, were trying some less text-bound approaches with creative writing and dramatics. Sometimes two rooms would even work together on such innovations.

The most important dynamic in these schools, however, was a group of parents who had come together from both, beginning the previous summer. Calling themselves Southeast Parents for Open Classrooms, they were reassuring their PTA, convincing their principal, and lobbying the Associate Superintendent. What they wanted was open classrooms for the families requesting them in each school. They were well read, quoting both current

and classical literature as arguments for change. They investigated open schools elsewhere, and reported on what they saw. They did their homework, detailing for the professionals what would be needed and where it could be got. They were determined organizers, canvassing every family, and listing every child whose parents said they would enroll. They felt they were getting somewhere, too. By New Year, 1971, they had 50 "working members." As Minneapolis first applied to Experimental Schools, Parents for Open Classrooms began to hear supportive words from administrators downtown.

Pratt and Motley were changing faster than that, but with the initiative coming from both above and below. Enrollment was 567. These schools also were under one principal, and most classrooms also followed the graded, basal-text approach. For five years, however, parents in the Pratt PTA had been talking of the ungraded approach as a way to equalize opportunity and improve quality in both schools. They had had PTA programs and speakers on the subject. Capitalizing on the parent interest and on a strong, flexible faculty, central administration had picked Pratt to undertake an experimental K-3 continuous progress program in 1970-71. It was now in operation. Already, staff were planning and training to extend the experiment through grades 4-6. That would complete the organizational pairing, Pratt-Motley, for racial and socio-economic desegregation. It would also provide a full K-6 elementary sequence in a different mode from traditional Minneapolis schools.

Of all Southeast schools in 1970-71, Marshall-University High presented the most difficult challenges, and perhaps also the most promising opportunities. Enrollment was 1238. It had by far the greatest experience with change and innovation. To date, unfortunately, the experience was

not happy. In less than three years the school had had to cope with institutional merger, a major shift of racial composition, and environmental shock waves from political and cultural rebellion. To appreciate its next encounter, with Experimental Schools, we need to sketch the background.

The village-square of Southeast is a cluster of shops and restaurants strangely called Dinkytown. On one edge of Dinkytown is the main high school building. Two busy intersections away -- past Burger King, a mom-and-pop grocery, pizza-and-beer, stereo stores, Dinkytown Dime, soda fountains, books-and-records -- is the main University gate. Just inside are Peik Hall and a small gym. Since 1968 Peik Hall had housed Marshall U's junior high (grades 7-8) for all academic classes; for others students walked to the main building. That, in turn, housed senior high, except the classes who walked to Peik Hall for use of the gym. Before 1968 there was no Marshall-University High. There were only University High on the campus, and Marshall high two blocks away. The one was a laboratory school of the College of Education; the other a Minneapolis public school. They were separate institutions.

Merging them had been the proud and arduous accomplishment of top leadership in school system, college, and community. Their purpose was to insure a superior secondary school in Southeast, combining the resources and serving the needs of both sponsors. The public schools would get space, innovative faculty, and a pipeline to supportive expertise. The College would get a real-life urban arena to work in, a ready ground for curriculum research and experiment, and automatic access for supervised student teachers. To keep all these benefits together, the two institutions agreed by contract to a joint policy board, with equal appointed

membership from the school system and the University. Its first chairperson was a man who had led the University's efforts to plan cooperatively with Southeast community organizations. Not only should staff, students, and programs be enriched in the emerging new school, but so also should governance.

Merger was a marriage made in heaven, but it ran into trouble on earth. The parties who had to consummate it were not in love. They had not been granted time for courtship. [illegible] were the proletariat thrown together with the elite, academically "average" students with academically "good", teachers from the rank and file with teachers holding university appointment. Needless to say, there were worries about status, fears of being taken over or swallowed up, uncertainties about new colleagues and new classmates. To the dismay of parents and confusion of students, organization and accountability of the staff in the school quickly became unclear. Marshall veterans did not like having an administrative director partly responsible to the University, even though he had been chosen from among Minneapolis principals. Nor was the new policy board confident of its role. Had it really replaced the Dean and the Associate Superintendent for Secondary, both of whom were on it? It was easier, though unsatisfying, to let those two men make most of the policy by themselves.

By fall of 1970 an ad hoc committee of the policy board was wondering anew how to "justify" the merger. "What is quite evident," they wrote, "is a great diffusion of efforts, dysfunctional practices, and lack of clear-cut uniform policies and procedures."

Merger alone might have been challenge enough for the Marshall-U community. But simultaneously with merger had come another change, equally unprepared for. Under a voluntary "racial transfer" program close to 100 new black students chose Marshall-U in the fall of 1968.

The number was far larger than anyone had expected. In the next years it continued large. White Southeast's liberalism was strained. Many assumed that "those kids from the north side" came to Marshall-U (or were sent) because they could not get along elsewhere. On that assumption, they were a threat to learning and discipline. The newcomers knew, of course, that some people wished they weren't there. By black and white alike, quarrels and scuffles began to be feared as racial encounters. There were occasional "incidents." The general level of parent apprehension went up.

For the more conservative it was going up anyway, spurred by ample signs around the high school that youth rebellion and student unrest were facts of life in Southeast, too. Being on campus and in Dinkytown probably gave Marshall-U the strongest "movement" flavor of any Minneapolis high school. Drugs were easily available. Counter-culture dress, language, and hair style were common. As Vietnam wore on, anti-war rallies grew more numerous and more activist. The campus shootings at Kent State, in 1970, sent a special shudder through parents and teachers with children in Peik Hall. And late that same spring Dinkytown was paralyzed by three days of mass sit-ins protesting construction by a fast-food chain only one block from Marshall-U. For a brief while there was even a local People's Park. University students and longtime Southeast adult activists took the lead in this flouting of the establishment. But more than a few Marshall-U students were there to make the point with them. Dozens became familiar with tear gas, and a few got arrested.

In these unquiet times Marshall-University was a mixture of the conventional and the changing. It had few of the fuddy-duddy rules which provoked protests elsewhere. There were no hall passes, no dress code,

no requirement for students to stay in the building when they had free periods. Some teachers even openly ignored the taking of attendance. On the other hand, courses were graded, sequenced, and arranged by departments just like everywhere else. There were two semesters. Electives were limited in senior high, and non-existent in junior. Girls had to take home economics; boys had to take shop.

By 1970-71 there was forceful sentiment for steps toward broader change. For the sake of re-designing curriculum and increasing students' options, the faculty were ready to vote for three 12-week trimesters per year, instead of two semesters. Some were already drafting new courses, and looking forward to coaching more students in independent study. In junior high a new Title III project was trying a counselor-and-teachers team approach with half the 8th graders. The aim was greater time flexibility and curriculum integration among core subjects, as well as a broader base for focusing on individual student needs.

More controversial was Marshall-U's first small in-house alternative program, the School Without Walls. It was designed for tough, truant kids (largely from Glendale) who found nothing they could enjoy in regular school. With a lot of help from college-student tutors, two or three teachers were taking time to try unstructured, informal, ad hoc teaching with this group. It was the beginnings of a street-academy approach. They had started in the University YMCA, and then rented space away from the main school. They had administrative support and service. But by many faculty the whole venture was considered just too loose, and probably a waste of time. Dropouts, perhaps, should be allowed to drop out.

Meanwhile, from a sizeable group of parents, there was pressure for

change in a different direction. They wanted things tighter, not looser. Basic skills needed more emphasis. Independent study and "other innovative programs" required stricter evaluation. There should be mandatory attendance at all classes, with cuts and tardiness reflected in students' grades. The open campus should be closed. Teachers ought to "take responsibility" for pupils passing through Dinkytown. Within the year, as an Southeast's Experimental Schools proposal was being considered in Washington, 100 Parents for an Improved Marshall High School would meet with the director and petition him with these requests.

If Washington gave Minneapolis a planning grant, these were the neighborhoods and schools from which a proposal must come. If there was to be "broad participation in the design," it must be by these people. If the design should be funded, this was the Southeast for which the money would flow.

CHAPTER II

WRITING THE PROPOSAL: January - June, 1971

It did not take long for an in-house group to put together a letter of interest to Experimental Schools. Both Associate Superintendents worked on it, as did James Kent, from Marshall-University High School. With suggestions from specialist departments, such as evaluation and the curriculum consultants, they could present the essentials of a purposeful idea and strong potential, without pre-empting the planning which would design the project. The idea was that every student and family should have a true choice among styles of education. The potential was in the Southeast schools and community, and in an array of promising practices ready to be combined in new programs.

Well before the January 30 deadline, John Davis signed the letter and mailed it to Binswanger. From 489 applications, a selection committee picked Minneapolis and seven others for 60-day planning grants. Detailed proposals were due by mid-April. Before mid-February, work must begin in earnest.

All had agreed that if a proposal was to be written, Jim Kent would head up the process. Optimistic for the best, he had already begun garnering ideas from small neighborhood meetings in Southeast. With definite good news from Washington, he set up shop in available space at Tuttle school. Coming with him to help was Betty Jo Zander, who had just quit as administrative assistant in charge of Peik Hall at Marshall-U.

A Process: Everyone Can Win

Kent's priority was to enlist community involvement in shaping a proposal. That accorded with his own values, and was one of Experimental Schools' criteria as well. Further, even if not funded, a plan for change that came from people in the schools would fuel the local process of change, in any event.

First and foremost, therefore, Kent went to Southeast parents, their principals, and any teachers who wanted to help. Word had spread fast enough that a planning grant was in hand, by which large dreams might win large rewards. When Kent publicized that there would be weekly open meetings, people willingly came by the dozens. It was a sort of Saturday-morning market place of ideas, supplied by a growing number of smaller groups who met afternoons and evenings to put their particular proposals on paper. The elementary principals, some teachers from all schools, and a few high school students joined in, on their own time. Three parents were hired for community liaison. In short order some 30 diverse people were giving substantial time, and 13 of those were a writing team to draft sections of the full proposal. Top management downtown kept hands off. Except when asked for technical or tactical help, with matters like population data or budget figures, the central bureaucracy was not involved.

From very early it was clear in all these meetings that Experimental Schools offered a change for almost everyone to win something. It was also possible that new programs would attract new students from across the city. If so, Experimental Schools might end the danger, posed by long-term declining enrollments, of Southeast losing Marshall-U or an elementar school. The purpose of the community process was not to decide on Southeast's single best way, but to see a spectrum of distinct options within

which most families could recognize their own values. Once accepted that there could be genuine alternatives -- equally legitimized, equally funded, equally accessible -- no one need attack one idea in order to advocate another. Each school of thought (and each thought of school, one might say) could gain energy for its own development, because none was needed to discredit someone else's. Except for an inevitable few to whom attacking and discrediting were values in themselves, people in Southeast understood that right away.

Elementary: Not So Hard

At elementary level it really was not difficult to act on the understanding. Immediately, parents began to convene on the basis of their values for their own children's schooling, rather than by attendance area or neighborhood. Traditionalists from all buildings knew what they liked, and had a chance now to make it better. Parents for Open Classrooms were far along toward defining what they wanted, and now might imagine having it all together under one roof. The continuous progress principal and teachers were sought out by new parents who liked that emphasis, and left alone by old ones who did not. If possible, everyone preferred that people more or less like-minded should have a whole building to themselves. Because they preferred that, and because the number of buildings was finite, the groups successfully resisted sectarian splintering. No Montessori wing, ITA segment, or operant conditioning module was seriously considered. The time pressure helped, too. Jim Kent's determination was firm that a clearly structured, readily understandable, probably fundable, and administratively feasible document would be delivered in Washington by April 10.

Quite quickly then, there was broad consensus on the outline and

placement of a three-part elementary program. There would be an improved and improving traditional school, called Contemporary. It would be at Tuttle, where present teachers and a parent majority leaned in the traditional direction. It seemed to fit with the flavor of the neighborhood.

There would be an Open school at Marcy. Several strong parent advocates came from that neighborhood. Some Marcy teachers were already moving in the open direction.

Pratt-Motley would be the Continuous Progress school. It was already begun. Willing staff were experienced or being trained. It was professionally planned to meet the necessities of its divided neighborhoods.

All three attendance areas, however, would now become one. Any K-6 child could attend any of the alternatives as a matter of right. Criss-crossing bus service would be built into the proposal. Actual enrollments in the three would be determined entirely by family choice. With this much clear, writing committees for each elementary alternative could move ahead, setting forth rationale, spelling out promising practices to be combined in the program, suggesting positions and materials they would like included in the budget.

Secondary: Not So Easy

By contrast with elementary planning, finding agreement on form and content for secondary options was a snarl of difficulties. The background sketched in Chapter I suggests several reasons why: the age-range and extreme diversity of a 1,200-member student body; the history and organization of Marshall-University High School; faculty discouragement with the results of merger; the mood of the times. Mingled with these were some important accidents and conflicting perspectives of personal position. All told, it was virtually impossible to get synoptic agreement

on the job to be done. Instead of people and ideas being able to move in parallel, and develop their own strong agendas, as in elementary, at secondary level they kept colliding. They tended to neutralize each other's momentum. As a result, no crisp pattern of necessities or possibilities was able to emerge. To see what did emerge, we have to review the people and their ideas.

Jim Kent had been director of Marshall-U less than a semester when he took on planning for Experimental Schools. Formally he was still director, the accountable administrator, with title and authority. For day-to-day operations after January, though, he was mostly out of the M-U building. And since day-to-day operation was Marshall-U's pre-occupying real-life agenda at that time, out-of-the-building in many ways meant out-of-the-picture.

Interestingly, one of Kent's major reasons for leaving Marshall-U was much the same as his major reason for coming there in the first place. He was fascinated by the community governance possibilities, as he saw them, of the joint policy board. Here, in principle, was a decentralization of control which had happened without political upheaval. By legal contract, approved in the city-wide board, it moved policy responsibility for one high school down toward the neighborhood which that school served. Four of the ten members on the policy board were Marshall-U parents. In a period when dispute over decentralization and community control had verged on open warfare in New York and other urban systems, this was a small hopeful development. Perhaps it could be made into a large one. "That's why I came to Marshall'U," says Kent; "I had read the contract, and thought something could be done." In January of 1971 he had also talked with Binswanger, and knew that evaluation of governance changes

was an Experimental Schools priority.

Helping Kent as staff for the Southeast planning process was another administrator who had just left Marshall-U. Betty Jo Zander's departure had been rather more definitive, not to say emphatic, than the director's. It was indirectly, but significantly, related to Experimental Schools. She was administrative assistant, in charge of Peik Hall, and from there co-ordinated the controversial School Without Walls program. When it became clear in January that Kent's time would be more and more pre-empted by the quest for Federal money, Marshall-U's principal (second in authority after Kent) said he must have a full assistant principal to help him run the buildings. He wanted one particular man, too -- a long-time Marshall High biology teacher, of military mind-set and a strong vocation for restoring order in the halls. The principal got his man appointed, and it somehow happened without Zander's hearing the news. Neither substantively nor procedurally was she pleased, when she arrived at a staff meeting one morning and saw the biology man there, now one of the administrators whom she was to assist. She was displeased enough, in fact, that she walked right out, permanently.

After a couple of weeks in limbo, Zander began working with Kent again. Now she, too was away from the day-to-day, yet directly involved with proposing a years-long strategy for schooling Marshall-U's clientele. Her particular interests were junior high or middle school years, and the future for students in School Without Walls.

Meanwhile, back in the principal's office at Marshall-University High was William Phillips. This was his first year, too, after coming up through the Minneapolis ranks and being an assistant principal for junior high elsewhere in the system. He had his hands full, and then some, just

running the place. Before him there had been two years of what some viewed as near chaos. The pressing need of the day, as he and many others saw it, was for stability, not excitement. The pressing need in planning was for 14 departments and 75 teachers to design and describe departmental (and inter-departmental) course offerings in the just-approved trimester format for next year. Experimental Schools support might help with that, but there was no time -- nor was this a good time -- to think in terms of revamping the whole high-school approach.

Bill Phillips, in short, was a careful, conscientious administrator. In the view of the associate superintendent who assigned him there, that was what Marshall-U needed. Phillips wanted programs clearly defined, set in orderly organizational context, and as nearly as possible surprise-free. Probably because it was none of these, governance by joint policy board, not to mention talk of using it for K-12 decentralization, did not appeal to him. Neither did projects so by-definition unboundaried as School Without Walls. Above his desk he kept a favorite slogan: Innovate, But Take Attendance.

Phillips, not surprisingly, did not spend major time with Kent and Zander in conceiving or writing the secondary part of Minneapolis' proposal. Nor did any except a few of the Marshall-U faculty. Those who did acted not as representatives for the rest, but on their own, with more encouragement from Kent than from their colleagues. Chief among them were the program co-ordinators -- department heads on joint University/Minneapolis appointment -- for math, english, and counseling. They all had promising practices they wanted to push.

Fewer secondary parents than elementary, as may be natural, showed keen interest in planning for their children's school. Almost none of

those who did were from the non-Southeast black families now choosing Marshall-U as an alternative to their neighborhood junior or senior high. The vocal parents from within Southeast tended to be intensely critical, divided into two opposite camps, and not effectively organized. One portion, already mentioned, wanted an end to the laxity that had come, as they saw it, that came with being a large institution in a bureaucratic structure. For them voucher plans sounded good, and some made extravagant claims that a third of Southeast parents were ready to start an alternative of their own.

For the vast majority of students, of course, school was school. It was part of the given order, a stretch of time to be variously tolerated, resisted, enjoyed, hated, dropped out of, or graduated from. Only among a few -- the articulate sort whom school itself would define as most able -- was education a cause for reform. Some of them did join the planning. They were oriented toward better intra-school communication, more student share in making decisions, and some bill-of-rights guarantees. They produced a careful document: "The Running of a School: Student Guidelines for Experimental Schools."

Given the time constraints, what might feasibly emerge from this mix of actors, re-actors, and non-actors? It was clear enough that some structurally clean or conceptually neat avenues to change were closed off from the start. Just the fact that Southeast by itself was the planning base, for example, ruled out proposing Marshall-U as a single-style city-wide alternative high school. Parkway in Philadelphia and Metro in Chicago were well publicized modern models, as were older specialty schools like Music and Arts in New York, or Boston Latin. The St. Paul Open School, K-12, just then being organized, was even closer at hand.

But -- unless the whole Minneapolis secondary system was to be altered at once -- no one of them could now be translated into choices, plural, for Southeast. The idea was not even considered.

An idea that was considered, but only fleetingly, was simply to extend through junior and senior high some analogues to the three options that were coming clear for elementary. Two major obstacles blocked that course. First was a strong fear that to divide Marshall-U vertically into separate educational programs, schools within the school, would be to invite separation by race and class as well. New alternatives might be old tracking system in disguise. Second, it seemed beyond imagining anyway, at least within the few weeks available, that this school's space, time, and personalities could be re-shuffled into three comprehensive but different programs. Only to the simple-minded could such a scheme, in winter 1971, have seemed simple. Kent and his colleagues dropped it, fast.

Looked into much more seriously, especially by Betty Jo Zander, was the idea of creating apart from Marshall-U an alternative to Marshall-U. It was chiefly conceived as a middle school, grades 4- or 5-8, with hopes that program could be designed to hold the 30-plus junior high students already in School Without Walls. Of course the middle school idea presented problems as to what sort of alternative environment it should be, other than in age-range, to the elementary schools and junior high which it would overlap. Reactions in community meetings were not encouraging. People tended either to like or dislike it on an assumption that it would siphon off the "problem" kids. Before that could be seriously addressed, however, it turned out that the hoped-for space in Southeast (a small building, used by a city-wide program for pregnant teen-agers) could not be considered. The separate middle school became moot.

All these ideas that could not happen remained in people's minds to influence the secondary projects that could. What was actually proposed, however, remained a collection of largely individual notions which Kent and the writing team worked hard to present as a cohesive whole. Marshall-University High would be a single school within which individual student programs might range from a regimented series of traditional classes in one building, to a free-form pattern of interdisciplinary involvement all over the city. To increase variety and ventilate the structure, a lot of new initiatives would be encouraged, among staff and students. To stabilize the structure and maintain continuity, much would be left just as it was. In proper proposalese -- "an eclectic curriculum approach...centered around four instructional modes" -- it sounded fine. But the easy language was wrapped around some uneasy bedfellows. Everyone realized high school would be the hardest part of the whole project to make real.

Writers preparing the proposal for Washington, early in April, called the whole Marshall-U section "Secondary School Without Walls." That was meant to suggest, plainly, a liberalizing direction of change. To many Southeast locals, however, it meant delinquent rowdies being tutored from a rented house. "Connotation of name objectionable to community," wrote one parent on her copy of the draft. It was too much. It was relaxation, not reform. Before long, the offending words were dropped.

For a sizeable few, however, the same slogan was not enough. Even if kept, it was rhetoric, not reality. Some just did not believe that M-U's administration and teachers would move that way, no matter what Jim Kent hoped. Others were angry that nothing was now planned for the Glendale students whose need had inspired an actual School Without Walls

in the first place. Since the program was dropped, honesty demanded the name should be too.

Betty Jo Zander felt the way these people did. She was also still convinced that somewhere among the alternatives there needed to be an option clearly outside the main stream, especially the secondary main stream in a comprehensive high school.

So it came about that in the very last pre-deadline days, Zander and a few of the more radical parents, wrote in a fifth component school. Its name would be Free. Its age-range would be K-12. Its size would be 70 or less. Its space would be rented. Its emphasis would be "daily success, self-direction". Its curriculum and organization would be "as students and teachers decide." Beyond that, little was specified. Kent was not enthusiastic, but apparently the Southeast's vocal left would be. Those most disenchanted with existing schools, would have a chance to make their own. At best, the Free School idea added risk-taking pizzaz to the plan as a whole. At worst, Washington could take the blame for saying No. "It seems valid," Kent cautiously wrote in the proposal, "to see whether this option ... is viable."

Wrapping Up The Proposal

With this piece, the program outline and substance of the Southeast proposal were complete. Because of the K-12 limitation, advocates for post-high school and pre-kindergarten programs had to be disappointed. But except for these, virtually all groups had got in much of what they wanted. Even more important, they had made themselves heard in how they wanted it. The organizing principles were clear: distinct alternative programs, and free family choice among them. With three elementary schools,

one far-out K-12, and one many-hued junior/senior high, there were enough options for real selection, and few enough not to be utterly confusing.

A governance section looked toward making the Marshall-University policy board virtually a Southeast community school board. Early plans were laid out for extensive staff development. Specific promising practices, pedagogical and organizational, were clustered throughout the proposal. Careful evaluation was promised, and researchers requested to carry it out. Each school would get extra teachers, aides, equipment, and supplies. There might be some minor building renovation. There would be a special Southeast resource center for environmental studies in science and social studies. There would be extra counseling and social-work services. Children would ride by bus from home to their chosen schools. A project director's office would give overall direction with program budgeting help and a public information center. All in all, the people who had worked so hectically for two months, felt good about what they had produced.

Binswanger's office felt good about it, too, and so did his independent selection panel. While they were reviewing the eight proposals produced by planning grants, Kent and colleagues had plenty of work to keep them busy. Like their counterparts in seven other districts, presumably, they spent a month preparing alternate work plans: one to use if news was good; the other if it was bad. On May 15, finally, Washington let Minneapolis know that Southeast Alternatives, as the proposal was now called, would definitely be funded. By coincidence, Southeast Parents for Open Classrooms had convened a strategy session that very evening. Their agenda was to plan pressure by media and by picketing, if necessary, in case the Open School was turned down, and Minneapolis

chose to forget open classrooms, too. Grassroots politics, of course, gave way that evening to grassroots partying.

With hefty funding assured, it still remained to negotiate exact amounts; to fill in gaps, meet criticisms, and add milestones in the proposal; and to get a formal Board of Education vote on the final version. That took three more weeks of high-pressure work, for not all of Binswanger's questions were minor, and the budget detail was major. In the same three weeks all Southeast families heard again, by mailings and meetings, about their now real options. Before summer vacation began, they checked off their choices and sent them in. Teachers, likewise, had to pick their options -- whether to stay where they were, or ask for transfers; and in either case, whether to sign up for summer staff development. "Choicemaking," as the proposal had promised, was beginning to become "the basic way of school life."

By June 7 the final negotiated document was ready to be laid before the School Board. It spelled out 3.6 million extra Federal dollars to come for Southeast over the next 27 months. It was renewable, at an estimated 2.9 million, for 34 months beyond that. Running to June 1976, that would mean a five-year supplement of more than $500 per student per year, to get alternatives started. The Board voted unanimously in favor.

A few days before, John Davis had sent Robert Binswanger a copy of the completed proposal as it would be submitted to the Board. "Dear Dr. Binswanger," he wrote, "...We are well on our way." Beneath the superintendent's brief letter, the Federal man typed his own reply: "exciting, promising, and important;" then, "By the way ... you don't have to address me as 'Dr.'! Fondly, 'Bob'." Davis' reply in its entirety, typed beneath Binswanger's note, ran "Dear Bob: You are right! 'John'."

Southeast Alternatives was indeed endowed with more than money. Mutuality and trust at the top, were part of its underpinnings.

CHAPTER III

Concepts - Values - Goals - Issues: What The Project Wanted To Stand For

This chapter is largely a digression from narrative. Before plunging ahead with chronology and description, it seems important to explore some ideas which underlay the events.

The exploration will not be neatly schematic. This report, after all, is on the flavor and facts of a project in educational reform. The reform gains ground or is stymied in the untidily political space and time of a big-city school system, not just in thinkers' heads. Even an ideas chapter must be part narrative.

On the other hand, the exploration is more abstract than a recounting of "what happened." It is a look at some dominant concepts which people either imposed on the events, or (depending on your epistemology) derived from them, or (most likely) both. They are concepts which people usually felt committed to -- or felt they ought to feel committed to. That is, they were not only concepts; they were perceived values informing the project. Like all values, those of Southeast Alternatives often-times became slogans, shibboleths, and jargon. That nfirms, rather than denies, their importance as values.

The values eventually (after two years, not at the very start) were distilled, formally stated, and frequently placarded as four official fundamental goals of SEA. In this sense, as coming from and accepted by man rticipants, they are "what the project wanted to stand for."

Recurring disagreement or uncertainty over how to stand for them defined many of the internal issues which made Southeast Alternatives a history, not a blueprint.

The key concepts in these values/goals are the four sub-headings of this chapter. The official goal statements are printed in full at the close of the chapter. At the close of the entire report, it will be time to review them critically again.

"Basic Skills"

By context and common usage one is never in doubt that "basic skills" is essentially synonymous with "the three R's". It carries connotations of academic seriousness and of making sure the kids really do learn something. From the beginning of proposal writing, and in virtually every SEA publication since, it has been felt important to salute this flag. "Certainly schools will continue to be concerned with this area", said the proposal. Southeast Alternatives will "provide a curriculum which helps children master basic skills." In lists of stated SEA goals, this one is always first.

The emphasis is real. All parts of SEA have worked to make sure that their students do not end up too illiterate to apply for jobs or tell a meter from a mile. But the emphasis is also defensive. It seeks to reassure everyone that alternative education does not throw out the baby with the bath. In 1971 there were many who feared it might. In 1976 many still fear that. We read now of some districts offering back-to-the-basics schools as alternatives in themselves.

To the extent it is defensive, however, the basic skills goal is also misleading. It states the obvious as though it were a discovery. SEA proponents, after all, never thought it necessary to promise that they

would "continue to be concerned" about serving school lunches or keeping classrooms warm in winter. Why solemnly swear that the three R's still matter? The reason is that the values of this project would not change school lunches (unfortunately, say students) or re-set thermostats, whereas they might very likely lead to shifts in understanding of what is basic.

In fact, to have schools which embodied such shifts was itself a major value for many in Southeast. The question was not whether children should learn reading and math, or even some geography and science. "Specific skills, intellectual disciplines, and bodies of knowledge" are important, of course. The question was also not whether anyone was opposed to children achieving "positive self-concept," "personal growth," and "self-determination." There would have been more argument -- much more -- over motherhood and apple pie. The question was whether school should nurture affective skills on an equal basis with cognitive, and be equally accountable for doing so. Should they be valued as equally basic?

An unmistakeable bias of the SEA proposal was to answer that question, Yes. Even the Contemporary School was proposed with an affective rationale: that many children "feel comfortable" in a traditional cognitive program. Beyond rhetorical bias, one thrust of alternatives was to say that if some families wanted more than the basic skills as usually defined, they should have it. The only reservation was, they could not have less. That was Goal I.

Though that may seem simple enough, basic skills could never remain a simple matter in Southeast Alternatives. An almost inescapable habit is to call students good if they do well in the three R's, and schools

good if their students are good. The common competitive inference is to measure schools against each other by how fast and how visibly their students acquire the basic skills. Hence the familiar apparatus of standardized tests and comparative school scores.

By the very act of offering options among styles of education, SEA was trying to break this habit. The choice of schools, from Contemporary to Free, is a choice among definitions of what makes a school good, and therefore of what makes a good student. The proponents for Southeast's alternatives manifestly did not all agree that speed and success in basic skills were the prime defining characteristic of school quality. Yet they singled out this one characteristic, defensively, as a prime goal for all. It may have been necessary, and perhaps harmless enough at the time. But it also tended to feed the habit which many of them hoped to kick.

When times came for program evaluation and considering test scores, debate about the basics was inevitable.

"Alternative School Styles"

Pledging allegiance to basic skills merely reiterated something SEA had in common with every district in America. Offering "alternative school styles" struck a note of true difference. The point here is not that alternatives differ from each other, but that the concept of alternatives as such is a radical departure in public school organization. To grasp the alternatives concept is crucial for understanding the Minneapolis project.

In essence the concept is simple. Alternatives exist when students or families have free choice among full educational programs that are equally available, different from each other, and physically distinct.

There are important refinements and additions which may go along with this definition, but those are its essentials: free choice by student or family, equal availability, distinctiveness and separate identity of programs, a full curriculum in each program.

That seems straightforward enough, as a definition. It has a practical corollary, however, which proves slow to sink in. It requires one of those small shifts of perspective which decisively change the whole view. It is this: once alternatives exist, there is no longer any "regular" program.

The point is worth putting in italics, because it is too little noticed, and because it is so foreign to the organizational ethos of public school systems. That ethos has grown up around the premise that there is some "one best way" of popular education. At any given time, the good way is offered by competent professionals and adopted by the school board as standard fare for public consumption. Reforms and rethinking come and go, as to what the standard fare should be. Thus in different periods, or different parts of the country there are varying orthodoxies of curriculum, organization, pedagogy, and even architecture. Likewise, in any one time or place, there may be departures from the standard fare, for special types of students. Thus there have been schools for the gifted, schools for the handicapped, vocational schools, and -- the most notable instance -- schools for the black. But always the norm of the system is regular schools for regular people. If there is anything else, it is offered or imposed for students who fail to fit in the regular pattern.

The alternatives concept, as defined above, undercuts this tradition deeply. It does not picture the system as a matter of a single rule and

possible exceptions to it. There must be two or several educational programs, each of which is as much the rule as any other. There can never be just one alternative school. There must be at least two, because they only came into existence by being alternatives to each other. By definition, no one school is better in itself than any other. A program only becomes better than another in being preferred over the other by people who will use it. It is only the best program for the people who choose it. The forum for that decision about quality and use is no longer reserved to professionals and a central board. It is expanded into the family and community.

Not all this was thought out and written down when SEA began. It was all there in embryo, nevertheless. The later definition of alternatives, in fact, was essentially built from a description of Southeast's elementary program. It was formalized, expanded somewhat, and in the fourth year of the project adopted as school board policy.

The definition described the program, even when the program was only a proposal. Every Southeast elementary family would have not only the possibility of choice among schools, but the necessity. There would be bus service to and from the four, for every elementary student. The schools would have different programs, and all four programs would be described to every family. Being in separate buildings, the programs would be physically, as well as stylistically, distinct. Each would be a full program, covering all the basics and then some, operating all day, every day, all year, K-6. All at once, on opening day in September, 1971, there would no longer be any "regular" elementary program in Southeast. There would only be alternatives. Neither school board nor principals nor teachers could say which was "normal" because none was and

all were. Each family must choose for itself.

In such a situation it was critical that the different programs not be taken as competitive with each other in any other arena than that of families' and students' educational values. People in Southeast must come to understand very rapidly that Experimental Schools and Minneapolis were not trying out several types of school in order to measure results at the end and decide which was best. The aim of the program was to commend itself whole. To that extent it was in the self-interest of each component that all should be successful. It was a bit like oligopoly corporations needing to keep the market divided. The point was pedagogical pluralism, not some new monopoly, nor the old one either.

A striking feature of SEA is the seeming ease with which people accepted this premise. One explanation could be that they did not much care -- that school by any other name is still a job, a requirement, a place to send the kids. Attendance patterns and levels of parent loyalty do not support such a theory. More likely is that unremitting public information and the knowledge that every school would get extra benefits neutralized fear of anyone's losing out. Perhaps still more important was the pre-existing high level of interest and sophistication among Southeast families.

In any event, a sense of commonality did develop, among professionals and parents with quite contrasting views of how children should be taught. The process of that happening is closely related to the project's next basic goal.

"Decentralized Governance"

Wher consumer choice is made central to schooling, as in an alternatives system, it is virtually implicit that the way education is

governed may change. One item in the 1974 formal definition of Minneapolis alternatives attempts to make the implicit explicit. Each true alternative must be "a program involving the community it serves (parents, students, teachers, administrators, and others) in its decision-making and developmental processes: a) in its initial planning stages; b) in its implementation; c) in its evaluation."

That may say a lot, or it may say nothing at all. It contains an infinitely ambiguous phrase, "involving the community." Everything depends on who interprets that phrase, and how. For SEA there were a lot of interpreters available. Sooner or later almost all of them got into the act, somewhere. Even as the proposal was written and funded, some of the key issues they would raise had briefly surfaced, or were easily discernible.

In parent participation the planning-grant period had set high standards and provided a strong start. From each of three neighborhoods a woman with children in the schools had been paid part-time (and had worked more nearly full) to help with organization and writing. By phone, personal recruiting, and flyers sent home from the schools each Friday, they brought many more parents into the Saturday meetings and planning process. They were articulate and able. Individually, they advocated Contemporary, Open, and Continuous Progress points of view. All three were high school parents, too. They could represent diverse opinions about the concerns at Marshall-U.

In all this there was one glaring gap which no one knew how, or had the skills, to fill. Southeast had four residential areas, not three. The fourth is the Glendale Housing Project. Parents were present and active from Como, Prospect Park, and the University district. They came

for meetings in the Tuttle teachers' lounge, mixed easily, and regrouped according to educational preference. Glendale parents, with rare exception, were not present.

There is no question Glendale people were invited and would have been welcomed. But in practice it was not so easy. No Glendale mother or father was on the community liaison team. No one actually living in Glendale was picking up the phone or dropping by before supper to brainstorm for better schools. From Glendale to Tuttle was a two-bus ride, with poor Saturday service, and in winter besides. Not everyone had a car. Almost everyone had small children. Even if you got there, you knew without asking what you'd probably find: people with more education than you, and better jobs, who'd lived longer in Southeast, in better places, talking about schools their kids were going to do OK in anyway, dropping names and pushing for ideas you didn't know about, volunteering for committees you didn't have time for. Despite the invitations sent home from school, it was not too inviting. Plans were already set to put Motley and Pratt together, anyway. Aside from that, no one had mentioned any special ideas for Glendale kids. There were no big changes in the air for Marshall-U High. All in all, it made more sense to stay home.

So Glendale at the start was not much involved in community involvement. What it intractably comes down to, no doubt, is that the culture of poverty, the culture of professional education reform, and the culture of parents who feel they own their schools simply do not flow together. Federal criteria requiring "a primary target population of low-income children" and "broad participation of the affected community" could not by themselves make it happen. The fact that it did not

happen in Southeast was to have occasional repercussions later, especially at Free School and Pratt-Motley. But those would not alter the underlying reality. Glendale was in SEA, but never of it.

Albeit without Glendale, by the time a proposal was written each elementary alternative had an active group of committed parents. It could be safely assumed that they would take the initiative with staff to help each "develop its own distinct community advisory group." The forms and flavor would differ, but the energy was tapped for parents to join with teachers and principals in deciding about programs.

At this point the barely sketched Free School had no staff -- nor program, nor space. It had only enthusiastic parents, a few disaffected senior-high students, and more applications than the school was funded to accept. Immediately, involving the community raised sensitive issues. In this instance, because Free School wanted maximum autonomy, they were hard policy questions of real governance, not just advice. Would parents and students take a direct part in interviewing and hiring teachers? Could they be responsible for designing a curriculum? Should they decide an admissions policy?

It was not the last time such questions might come up in SEA. The proposed "Student Guidelines for Experimental Schools" had already argued for student vote in curriculum and personnel decisions. That pre-Free School idea had not survived to the final proposal. But now the questions were concrete. People sensed that the system's answers would be looked to as precedents.

Different issues made community involvement an even murkier area at Marshall-University. All the factors which had hindered cohesive secondary program planning, conspired against clear participatory govern-

ance, as well. The high-school community -- students, faculty, parents -- was anything but cohesive; and those who might have led in bringing it together were too pressed by other priorities. Plainly there would not be any action in a hurry to strengthen the community role at secondary level. Before long, that in itself would become an issue.

Meanwhile, the question of what could or could not happen at M-U was hopelessly entangled with the governance question for SEA as a whole. The second question was even knottier than the first. Wrapped up in it were two of those years' most disputed concepts in school policy: decentralization and community control. An urban district like Minneapolis, sponsoring a project on the scale of Southeast Alternatives, was bound to face the question of how these two terms might apply.

Decentralization alone might be merely an administrative matter. In a significant way, Minneapolis had already moved to create some dispersed centers of administrative control. Within the system were two clusters of schools, called pyramids, which could be interpreted (but at the time were not) as prototype subdistricts. A north pyramid, created in 1967, took in Minneapolis' most heavily black neighborhoods. The south pyramid, new in 1969, covered the Model Cities area and its concentration of native Americans. In addition to easing communication and cooperation, part of the pyramid purpose was to improve focus and coordination in use of Title I funds. Each had its own central office and K-12 assistant superintendent -- an intervening level between elementary or secondary principals and the elementary or secondary associate superintendents downtown. Budget, staff allotments, and some services were beginning to be managed from the pyramid offices. Pyramid superintendents sat with city-wide top management on John Davis' staff

cabinet. They met regularly also with their own citizen advisory committees.

Southeast was not a poverty area, and had far fewer schools or students than either pyramid. Nevertheless, Southeast Alternatives was seen from the start as in some sense analogous to the pyramid structure. For some the analogy probably stopped with administrative convenience. A small cluster of schools, with common attendance area, must be closely co-ordinated in using a large supplementary budget. The five year federal program would have a director, with K-12 responsibilities. He should report to t[illegible] and 7-12 associate superintendents. Considering the scope and visibility of the project, it made sense that he should join the cabinet, even though not himself an assistant superintendent.

In Jim Kent's mind, the analogy to the pyramids must be pushed further than that. Even in administration, there was more at stake than convenience in running a federal project. There were important principles and practicalities involved.

The principle was one of intending in the SEA project to implant decentralized administration in still another part of the city. It was the further adoption of a promising practice already tried. Not all of Davis' cabinet, however, were as convinced as Kent that this was the pattern Minneapolis should strive for. They were not so ready to generalize from the pyramids' special case.

The practicalities for Kent were that decentralizing from downtown required centralizing in Southeast. To provide overall leadership, he thought the "director of the federal program" should be director of the local programs as well. If so, then building principals would

report to Kent -- about whether to mix kindergarten with 1st-grade, for instance, or whether to require home economics for boys -- then unless they went around him they must not deal with their accustomed associate superintendents. Vice versa would also be true. Decentralization might relieve top administrators of some work, but it would also relieve them of some power. It might simplify a principal's access to a supervisor, but it also subjected that principal to closer control. As the Contemporary School administrator remarked, before a year had passed, "More autonomy for Southeast, means less for Tuttle."

Both the concept and the practicalities of decentralization were surrounded by ambiguity as Southeast Alternatives began. It was nowhere clear that decentralization was an end of the project, as well as a means. Neither bureaucratic report lines nor the flow of local budget and personnel allotments was specified. Only after six months pushing, in January 1972, did Kent get from Davis the momorandum he wanted: Southeast principals would report in all matters directly to the Southeast director; resource allotments for all five schools would go in a lump to the Southeast director, and only thence be parcelled to the principals.

Decentralized administration becomes decentralized governance as it is linked with strong community involvement. Southeast had spirited parent participation in early planning, which would continue on in the elementary schools and Free School. The question now was what ongoing form that participation might take on a project-wide basis, and what powers it might have. People were sure to want something much heftier than a five-school PTA, and Jim Kent agreed. He also thought he saw a way to get it which would keep the University involved, and at the same time clear a path for moving beyond bad memories of merger in the life

of the high school. But here again Kent was pressing a principle and some practicalities which were not immediately persuasive to his colleagues.

In Kent's view, but very likely no one else's, the "noble experiment" of a joint Minneapolis/University policy board for Marshall-U High had been in principle a decentralizing move and a community involvement move together. He regularly cited the policy board in parallel with the pyramids, and quoted its designers' thesis that "the emerging urban school should be a broadly based community agency." Of course the policy board was not a pyramid, and its broad base was mostly in a perceived community of interest between two large institutions, scarcely at all among parents, teachers, and students.

Nevertheless, it was a structure for sharing control, and it did have specific reference to the Southeast attendance [illegible]. In 1970-71, as already described, it was floundering for lack of a clear mission and responsibility. Everyone saw a need for agonizing reappraisal. Kent's inspiration was to seize the opportunity. The Marshall-University policy board, he reasoned, might be "reconstituted" as an integral part of the alternatives experiment. It could become a decentralized governance body, not just for high school overview, but for the entire K-12 spectrum.

If that were done, much else might follow. From committed elementary parents the new policy board would pick up a measure of community energy not available before. With a director for SEA, five schools instead of one, a large federal budget, and an experimentation framework, it would have greatly increased potential for both the University's and the school system's interests. "Carefully reviewed

considering the federal grant," policy board membership could become the strong expression of community ownership and professional experience in shaping the schools. Not least, it might bring to bear on the troubled high school itself a more unified and broader coalition of community concern. One could even evisage that eventually federal, university, and school district funds -- all three -- would be transferred directly to this new Southeast entity. The policy board, then, "would determine policies and allocations within the framework of the legal contract." Administrative decentralization and truly strong community involvement would advance in tandem, both theoretically and practically far beyond where they had arrived thus far.

These were heady thoughts. They found expression in the March 30 draft of the Minneapolis proposal due in the Experimental Schools office April 10. University and Minneapolis officials had agreed a week before, that if Southeast was funded, their contract could be redrawn to put the policy board on a K-12 basis. Two weeks later, the new ideas caught Binswanger's interest, too. Was it possible that this prospective project could so directly and ambitiously provide a formal framework for community voice and vote in decentralized governance? That would indeed be more than a novel means to alternatives; it would be a significant end in itself.

But no, it was not possible -- not that easily. Washington's favorable interest in sub-district community governance was met by Minneapolis' higher-level qualms. In particular, John Davis and Nathaniel Ober had many reservations about letting matters move that way.

Ober, associate superintendent for secondary, was just plain opposed to the notion of making over the policy board into a community board.

As he was Minneapolis Schools' chief presence on the policy board, his views carried special weight. Ongoing advisory groups were fine, he thought, but once student/family choice among alternative programs was assured, the need for neighborhood role in running the schools was essentially met. He liked the analogy to a bakery: consumers determine by their purchases what will be offered for sale; they don't need to be in the kitchen or sitting up nights with the baker deciding the flavor of tomorrow's cupcakes. Ober's particular bête noir was the then much discussed voucher plan idea. Imagining a community policy board deciding what alternatives to offer struck him as not much better.

John Davis also was uneasy with how fast and how far Jim Kent's language was leading. Policy, as he would later feel it necessary to emphasize in a special memo, was an exclusive province of the elected citywide school board. Below the school board level there should indeed be much community discussion, participation, and support. But one must never mistake that for a policy function, nor, therefore, for community control. Control belonged at the top. Kent's proposed policy board in Southeast, empowered to "exercise its discretionary authority," would move it too far toward the bottom. It carried overtones of New York's Ocean Hill - Brownsville debacle, every superintendent's bête noir.

A chief reason for Washington wanting to fund the Minneapolis proposal was the possibility, as it seemed, of fashioning a legal decentralized governance group around the Marshall-University joint policy board. Try as he might, though -- even with Binswanger's help -- Kent could not persuade his superiors that their bêtes noirs were really red herrings. In the process of negotiating a final version of the proposal for school board approval, the expansive language of earlier drafts must be con-

siderably toned down. There was careful noting of "legal and fiscal restraints." A reconstituted policy board might emerge as no more than "the model of an advisory body." In any event, discussions of such a complex matter among so many legitimate interests "will be conducted in a prudent manner." It did not sound so promising as before.

Malcolm Moos, President of the University of Minnesota, had contributed a letter with the proposal, assuring that institutions's willingness to recast its relationship with the schools. As these arguments about the policy board went on into fall, one wonders if he and his deans did not wish there could be some more placid way to stay in touch with the schools than through involvement with community involvement. Eventually one would be found.

It took "several months of vigorous discussions" to lay Kent's ideas for the policy board, and the moribund board itself, to rest. Decentralized K-12 governance would have to come as a carefully delimited advisory council to the SEA director, without structural ties to the University, and without intimations of policy power. By winter 1972 it was clear "that neither administrators from the University nor Minneapolis wanted any other type of governance-administration arrangement." There was still the live question, however, whether such a council could win for itself some semblance of the practical influence originally proposed by Kent for a community policy board. It might be possible, and as will be recounted later, it would certainly be tried.

"Comprehensive Change"

Perhaps the most often repeated, probably the most slippery, and certainly the most grandiose of SEA goals is "comprehensive change." Of particular concern here is its slipperiness. That is made worse by

frequent billing of the whole project as not just a straightforward agenda of reform, but as an "experiment" in comprehensive change. Concern is not diminished by remembering Robert Binswanger's assurance that the reformers need not send him only success stories, because Experimental Schools was above all a program of "research."

To understand Southeast Alternatives as a research experiment in comprehensive change requires three assumptions. First, friendly, that the words do mean something. Second, tolerant, that their meaning is neither fixed nor exceedingly precise. Third, critical, that they rightly have different meanings for people in the different contexts of SEA.

The first assumption is simply to warn cynics away. There are some who enjoy dismissing an effort like SEA on grounds that the leopard cannot change its spots. On this view, a bureaucratized top-down school system is bound to remain just that. Overblown promises of change, dressed up in pseudo-scientific jargon, only camouflage what's really happening. The true story of any big system is its own institutional aggrandizement, the safeguarding of jobs, advancement of careers, and preservation of the status quo. Evidence for all these features can be found in this report, to be sure. But name-calling is not analysis, and the question remains: when people in Southeast Alternatives say their project goal is comprehensive change, what do they mean?

The second assumption is to warn away the gullible. There are those who imagine that where heavily rational and scientific language is used, there must be rational and scientific activity going on. "Experiment" has an aura of controlled laboratory settings and detached objectivity. "Research" connotes meticulous design, painstaking collection of data,

and dispassionate inference at the end. In association with these two, "comprehensive change" suggests an engineered variation of institutional components for the sake of more effective functioning. The planned variation is the experiment; the research will tell what happened; and if the results do not satisfy, another variation can be tried. The gullible believe this is the whole story.

As is obvious already, the real world of Southeast Alternatives is a far messier mix of interdependent variables (sometimes very willful) than this tidy scheme could ever contain. If SEA is research and an experiment, dealing with comprehensive change, it is these things in some much more free-wheeling sense than the laboratory language conveys. One suspects, in fact, that the laboratory language is chosen partly because it is respectable, safe, and suitably pious in the church of social scientism. But orthodoxy is not analysis, either, and the question remains: when people in SEA say their project goal is comprehensive change, what do they mean?

The third assumption -- that there are important different meanings of comprehensive change in different SEA contexts -- provides a framework for considering the question. Instead of as a pyramidal organization chart, it helps to consider Minneapolis schools as a universe of nested boxes or concentric spheres. Living in the outermost sphere are students and families. They are the most numerous, and have the most space to move around in. In the center sphere is the office of Experimental Schools, with few people and not much maneuvering room. Between the outer and the inner are spheres called classrooms, schools, the SEA office, and the central administration. The whole conception is one of worlds within worlds. Travel and multiple citizenship are common, but

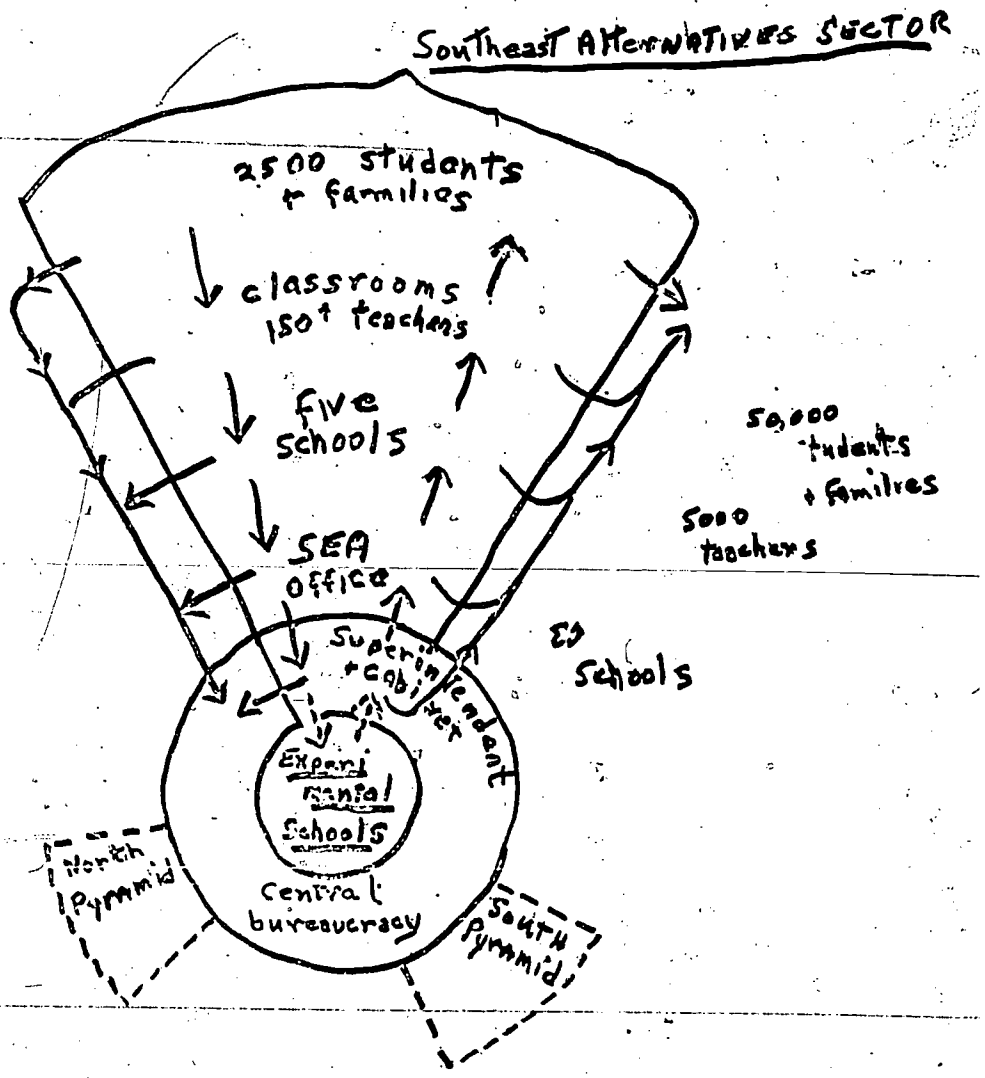
usually not farther than neighboring and next-neighboring spheres. Each sphere has its own pattern of internal organization and external relations. Students enter the classroom and school-building worlds easily. They have less traffic with the sphere of central administration. Central-office people communicate readily with SEA headquarters, and jump easily beyond that to deal with the buildings. It is rare to find them with students in classrooms, however, and following farther than that is virtually unheard of. For an associate superintendent to ride bikes around the park with random 11-year-olds, or for them to make phone calls with him in his office, requires a far-afield trip.

The image of concentric spheres can serve to diagram, over-simply of course, a whole public school system. Southeast Alternatives, however, is only a part of the whole. On the diagram of spheres, then, the students, classrooms, schools, and administration can each only be a sector of its whole sphere in the whole system. Likewise, the schematic must show that initially SEA only engages a portion of top-management's attention, and that only that same portion of top-management is concerned with Experimental Schools.

The image is already too complex to hold in mind. In two dimensions, adding arrows to be explained later, it looks like the drawing, next page.

Now, in this formal education universe of worlds within worlds, what might our slippery terms mean? For these concentric spheres, what is a research experiment in comprehensive change? Since the idea comes from Experimental Schools, with the intent of producing benefits for students and families, let's traverse from the smallest world to the largest.

Inserting themselves temporarily in the center, looking outward,


Southeast Alternatives Sector
2500 students + families
classrooms 150+ teachers
five schools
SEA office
Superintendent + cabinet
Experimental Schools
Central bureaucracy
North pyramid
South pyramid
50,000 students + families
5000 teachers
83 Schools

Binswanger and his Washington colleagues wanted to help change spread everywhere, in all the sphere. Needless to say, they had their preferences. Changes which liberalized or loosened up set patterns for students and staff would be favored. But in very large degree all Experimental Schools could really stand for was the presumed positive value of change itself. Their purpose in theory was change for the sake of change, throughout the system. In that quite formal sense, change was to be comprehensive.

To achieve the purpose Experimental Schools relied on one negative assumption and a strategy which was its positive corollary. The assumption (there is much evidence for its truth) has already been mentioned: small isolated, piecemeal changes have no systemic effect; the spheres of the system absorb them like passing showers in the desert, and go on as before. The strategy was implicit, but obvious: get enough locally favored new initiatives started, in enough variety, with enough cohesion among them, on a large enough scale, and over a long enough time that the system as a whole could not possibly ignore or be unaffected by what was happening. Scattered showers make no difference. But a rainy spell, with fertilizer and seed and a county agent, should make the grass grow, bring birds and earthworms, raise the water-table, support crops and farmers, and even lead to irrigation. All that, and the process by which it happened, would be comprehensive change.

Experimental Schools' strategy was also its hypothesis and its experimental method. An important part of both political reality and reform theory for Binswanger was that he could have little control over any spheres outside his own. His office might intervene or influence with counsel and criticism, but beyond helping start up the process he

must be a very passive experimenter. He could not actively control variables nor on his own initiative introduce new reagents. For Experimental Schools, in fact (or at least in theory), it was not even an experimental question whether this or that promising practice, nor this or that combination of practices, "worked". The only question of their experiment was whether many innovations deployed together would provide a critical mass for self sustaining, system reforming change.

That being the case, the only reasonable research task must be to watch carefully what happened, try to trace the strength or weakness of connections among events, make a judgment at some point whether change was comprehensive, and finally a further judgment whether the package of innovations at the start had much, little, or nothing to do with the state of the spheres at the end. Considering the five-year time span, and that all variables were beyond control, it would be remarkable indeed if crisp findings emerged, and still more remarkable if they were other than highly speculative. It is absolutely unimaginable that the hypothesis would be susceptible of either proof or disproof.

Despite the science-tinged rhetoric, it seems, conducting rigorous experiments and recording repeatable results were not very likely the main line of business for Experimental Schools. Promoting and facilitating institutional change was.

Schematically, the arrows in the diagram above suggest ways the strategy for comprehensive change might take effect in Minneapolis. Southeast Alternatives as a whole, including its direct access to top-management, is the seedbed sector. Within Southeast, for several years, extra money from Washington supports a very large increase of activity. The increase occurs in all parts of this section through the spheres of

the school system. It is especially characterized by intensified flows of ideas, information, and influence among all the parts. Arrows on this already crowded diagram show a deceptively simple inward/outward movement of energy, passing equally in both directions across hierarchical boundaries. That is only a very primitive stage of process. As activity increases, boundaries within Southeast will be leap-frogged or bent, sometimes severely. In fact, SEA began just that way. Stepping up communication reduces order and increases energy. Intricate inner loops of interaction will develop, like whirlpools in a stream, which themselves exert change effects for a while, and then fade away. Parents, staff, and students will see each other trying out new roles, and adapt or reject them for themselves. They will compete and compare notes in the use of new resources. Some will find themselves gratified by new rewards.

In all this, new patterns of cooperation and acceptance will emerge, become familiar, and then be counted on to continue. If new vitality is not cancelled out by internal conflict, Southeast will achieve self identity and esprit de corps as a protected sub-system. It will discover a corporate self interest in its own survival, and from that base will begin to foment change outside its sector boundaries. An increasing part of the agenda will be to make the organizational environment more favorable to the organizational oddity. What better way than to shape that environment in SEA's own image?

For systemic reform, this is the crucial enterprise. This is what Washington will be waiting for. Ideas, information, and influence will start to flow sideways from Southeast's homeland, into and through the spheres of the system as a whole. By now the SEA families, classrooms,

schools, administration, and link with top-management will have become a very different entity from what they were (namely, not actually in entity at all) four or so years before. The hard question of all institutional change will come to the fore in a system-wide context: can the new entity be legitimized as rule, rather than exception? or must it lapse back toward status quo ante? Put a slightly different way, will the "large scale experiment" become full-scale policy? From the Experimental Schools point of view that would achieve comprehensive change, the purpose of the project.

But was anything so grand the Minneapolis purpose? This is to ask whether it was Minneapolis policy to approve a project because some time later it would sharply change Minneapolis policy. The question almost answers itself. Beyond approving receipt of the money and recognizing that Southeast people had done a fine job, there was little pre-operational discussion of SEA in the school board. There was none at all (though there were probably some private thoughts) of its potential leverage for changing the system. From the point of view of those wanting change, silence was wise. In a school board election campaign two months after SEA was funded, conservative candidates found that belittling alternative schools won them votes. That must have been code language for showing devotion to the old ways, since at that time alternatives in Minneapolis were scarcely visible. Six months later, however, one board member's trial balloon, in favor of expanding the alternative approach was quickly and easily shot down. The majority view was that schools need offer only the kind of education which the majority wants.

It was true to a degree, then, that the school board did not know what it was doing when it bought into (or was bought into) Southeast Alternatives. If they had, they might not have done it.

That was equally true, if not more so, of the bureaucracy. Four years later, as he left Minneapolis, John Davis wrote that "the plan" was to start alternative schools in a "relatively secluded" way, export their successes to other parts of the city, and finally bring back the pioneer schools as "an integral part of the school system" again. As a conceptualization of systemic change process, that translates the implicit Washington strategy from a language of outside intervention to a language of inside management. The two are not incompatible. As a management plan however, comprehensive change was even more secluded than the project itself. Davis prudently did not bruit it about. At top levels discussion was brief, oriented toward agreeing on the choice-of-programs idea, selecting the place, and delegating the responsibility. In the central service departments it was occasional to the need for quality grantsmanship, therefore technical rather than substantive. Among middle management outside of Southeast it was a matter of simple announcement in the elementary and secondary principals groups. Similarly with teacher organizations, the AFT bargaining agent and NEA affiliate: there it was considered sufficient to keep the leadership informed (the project would produce new payroll) and reassured (the alternatives would not violate any conditions of contract).

So far as most of the system was aware, in short, SEA was not an entering wedge for comprehensive change. It could more easily be seen -- and was -- as just a more-than-usually-successful foray into the federal hunting grounds. Admiration might be mixed here and there with envy, but need not admit anxiety. And if there were some startling departures from normal practice, they could be tolerated as "only" an experiment. Binswanger was right. In school systems, innovation rarely

implied change.

It was a low-profile stance. Later, as we shall see, some Experimental Schools people would interpret this as dire dereliction. But in Minneapolis, at least to start, it was the leadership view that comprehensive change comes best when talked about least.

Except, of course, in the "relatively secluded" sector where the changing was to begin. To, with, by, and among the people of Southeast there was a great deal of talking. Much of it was in terms of comprehensive change, too -- for Southeast, to be carried out by Southeast. Part of the exhilaration which participants felt from the start (and perhaps part of the déjà vu feeling among some at Marshall-U) came from knowing they were part of a process which offered promise beyond their own bailiwick. But most of their energy, perforce, had to go toward fulfilling the promises they were making to themselves. Comprehensive change, project-wide, meant putting in place the K-12 services and connecting apparatus which would provide a chance for five different schools to develop as one cohesive program. The flood of ideas, information, and influences had to be encouraged, and at the same time somehow made manageable. In that context experimentation meant wading into tasks most Southeast people had not performed with their school system, inventing ways to handle them, and if those did not work, trying something else.

At building level, similarly, comprehensive change predominantly meant a trial-and-error shift from what had been toward what was going to be. There were important variations. Marcy and Pratt-Motley each had to undertake major institutional change itself. Existing faculties, working with many new parents, were required to learn new substance and

new style as a group, not just as individuals. The two-page Free School proposal entailed creating a new institution, not changing an old one. Even at Tuttle, becoming for the first time an alternative meant a shift of self-image, an appreciable change of student-body, and an implied challenge to be the most modern old-fashioned school in the city. At Marshall-University, on top of everything else, administration and staff had to weave a web of new relationships, programmatically in the building, and professionally with new SEA elementary colleagues outside.

"Where the rubber meets the road," as Tuttle's principal enjoyed reminding his peers, is in the sphere of teachers and their classroom students. Here change was expected to be as all-encompassing as anywhere else -- in many instances more so. It was not just concepts which might be altered radically, but the concrete arrangements of space, time, people, and things -- for every Southeast teacher and classroom. The new resources, roles, and rewards of the project came as an especially demanding offer. Unfamiliar or unheard-of materials and equipment, which previously could be ignored, must now be chosen or rejected. Consultants, evaluators, counselors, were standing at the door, waiting to be used. Non-experts were being recruited as helpful aides and volunteers, almost before anyone was sure what they should help with. Teachers must become managers and co-ordinators of many more people than just their usual complement of children. They had the challenge of designing new activities and whole new curricula. They might change the furniture, order up field trips, or buy encyclopedias. Whatever happened, it would have to be interpreted to parents. Teachers would be rewarded with power as they sat on committees and councils that made

decisions. They would be praised in print and photo, by an SEA newspaper, as their daily life with students took on new tone. And all the while, of course, they would still be teachers.

Physically and organizationally the perspective and responsibility of a classroom teacher appear narrower than for a principal or project director or superintendent. But precisely because the teacher's realm is smaller, and because all changes in the wider realms imping on this one, classroom change is apt to be more intense and more total than changes in bigger places. By the same token, teachers and students in classrooms have the most opportunity to be truly experimental and to generate useful research findings. That is because they are themselves both subject and object of their own experiments, and the beneficiaries of their own research. How and whether to take systematic and conscious advantage of this opportunity was to become one of SEA's most interesting program questions.

Finally, the intended beneficiaries of all these structures, processes, and people: Southeast students. The aim of comprehensive change through all the concentric spheres of the system, is to produce or support change in the students' formal learning environment -- perhaps by making it very informal. In one way, because of their transiency in any one part of the whole structure, students may have least knowledge of changes over time in that part. In another way, because of their transit through the structure, they may have most experience of its wholeness. In any event, they and their families are the ultimate evaluators of the data (the things given) from comprehensive change. If what happens with these people is deemed good, then what happened five worlds away was good also.

"But how the hell do you tell?" asked another Southeast principal at the end of a dull meeting; "Count the smiles?" With a touch of embarassment, he laughed. "Maybe not such a dumb idea."

A lot of SEA's most useful research came as variations on that not-so-dumb idea.

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Southeast Alternatives Goals

The fundamental SEA Goals are stated in the original SEA Proposal (I) and in the N.I.E. -- Minneapolis School Board 1973 Scope of Work Contract (II,III,IV) and are as follows:

SEA GOALS

I. "Providing a curriculum which helps children master basic skills...."

II. "The project will test four alternative school styles (K-6) and selected options in schooling programs for grades 7-12 articulated upon the elementary alternatives."

III. "The project will test decentralized governance with some transfer of decision-making power from both the Minneapolis Board of Education and the central administration of the Minneapolis Public Schools."

IV. "The project will test comprehensive change over a five year period from 6/1/71 - 6/30/76 combining promising school practices in a mutually reinforcing design. Curriculum, staff training, administration, teaching methods, internal research, and governance in SEA make up the main mutually reinforcing parts."

CHAPTER IV

GETTING STARTED: June - August, 1971

Between definitive approval of the proposal on June 7 and opening day for schools on September 8, Southeast Alternatives faced two broad, equally important necessities. One was to organize and begin staffing the central services of this new decentralized K-12 sub-unit. The other was to prepare teachers and buildings as the new options which they had now become. All told there were close to 70 positions to be filled under federal funding. Summer vacation was at hand, when almost all regular staff would be unavailable. Clearly not every task would get done. Clearly a great many must.

K-12 Services

For a project of only five schools, SEA would soon acquire an extraordinary array of central staff. Public information, financial management, staff development, student support, evaluation, and community education would all be covered by full-time professionals. In the first summer none of these was there. But most of the needs represented by the titles were.

Most immediate was public information, since the whole project was built on offering the public its options. Even before a specialist could be hired, a first requirement was for students and families to do their choosing. Here the multitude of mini-meetings and dittoed flyers paid off. Mailing out actual option cards to every family had to be a rush

job (largely handled by the three community liaison parents), but it could be done with assurance that most elementary families already knew what the range of choices meant. They had heard several times what different elementary styles were intended, and many had even been to look at the buildings where the programs would be housed. Most were content to choose the place which would have been their neighborhood school anyway. But even in this first round, some 26% decided it was worth it to go farther from home.

Once choices were made, there had to be a plan for getting the students where they wanted to go. Working out bus routes, bus schedules, and bus budgets fell to a parent liaison and the principal from Pratt-Motley. With help from the transportation department downtown, they got it done.

Though a large effort, summer staff training was not a major problem. Plans had already been prepared for the open and continuous progress teachers, and for piloting some interdisciplinary courses in the Marshall-U summer school. Additional days were scheduled for all faculties to have extra SEA orientation and planning time, if they chose to, at the end of summer.

Most staff development, however, was to occur as in-service during the work years of the project itself. The strategy proposed was to provide a cadre of resource specialists, to assist teachers at all levels with methods and materials of various promising practices. Fred Hayen was ready to sign on as director of staff development, beginning in September. He was an old Minneapolis hand, completing a doctorate at the University of Massachusetts in 1970-71. From there he had consulted several times with Jim Kent in writing the proposal. Interviewing and

hiring an elementary resource cadre Kent left largely to the two Southeast elementary principals. The group they put together included resource teachers in art, music, math, woodworking, environmental science, and language arts. For a secondary cadre, the Marshall-U principal recruited extra staff in several of the same areas.

"A major emphasis of the project," stated the SEA proposal, "is on the affective domain." To help that be true there was funding provided for a counselor on the staff at each elementary school. Early in summer the two elementary principals interviewed and hired for these positions. In addition, Kenneth Rustad, counselor at Marshall-U, took appointment for fall as SEA director of student support services. Part of that job was to develop and win acceptance for a small-group counseling program in the high school. The other part was to provide an integrative umbrella, in Southeast, over the normal bureaucratic separation among psychological, health, and social work services for students.

Evaluation was intended and required to be a very major feature of the alternatives project. It had already been agreed, among Kent and the associate superintendents, that SEA evaluation would be independent of the school system's research and evaluation department. That partly had to do with the general emphasis on decentralized administrative control, and partly with the intended specific emphasis on a formative, within-the-process style of evaluation service. The system's central department had a more summative, after-the-fact approach, which for SEA was meant to be contracted outside the system by Experimental Schools itself.

About this division of labor, however, there was much confusion, which would cost a disputatious year and some warm resentments to get

cleared up. The proposal listed five chief evaluation tasks for "local and federal evaluators to share." How to share them was left for decision "when staff is actually on the job." Washington was ready with a contractor for Level II, as external evaluation was called. Kent met immediately after funding with him and a member of Washington's staff. They sketched a co-operative plan. Then Kent hired Dale LaFrenz, a former math teacher in University High, to head up Level I, internal evaluation. He would start in late August when faculties reconvened. Meanwhile, in the midst of more immediate tasks, evaluation was necessarily set on a back burner. Kent and all concerned had to assume that the two-level co-operation would work out.

Among those other tasks were physical and financial housekeeping. SEA headquarters staff would no longer fit in Tuttle or any other school. They had to lease, furnish, and move into rented commercial space near Pratt. For their new programs both Motley and Marcy now had federal funds for fairly extensive carpeting, partitioning, and painting. Tuttle and Pratt had lesser amounts. All the schools had their wish-lists of materials and equipment to get into requisition form. For the Free School, of course, a building must be found. There were inevitable layers of paperwork piling up, and hours of calculation. Among its own central staff, the project required professional help in business and financial affairs.

Finally, of minor importance in the proposal, but eventually a large SEA activity, was community education. With federal money for a full-time Southeast coordinator, this, too, was to be woven into the comprehensive decentralized project. Eager to start expanding the small evening program at Marshall-U, and to link it with the elementary

buildings on a project wide basis, was Becky Lattimore. With agreement among the principals and the Minneapolis director of community education, Kent hired her during the summer to start work in the fall.

Contemporary School

For five SEA schools, the requirements of getting ready for life as Southeast Alternatives ranged from relatively light to impossibly heavy.

The main summer change at Tuttle, apart from refurbishing the building was administrative. In 1970-71 Arthur Lakoduk had been an intern principal, learning some ropes by working with the administrator in charge of both Tuttle and Marcy. Most of his time was concentrated at Marcy. All were agreed that his energy and skills should be kept in the project, as an assistant principal. Once designated for the open program, however, Marcy would obviously face the more extensive changes and probably the greater internal stress. It made sense for the senior man to pay prime attention there, and to delegate most operational responsibility for Tuttle Contemporary school to Lakoduk. He was more than willing and there was no disagreement at Tuttle, either. As soon as pre-fall workshops began, he wanted to work with teachers and parents on the Contemporary school's key question: How will Tuttle, though in many people's minds only expected to be traditional, become in fact an important part of comprehensive change?

Open School

At Marcy there could be no waiting for pre-fall workshops. Principal and staff must plunge immediately into transmuting 10 self-contained classrooms into one Open School. They had both the opportunity and

the necessity, moreover, to work closely with the sophisticated, self-confident, and highly committed veterans for Southeast Parents for Open Classrooms. All but two of Marcy's teachers -- ranging from a 20-year old-timer in that building to probationary rookies -- had readily chosen to take on the challenge. So had the principal, Harold Benson. The year just passed was his first in Southeast, after seven years administrator experience in Minneapolis. Working on the proposal and with the parents had fired his interest in both open education and community involvement. He claimed no expertise in either area, but he knew enough to know that that was the expertise he wanted to acquire.

The process began immediately. Five weeks of staff development started the week after school let out. In it were old and new Marcy staff, including half a dozen federally funded extra aides, and occasionally some parents. At one time or another fully a dozen different consultants came in to help -- several from the University faculty, several others from active teaching experience in open schools or classrooms around the upper midwest. For two weeks of full days the Marcy people focused largely on the different roles required on an open teacher, compared with those of a teacher traditionally trained. Teacher as learner, as informal teammate, as manager of a new kind of environment, and as extension of home and community were all explored. Much of the content outline for these sessions came from early proposal drafts written by Parents for Open Classrooms. Appropriately, then, there was also consideration of new roles for parents and non-professional adults in the building. Ten sessions were conducted for the staff to practice new communications patterns among themselves. The entire group visited a laboratory open school at Mankato State College, 100 miles

away.

Then, for three weeks, Marcy ran its own pilot open school. As new carpeting, and furniture began to transform the building, 40-50 younger elementary children came to two open classrooms each morning. During afternoons in this hands-on atmosphere, the staff continued with their own training. Now the emphasis could be more directly practical and problem-solving: how to develop choices with children, how to deploy teachers and aides, how to arrange the furniture.

By the end of the five weeks thirty people had had more than a casual or textbook exposure to principles and practices of the new education they wanted to offer. Along with that experience had come an extended introduction to the rewards and stresses of many new people working closely together. It was necessarily a hurried effort, with many loose ends and not a few anxieties about the approaching start of school. Teachers who would have to make this school work, they felt, grew impatient with hearing one-shot consultants come in to talk about their own schools. Inexperienced but radical-minded aides wanted time to challenge assumptions that others believed had to be accepted. The human relations sessions seemed like a daily distraction from practical tasks that had to get done.

Nevertheless, it a was a long head-start. A month later, when staff returned for a two-week pre-fall workshop, it was made still longer. That was a pressured time for concrete organizing of space, time, tasks, and new materials to start the year with nearly 300 students. As outlined in the original proposal, there were to be two models of organization -- equal options within the alternative. One was the open classroom, as practiced earlier in the summer, based on what people had read

of the British infant schools. The second was an open corridor structure, with many more teachers and students sharing and circulating in a much larger space. It was most immediately based on the approach being developed at the Mankato laboratory school. What befell this attempt at simultaneously organizing one school two different ways is described later. As summer ended, morale was high, but so was the level of worry whether anyone was really ready. In a short time there had been a lot of retraining and a lot of confidence gained, but also a lot of questions postponed. The institution had begun its change with large scale effort among the people who had to run it. They were about to start the first public open school in Minneapolis.

Continuous Progress School

By summer's end Pratt-Motley was different too. The difference, though, came by consolidation and extension of previous change, not by abrupt immersion in a new philosophy. The process was already well advanced when SEA funding was finally approved. No matter what the word from Washington, it would have gone forward anyway.

This momentum came from more than a year's experience with continuous progress practice. In spring of 1970, Pratt was selected by the school system to undertake an ungraded primary program, ages 5-8. This step in itself was to be a further testing of methods initiated on a smaller scale in a North Pyramid school, and recommended by a consultant's report for consideration throughout Minneapolis. One reason for choosing Pratt was the expressed desire of many Prospect Park parents that their school should be trying new ways to improve education. From central management's point of view the change was something less than comprehensive, but certainly a step beyond the

piecemeal. At building and classroom levels it was meant to be pervasive.

With the decision for continuous progress came a new principal, Jack Gilbertson, promoted to Pratt in order to lead the transition. His faculty already knew, and mostly were committed to, the idea of an individualized ungraded program. In the summer a full year before SEA he and the primary teachers had six weeks of special training. The emphasis was on organizing instructional teams, recasting curriculum and materials, and writing objectives. Parents took part in two or three all-afternoon sessions. After the six weeks, ungraded primary and classroom intermediate teachers (grades 4-6) went through a week-long human relations workshop together, laying groundwork for working alongside each other in the same building.

Stage two was to be extension of continuous progress through ages 9-11, with the full pairing of Pratt and Motley. School Board approval for the pairing, with commitment of extra staff and budget, came one day before the letter of intent to Experimental Schools in January 1971. Right away, Pratt-Motley intermediate staff (including one teacher on sabbatical at the University) began concrete research and planning for their physical move to Motley and their pedagogical shift to a continuous progress mode. They visited other schools, brainstormed among themselves, worked with consultants for reading and social studies, and listed rehabilitation they wanted at Motley. When the planning grant was announced, it meant they could write into the proposal even more ideas, and people to carry them out, than they were counting on anyway. So could the primary staff, for Pratt. From late April to the end of school, intermediate teachers spent every Tuesday afternoon in team planning. Before summer even began, they had blocked out room use,

homeroom groupings, afternoon interest centers, and a tentative way of reporting to parents. On the last days of school they packed and labelled materials for moving into Motley. Only one teacher chose not to stay with the new program.

What remained for summer, then, was to nail down details. Motley's teachers had two full weeks of that by themselves, in June, with new staff and aides supplied from the SEA grant. In August they had two more weeks, together with the primary staff at Pratt. Pratt people re-assessed their year's experience with a three-team arrangement, and decided to drop it. They also decided to keep 5-year-olds separate, instead of mingled with the 6-8's. With enrollment now known, Motley people were able to name specific student groups, and plan the first two weeks of school in virtually hour-by-hour detail. Together the total staff worked out shared schedules for shared people such as counselor, social worker, and principal. They had new students in for orientation and testing. They felt well prepared and ready for the year.

Free School

Summer for Southeast Free School was very different from summer for anyone else. This was not an institution changing; it was an institution barely conceived, yet already being born. It had begun life as a few late paragraphs in the SEA proposal. The paragraphs became people in three jumbled months of searching for staff, searching for space, and searching for purpose. By late August the people became an enthusiastic, but precarious, community.

As was expected, Free School people came from the ranks of left-liberal dissent. Many were reform-movement activists for such causes as civil rights, ending the war, and feminism. Some were radically doubtful that

"Amerika" was reformable at all by any normal political process. They might harbor hopes for revolution, or by life-style and associates rest their faith in the growth of a counter-culture within.

What brought Free School's founders together in education was their own experience of it. As parents, teachers, and high school students they had all found that public schools were places which contradicted the values which they themselves considered important. The contradiction was more than a matter of distasteful pedagogy, though certainly it included that. It was crucially a matter of ethos and expectation. The emblems of school -- compulsory attendance prescribed texts , the threat of failure, administrative hierarchies, social workers, patriotic exercises, dress codes -- were badges of belonging to "the system". Public schools were part of the establishment which Free School people were dissenting from. That was why free schools were needed.

Yet now the suspect system itself had invited those who despaired of it to get organized, draw from the public purse, and do their thing -- within the system. To readers of Kohl, Kozol, Goodman, and Denison, it seemed too good to be true. It was certainly a paradox, and almost everyone had questions. Could a public school organization even tolerate, much less actively nourish, a genuine Free School? Could genuine Free Schoolers survive, without being co-opted, in a centralized bureaucratic structure? Other than money (from Nixon's administration, of all places) what were the bonds which would hold oil and water together? And what would a genuine Free School look like, anyway?

Only time would tell, people said, and in the summer of '71 time did not allow for pondering the paradox. Thinking it through would have

to come from acting it out. An as yet unembodied idea, the Southeast Free School must be incarnate by Labor Day. There was much to be done. Betty Jo Zander, the administrator who had written the Free-School proposal, stayed thrqugh much of the summer to help with the work.

Students and parents, teachers and space, were the obvious minimum necessities. Seventy students were chosen by lottery, from more than 100 who wanted to come. Teachers were chosen by parents and a few older students together. Space was found by a committee from the whole group. These three choices defined the environment and posed the challenges for Free School's development.

As the luck of the lottery turned out, even after a corrective second drawing, the students who started at Free School were virtually all white (95%) and heavily from families of high educational background. Noticeably absent were all but a handful of children from the low-income Glendale Housing project, or (which came to much the same thing) from the now terminated School Without Walls at Marshall-U.

Free School did have poor people, but most of them were voluntarily that way. They were people who rejected the American dream, not people who felt they were failures in achieving it. It did have drop-out teenagers, too, but few fit the unemployable urban stereotype. They were not crippled by ignorance in reading and math; they were not tagged for a future on welfare or in the courts -- or even in blue collar wage earning. By social antecedents, in fact, if not by ideological or emotional preference, Free School was rather middle class and very monochromatic.

For some parents that was OK. They wanted a school which would enhance and educate according to their values. If actual enrollment did

not happen to include the culture of poverty, that might be regretable, but it was not invalidating. For others, though, not having blacks and poor people in the Free School was like not having wheat-germ in a co-op grocery. It provoked the pangs of guilt which accompany that most painful sin, the self-violated self-image. From the very first meeting, then, there was uneasy discussion about the character of the school. Some argued that they must do something to bring in Southeast's truly poor, from Glendale and black families from wherever there was interest. Otherwise, Free School might end up irresponsibly as only a haven for hippies. Others agreed that these were laudable goals, but worried that pursuing them would bring Free School a lot of hard cases whom they were not prepared to deal with. A haven for hippies might be bad, but a dumping ground for delinquents would be worse.

This was a background debate which continued important throughout Year-1 and beyond. It also became part of the foreground agenda, choosing teachers. More than 20 applicants showed up for a first group interview with about the same number of parents and students. Free Schoolers wanted a selection process that included the applicants themselves. That would set a participatory standard for the future. Planning would begin with interviewing for staff. Everyone asked everyone, "What is your vision of a Free School?"

Answers from the applicants showed the same disparate spectrum of ideals -- Summerhillian, political, counter-cultural -- as answers from the parents. And from at least one or two of the would-be teachers came support for a fourth vision as well: the obviously middle-class Free School should become explicitly and predominantly a school to serve lower-class needs. Ordinary public schools short changed the poor by

not giving their children the skills or motivation to change society in favor of the oppressed. The only justification for Free School would be in its contribution to redress that balance.

Most of the group convened were not ready for so hard a line. It was more important to move ahead with those who were present, than to start over for the sake of those who were not. The issue was deeply uncomfortable, but realities were realities. It simply was not practical, at least not at the very beginning, to try to be both a new Free School and a new version of the School Without Walls. Rather reluctantly, that was the decision.

Strong agreement was easier to achieve on the question of staff size. There was quick unanimity that there must be more teachers than the three allotted, and that they must be organiz an equal-status collegium, not a hierarchy. Individualized learning in a K-12 age-range demanded the former; egalitarian doctrine demanded the latter. Both seemed possible if the principal-level salary budgeted for a coordinator were combined with local money allotted for teachers, and the total divided equally among six people instead of unequally among three. This plan contained some seeds for bitter controversy later, but as the School was struggling to be born, it had many attractions. To parents and students it meant more staff per dollar. To applicants (at least to all who felt they could afford a $6,000 salary) it meant a doubled chance of any individual's being hired. And for everyone it was a distinctively non-traditional affirmation of anti-bureaucratic values: individualism and equality. The bureaucracy itself, lobbied by Jim Kent, agreed to appoint six teachers as long-term substitutes, thus getting total salaries low enough to meet the budget. The union pressed no questions

as to whether the "subs" would do full-time work for part-time pay. And thus the plan went through.

That such issues should be chosen, proposals made, and decisions taken by a group of parents and students was already a remarkable departure from normal public school practice. Equally startling was that these parents and students, the community, were actually screening and selecting the people who would teach in their school. Officially, to be sure, the community group could only "recommend" adequately credentialed people for appointment by the downtown personnel department. But with surprisingly little hemming and hawing, and with liberally loose construction of some of its own required rules, personnel accepted all the recommendations. As Free Schoolers experienced the process, hard though it might be to believe, they themselves were in control. Over against the bureaucracy, they were establishing autonomy. They were in the system but not of it, and no one downtown was disabusing them of that perception. Here again were some seeds of future conflict.

The initial hiring process was not tidy, but it achieved its purpose of identifying a group who wanted to work collectively with each other and with the community. After a first meeting with all the candidates, there was a series of day-long work sessions with those who both wanted and were wanted to return. By self-selection and consensus (not to mention the inherent requirement of having time available to do all this), the active candidates were reduced to nine. These then spent a solid week on planning. By the end of that time it was clear who would be the Free School staff team.

They were five men and one woman. They were highly motivated, strongly individual, variously radical. All wanted a personalized

school, focused on people, not subject matter. They saw themselves as mutually supportive peers in the movement for a new America. Only one was over 25; none over 30. None was a parent. All were white. Except as students themselves, or on student-teaching assignments, none had ever worked in a public school. Until Free School came along, none was very eager to do so.

First among equals on this team was Tom O'Connell, chosen as Head Teacher by common agreement of all involved except possibly O'Connell himself. In the previous year, he had helped found a small private free school for high-school students in St. Paul. His deepest interests were in advancing grass-roots power over the institutions and forces that held people powerless in a profits-oriented mass society. His hope for free schools was that they should add momentum and creativity in communities organizing for independence. In this Free School he saw some chance of building a beachhead for the return of decision-making power from central authorities to the people whom those authorities were commissioned to serve. Like all Free Schoolers, he found the concept of being an administrator uncomfortable, or even downright distasteful. But for the sake of the greater good, he could accept responsibility for providing an administrative link between the Free School community and the towering hierarchy to which it was willy-nilly attached.

In the same pressured weeks that they had chosen teachers and talked about program, the Free School group had also found a building to rent. It was not a place all to themselves, and it was neither the homey old residence nor the flexible open space that many had hoped for; but it did meet the fire codes. It was part of a former Methodist

church and Sunday school center, across the street from the Southeast branch library, half block from Marshall-U, and right on the edge of Dinkytown. Free School got one ground floor room (about 50x20) with lots of windows, a couple of smaller and darker rooms, and the attached modern church itself. Outside was an ample corner lawn for running around, playground equipment, and no fence to protect it from the heavily trafficked street at one end.

Most of the two-week workshop before school necessarily went to getting this space ready. For Free School people it was important to do the work together, themselves, not to have it done for them by janitors or work crews, clerks or consultants, from downtown. So parents who could spare the time, a couple of older students, and six brand new teachers took on in ten days the ten thousand tasks and details without which even the freest of schools could not function. The whole infra-structure of pre-existent of stuff, which established schools find routinely at hand, this group had to whip up in a hurry. They painted walls, found furniture, remembered toilet paper, collected materials, ordered a phone, and carried out trash. A new parent liaison, Sally French, shouldered the burden of clerical and record-keeping chores that others found either beyond or beneath them. Everyone underwent bureaucratic baptism in getting purchase orders and filling out sextuplicate requisitions. They cursed the system and began to learn how to use it.

All this was more like plain work than like a faculty workshop. There could be little philosophical probing, and -- beyond what to do on opening day -- not much curriculum or program design. That was worrisome, but acceptable. It would have been against philosophy

anyway to pre-arrange too much. Once things were at least in rudimentary order, the tired teachers could rationalize their lack of training or planning. The essence of Free School, after all, would be found in "creating the program with the kids".

Marshall-University High

To get started in SEA, the smaller schools all composed variations on a single theme: how to become what their new names promised and their people hoped. Marshall-University had no new name and no new common vision. It had to compose for a very different theme: how to agree on what to hope for, and what to promise the school would become.

Summertime activities did not go far toward answering these questions. It was not that nothing happened. It was simply that the happenings did not combine in any core of clarity about what direction the school should move. Some of the activities were these: William Phillips became formally the principal; several teachers taught trial versions, in summer school, of new interdisciplinary courses they had already worked on; others revised their repertoires for new electives to fit the trimester calendar taking effect in September; here and there the more aggressive departments acquired new hardware and software; new staff were hired to strengthen further expansion of electives and innovations; serious talk started about a program of informal "guide groups" throughout the senior high; planning was begun to expand the counselor-and-teachers team approach in junior high.

That was a respectable list for one summer. Nowhere in it, though, was a process hit upon for Marshall-U's staff, students, and families to come together in sufficient numbers or for sufficient time to deal

with Marshall-U's changing. In view of the history already recounted, that was doubtless too much to expect. In addition, there were some inherent features of the high school which made it an utterly different planning environment from other Southeast Alternatives.

First, Marshall-U was three times as large as any of its local feeders. Although the smallest of Minneapolis secondary schools, it still had three administrators, 75 teaching faculty, and a dozen or more professional support staff. Their organizations, professional loyalties, and meeting habits were along departmental lines -- not at all the same as a dozen or 15 elementary generalists able to gather weekly with their principal in the staff lounge. For many of the parents, even if they expected and wanted to come to meetings [illegible]ool was physically a long way from home. Psychologically, f[illegible]udents and parents alike, high school is always much farther from home than even the most unwelcoming elementary school. Marshall-U was no exception. Among its older students, in fact, from apartments and rooming house pads in the University area, were an appreciable number of "emancipated minors" who had already made the break with home and were living on their own.

Second, it was almost by definition impossible for this school to convene a self-selected clientele to hammer out a school-wide alternative purpose. Except for [illegible]ee School, tiny and untested, M-U was still the only secondary school for Southeast. If students and families were to have significant program options beyond 6th-grade, they would all have to emerge and co-exist within this one institution.

Third, Marshall was already serving as an alternative of sorts. Close to 15% of the enrollment were non-Southeast transfers -- largely

black and mostly from the north side. These were students and families who saw Marshall, prior to and apart from any SEA changes, as a better learning environment than the junior and senior high schools in their somewhat stigmatized part of town. It was arguable that they were not so much looking for new kinds of schooling, as for a good version of the old kind. The same could be said for some 80 deaf or orthopedically handicapped students coming from all over the city for "mainstreaming" in this high school.

As newly-named principal in this setting, Bill Phillips faced a choice. Should he put his chief efforts -- this summer and thereafter -- in support of innovation, experimentation, trying to make Marshall a showplace high school for the new generation of urban youth? Or should he strive for stability, consolidation, gradual evolution toward some more modest goal? There was pressure from both sides.

On the one hand, the very fact of an Experimental Schools grant, in a context of national concern about classroom crisis and student disaffection, at a time of heady publicity for unusual initiatives in other cities, in a local system [illegible]ing to do great things -- argued for some dramatic moves and announcements. A few teachers argued that now was precisely the time to meet pervasive changes in the environment with pervasive changes of concept, organization, and program in the school. A few parents, having read about John Adams in Portland or Parkway in Philadelphia, wanted Marshall-U to follow those leads. A few students had ideas of their own for re-doing the institution along less institutional lines.

On the other hand, Marshall-U as a whole was far from fired up about starting with a fresh slate in the name of alternatives. Many

faculty wanted time to catch their breath. Some very vocal Southeast parents were worried about order in the halls. Among other secondary administrators Marshall-U was already seen as pretty far-out. Above all, there was no compelling blueprint for extensive change. These were arguments for going slow. Bill Phillips wanted Marshall-U to become "a school of alternatives" for both faculty and students. But Bill Phillips was also the first to acknowledge that he had no master plan for the high school of the future, and he did not like to move without a plan. Further changes within this institution would best come slowly. They should come primarily from among the teachers themselves, not by imposition from above. They must not exalt the daring at the expense of the traditional. They would inevitably and rightly come piecemeal, incrementally, not as a sweeping victory of good guys over bad.

The principal's preference, in other words, was for stability, not excitation. In his own words, "The dominant thrust of the first years was toward administration rather than leadership." That was the summer's chief decision.

As former M-U administrator, Jim Kent knew the difficulty of the problem. No more than anyone else at this time, did have a clear-cut vision of what the school should become -- or how it could become it. As SEA director, he had to be content with "a trojan-horse approach: get some things started, and see what can happen." He was not greatly optimistic. It was "an open question" for the whole year, he wrote in his August 31 report, whether sustained planning or program change would be forthcoming at Marshall-University.

CHAPTER V

CHANGES IN THE SCHOOLS: THE FIRST TWO YEARS

September 1971 - June 1973

This is a chapter to sketch changes and their impact in five schools, separately, over two years. In that period each had to define by its own behavior both the content and process of its identity as an alternative. Each took into its life a cornucopia of new resources, roles, and rewards -- usually nourishing, but sometimes indigestive. The time was long enough for some patterns to emerge. It was short enough for not all of them to be set in concrete. By the end of the period there would be some important changes in the Minneapolis setting, plus a stormy second round of proposing and negotiating with Experimental Schools. Then would come the urgent need to look ahead at questions of the alternatives' future. Until then, it was a full agenda just to establish each alternative's present. The overriding question of the first two years was not, What next?, but more often, What now?

Tuttle Contemporary School

What made Tuttle different was that it was supposed to stay pretty much the same. At least that is what many people thought, and what Tuttle people thought they thought. Press and public attention were focused on the other alternatives. Those were the places for something new -- news. Understandably but unfortunately, Contemporary school seemed to be left as a place where the old remained -- no news. Supposedly it was for people

who did not want change.

In a project devoted to comprehensive change, traditionalism is a hard image to bear. It was hard for Tuttle. All the alternatives were equal, but there were grounds for worrying whether this one was less equal than others. Tuttle was getting less money, for one thing. In common conversation, for another, people kept calling it "traditional" -- an adjective of dismissal, not of great expectations. Even the official name, Contemporary, felt a bit weak and cosmetic alongside such self-evident virtues as openness, freedom, and progress. Besides, Tuttle was losing its principal to Marcy. Arthur Lakoduk, coming to Tuttle, was undoubtedly an able young man, but was also undoubtedly a very junior assistant. Perhaps the real truth of the matter, some teachers and parents suspected, was that Tuttle had been picked as control group for the rest of the experiment.

Almost by the structure of the project, then Tuttle was in danger of negative self-image. Along with that, easily, came attitudes of competition and resentment toward the other school. The big story of the Contemporary school in its first two years, is how both these threats were turned aside.

From the day he arrived, Art Lakoduk contested the notion that Contemporary meant any kind of stick-in-the-mud school. When people referred to Tuttle as traditional, he corrected them. Contemporary, he argued, meant "using the best of what's available at the time." There is a base of proven pedagogy, which Tuttle affirms and stands for. Graded structure and self-contained classrooms support mastery of the basic skills and growth in self-esteem together. But on this base innovation is possible and necessary. Wherever teachers and parents think our materials

and methods are not the best available, we now have the chance to improve them. The new federal money is for that kind of innovation, "not to do the same things more expensively." Because it is Contemporary, Tuttle can understand itself best as a changing school.

This was not an inaugural address, but a slowly growing grasp of how a "conservative" school could hold its head high in a "liberal" project. Without great pressure for immediate major change, the first year could go toward relatively small improvements, and toward consolidating work relationships among Lakoduk, the staff, and parent leadership in the PTA.

The latter was a low-key but on-going effort. Aside from the extraordinary time and patience invested by Tuttle's parent liaison, Evelyn Czaia, probably two chief factors indirectly and strongly contributed to its success. One was the presence of a full-time counselor, on federal funds. The first typical faculty reaction ranged from skeptical to hostile: "Counselor? Who needs it?" She persisted, though, and won her way. More important, she won new understanding of guidance as a developmental concept, not just remedial, and of affective learning as integral with the basic skills emphasis. That contributed to the general relaxation of mood. By springtime, first year, the counselor was meeting regularly in school with a parent discussion group. That moved from discussion about children, to concerns and ideas about the school community as a whole.

A second factor helping everyone feel more comfortable about the future was Lakoduk's own special and evident interest in community education. He had been a community school director in Minneapolis, and taken a Mott fellowship in Flint. About this subject, he wore his heart on his sleeve. He really liked the vision of neighborhood school as neighborhood center,

offering educational activities from pre-school through golden age, from morning through evening. In this community that struck a chord. As soon as the right leadership was found, it would pay off.

Program changes in the first year were largely limited to what could happen quickly through the help of additional aides, new money for specialist help, and new materials. Indicative of the Contemporary approach was Tuttle's early decision not to hire a program co-ordinator ("to do the same things more expensively"), but to put much of the SEA money for that position into lasting supplementary materials for their media center. As part of the summer renovation the old school library had been moved from a dark basement corner to two carpeted, light, and newly furnished rooms upstairs. Now they could be generously stocked with teacher-requested hardware and software -- from geological units to cassettes to books -- for use in classrooms or in the center itself. Other money went toward contracting extra help and vastly improving the facilities in ceramics and the woodshop.

Meanwhile, a lot of thinking was going on about core curriculum in reading and math. In both areas, Tuttle teachers were feeling dissatisfied, before SEA, with the texts and materials at hand. With new resources available they could begin changing them to their own specifications in Year-1, and by the end of Year-2 come up with "quite technical" programs embodying the emphasis on sequential skill development which Tuttle teachers favored. Both came to be characterized by minutely detailed break-downs of specific skills to be mastered; eclectic teacher-selected materials for developing these skills; and an apparatus for recording individual student progress through the sequence.

For reading, the means to this end was a consultant University professor, plus graduate students, who worked with teachers in classrooms and in a new reading skills center. They demonstrated techniques and materials;

helped with analyzing and defining the skills; and designed retrieval systems for matching instructional materials to instructors' objectives. Eventually five different reading textbook series were available, with innumerable games, paper-backs, audio-visual, and manipulable aids. The Tuttle Pupil Progress Chart, being tried out by teachers by the end of Year-2, identified a scope and sequence of 460 reading skills, grades 1-6.

Math followed a similar zealous pattern, with the technical help coming from SEA's own elementary cadre math specialist. She helped teachers define their own objectives for minimal math competencies. For grades 3-6 these objectives were converted into test items for use in a computer-processed Comprehensive Achievement Monitoring program. To maintain the system and help make sense of the printouts, CAM required a special aide, with inservice sessions for both teachers and parents. In-school computer terminals were increasingly used for interactive drill and practice, supplementing numerous games and project materials in the new math skills center. Teachers still used, but rather differently, the basic math text series which before SEA had been the whole math program.

So much changing in two years' time pretty well dispelled any fear that Tuttle was tagged as only a control group. It did raise a conceptual question, though (which the principal himself identified in his first month on the job), whether Tuttle could become Contemporary without looking like Continuous Progress. The self-contained classroom was getting to be not so self-contained any more. Well, felt Lakoduk, if that was what staff and community liked best, so be it. Jim Kent was not so sure. After all, the point of alternatives was that they should be distinct from each other. In reading, especially, he urged Tuttle to stick with a single basal textbook series. But Tuttle did not want it, and Tuttle had its way.

Tuttle's way was also toward a greatly expanded community program already suggested above. Possibly this was particularly appropriate and likely for a Contemporary school; possibly it came much more from the character of the neighborhood and the principal than from their particular philosophy of K-6 education. In any event, Lakoduk wanted a full-time community education director, and in the fall of Year-2 got SEA funds to hire Bruce Graff for the job. In part-time work the spring before, Graff had already shown teachers that after-school programs need not disrupt their space or materials. Coming on full-time and functioning as a member of the faculty, he led a dramatic expansion of both afternoon and evening activities for both children and adults. How these came to mesh with classroom instruction, and to make volunteer community involvement a leading feature of the teacher-directed Contemporary school, are an important enough topic to deserve separate treatment later on.

In the same spirit as the strengthening of community programs, Tuttle's PTA also changed. After a Year-1 survey, the PTA board cut back on sparsely attended general meetings, and replaced them with smaller sessions for more focused concerns. Mini-meetings at parents' homes or with grade-level teachers served for both information and feedback about curriculum changes. Weekly coffee-and-conversation groups, in the school, were a successful low-pressure way to open the door for new parents to take an interest in the school.

Gradually, without claiming decision-making powers, the PTA board took on a strong advisory role in addition to its annual fund-raising and social events. They began to propose parent representation in staff meetings, complementing active teacher representation on the board itself. In spring 1973, they met directly with an Experimental Schools officer to

protest some decisions made in Washington. About the same time they played the key role in making clear Tuttle's objections to proposals for a "re-organized school week". In the 1973-76 plan they looked forward to an active advisory part in selection decisions for new personnel.

From his early weeks as administrator, Art Lakoduk recalls, "I wanted Tuttle people to feel special, too." By the beginning of Year-3, he says, "You didn't hear nearly so many negative cracks about the other schools." At the same time, parent and staff surveys showed as high satisfaction with Tuttle's work as anywhere in Southeast. Evidently some "special" feeling was beginning to take hold.

Marcy Open School

By enrollment changes alone, Marcy was a changed place when it opened as Open in September 1971. Almost half the 282 students were from outside the old Marcy attendance area. They had not been to Marcy before. In larger proportions than elsewhere, neighborhood families had chosen a different option, and newcomers were riding buses to this one. More of the new children were from Tuttle than from Pratt-Motley. More were in upper quartiles of standardized reading-test scores than lower. More were in the younger half of the elementary age-range than the older. More than in the other schools came from single-parent families.

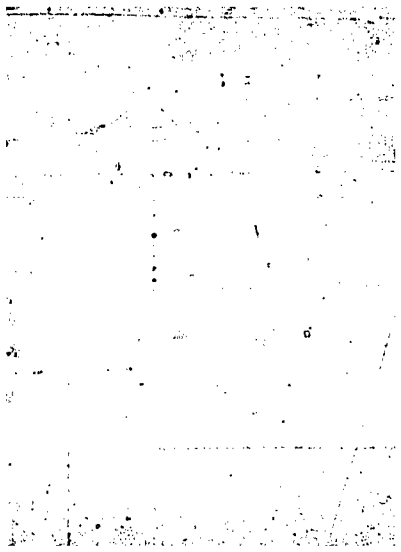
With these children came mothers and fathers already committed as Open parents. Receiving the children were staff who had spent most of the summer preparing to be Open teachers. In both groups, enthusiasm and expectation were high. So were abilities and determination. The life of the school would be fashioned by how these people cooperated or clashed

in agreeing on goals, developing program, and arranging its governance.

Goals were an early concern. Dale LaFrenz, internal evaluation director, was urging that every alternative define some standards by which to measure its own progress. Marcy seemed to welcome the task. From the many people who were coming to meetings about the new school, principal Harold Benson had no trouble putting together a goals committee. It was two parents, two teachers, the curriculum coordinator; and Benson himself. LaFrenz met with them, often, as facilitator.

The goals committee was small, but its communication base was large. In its work was the first concerted effort of parents and staff together to define what was important to an Open School. When the Marcy community gathered in much larger meetings, which was often, the goals committee reported to them. For every bit of output, they got large dividends of input. Their own meetings were long, frequent, and sometimes full of high feeling. The feelings were over substance and nuance in such issues as children's freedom and ability to make their own choices, relative importance of cognitive and affective learning, classroom structure or the lack of it, and the balance of authority between parents and professionals. On many occasions the dividing line of difference seemed to fall between staff and parents. It became clear in the goals committee, as elsewhere, that that dynamic could be as important as the goals themselves.

Eventually, by December, the committee had a product which everyone could own. After the manner of such documents, it was balanced, long, hard to take issue with, and much less vigorous than the process which produced it. There were goals for children, teachers, parents, the organization -- more than 50 in all. Those for children were later sub-divided as "Feeling OK and Getting Along with Others"; "Making Sense out of School"; and "Using What is Learned". None in any category was



of the quantified, precisely measurable, behavioral objectives type. As many began "We hope; want; expect; or would like to ...." as "We will." The goals were a composite statement of values. There was repeated emphasis, direct or indirect, on a personalized, experiential, and holistic approach in the Open School. One mark of such an approach would be the extent to which understanding their "values, emotions, and interactions" became for all Marcy people "a vital part of the educative process."

While these generalities were being struggled over, an educative process was going on which was indeed rich in "values, emotions, and interactions." That is what made the goals not quite such easy abstractions they appear in print. Two basic issues developed simultaneously and remained intertwined with each other. In the first two years they would have to be resolved several times over. One concerned how to organize and conduct open education. The other concerned how to make the school's decisions. There were questions of curriculum and instruction, that is to say, and of governance.

Marcy began the year, as the SEA proposal had outlined it should, with two models of program structure. Model I was preferred by parents of about 55 children. It provided two ungraded classrooms, each with children ages 5-11, who had their own teacher and aide, and their own interest centers in the room.

Model II was chosen for 225 children. In multi-age lists of about 11, they were assigned to teachers-as-advisors, not to rooms. The rooms throughout the building, were resource and activity centers which the children could use according to interest. They were staffed by the teachers-as-teachers, with aides. They offered places for math, creative writing, art, social studies, science, reading, woodworking, gym, music,

and multi-media projects. To provide some order, a requirement rapidly developed that children must meet with their advisor each Monday morning, and decide then on their schedules of activities for the week -- in multiples of half-hour mods. So parents could be part of the decision, a weekly list of activities available in the centers went home with the children each Friday.

Model II at Marcy did not work. It was based on influential advice and example from the lab school of Mankato State College; it was what the large majority of parents and teachers had wanted; it seemed the more open option. But by November or sooner, few teachers, students, or parents were happy with what was happening. Nervous allusions to The Lord of the Flies got knowing nods in the school. After the energy required for slowing kids down and stopping fights there was little left for the desired close relationships among students and teachers. Among so many people and places, children had little sense of belonging with any one. "Kids were falling between the cracks," and teachers could not stop them. The structure of specialized centers encouraged fragmented learning, not integrated. What could be accomplished in them felt fleeting and superficial. Parent volunteers were abundant, but their roles far from clear. Getting weekly schedules done was a nightmare; having them actually followed was a dream. Between the emerging Marcy goals and the emerging Marcy day-to-day was a growing gap. Teachers and children were getting battle fatigue. Several parents were asking whether there could be another classroom of Model I.

By November, no wonder, the staff wanted some time by themselves. They needed, more than anything else, some breathing space to be together as their own support group. They took a Saturday and went off on a retreat.

Meanwhile, parents and staff were also working toward a format for joint participation in governance of the school. There was no shortage of either numbers or leadership. Most of the former Parents for Open Classrooms, of course, were now at Marcy. General parent meetings regularly drew 100-200 people or sometimes more. The original community liaison for Marcy's neighborhood, Diane Lassman, was an Open School parent, who continued work on school community communication. A new parent, Judy Farmer, became Marcy's parent coordinator. She was one of many at Marcy who had been active in the parent-run Southeast Cooperative Nursery. She pushed especially for parent work in the building and on committees.

The question to be thrashed out was, How would decision-making be shared among parents and staff? With so much assigned responsibility, most teachers were concerned that parents be helpful, but not look over their shoulders every minute of the day. Some were more uneasy than others that they, the perceived professionals, had come later to open education than many of their lay clientele. From even some of the most active lay leaders, came cautions against undercutting the staff on whom all parents depended. Harold Benson regularly reminded people of what his superiors were reminding him: that no degree of participatory decision-making, by staff or parents, would dilute the principal's formal accountability for Marcy's entire program. Jim Kent reinforced that: whatever was done by way of governance must be within the legal boundaries of school board policies, rules, and regulations.

All these points were made in a provisional steering committee on governance, formed by parent and staff volunteers from crowded early meetings on parent involvement. Their job was to examine various models of decision-making (including the Marshall-University joint policy board),

and bring back some alternatives for everyone to vote on. In November, as dissatisfaction grew strong with Model II, and as staff went on retreat by themselves, the provisional committee finished its work. Despite Benson's and Kent's reservations, it would offer the voters an ideological choice: an elected council to advise the principal; or one to make policy for the school.

When staff came back from their retreat, they brought what to some seemed surprising news. They were ready to reorganize Marcy, with a very different design in place of the problematic Model II. The surprise was not that staff wanted something better, but that in meetings without any parents present, and without announcing that that was their purpose, they had taken it on themselves to formulate a policy decision. To people of strong parent-control ideology, even though they might agree with the changes suggested, that was an affront. It was something done "behind our backs." To a smaller number, it was a double affront. They not only believed in parent-control; they also felt that the new design was a retreat from openness.

There was another crowded meeting, of course. Acknowledging people's strong feelings, principal and teachers reviewed why they and others had found Model II unworkable. They explained their proposal for change, outlined some alternative ideas they had rejected, and put it to a vote. Model I½, as it was called, carried. Everyone had taken part in the decision. Until another day, the crisis was contained.

Perhaps this episode was cathartic. In any event, the virtually simultaneous decision on a mechanism for governance offered promise that it need not be repeated. On December 6 Marcy met to consider its provisional committee's report. There was no objection to a representative

council, elected equally from parent and staff constituencies. The debate, sometimes heated, was between advisory power and policy power. By a small margin in a large meeting, Marcy voted for the former. This was no time to be doctrinaire about parent control, aruged some. A positive foundation for mutual trust would come best by not demanding too much power. Complicated ballots were cast during December vacation. In January the Marcy Advisory Council took office.

Also over vacation, people pitched in to rearrange rooms and schedules for Model I½. The new pattern established double size multi-age open classes, called families. Two physically opposite rooms, including a furnished segment of the broad carpeted hallway between them, were home base for a single family of about 60 children. They shared the space, the interest centers in the space, and a team of two teachers and two aides. The separate woodshop, gym, music, art, and media centers were shared by all the families and by the unaltered Model I classrooms.

This was a very considerable change from where Marcy had started in September. Arriving at the change had been a stressful experience, and there was still divided opinion over whether it represented an advance or a retreat in terms of open education principles. Whatever the theory, observed Fred Hayen later, accepting the stress was courageous behavior. "Here was an idealistic bunch of people" he said, "publicly admitting they were in way over their heads. They consciously made a correction. You don't see that too often." Many in Marcy felt that the correction had saved the school -- especially as they found, happily, that families worked much better than Model II. Some saw special strength in Marcy's beginning to develop its own model, rather than following someone else's. Others still hoped that with experience would come the

skills to have another try at Model II. "Maybe we'll evolve back that way," said Benson; "but no one can promise it." Whatever might be wanted in the future, everyone could agree to an immediate moral, drawn by Jim Kent, "that earlier parental communication and involvement in the decision-making process is imperative."

In spring there was opportunity to act on that learning. By that time there was some doubt among staff whether even the mid-winter change had gone far enough. In particular, it seemed to some that the 5-11 age-span in each family was simply too broad, and that the desired level of teaming among teachers and aides was too difficult to achieve. One family, in fact, had already divided for most activities into a primary classroom and an intermediate, with a teacher and aide for each. Others were wondering if that was not a good idea for all.

Now, Marcy had two resources for decision-making which had not existed in November. One was the council, where recommendations might be clearly made and acted on. The other was an internal evaluator provided for the school -- a Marcy parent, interestingly enough, and one year earlier a leading light in Parents for Open Classrooms. A defined task for the evaluator was to be of service to decision-makers by providing information to clarify structural and programmatic issues. This she set about doing, at the request of staff and with help from counselor and social worker. Behavioral observations, sociograms, and interviews with teachers and students were gathered in each family. Compiled and categorized, the data came to staff meetings and to the parent/staff council. Using the information which everyone now shared, staff recommended to council that in each family the two teachers divide their accountability for the children along age lines: one responsible for the 5-8 year olds, and the

other for 9-11's. There would still be mixed ages in both rooms, and teachers would still team together in activities where that seemed valuable. But Model I½ should be modified in the direction of finer age-group distinctions.

Harold Benson presented and supported the staff position. He said he and they would accept the council's judgment as a decision, not just as advice. There was substantive debate centered around the observational data and the point of principle that families were designed for many ages to learn from each other. What teachers wanted might be a practical and realistic modification for the children. It might also be a backward step toward graded structure.

At the end of the evening, council approved the change. That was the way the families would work next fall. Everyone would be notified. Everyone could agree that decision-making at Marcy had much improved.

Summer came and almost all the teaching staff (with two parents) went for at least one week of workshop at the Prospect School in North Bennington, Vermont. Prospect is a well established, partially state-funded, independent open elementary school. Its director, Patricia Carini, and a co-founder, Marian Taylor, had visited Marcy in the winter. They and their experience in open education were much looked up to by Marcy people, as by many others. In the summer workshop one conviction which Carini expressed firmly was that grouping 5-11 year olds together for learning was neither developmentally justified nor pedagogically sound. For the sake of both kids and teachers, she advised, Marcy should design most program separately for primary and intermediate groups. Marcy teachers did not require much persuading. Recognized expertise was legitimizing the direction their thoughts had already taken. Talking together in Vermont, they agreed easily that separate

groups in separate rooms would be the way to teach in September. Thus, the stage was set for governance/program crisis number two.

After a host of other summer experiences -- four people stayed on at Prospect for six weeks; another half-dozen visited infant schools in Britain -- staff and some volunteers reconvened for pre-fall workshops at Marcy. There they firmed up the Vermont ideas, including division of the classroom day into meeting times, project-activity times, and quiet times. For the sake of getting off to a well ordered start, moreover, staff decided not to use volunteers for the first two weeks. Year-2 began with each family sub-divided into primary and intermediate units across the hall from each other, sharing the space between. When feasible, according to teachers' judgment and preference, there might be team teaching and cross-age activities.

Astoundingly, considering the history and Marcy's propensity for communication, there was no general announcement of the organization change. All the sharing of plans was informal, and in the late August city doldrums, there were lots of people it missed -- even including some non-classroom staff. Not at all astoundingly, therefore, as school got going many parents were truly angry all over again. The new arrangement, they felt, was not at all what had been agreed to in spring. Had teachers and administrators (again) simply acted unilaterally?

At the first September council meeting staff worked to explain and to placate. They cited the importance to them, as professionals, of taking seriously Pat Carini's critique and their own staff development learning. The new age groups were something to try, not a policy carved in stone. By November or so, they suggested the two-tier families might well be re-merged. The parents who had been to Prospect said they did not

like the change, but that staff needed the leeway, and that it would be destructive for Council to box them in. They found support for not forcing the issue. Tempers receded. Matters were left as they were. Until November, there could be watchful waiting.

When November came, nothing changed, except that the moratorium on volunteers belatedly ended. Primary and intermediate groups continued as before. If they had not been pragmatically successful -- pleasing to children and teachers alike -- Marcy might have had an explosion. Instead of an explosion there was something not much better: a small group of the very resentful, and an infectious sore of mistrust as to whether mutual parent/staff decision-making was really going to happen.

The story does have a happy ending. Marcy council decided to use internal evaluation and get some data again. This time they needed to know not only what was happening in the classroom families, but what the families back home thought of it. From surveys, reported to council in January, it was clear that parents overwhelmingly approved the narrower age groupings, as well as the separate scheduling of quiet and noisy activities. What they disapproved, still, was the process and mis-communication of the decision. With that information, the governance and program issues could be separated. Benson and the teachers, affirmed in what they were doing, could admit to some mistakes in what they had not done by way of sharing. They could stop intimating that the whole arrangement was only tentative, and that some day they would surely return to the wider age-range, larger families, and teacher teams. Parents, for their part, could accept acknowledgment of some murky process, without demanding reversal of good results. The boil had been lanced and the program went forward.

For the rest of the year, as it happened, there was more than enough governance work as such to keep Marcy council busy, and to strengthen its confidence along with the teachers'.

First, throughout February extraordinary hours were required to prepare 1973-76 planning proposals for renewed funding by Washington. As the voice which must speak for its school community, council was directly responsible for reviewing all Marcy's ambitious hopes, revising them if needed, and approving a Marcy package as part of the SEA total.

Second, for two months or more council was re-writing its own constitution. That brought another look at the advisory vs. policy question, which this time elicited direct word from John Davis that while school councils may influence policy, they do not make it. Work on the constitution also involved simplifying the membership categories in hope of inviting greater participation by teaching staff. All along, teachers had felt under-represented, since most staff seats went to employees not actually responsible for classrooms. It was finally settled that council would be six parents and six paid personnel, all elected at-large from the two constituencies, to advise the non-voting principal.

Third, in late February, Harold Benson resigned. Effective April 1, he would be gone, to co-ordinate planning for alternatives in the Minneapolis south pyramid. How Benson's successor was chosen is left for a later chapter. It had vital connection with project-wide governance strategies. Marcy council was heavily involved, though, in establishing the process. It was not itself the selection committee, but did have the candidates sit in on a regular council meeting. By the end of March a new man had been recommended and appointed. On April 2 he began work at the school.

Fourth, on April 9 Experimental Schools rejected Southeast's 1973-76 plan, telling Marcy and everyone else to rewrite completely. Within one month there must be a new document and vastly reduced budget. Almost simultaneously at Marcy came the fall-out from some poorly managed parent complaints about staff leadership. That ignited staff resentment of the parent leadership. Now it was the teachers' turn to ask whether parents were meeting privately to make personnel decisions without staff participation. In the flare-up, a few intra-staff sensitivities were abraded as well. It was a high-pressure time. All in a rush, a lot of old sores were threatening to re-open.

The just-arrived administrator was Glen Enos. He came to Marcy from an assistant's job in a heavily black north Minneapolis elementary school. There he had especially worked with a teacher training program which emphasized parent participation as a force for professional growth and institutional change. Earlier, in secondary work, he had focused on core-curriculum approaches which broke down traditional subject-matter boundaries. For seven years in the Congo (Zäire) bush country, long ago, he had worked on teaching basic three-R skills as part and parcel of indigenous agriculture and crafts. His own convictions about integrated learning and community involvement drew him to the Open school, and vice versa. He had applied to be principal.

His introduction to the new job, Enos recalled later, "was one blow after another." In some ways, however, he had walked into a lucky combination, and could take advantage of it. He knew nothing of the planning which had gone on, except that suddenly everyone was furious with Washington, and faced a lot of tough decisions about future dreams. He knew little about staff/parent and program/governance history, except

that obviously it was too hot to rehearse in public at the same time as trying to re-write a three-year plan. It made sense for council to rally everyone for the public decisions which Washington, as a sort of unifying pain in the neck, required; and for the principal to hear out in private the individual frustrations and hurts which people were carrying around. Not yet anyone's partisan, he could best absorb one blow, and work on continued healing of past divisions. Ignorance there was an advantage. Council could best absorb the other blow, where ignorance was disadvantage, by re-casting budgets for assured continuation of the program already in place.

In any event, roughly that is what happened, for the rest of the spring. With careful attention from both parent and teacher leaders, the interpersonal storms blew over. Council remained task-oriented, and its new, quite adequate request from Washington was funded. A co-ordinator position had to be cut, but principal and staff could talk realistically about the consequences in terms of their own work-loads. People's pride in their program was bolstered by a plan to send Minneapolis teachers for internships in Marcy's classrooms next fall. Another satisfying agenda, strongly supported by the principal, was to advertise Marcy in the black community, and increase its embarassingly low minority enrollment. Finally, optimistic parent and teacher brainstorming began for opening the Open school into the community-as-a-classroom on a scale not yet attempted.

All this winter-spring activity, be it noted, was consolidation and extension of program or governance already developed. No group proposed radical rearrangements or sharp departures in new directions. There were no notable upheavals over who had a right to meet or make decisions. The parent co-ordinator, now worked almost as much for teachers as with parents

proper, linking them with a variety of volunteers. Faculty evaluation focused on obstacles to personalized, experiential, holistic learning in their own classrooms and the resource centers. Instead of battles over Model II or Prospect, council now had an outreach committee on Marcy as a Model. After two frentic years, there were signs that the Open School's shakedown cruise was about completed.

Pratt-Motley Continuous Progress School

By the time children came for classes, Pratt-Motley had already behind it some of the history which other alternatives must still acquire. In Prospect Park were parents with several years' interest in gaining an ungraded program for both schools. At Pratt there had been a year of experience with continuous progress for 5-8 year olds. For half a year intermediate staff had been preparing to teach their students in the same mode.

It was not a burning or brand-new question, in short, what sort of school Pratt-Motley was meant to become. Professionals and the active parents were already agreed. Nor was there any large influx of new families to propose different definitions. When all the option cards were counted, 85% of the students still came from the old Motley and Pratt attendance areas.

That being the case, it did not take long for Pratt-Motley to state its philosophy and objectives. A document with that title was adopted by staff before a week of school had passed. In a list of mostly unexceptionable principles, it emphasized that "learning involves a change in behavior." The objectives for continuous progress education, then, were to develop "thinking behaviors," "socially effective behaviors,"

and "self-directive behaviors."--each rather painstakingly subdivided. For all this there must be "tool skills" (the three R's), "set up with specific behavioral goals on a sequential continuum." The skills would be practiced and the behaviors developed in dealing with "already established knowledge in the many subject areas."

This was a tidy and purposeful foundation, obviously intended to insure that continuous progress would not simply be left good nature and good luck. To carry out the purpose, staff had long since decided on an organizational schema for time and activities. Mornings would be given to basic skills work, individualized as much as possible by achievement-based small groups or by the curriculum materials for each child. Afternoons would be spent in interest-based groups pursuing mini-courses and non-core subjects. The crux of the matter was that each child would advance at a personally comfortable pace, without fear of failure, through the serious sequence of mastering tool skills; yet each would also have plenty of time for moving around among activities that were fun, using the tools in cognitive and affective behavioral growth.

How was the theory to be worked out in practice? After all the preparation and clarifying of purpose, it remained to be seen how two large changes of environment would affect the program. One was physical: there were two buildings, not close enough to walk between, for a single continuous program. The other change was less tangible, but equally impossible to ignore: Pratt-Motley was now in the SEA sphere of influence; after having started work and begun to shape strategies by itself, it must now share intimately in the resources and values of a much larger change effort.

Quite apart from SEA, Pratt-Motley's two-campus structure would

surely have been a defining force in its program. The main difference was a difference in teachers' experience and ways of working with curriculum. The primary staff had worked a year already with the new approach, and were adapting it to their own style as a working group. Intermediate teachers were just beginning, with an age-range whose repertoire of skills and behaviors was developmentally very different. With the two populations of students and teachers in separate buildings, unable to rub shoulders day by day, it would have been surprising indeed if they had not begun to take on quite separate characteristics. For children at about age nine, when they shifted home-base from one building to another, there was almost bound to be some marked discontinuity in their continuous progress education. That hyphen in Pratt-Motley was hard to pronounce -- or to articulate, an educator might say.

The advent of SEA brought somewhat contradictory influences to bear on this problem (if it was a problem) of separation. There were simultaneous factors which weakened and strengthened the hyphen.

On the one hand, federal funds supplied staff positions which made it easier for each building to develop a distinctive culture. The curriculum coordinator who had worked a year getting primary program started, could stay solely at Pratt. That was because SEA provided Motley with a full-time co-ordinator of its own, the language arts consultant who had already worked part-time with intermediate teachers the winter and spring before. Above these two strong individuals it seemed an efficient and comfortable working arrangement that the principle should devote an extra share of his time to the primary building, and his administrative assistant an extra share of hers to the intermediate. For each building, moreover, federal funds supported a part-time community aide to recruit,

orient, and keep in touch with volunteers. Even with other new staff who worked in both places -- such as counselor, math specialist, and the parent who continued as general community liaison -- this added up to a strong support structure for autonomous development in each building. It was made stronger by the fact that both Jack Gilbertson and the two staffs (as they rapidly came to be seen) thought it best not to force uniformity of style on people who felt they had already agreed on basic philosophy.

At the same time, both the SEA director and a key goal of the Southeast project worked to conteract any moving apart of Motley and Pratt. At one level it was conceptual and perceptual concern. Even though in two locations, Continuous Progress must genuinely grow as one program. Given the ease with which separated groups under the same label can convert differences of style into differences of doctrine, Jim Kent worried that Pratt and Motley would first come to seem, and then actually be, two different animals. He was sensitive (hypersensitive, most leadership staff at Pratt-Motley felt) to any signs of rivalry or tension between the two buildings. He was therefore especially supportive of any staff development and planning projects which brought their people together. Later on he would support a project-wide re-organization which actually brought them under one roof.

A more basic and long-term unifying force was the SEA goal of strong community involvement in the governance of each alternative. The effect of this common value was to strengthen momentum which pre-existed SEA in the move to pair Motley and Pratt. There was the symbol of a joint PTA already. There was also a joint staff committee, advisory to the principal. Still staff only, this easily became a Pratt-Motley co-ordinating committee in 1971-72. In the first fall, however, Suzy Gammel (one of the original

SEA community liaison parents) organized a parent liaison committee for the merged school. With her groundwork and Jack Gilbertson's support, parents gradually began to mingle with the staff committee. By the second fall this sharing was formalized with an election of three parents (plus PTA president) to sit with seven staff as a co-ordinating council. With strong representation from both Glendale and Prospect park, the council met frequently and actively. It became heavily involved in the ordeal of 1973-76 planning. At the end of the year it was making non-salary budget recommendations for the whole school. Through a personnel selection committee it was interviewing and voting on applicants for staff vacancies, even to the point of once "overriding" the principal.

That, however, is jumping ahead. The bulk of the coordinating council's work was co-ordinating -- keeping the two buildings in touch with each other. "There was very little philosophical discussion," recalls Suzy Gammel; "It was almost as though the philosophy were set." Council's job, in a sense, by emphasizing interbuilding communication, was to keep it from becoming unset.

In curriculum development a common task for the whole school was to begin use of new materials in both math and reading. These were the Pyramid Reading Program and the Individualized Mathematics System. Both were considered especially suitable for Continuous Progress instruction. Both required extensive preparation and staff training in Year-1, for full-scale introduction in Year-2.

IMS math, as it was called, was just beginning to come out commercially. With a collection of some 7,500 laminated pages for student use, it divided math into 10 broad topics, sub-divided each topic into nine levels of difficulty, and for each level identified specific skills to be mastered.

After initial placement, with guidance from mastery tests and teacher prescription, children could pass through the sequential steps of each topic (e.g. subtraction, fractions, time) at their own most comfortable speeds. A particular selling point for IMS was that the color-coded and illustrated work pages did not presume high verbal ability. Weak readers might still be strong mathematicians.

For teachers, such detailed individualizing of such a wealth of materials is labor-intensive. They had first to become familiar with the concepts, the activity cards, and the record-keeping grids which charted pupils' progress. They must also have a manageable place and means for IMS access. Operating the system required initial placement tests and then, repeatedly, short checkups or unit post-tests. A math resource center was organized in each building. Extra aides were hired to help with testing and records. In both spring and fall of 1972 (plus summer staff development) teachers, aides and some volunteers took 18 hours of IMS in-service training. Coordinating all this was the Pratt-Motley math specialist.

To her also fell responsibility for adjusting and de-bugging the program during Year-2. In general, IMS worked much more satisfactorily for intermediate ages than for primary. Younger children were baffled by the multiplicity of cards, not to mention more manipulable materials. In late spring only a third of Pratt teachers were ready to say they preferred IMS to other math curricula. By contrast, all Motley teachers liked it. Even they, though, felt it was too time consuming, and gave top budget priority to the aides they needed to keep the program running.

A similar complexity required similar development of staff to achieve closely monitored Continuous Progress in language arts. The Pyramid Reading

Program was a constellation of methods and supplemental materials developed in Minneapolis for making a single basal series (American Book Company) more effective in inner-city Title I schools. All SEA was encouraged to use Pyramid, but only Pratt-Motley really wanted it. Again, there was a division into multiple levels of difficulty, a series of sequences through the levels, and a profusion of games, flash-cards or worksheets to maintain momentum.

In spring of Year-1, all Pratt-Motley staff, including aides and administrators, had 20 hours of in-service workshops with the University professor and specialists who had designed Pyramid Reading. There was more training in summer, and for Year-2, a primary teacher took the new position of Pratt-Motley reading resource specialist. Her job was to continue training of staff and volunteers, to design orderly ways of maintaining and adding to the materials, and to assist with the diagnostic and prescriptive decisions which had to be made for each child's language arts program. Unlike IMS, Pyramid Reading called for small groups working through a limited band of achievement levels. Individualization came by use of materials within the groups, and by movement of any child, whenever deemed ready, from one group to the next. At Pratt, also, there was a specially furnished reading reinforcement room, staffed by a part-time aide. Like IMS, the program took a lot of time and a lot of management.

Both buildings began full-scale use of these new curriculum programs in fall of 1972. Meanwhile the staff in each had begun to consolidate their particular ways of organization and styles of working. As already suggested, they were quite different.

At Pratt, with primary children, teachers stayed with generalist

roles, each maintaining home-room responsibility for a heterogeneous group of multi-age children -- except for the mostly separate five year olds. There was considerable moving about, however, as children went to different achievement groups meeting in different rooms. In the afternoons children were assigned to groups according to age. Teachers taught in their own rooms, emphasizing curriculum areas of their own interest. By the end of Year-1, these offerings were organized as four-week mini-courses in social studies, music, science, and art. Children could choose what they wanted, in rotation.

To coordinate and keep track of all this, teachers met as a single planning team. In doing so they became comfortable with making frequent revisions of schedule and with a general expectation that children might learn any given subject matter in many different places. They also developed a habit and reputation for paying special attention to affective atmosphere in the building. Pratt staff, for example, were particularly in tune with the "magic circle" technique as a daily way of encouraging relaxed acceptance of students' and teachers' feelings in each classroom.

At Motley, with older children, there was greater specialization by teachers, more rigorous achievement grouping (in the first year), and a heavier emphasis on expectations of cognitive learning. To start the day, at first, students worked in seven different classrooms that were clearly separated by their reading levels. After mid-morning recess, half worked with one set of teachers in social studies (also grouped by reading ability), while the other half worked with another set of teachers on individualized math.

After lunch arrangements at Motley were much more free-flowing. Students signed up every two weeks for an ever-growing variety of interest

group activities, conducted by regular staff, stipended specialists, and by more and more adult volunteers coming into the building. Some of these mini-courses were conceived and led by Motley students themselves, and some eventually by senior high students from Marshall-U. There were two sessions daily, with activities ranging from woodshop, biology, and ceramics, to quilting, inflatables, and have-kite-will-fly. It was an immensely popular program. Two of the most notable offerings were a plot-the-lot project (surveying, landscaping, environmental science) and an adopt-a-grandparent service to an old people's home. Records were kept of each child's choices, and reported to parents, in an attempt to link these activities with the more academic curriculum.

The strict achievement grouping for language arts and social studies each morning, however, was soon recognized by most staff as a mistake. It was variously modified during the first year, and dropped altogether in Year-2. The obvious problem was that it created a socio-economic tracking system, to an extent that it seemed "the hill kids" (Prospect Park) were at one end of the hall, and "the project kids" (Glendale) at the other. That not only was invidious; it doubtless contributed also to a spell of painful tension, early in Year-1, concerning discipline.

What happened was that rules which staff considered essential to curb fighting, bullying, and disruption were hotly objected to by parents from both parts of the community. There was a crowded, confrontational meeting at the neighborhood center. Glendale families, having heard there was a list of trouble makers, felt their children were being branded as a group for surveillance and suspicion. Prospect Park families felt the new rules -- which included a demerit system -- were much too restrictive for the kind of school Pratt-Motley claimed to be. After

the protests, there was compromise and reconciliation. The "Motley code of responsibility" went back to a student senate, whence it emerged somewhat relaxed, but still with a message that discipline was important to Continuous Progress. As teachers and students came to know each other better, esprit de corps improved, and the issue faded. But it was an episode which left some scars, nevertheless.

In simplified summary, then, the difference in tone between the two buildings was this: Pratt primary seemed more relaxed, carefree, child-centered, and noisy; Motley intermediate seemed more clearly structured, academically focused, demanding, and quiet. Some people saw these differences as amounting to incompatiability, and wanted them resolved one way or the other. Others saw them as quite tolerable reflections of the children's ages and the teachers' tastes. But everyone saw that there was a difference.

Southeast Free School

Seventy students are not many, and six teachers to work with them would seem an enviable ratio. That was what Free School began with. The absence of administrative support staff was partly compensated by a paid parent liaison. In addition, before October 1 federal funds supplied four aides to join the group. In mid-winter a full-time internal evaluator came, who actually could spend much of his time trouble-shooting or just lending a hand. And beyond the in-house staff were the available cadre of SEA resource specialists.

There was at least one adult, in other words, to work with each seven or eight students. On paper, Southeast Free School looked like a luxurious set-up.

Inside the building it was not. Hopeful but inexperienced people were starting work virtually without a plan, and therefore without definition of who was to do what for achieving an overall purpose. Despite the advantageous numbers, there seemed always too much to be done, never enough time to do it. There were not enough skills or confidence, either. As one teacher put it, "Every 'How?' was a huge question " -- and, she might have added, so was every 'Who?'

If one student wanted to learn German, and another asked for darkroom equipment, and two others started to play guitars, whose wish came first? What if a successful game of Risk was broken up by a temper tantrum or a bully? Whose responsibility, if anyone's, were students who dropped in for half an hour and then left? or who came, but simply wanted to do nothing? or who sat by the back door and rolled joints? Was it all right for a teacher to come late every morning? How could people shoot baskets, play kick-ball, and practice yoga all at the same time in the church-

become-gymnasium? Who handled petty-cash? What if a clogged toilet (the only toilet!) had to be fixed right away?

It was questions like these which seemed so huge. There was no one -- no one was wanted -- to set schedules or enforce coordination. Instead, there was ad hoc decision, and as often as not ad hoc revision of whatever had been decided. People shaped their roles reactively, establishing some personally acceptable order amid the confusion of events which flowed about them.

Patterns did begin to emerge. In time, space, and activities, staff and students sorted themselves out by a combination of age, compatibility, and interest. Children up through about age eight, with a couple of teachers who liked them, laid claim to one end of the big room. High school students gravitated to the teacher most in tune with most of them. His current topics round-table became their place. Other staff found themselves preferred by and preferring junior-high students. One aide concentrated on art, and on just talking with kids. Another divided his time between gym activities with older students, building play equipment for younger, and driving the field-trip bus for everyone. At considerable cost to his teaching of math, one man took care of all the requisitions and budget work. Almost everyone felt field trips were important, especially of the camp-out variety. After one to the north woods in early fall, people began talking about a long trip to Mexico, for winter.

This early semblance of organization was more like a pattern for survival then a pattern for freedom. Eventually it would become a framework for program and curriculum. In origin, though, it was not keyed to developmental goals or planning at all. Much more it was a

matter of coping with the next day or the next week. For some that was the accepted way of organic natural growth. Talk of planning and shaping the future, in fact, was incompatible with the authenticity of the present. For others, however, the present was turning out to be not much fun. Simply getting through a day or a week, without sense of vision ahead, was too little reward. The intractable disarray and disappointment were too high a price.

As in any institution, people resorted to fantasy to soothe their hurts. By the end of October Tom O'Connell, head teacher, was contrasting the "miracle pictures" everyone wanted to believe with the realities they needed to face. "There is fighting in the joyful community," he pointed out, "and things get ripped off." With wry reassurance that no super plan would destroy "the inherent and beautiful chaos of Free School (God save us)," he reported some staff organizational decisions: they would "assign" students (the quotation marks were apologetic) to regular evaluation sessions with advisors; students and staff would meet every Monday morning in an "attempt to be more systematic;" and they would try "for the first time a weekly schedule."

The modesty and tentative phrasing of these changes reflected the strength of Free School's resistance to corporate definition. In staff meetings and in print, O'Connell pushed hard. He wrote a brief essay, "On Freedom." It listed a few unromantic requirements for becoming free: "putting up with some drudgery" "hard thinking," "self-discipline," "risk-taking." For children to learn freedom, "having adults around who aren't afraid of being adults is important." By clear implication, O'Connell was distressed to find so few of these qualities in Southea Free School. Instead, emblazoned on the wall, he found A.S. Neill's

"very inadequate" slogan, "Freedom is doing what you want, as long as it doesn't interfere with somebody else." Not so, thought the head teacher. Neill's notion reinforces many students' dependence on instant gratification. "Kids become slaves to their own inability to face unpleasantness."

The thoughts of Tom O'Connell were much admired and widely distributed. They were the strongest early effort at Free School to lay a conceptual foundation on which a cohesive and continuing program might be built. As an unmistakeable attack on hippie satisfaction with "doing your own thing," they offered a ground for discussion and decision about purpose and policy. Of discussion there was lots; but of decision there was none. "On Freedom" served nicely as a public relations handout to visitors. So did Neill's slogan, in effect, for it remained as prominent as ever on the corridor wall. Neither statement became school policy. The Free School community, as yet, had no way to decide. Once school had hurriedly begun, in fact, deciding what sort of school it was meant to become more andmore difficult.

Parent interest stayed lively. Of 53 families, between 20 and 30 regularly had adults at monthly general gatherings or Free School pot-lucks. People still remember these evenings with a sense of excitement and fun. They were town-meeting affairs, in the sense that issues were argued, suggestions made, complaints aired, and questions asked. As in the staff move to give every student an advisor, they were sometimes influential. But they were not a forum for decision, either by vote or by cumulative consensus. In mid-October, for example, the parents present wrote down a page of objectives and expectations for the school. Three weeks later came another discussion, apparently without reference to the first, of educational goals. There it ended. On this topic, as on many others,

there was no follow-up. Few records were kept, and fewer still distributed. Accountability was not assigned. Questions were left hanging. Action was not taken. For the most part parents shared a feeling that "Free School should be the kids' school," and that they should not be too pushy.

Staff, also, hoped that students would run the school, at least to the extent that they would take charge of their own learning. At first, they all met together daily; then, for a while weekly. By winter, as one nine year old saw it, "Every once in a while, when there was a problem we would have a meeting to try to solve it." For several reasons, none of these schedules took hold. Most elementary-age children were baffled or bored by an unstructured conclave of several dozen bigger people. Many secondary students, observed the internal evaluator, were simply "paralyzed in the face of freedom." They brought with them a lot of negative learning about schools and teachers in general, no matter how innovative. At Free School, on a good day, 25 teen-agers might be meeting with 10 or more staff. Even for the unparalyzed, it was not a promising ratio for student power.

So practical policy control fell by default to the teachers and aides. What that meant was anything but clear-cut. Most of this staff were deeply distrustful of institutions; the last thing they wanted was a managerial role in a public school. From students, even the young ones, they looked more for acceptance as peers or older siblings than as authority figures or surrogate parents. Some placed highest value on their own freedom, as well as the students' to work individually as they wanted with those who chose to work with them. Despite the imperative importance, repeatedly asserted, of "getting it all together," it was equally important to avoid all appearance of either coercing or being coerced.

Not surprisingly, the way Free School staff exercized their control was much more as individuals than as a group. In planning they left each other alone or in pairs to set up a sewing center, arrange a field trip, offer a course. For administrative and budget detail they left the head teacher alone, or the teacher who kept the books, or the parent liaison who doubled as secretary. The questions that got handled were small and immediate ones that could be settled unilaterally or by agreement among two or three. Large and longer-range concerns got postponed. Curriculum priorities, evaluation, size and staffing of the school, overall organization, the politics of SEA -- in the camaraderie of the group these might be lengthly discussed, but little about them could ever be decided. There was no division of labor for making recommendations; there was no apparatus for closure; there was no structure for accountability. Free School staff might be in control, but it was not controlling.

Nevertheless, big decisions had to be made. With no effective organization among parents, students, or staff, there was no group to make them. To achieve the focus that was lacking, O'Connell proposed a representative governing board that could speak officially for all three constituencies.

It took a while for the idea to catch on. For all its problems, many Free Schoolers were reluctant to give up on the 100% democracy of a town-meeting ideal. There was fear of a centralized group taking over. There was lengthy jockeying over how seats should be distributed. Eventually, however, agreement was reached and elections held. In early April nine students, four parents, and three staff took office, chaired by the non-voting head teacher. One of their first acts was to approve a formula whereby 15% of the students and parents and a third of the staff could

force reconsideration of anything the board decided.

Besides inviting pressure to change their minds, the new board had to resolve two old questions right away. They had to say clearly how large a Free School was planned for next year; and who of the present staff should be asked to return. They faced one major new item, too: Tom O'Connell was resigning at the close of school.

It was part of the SEA proposal that in Year-2 Free School should have 150-200 students, "if there is interest." By the middle of Year-1 there was strong interest, among staff, students, and parents. Among other advantages, expansion was seen as a means to be active with Southeast's poor, and at the same time dilute the school's white middle-class hippie flavor.

As recounted already, the particular injustice which troubled Free School was that SEA offered nothing special for early drop-out students from the Glendale housing area. School Without Walls was gone and Free School did not replace it. All year long some Free School people and friends had been trying to do something about that. The head teacher had worked closely with one of several college students or student teachers who had helped at School Without Walls. They lobbied, unsuccessfully, to have a basic skills center in Glendale underwritten as another Southeast Alternative. O'Connell asked a street-wise aide to work especially on Glendale liaison. They found the University could provide free space in Glendale itself. They negotiated with Marshall-U to give transcript credit for work done at the new center. They agreed that Free School would informally supply the learning materials. They gambled that eventually some subsistence pay could be found, too. They hit on the idea of a "satellite learning site" sponsored by Free School.

In January, at last, Glendale Street Academy had begun operation. Four virtual volunteers met with 22 teen-age students who were not about to attend Marshall-U, and were not at Free School either. Many had already had scrapes with the law. The Street Academy offered a structured, no-nonsense, basic skills curriculum: math, reading, and "urban survival." Daily attendance was required.

The time when the Street Academy got started was also the time when Free School began to look to its future. Staff presented to a parents meeting their basic arguments for expansion: to become "a racially diverse alternative," and to work directly with "kids who have trouble staying out of juvenile institutions." Parents generally agreed. A planning committee, with representation from Glendale Academy, was appointed.

For three months, off and on, the planning committee and its task forces gathered up ideas. In late April they produced a portmanteau proposal, for further discussion and governing board action. It called for expansion toward 200, renting additional space in the building they already had. Including Street Academy students, Southeast residents would take 130-140 places; 40-50 more would be reserved for non-Southeast minority transfers, to be recruited city wide. Within the broader K-12 program would be a "directed studies" component, like the Street Academy, requiring basic skills work for all secondary students who needed it. The building as a whole would be organized around staffed resource and activity areas, available to all ages.

That was the core. Equally desirable would be a travel program, community theatre program, apprenticeship program, and rural satellite program. Readers who added it up found that the total proposed staff came

to something over 30. The committee conceded "a possibility that they will not all be funded." It acknowledged many unanswered questions of priority, practicality, and preciseness. It did not address the difficulty of organizing such a program between June and September, with no director on hand. Nor did it attach any budgets.

In the same three months that the proposal was prepared, and a governing board agreed to, Free School also lived through its first traumatic tangle with decision making about personnel. On his own, facing a February deadline, the head teacher had recommended to Jim Kent that the five other teachers (all probationary) be rehired. Both students and parents reminded O'Connell that that was not his decision to make alone. It was partly an important principle. It was also clearly a matter of some people having negative judgments to express.

O'Connell's recommendations were held in abeyance. A teacher evaluation committee, aided by the new internal evaluator, set about gathering data and opinions. Eventually they recommended that two teachers be rehired, but that three be considered only along with new applicants for the expanding staff -- whenever that was decided. Now there was a new storm of criticism. The committee reversed itself and recommended exactly what the head teacher had asked three months before. As the evaluator described it, the process had been "chaotic, polarizing, and psychically deflating." When governing board took office, staffing decisions were still up in the air; but staff morale was down on the ground.

The expansive planning proposals were distributed for reactions on April 21, with "final decisions" by governing board slated for the week of May 1. On April 23 a staff selection committee was still locked in

indecision about the status of existing employees. The firmest minute they could muster was to be "generally agreed that we should seek an early resolution." For governing board, ventured O'Connell in the newsletter, "a second meeting may be necessary." It was getting late, though, for early resolutions and multiple meetings. Outside Free School administrative patience had begun to wear thin. Jim Kent memo'd O'Connell on May 2: if Free School people could not realistically agree on staff and program, then he himself was "prepared to take such administrative action as necessary, next week."

Despite such pressure, summer had mostly passed before Free School had budget, staff structure, or program outline. Kent's "administrative action" amounted to saying that the six locally funded teacher positions (for 150 actual enrollment) could be divided among 10 people at substitutes' salaries, and that SEA would provide 10 aides beyond that. Within those basic staff limits, Free School must make up its mind. Bit by bit, with much backing and filling, with frequent ambiguity, by a shifting collection of committees and individuals, all summer long, decisions did happen. Among the most important were a division of students by three age groups, a division of program by core-curriculum and resource centers, the hiring of all Street Academy staff by the Free School, and the selection of Tom O'Connell's successor.

The new administrator, now officially director or principal, was Anthony Morley. He had just completed a fellowship program on issues in urban education. His experience, however, was as an inner-city parish pastor and church executive in St. Louis and New York. He had no working background in public school systems, but knew of Free School and SEA from having visited all the initial Experimental Schools sites. He believed

in alternatives and in the importance of change-oriented units in large organizations. He especially liked what he saw as Free School's union of pedagogical and political progressivism. His name was proposed by the associate superintendent for secondary education, a long-time friend from St. Louis days. Governing board interviewed candidates and recommended Morley in late June. He came in time for staff development at the end of July.

There were several new staff, and for all of them in different ways the weeks before school were a sobering experience. Two weeks of intensive human relations workshop had been planned to bring the team together. Not many felt it achieved that purpose. By exposing individual uncertainties, the workshop often left people more wary of each other than united around their tasks. With time growing short, those tasks loomed monumentally large.

Most troubling in the real world was the anger of several Glendale parents at the plan which was meant to help them. Their disciplined basic skills Street Academy, in Glendale, was being melded now with a loose and undefined Free School on the edge of Dinkytown. It seemed to the Glendale critics that they were losing what little they had. Free School's reputation thus far did not reassure them that academic skills would really be stressed, or even that absences would be reported. They were worried, in a word, that Free School freedom was an indulgence their children could ill afford. By conversations with staff and by direct request in governing board, they asked to keep the Glendale site as a place for academic subjects each morning. Governing board and teachers could only promise that they were "open to the possibility".

Considering the overwhelming number of other loose-ends, it seemed

doubtful indeed that Free School could manage two sharply different programs in two separate places. As of August 15, for instance, the building was still in messy disarray. There was no janitor. Though enrollment was doubling, little in the way of equipment, furniture, or supplies had even been ordered. A teacher position was still vacant. Though jobs had been freely promised, the lengthy civil service process for hiring aides had not even begun. Transfer applications from minority students were only a small fraction of the hoped-for 50. There was only a bare outline of actual program and teacher responsibilities. Free School overall felt a lot like the year before.

Nevertheless, half the staff and families had had a year's experience. It made itself felt in organization. Year-2 began with designated teachers and home-base areas for three broad age-groups: primary (5-8), middle (9-13), and secondary (14-17). Each teacher and aide, moreover, had a list of advisees, with responsibility for overview and guidance of their activities in school. In the three home-base areas, core-staff should provide both learning activities and a comfortable environment for peer-group socializing. From there, students could move out to work with specialist staff in gym, woodshop, math room, music, and the like. These resource centers and staff were available on different timetables for different age-groups.

Part of the accountability concept was that students should be responsible, with advisor help, for arranging their days productively. Before long everyone above primary was expected to have a schedule card, filled in by hours of the day and days of the week, for a six-week period. Teachers could be heard asking students in the hall, "Where are you supposed to be now?" Students could be heard answering, "I lost my schedule", or

sometimes, "I couldn't find my advisor," or often, "It's a Free School, isn't it?"

This last retort, students quickly realized, was threatening and effective. Unquestionably, Free School was not free in the same way it had been. The organization and specialization required more setting of limits and less random activity. Yet time had not been taken, and now seemed unavailable, for reaching a common mind among the staff as to their own expectations and handling of student behavior. There were no parent meetings to discuss the new structure. For returning students, now a minority, it was a sudden, large change. The situation was one where mixed and inconsistent messages were highly undesirable, yet virtually unavoidable. People sought for the norms of Free School life, and could not find them. What seemed to be sanctioned by one person might be seen by another as violating tradition, and accepted by a third as only for special situations. Examples ranged from allowing bikes in the building, to expecting attendance at classes, to conferring with parents. The conflict between collective consistency and individualist leeway plagued all parties all year long. A.S. Neill's message had been painted over, but not forgotten.

As a framework for program, the arrangement of home-base areas plus resource centers survived. For the 50 primary and 60 middle students it provided new supportive structure and assurance of attention. Within that structure each group had a space of its own where children could slowly develop identity and loyalty with each other. Camping trips helped break down clique divisions between old and new students, especially in middle. In the overcrowded primary area there was increased receptivity for experienced parent volunteers to help with the feelings and conflicts

of younger children in a noisy, over-stimulating environment. As everyone gained confidence, the use of resource staff increased. Middle students often filled the math room. With the theatre man they improvised and produced two plays. Primary children learned to use the woodshop. In spring there was a flowering of indoor and outdoor art activity.

The most intractable program problems were at secondary level, and with older middle students feeling pressure to be grown-up teen-agers at last. With a rush of last minute enrollments, there were over 70 students of senior high age. Two-thirds were new. Fifteen were transfers from outside Southeast (mostly white, as it happened), accepted without screening or orientation. A few more than that were from Glendale Street Academy, generally expecting not to like their new school. Half a dozen, mostly older, were unexpected walk-ins on opening day.

With this collection of mutual strangers there were individual successes but collective disappointment. The most positive group experiences were trips away from school: one to Mexico for a month, with 35 students and five staff; one to alternative schools in Chicago for a week, with 11 students and two staff. In addition, there were the morale-saving anecdotal instances of students who flourished with this or that individual teacher, putting on amazing spurts of cognitive or personal growth.

About secondary program as a whole, however, it was hard to be cheerful. The student body was a fragmented puzzle of very small groups or isolated individuals. Except on the trips, it stayed that way. There was a lot of passivity, and little venturing out. Even by the studious, "difficult" activities like art, science, math, and theatre were studiously avoided. In the laissez-faire atmosphere, directed studies was not enforced as a requirement after all. Those who wanted jobs took hours of help from the

apprenticeship aide, but seldom matched that with time for acquiring skills in school. Glendale students were probably the most cohesive group in the school, but their felt sense of isolation and antagonism was painfully -- sometimes destructively -- apparent. On all sides there was a lot of boredom, accompanied by overt or covert defiance, and punishment by unpopularity for teachers who tried to set performance standards. In mid-winter, one-by-one, a fourth of the secondary students were dropped from the rolls or counseled out. They had found so little to engage them that even by Free School's lenient expectations they were chronic truants.

All these accomplishments and growing pains in so small a compass called out for governance. The submerged ambiguity and ambivalence about what was important to the Free School was still submerged in theory, even as it broke through the surface in practice. According to the planning proposal of the spring before, ongoing evaluation of program, setting of requirements within the school, and deciding basic direction of curriculum were all part of governing board's charter. According to public school practice, they were a formal part of the principal's responsibility. For Free School's principal and board alike, effective overview of what was happening proved well-nigh impossible. Events seemed always to move faster than governance could catch up.

First priority for the new year, all agreed, was to get the board reorganized for the larger school. Beginning with no constitution, no set of records, no committee structure, and not even a clear list of members, the de facto working group had much to do. They wrote a constitution, claiming full Free School policy responsibility, "subject to the legal constraints of the system they belonged to." They debated whether staff members should vote on personnel decisions, and decided they should.

They allotted 10 of 22 seats to middle and secondary students. They made the principal ex officio without vote. They spelled out a complicated election procedure.

A new governing board met first in mid-November. Because of the bad experience with twice-rescinded re-hiring decisions in Year-1, and because dismissal of an aide had already been handled in a painful ad hoc procedure this fall, the members saw personnel policy as their first obligation. They designed a careful, clear, thoroughgoing process to yield staff evaluation decisions that would stick. A nine-member personnel committee came into existence. It was evenly divided among parents, students, and staff -- plus the principal, with vote. The internal evaluator drafted formal interviews and rating sheets for the committee to gather representative assessments of all 20 teachers and aides. For three months many of the committee worked five or six hours a week, including one 10-hour marathon of the whole group. Close to their March deadline, they finished. Four people, including one teacher on the committee itself, were recommended not to return. There were some strong disagreements, but this time there were no moves to rescind.

Less sensitive and personally draining, but closer to the heart of program policy, were two other items on governing board's agenda. One, fairly brief, was graduation requirements. The other, extremely lengthy, was planning and budgeting for 1973-76.

Starting early in fall a teacher, one principal, and a few students had been working on graduation criteria. The Free School diploma must mean more, they felt, than that its holder had taken courses or grown too old for high school. It should be a statement that the student had demonstrated competence or proficiency in several broad areas. With many

suggestions from staff and a few from students, the small working group offered a list of proposed requirements.

Their four broad areas for achievement were not startling: communication and language, mathematics and science, social perspective and humanities, personal independence and initiative. The new departure was that under each heading they attempted to describe the Free School graduate in terms of competence and activity. The diploma would attest, for example, that "you can read an article or see a program on a current scientific topic... and explain it to someone else." It would mean that "you have found and held a job." It would tell that "you can come up with what you need to know in order to do something practical about a political or cultural problem." With six pages of such requirements went a cumbersome procedure for verifying their completion and actually becoming a graduate.

The document as a whole was a bit didactic and, as students said, "heavy." As a set of exit criteria, it emphasized the hoped-for product of Free School learning, not the process. It was not a matter of gripping interest, therefore, to teachers and students who were daily caught up in trying to discover an acceptable process. Nevertheless, the graduation requirements attempted to state some basic directions for the whole curriculum, and thus indirectly to shape program even for younger ages. As well as a check-list for 17-year-olds, they were a kind of goals statement that secondary people, at least, would have to use all year long. Staff worked them over briefly, and in February governing board approved.

Planning and budgeting for Years 3-5 were already on the agenda when governing board was elected in fall of Year-2. For all SEA it was a tortuous, sometimes tormented, process. For Free School it began with

lists of promising practices people would like to have funded, proceeded through attempts to state philosophy and goals, and ended in long debate about size and structure of staff.

In the first phase a staff committee gathered ideas and came up with new wish-lists. The rural satellite reappeared. It and most other suggestions from this period were quite in vain.

The second phase produced two documents which seemed purposeful and organized at the time, but soon faded into obscurity. One was a set of Free School goals keyed to 11 "intended outcomes of the SEA experiment." They purported to provide a framework for more detailed program objectives, and to show Free School's way of serving project-wide purposes. For a while they were taken quite seriously. In two December meetings, governing board discussed, revised, and adopted them.

The second document was a philosophical outline sketching eight "arenas for freedom" and stating the purpose of Free School to develop "skills, knowledge, and inner autonomy for acting as free persons in that environment." It was drafted by the principal during winter break, then rather passively approved by staff and governing board. Later, it was incorporated in the 1973-76 plan. After that, like the set of goals which went before, it was rarely referred to.

"In reality," an evaluation analysis said later, "the school does not find its base in the stated philosophy." These supposedly basic affirmations, proposed by the principal and accepted with deceptive ease, were largely illusory. They could be quickly forgotten, because they made no convincing connection with teachers' and students' actual activities or problems. There was a large gap and a double bind. The press of what must be done every day left little energy for thinking out the goals;

and without hard-thought goals there was little unity for what must be done every day.

The third phase of planning hit much closer to where people lived, and thus provoked much more vigorous response. This was the concrete problem of specifying how Free School would end Year-5 still able to do all it wanted to do in Year-2, but on local funding alone. That explicitly challenged an unspoken assumption that all staff positions could or should continue indefinitely. The challenge was made harder by the principal and some parents pushing strongly for fewer teachers better paid, and for less reliance on hourly-wage aides carrying teacher work-loads. It was made harder still by feelings that in this argument the well-paid administrator was slighting either the dedication or the ability (or both) of present staff. It was made hardest of all when Experimental Schools sent back the governing board's laboriously achieved compromise, with instructions to cut its cost by more than half.

The planning ordeal consumed four full months, not only for governing board, but for many others as well. There were claims that Free School deserved much more per-pupil funding than other schools. There was criticism of "hierarchical" and "bureaucratic" distinctions among temporary positions, permanent staff, and aides with limited duties. There was worry whether in any event it would work. Staff had to estimate the consequences of each proposal for themselves and their students. For the first time, secondary students showed strong interest and voting power on the board, when secondary staff positions were threatened. The principal even suggested once that if Free School could not get what it wanted from Washington, governing board should consider ending the experiment.

Eventually new compromises were reached, a new budget settled for,

a plan approved, and even job descriptions written. The planning's strong positive aspect was that it outlined a structured way for Free School to endure, rather than remain vulnerable with irregular staffing and a soft budget. Its equally strong negative aspect was a heavy toll on morale and daily work. Internal evaluation, again, noted "a direct effect on the time staff members spent with students." Even more marked was "the administration's isolation." All in all, during so many people's pre-occupation with their future, "the present program seemed just to be carried along through momentum."

And when planning was done, the item still at the top of a burned-out board's agenda, was personnel. All the vacant and re-defined positions had to be filled. New committees were needed, more screening and interviewing, more decisions about people. Free School approached its third year as it had approached its first and its second: struggling to define the staff which would define the program. Governance was personnel. As for capturing a collective and pragmatic vision of what Free School would be, it seemed that the harder people ran, the more they stayed in the same place.

Marshall-University High School

Opening day at Marshall-U in 1971 came and went without fanfare for alternatives. Few of the '75 faculty, and fewer still of the 1129 students or their parents, were familiar with the SEA project. Within the building there was little concerted effort to play up the high school's part in a project of comprehensive change. As suggested already, the strategy for extending options to this half of Southeast's students was gradual, not grand.

What everyone did know about was the shift, effective this year, to a trimester calendar. The strong faculty decision for this change had preceded SEA but the change itself fit well with an increased emphasis on choice and alternatives. Trimester scheduling weakened the traditional pattern of year-long graded courses. It set a framework, at least in senior high, which welcomed proposals for dealing with new content in short courses which could stand on their own, or for treating old subject-matter in a particular teacher's distinctive style.

Together with the calendar change, at winter trimester, came the introduction of a student self-registration, or open registration, system. Instead of having teachers and class hours assigned to them by computer, as had been the case, students gained some opportunity to choose the people and times they preferred. The effect was to loosen some rigidities of the previous procedure. Within the limits of course requirements and the seven-hour day, self-registration provided a sort of open market. And it tended to reward those teachers whose classroom styles corresponded best with students' preferences.

By the school administration and among the department chairpersons

both these early changes were conceived as long-range efforts. They were intended as a means to stimulate variety and new departures from within the school itself. They did evidently release new energies quickly: 26 new courses were already offered in the fall trimester, and 34 more in the winter. As they learned of SEA staff development funds, teachers moved rapidly to take advantage of them in writing new curriculum, and re-writing old, to fit the trimester pattern.

Among the ideas which began to emerge, special emphasis, status, and SEA funding went right away to those which took an interdisciplinary or action-learning approach. Man: His Feelings and His World combined music, art, literature, and communication. AWARE (A Wilderness and Research Experience) linked individual cognitive projects with affective growth in preparing and carrying out group camping trips. An Off-Campus Learning Experience broadened the old work-study concept to give students credit for completing learning contracts away from school, under non-faculty sponsors.

Another route to variety, a chance to escape four full years of ordinary classes, was through independent study and early graduation. The proportion of credits which could be earned by individual work under individual faculty supervision was increased, and teachers' time was set aside to provide that supervision. Administrative barriers to accelerated progress were reduced, and students were encouraged to finish up ahead of time. As was expected, academically able students took advantage of these opportunities. Early graduations and the number of proposals submitted for independent study both increased sharply.

Still a third type of early emphasis was on direct attention to the feelings and conflicts of high school students growing up. Mid-way

through Year-1 Marshall agreed to be the site for the SEA funded (and separately administered) Deliberate Psychological Education project. DPE, linking a University Professor of Counseling with counselors and teachers at the school, aimed to develop elective courses that would explicitly focus on adolescents' personal development and psychological growth. Such courses did eventually appear, in profusion. But the immediate impact of DPE at Marshall was to undergird and accelerate planning for an ambitious program known as Guide Groups.

The plan was to have every senior high faculty member take responsibility for an unstructured twice-weekly meeting of about a dozen students. The purpose of these Guide Groups was to support personal growth, positive attitudes toward learning, open communication, and "a more personal relation between student, home, and school." They would help to replace the institutional atmosphere of school with one more favorable to students' maturing and enjoyment. Their dominant content would be process. Plainly teachers were being asked to practice some interpersonal and group-dynamics skills, apart from their subject-matter expertise. To strengthen such skills, and the confidence to use them, in-service workshops took place late in year-1. Guide Groups became part of every students senior high program at the beginning of year-2.

Probably the training was not enough, and certainly many teachers had little heart for the strange business of leading unstructured groups in a wholly affective agenda. With hard-to-specify objectives, Guide Groups did not win strong administration support. Students were dubious too, as shown by unmistakeably low attendance. With notable exceptions Guide Group looked much like the homeroom it replaced, and was easier for both students and teachers if it was <u>treated</u> like homeroom. It most

frequently became a time for announcements, information exchange, chatting, and waiting for the bell. By the end of year-2 it was easily agreed that one meeting per week would suffice, and that sights should be lowered to "educational and vocational planning, not personal growth."

As ambitious as Guide Groups was the dream of two or three other faculty that Marshall-University might become the place where everyone used TV to make learning more fun, more humane, more effective, and more creative. From some modest initial discussion about extending multi-media services in the building, grew a proposal for a semi-professional production and editing studio, plus a five-channel closed circuit link to 42 classroom locations, plus capability to transmit from any one location to any or all of the others, plus a plan for training teachers and students how to use and maintain the equipment, plus ways for other SEA schools and the College of Education to share its use, plus over 300 pages of possible curricular applications, plus ample software to get well started, and plus much, much more.

The proposers were able to tap the know-how and sympathies of Washington's project officer for SEA, who happened also to be a specialist in educational TV. In the summer before year-2 Experimental Schools granted $90,000 extra for equipment and materials. What with bidding and construction delays, installation was not complete until almost a year later -- the end of year-2. For a year after that the studio got brisk and creative use by the original proposers and their students. Relatively few other faculty were persuaded to exploit it, despite the undoubted possibilities. By year-4 the chief initiators who really understood those possibilities were gone from Marshall-U (as the friendly project officer had long since been gone from Washington), and the costs of

staffing and maintaining the studio began to seem very large. By year-5 the chief use of the facility was for a small vocational program, locally funded, drawing students from other high schools, as well from Southeast. Though the hardware is all in place, only a fraction of the original dream has ever come true.

Like senior high with its Guide Groups, Marshall-University junior high also had a program in which counselors were central and which aimed at a more personalized, affectively aware relationship between teachers and their students. It was a pre-SEA Title III project, and its format was very different from Guide Groups. Seventh-and 8th-grade core-subject teachers met daily with a counselor to pool their perceptions of students' satisfaction with school, behavior with each other, and academic progress. The counselors spent time in the classrooms, meeting students informally more often than formally. This project continued through the first two SEA years. Its meetings and communication with parents gradually became the forum where Marshall-U's own planning for junior high alternatives began.

Such planning did not come to much in the first year. Its one clear-cut product was the design and funding (from SEA) of a partial-day program for students with "special difficulties" -- i.e. low achievement combined with behavior problems. Two teachers with a special concern for such students proposed an Adjusted Learning Environment. The emphasis would be on reading and math, with individualized support to both child and family, and some use of behavior modification techniques. Other members of the classroom teams, needless to say, welcomed the ALE proposal. It was carefully prepared, began smoothly in the fall of year-2, and continues on local funding at the end of year-5.

For thinking about the rest of junior high, an informal group of parents met off and on into the spring of '72 with the assistant principal (administrator for junior high), counselor, and some of the teachers. They were concerned about the "climate" for 7th-and 8th-graders, and wondered about planning for the future. There was dissatisfaction on all sides that students had to move back and forth (through Dinkytown) for some classes at the main building and some in their home base on the University campus. There was parental apprehension for young children in an environment of older teen-agers. There were demands that these "transition" grades should benefit from SEA money as much as the senior high. There were questions whether the junior high must accomodate its program to the alternatives now taking shape in three SEA elementary schools. Everyone felt that somehow alternatives should become part of junior high life. Several teachers began to develop their ideas for mini-courses and environmental projects. The idea of expanding the teacher-and-counselor teams to include non-core teachers was looked into, but found too complicated. At this point, it seems, neither parents, nor administrators, nor teachers were ready to take leadership in saying what junior high alternatives should look like. In the absence of a plan and people to lobby for it, things stayed the same. Attendance in the discussions dwindled, and the meetings with parents came to an end.

In the fall of year-2, however, 7th-8th grades opened with 50 more students than staff had expected -- 170 instead of 120. Most of the increase was from outside Southeast, perhaps attracted by the notion that SEA had extra money, and would surely be improvement over run-of-the-mill junior highs elsewhere. One response to the crowded and hectic situatio

was to revive earlier proposals for a 7th-8th grade Environmental Quarter, and let students who wanted it choose a very loosely structured core program in an "open" classroom. About 25 students made that choice right away, going with the one teacher who was available (on SEA funds) to manage the new option. By winter trimester it had been acronymed as IDEA (Inter-Disciplinary Environmental Approach), allotted support from the federal budget for a second teacher, and expanded to 50 students. IDEA continued to the end of the year, winning a mixed and dubious acceptance, at best. It had been hastily thrown together, after all, with little or no time for planning curriculum or for preparation of space and materials. The teachers directly involved were uncertain what they themselves wanted as open education, and too harried from the start to build strong working relationships with each other. The relation of IDEA to the rest of the junior high program was even more problematic. Did IDEA offer alternative content ("environmental"), or alternative process ("open")? Was it to continue with the same teachers, or was it a one-year expedient? Did Marshall-U's administrators really back it, or was it a somewhat grudging concession to SEA's need for novelty? Was it just for students already "mature enough to take the responsibility," as internal evaluation implied, or was it a program to foster that maturity? In the winter of 1972-73 when immense energies were demanded in planning for the next three years, there was still no consensus on these questions. Nor was there much apparatus for achieving consensus, even among faculty. Not until mid-spring, with the appointment of a junior high program planner, did it begin to come clear where the IDEA idea would lead in SEA year-3.

Though it is covered more broadly elsewhere, mention belongs here also

of the first years' evening education program at the high school. This was a pre-SEA activity of evening classes for adults. With the coming of an SEA Community Education co-ordinator, Becky Lattimore, the Marshall-U program grew rapidly. By the end of year-2 there were close to 100 different classes offered, on three evenings each week, bringing over 900 people into the school building. The connection with alternative schools is that about 30 of these were high school students, earning some of their graduation credits in evening classes traditionally thought of as serving adult leisure-time interests. One of the most popular was a DPE course, Psychology of Counseling, taught by a young social studies instructor.

In these carefully negotiated crossovers between the "defined school day" and the "lighted school" -- normally two very separate parts of urban educational bureaucracy -- there was just a hint that one alternative for high school youth might be to do some of their learning with grown-ups, at night, helped by teachers from the community who held no certificates beyond their own enthusiasm and knowledge. There were further hints in Becky Lattimore's recruiting of a lay Community School Committee to advise on the character of the Marshall-U program, and in her questionnaire to discover what evening classes might even be wanted by junior high students.

What all this activity amounted to depended very heavily on who was looking at it. But from whatever point of view, it seems clear enough that the projects all together did not add up to a program of major change, yet. For senior high students there were important new procedures and new choices, some of them quite novel. But there is no report of students feeling that now they belonged to a new kind of school. For 7th-8th graders

not much was different at all. For faculty there were good opportunities to design new offerings, perhaps together with a compatible colleague, and very likely get them funded. There were also ways any alert department could acquire its wish-list of late-model equipment or materials. But in June '73 the school was still essentially the same entity as in June '71 -- students choosing courses from teachers organized in departments, co-ordinated in time and space by a principal and assistants. For parents the school must have seemed somewhat more complex than before, perhaps a bit more lively in curriculum and a bit less turbulent socially, but not a lot better or worse. The features you liked or disliked when your child was in 9th-grade were still the features to like or dislike as she entered 11th.

From where Bill Phillips sat, in the principal's office, this pattern of parts without a whole was quite acceptable. It was evidence that enterprise and energy were being released "from within the school itself." The variety of projects, moreover -- from independent study for a single student on Black poetry, to writing a "deliberately psychological" childcare curriculum in home economics -- showed that Marshall-U's entire heterogeneous spectrum of students and faculty could see benefits for themselves in the atmosphere of change. No one need feel left out. Equally important, no one was compelled to join in. For those who chose to try some innovation, there was encouragement, but little special glory. For those who chose to stick with what they knew, or even to scoff at SEA as one more passing federal fad, there was continued acceptance, and no threat of being labelled old fogeys. As Phillips came to see it, this was the right route to a high school comprehending <u>all</u> styles of teaching and learning as <u>equal</u> alternatives to each other. "It made

absolutely no sense at Marshall to try to develop a single program and make everybody be part of it. You had to develop a school of alternatives in which everybody could be happy. That made a lot of sense."

Not everybody was happy, however, and to many observers Phillips' low-pressure approach did not make sense enough. The SEA experiment, after all, was a nationally visible test of comprehensive change. Binswanger's initial invitation for proposals had cast cautionary aspersions on "piecemeal" efforts which had no unifying principle, and would ultimately leave their sponsoring institutions unaltered. Was not Marshall-U's eclectic pot pourri of projects running just this risk? Was extra federal money, doled out here and there over a few years' time, enough to make true alternatives take root in secondary education?

The pressure of SEA activists and the Experimental Schools ambience was to say No -- to demand from Marshall-U some conceptualization and strategic design far more crisply identifiable than what was actually emerging. One department chairman, for example, came forth with an extensive and carefully thought proposal for radically re-conceiving the entire curriculum and faculty organization. He complained that he could not get administration support for a serious hearing. Parents of older elementary students, especially in the Open School, began to ask how the high school was preparing to receive their children. One Marshall-U and Marcy parent expressed her opinion, and no doubt strengthened other people's fears, that up-coming Open students could only "be frustrated by the fragmented approach and rather stagnant, sexist courses" in junior high. At about the same time internal evaluators for the 7th-8th program were observing, among teachers and the more vocal parents, a feeling that "experimentation is only given lip-service," and that the

Marshall-U administration was even "somewhat manipulative in its effort to maintain the status quo."

Strong comments like these reflected a widespread notion, in Southeast, that the high school was not in step with the rest of SEA. A common question, both inside Marshall-U and out, was whether the whole school was part of an alternatives experiment, or only those people connected with the list of specially added projects. "I think we may have failed to specify our expectations in this regard," lamented the Experimental Schools project officer after an early visit. He was right, but the lament itself showed that Washington wanted a more encompassing approach. The same expectation was underlined by Jim Kent's pointed inclusion of "all personnel" and "the entire school program" under the SEA umbrella. Whatever form or forms the movement at Marshall-U might take, the context of change was to be systemic, the school as a whole. In some important sense a totally traditional gym class should be as much a part of the total experiment as a trimester in the woods. The parts must add together as a whole, and the whole must equal more than its parts.

For Bill Phillips this sort of pressure felt like a demand to make the school over in some new ideological image. He resisted it, strongly. He had no such image pre-formed in his own mind, and saw none proposed that persuaded him or -- more important -- united the faculty. Two forays for ideas outside Minneapolis had not been encouraging. One was to a conference sponsored by the Center for New Schools, in Chicago. There he found other project directors with soft-money grants (and "at least half sharing some common tie with Harvard and Binswanger."), but none with plans for making innovation endure on local budgets. The

second was to look at Berkeley's Experimental Schools Program, since people kept telling him, "They're doing such great things; why don't you?" But what he saw was mostly "ill-conceived alternatives that wouldn't last; no strategies, no implementation plans." Both trips left Phillips feeling confirmed and comfortable in his early response to SEA. The way to go with alternatives at Marshall-U was -- slowly. Even though people might be asking, "When will Marshall join SEA?" and even sensing some body of opinion that "they have a hard-hat for a principal," his judgement remained as it was. This high school would benefit most from "administration, not leadership."

But administration of what? If there were no viable models to adopt or adapt, and if a collection of teachers' projects (themselves pretty softly funded) still did not synergize as comprehensive change, where was the unifying principle for Marshall-U? One avenue to more broad-based commitment and co-ordination for a school of alternatives might be inviting more of Marshall-U's clientele into Marshall-U's governance. Parents, especially, if they had a hand in shaping policy, might bring new resources of people and time to enrich the program, might strengthen support for new ideas, and above all might generate a better esprit de corps in the school as a whole.

The argument for greater community involvement was highly attractive to at least those faculty and parents who had clear priorities of their own for re-making the school. It was also much advocated by Jim Kent. He was frankly worried that the high school was not tooling up fast enough to maintain momentum when funds fell back to normal or faculty were cut by projected decreases in enrollment. He feared inevitable re-trenchment if the school did not have the organized strong support of

involved families. And he heard a lot from elementary parents, excited about their K-6 alternatives, but unconvinced that anything new was being prepared, 7-12.

Kent also had a managerial reason for wanting a new pattern of governance at Marshall-U. We have already seen that the joint policy board for Marshall-U could neither become a K-12 governance group, nor continue as a board of directors for the high school alone. As early as February, 1972, the policy board had recommended that it be replaced at the high school by some new "broad-based" governance structure. For K-12 overview Kent had set about developing a community advisory group from Southeast as a whole -- the Southeast Council. It was chiefly chosen by the parents/staff community groups of the five separate schools. Yet there was no such strong group at Marshall-U. With that one school comprising fully half the SEA students and families, it was urgent, from at least the start of Year-2, that one be developed.

Making it happen, however, was another matter. Marshall-U's most influential governance group was the council of department chairpersons (now including leaders of such SEA-funded projects as AWARE). Together with the principal they dealt with nuts-and-bolts policy questions like allocation of teacher positions within the school, distribution of non-salary budget, and approval of curriculum changes. A much larger faculty council chiefly worked on more topical questions, such as human relations programs. After a peak of student activism in 1969 and '70, the student senate now attracted less and less interest. It neither took nor strongly asked any major role in school policy. The only vehicle for parent involvement was quite traditional PTSA, whose meetings were sparsely attended and rarely a forum for debate -- much less for decision -- on

overall school policy.

No one claimed that this was the best of all possible arrangements for community involvement in decision making. But, even more than in educational programs, Bill Phillips was loathe to embark on rapid or unsettling changes. To develop a new advisory group in governance would be unsettling, he felt, if it shunted aside the traditional PTSA, if it threatened the authority and expertise of the chairpersons' council, if it failed to balance all elements of the diverse parents, and if it was not clearly confined to advising rather than governing. So many cautions and conditions seemed to justify long delay. They also seemed, for people who wanted immediate, strong, visible community participation, like plain resistance to the whole idea. Not until late winter of Year-2 did Phillips convene an ad hoc committee to begin work on a new governance structure. As school let out in June, they presented their plan.

What was proposed was a carefully limited principal's advisory council whose 18 members would be based on existing official groups in or concerned with the school. At Phillips' particular insistence there was a built-in guarantee that non-Southeast black parents and parents of handicapped students would have seats. So would representatives chosen by the PTSA, both faculty groups, the student senate, and non-certificated employees. Of these several defined constituencies only the PTSA would choose as many as four representatives. The principal himself would also appoint four. Throughout the proposal, moreover, was language intended to insure that the advisory council "shall not abridge, infringe upon, or modify" the principal's responsibilities. Only "at his discretion" might the Council take part in interviewing for vacant faculty positions, and the principal "shall be present" at all Council meetings.

With such careful balancing of interests and protecting of administra-

tive perogatives it was not likely that this proposal would please those who were agitating for new input into policy and planning. It did not. Jim Kent pushed hard for something more powerful, or at least more inviting to new people with new agendas. Since each school's governance plan was arguably part of SEA's comprehensive experiment, he had some authority to approve or disapprove its implementation. Since the increasingly influential southeast council was his advisor on SEA policy, and had reviewed all the other schools' governance plans, he could invite them into the discussion. He did both, sitting on the Marshall-U proposal over the summer, and then referring it to southeast council in the fall of Year-3. Now it was Bill Phillips' turn to complain about "manipulative power." From his point of view Kent and a small group of critics, mostly from outside Marshall-U, were trying to force on the school a model of legislative power which would only destabilize things all over again, and in any event was not being asked for by the school itself. Phillips was consistent throughout: "I dug in my heels." It all added up to continuing delay, and only minor revision of the plan proposed. Not until January of 1974 -- almost two years after the policy board had decided it must go out of business -- was a principal's advisory council for the high school actually constituted and scheduled to meet.

At the end of Year-2, clearly, Marshall-U sat somewhat uneasily in the comprehensive experiment of which it was the largest component. The differing views of key actors as to how much change was expected, and what rate of change was desirable, engendered strong disagreement, sometimes accompanied by strong feelings. In a word, Jim Kent thought much more was possible and needed, much more rapidly, than Bill Phillips did. The two men reflected -- did not create -- a similar difference of stance

among teachers and parents. There was not enough agreement or power on either side to resolve that difference early in the project. Directions of real movement for Marshall-U would only begin to come clear in Year-3 and beyond.

CHAPTER VI

IN THE SCHOOLS BUT NOT OF THEM:

SEA K-12 SERVICES

Southeast Alternatives was not schools alone, but additionally a small host of project-wide enterprises which impinged on the schools. These were the SEA K-12 Services, co-ordinated and at least partially funded through the project director's office. Some of them operated as semi-autonomous components of the organization, much like the schools. As a group, they played three vital roles.

First, they all existed to be directly useful, and thus directly influential, in the internal workings of the alternatives themselves. They were to help each school do a better job of what it wanted to do. They were, precisely, services.

By being project-wide, moreover, neither emanating from nor directed toward any single school, they had a further function. They provided several sorts of professionals who had to be owned by all the alternatives in common. For that to be possible, their activities and agenda had to span the spectrum, from Contemporary through Free and from K through 12. Inherently, therefore, the K-12 services could be integrators in the project as a whole. They dealt with concerns about which people with single-school priorities and people with project-wide priorities would sometimes have to make common cause -- and on which people from different schools might have reason to work together.

Third, the director and central services cluster of SEA were not simply a passive resource, waiting to be called on by the schools. They were instigators and promoters of what they had to offer in their own right. With built-in interest in making their own organizational specialties characteristic of the whole, they became program centers themselves, as well as integrators of other centers. As such they generated ideas, information, and influence of their own, contributing importantly to the stepped-up activity level throughout Southeast. The K-12 services, in short, were part of the critical start-up mass for self-sustaining comprehensive change.

Public Information

Because it rested on people making choices, Southeast Alternatives required from the start that its own public know what their options were. Because it was a federal project, with large investments of interest and self-interest from Washington, it required that people from far afield know of it and think well of it. Because it was a seed-bed for system-wide change, it was required that all Minneapolis became knowledgeable about what the change involved. There were thus three broad publics to be served with information, all in a competent public relations way: the public internal to Southeast itself; the overlapping public of the Minneapolis system; and the indefinite public external to both.

Internal information had an easily stated prime purpose, "to help parents make wise choices" -- and to make them happy. Tending to that purpose began very early, with the hiring of parents for community liaison. In year two, public information activities were greatly expanded under the leadership of Sally French, the newly appointed public information specialist, who was herself a Southeast parent and resident.

In visibility and volume the main means of broadcasting what people needed to know in Southeast was an SEA newspaper. From the fall of Year-1 it went bi-monthly, by mail, to all school families, and of course to all the staff. In 8-12 pages it combined the practical and the promotional. There were full bus schedules, details of transfer procedures, and general program descriptions of the different schools. In each issue French was careful to include feature material from each school, and often from SEA's non-school components. The stories and photos on particular programs or people were balanced by equal space for general matters that touched everyone -- the results of evaluation surveys among parents, for instance, and the question of merging SEA with a larger administrative area. By regularly sending every home both school-based and project-wide articles together, the newspaper medium itself was an up-beat message of SEA unity in SEA variety.

In addition to the paper were numerous other ways of spreading information. Like the paper, most were developed first with a Southeast audience in mind, but also served much more widely for orienting visitors, sharing with the press, sending along to education conferences, and mailing to distant inquirers. An SEA slide-tape show provided visual introduction to the alternatives, as well as verbal. Each elementary school and the Free School produced its own professionally coached brochure. For Years-2 and -4 there were comprehensive text-and-photo booklets displaying SEA as a whole. There was a cheerful anthology of children's writing and artwork. For Year-5 there was a 120-page collection of essays by SEA participants, from teachers to the superintendent. It was a sort of Festschrift, from SEA to SEA.

All these items (some 70,000 pieces in all) went routinely to school

board members, all Minneapolis school buildings, and sometimes to all the teachers in the system. Besides that, if a PTA or group of teachers anywhere in the Twin Cities area wanted to know more, the public information director would find someone to tell them. With heavy reliance on parents from each building, there developed, in effect, an SEA speakers bureau.

The most direct and obvious way for people to see alternatives in action was just that -- to visit the schools. By the end of Year-5 fully 7,000 people had done that, by formal arrangement. Scheduling and co-ordinating the Wednesday visitor program quickly became a major facet of public information. It, too, required a person in each building to handle hospitality and logistics.

Visitor days were popular and manageable, but in terms of system-wide impact they were haphazard. There were lots of people from out of town, but not enough who could practically ask about offering alternatives in Minneapolis itself. Often, moreover, the quick walk-through tours left visitors without sufficient chance to reflect on why such unaccustomed activities as they saw were actually considered desirable. It was easy to be attracted or repelled by the trees, but miss the forest. Even though the schools were willing to be looked at, not enough was being seen -- especially by the most critically important audience, Minneapolis school people.

For the fall of Year-4, therefore, Jim Kent and Sally French designed more strategic spproach. On a large scale, people in the local system should have opportunity for concentrated, systematic exposure to the Southeast experiment. Temporarily, the usual outsider visits were suspended. Instead, for a week at a time, SEA was host to just one of

Minneapolis' three large administrative sub-areas. From each, about 100 people who were likely to be involved in developing alternatives in their area, came to spend four full days observing and questioning SEA. They were teachers (with substitutes provided), parents, and administrators. In addition to half a day in each alternative school, with time to talk with their own counterparts and students, they had substantial meetings with Teacher Center staff, the internal evaluation team, project-wide lay leadership, and the SEA director. As nearly as possible, it was a total-immersion experience.

Together with their packets of prepared material, these system-wide visitors took home their own assessments and a realistic feel for what is entailed by making alternatives the pattern for public education. That was the point of the whole massive effort -- that the "relatively secluded" experiment should be considered throughout the system for its bearing on K-12 teaching and learning in all the system's parts.

Staff Development and the Teacher Center

Staff development in SEA began with simple recognition that an alternatives program has special training needs, and with the naming of Fredrick Hayen as staff development director, to pay attention to them. From that beginning it mushroomed into a complex organization pursuing its own purposes not only within SEA, but alongside it and far beyond. The rather breath-taking growth stages are fairly easily listed. Keeping them within the perspective of this report will be more difficult.

First, for a year, there was only ad hoc organization: the schools did what seemed important or feasible; Fred Hayen worked with principals and teachers who wanted help identifying their needs.

Second, at the start of Year-2, an SEA Teacher Center emerged. It had a teacher-controlled board, to allocate staff development funds and use the director as its staff.

Third, staff development replaced governance and operation of Southeast schools as the ground where school system and College of Education interests most naturally met. At the end of Year-2, Minneapolis Public Schools and the University of Minnesota contractually created and funded the MPS/UM Teacher Center, with a new and more potent board. This new board hired SEA's director of staff development for its own.

Fourth, the original teacher-controlled SEA board became the SEA in-service committee of the larger MPS/UM entity. They acquired their own in-service coordinator as staff, and continued in charge of all federal funds for SEA staff development.

Fifth, from Year -3 on, the MPS/UM Teacher Center developed remarkable expansionist momentum. It became the umbrella organization for a diverse array of pre-service, in-service, and community training activities. In behalf of the alternatives idea, Hayen and a now numerous staff sought system-wide for ways to export the skills and experience being gained in Southeast. By Year-5 MPS/UM was proposing to manage a nation-wide dissemination network among big-city school districts.

So much for bare outline. In an open-ended project devoted to comprehensive change one should not be surprised if there are some surprises. Here we have a service unit of the alternatives program which by the end of the trial period is in many ways more extensive than the experiment itself. There will be (and are) very varied opinions of the program strategies and organizational entrepreneurship which make up this story. Some

will understand an imaginative and far seeing effort to insure SEA's long-range change impact on both the school system and the professional preparation of future teachers. Others will judge that SEA conceded too much too soon to the self-interest of an entrenched professoriate, at the expense of careful staff development in SEA proper. Some will see Hayen's organizational style as catalytic and creative, relaxing bureacratic constraints and enabling people to combine their energies in new ways. Others will dismiss it as sophisticated empire-building, a bubble bound to burst.

To give texture to the story, the bare outline deserves some additional detail. Most important for our purposes are the beginning and the middle.

There was no hint of a Teacher Center in the SEA proposal. Nor was there any defined staff development strategy for the project as a whole. There was a double-cadre (elementary and secondary) of specialist resource teachers. There was allowance for released time from classrooms during the school year. There was the title of staff development director. When Fred Hayen took up that post, after the first summer activities, he brought no package of staff development techniques or content ready for delivery in alternative schools. He did not believe there was such a package. He had not yet thought of a Teacher Center, either.

What led him to think of it was the nature of staff development needs and wants during Year-1. They might clearly cluster around new curriculum materials, as in the Continuous Progress and Contemporary Schools. Or they might grow from a plunge into organizational and governance changes, as at the Open School. Or they might be a function of constant tension between individual and institutional claims, as in Free School. Or they

might be scattered through the generally skeptical context of Marshall-University. Whatever the specifics, Hayen believed from the start that they must be identified from within each organization before any outside help could be useful. He therefore chiefly worked by inviting people to talk about their own perceived problems, and about what they thought might help to solve them. It was an informal, voluntary, short-range approach.

If people were willing to meet -- as the three elementary principals were -- Hayen met with them. If they could clarify a question or problem-solving idea -- finding a particular kind of consultant, for example, or attending a particular conference -- he provided money or people to follow it up. If they wanted to wait-and-see about SEA in general, or keep to themselves -- as at Marshall-U and the Free School -- that was all right too. The stance was to reaffirm constantly that what SEA staff were doing was important and that they were probably more expert about its difficulties than anyone else.

Quickly, the director of staff development found himself in a broker's role. He had the budget, and sometimes the concrete suggestions on how to use it. He was coordinating the elementary resource teacher cadre and talking frequently with the community liaison parents. He was informally in touch with people at the University or elsewhere who might be useful on this or that occasion. Pratt-Motley staff, for instance, spent one weekend with the leadership trainer from a Lutheran seminary. Putting people in touch with what they themselves wanted right away was more important than over-arching design or a syllabus of workshops.

The most particularly productive brokerage, however, seemed to be

among SEA people themselves. Many elementary teachers wanted to visit each other's alternative schools. Staff development money made that possible, and allowed also for the teachers released on a given day to have lunch together as a group with Hayen. From these connections came further exchanges of techniques and skills -- as when one Contemporary teacher spent a day in a Marcy classroom showing the Open teacher who invited her how to teach math with an abacus. All the staff development director did was approve the idea and pay for the substitute. It struck him strongly that, "If this is really the process, then this is where the decisions should be made: by the teachers."

A means for institutionalizing and expanding this example of the abacus seemed ready at hand. Professional and popular journals were reporting on British experience with local resource centers initiated and controlled by teachers as places where they could exchange and develop new tricks of their trade. What happened through such a center was up to the teachers -- not to education professors, administrators, or text-book publishers. Helping them make it happen -- not telling them what it should be -- was the teachers' own hired hand, a warden of the center. Hayen and Kent talked it over. They both warmed to the notion of adapting the British idea to the SEA setting. At mid-winter Hayen distributed a brief concept paper. Others like the idea, too. It was consistent with the stated commitment to decentralized governance. It was a way for people from all the alternatives to work strategically together. Within the framework of teacher control there was room for representation of administrators, parents, and even students. Why not try it?

To the surprise of SEA, Washington raised objections. At first there was merely a delay of final approval, pending clarification of the plan.

Then, two weeks before schools re-opened, the plan was rejected. This time the grounds were directly substantive, and expressed with interventionist vigor by Experimental Schools' new project officer for Minneapolis, Cynthia Parsons. There was not sufficient guarantee, she felt, "that teachers would really have control over budget." Even if that were taken care of, there was little promise that a "center as such" would be created. British example, "along Leicestershire lines," called for a welcoming walk-in place where teachers gather to swap ideas, develop their own materials, and strengthen their differing styles. The SEA model seemed more like a board room for voting on budgets. Why?

For the theoretical question, Hayen had a theoretical answer. It was essentially that the sociology of American education systems did not allow for simply imitating British precedent. In an environment of administrative lines and controls, the first necessity for change was "an organization which can live within a rigid system, and through its own structure protect the freedom of its constituency." That was the Teacher Center board, in charge of dollar resources and reassuringly visible on an organization chart. The Teacher Center center would follow, but in Minneapolis context it could not precede. In reality, after all, decentralized staff development was beginning with administrators' ideas and administrators' budgets. SEA was not Leicestershire.

Cynthia Parsons remained unconvinced, but besides the theory of the matter, she had to deal with the politics. Meeting some of her objections and getting Teacher Center approved became an important teething exercise for SEA's fledgling community governance group, the Southeast Council. For this new body of parents, teachers, and community figures it was the

first big issue. As school started in Year-2 they worked with Hayen to enlist more teacher involvement and teacher support in his plan. They played a critical role in re-writing and legitimizing. At the end of September the Council, not just administrators, met with the project officer. They persuaded her to reconsider.

In early October 1972, finally, the staff development budget was given to an SEA Teacher Center board. Its majority was seven faculty from the five schools, with one principal, three parents, and two secondary students. From then on, this board was to make the decisions about staff development priorities, programs, and funding. Fred Hayen would see that those decisions were carried out. The director would be the directed.

The directed director, however, had much to fill his days besides direct staff work for the new board. Already by the end of December, he reported, "the time required ... to follow up on staff development programs is not available." His time was going instead to "planning and making contacts required for future roles of the Center."

What that reflects is that simultaneous with the birth of the board other people were beginning a serious search for some new linkage between Minneapolis Public Schools and the University of Minnesota. The idea of continuing Marshall-U's joint policy board in K-12 governance and operation of the schools had been decisively defunct for months. Southeast Council was doing fine without University participation. In the persons of several administrators and faculty, however, both institutions still wanted a contractual arrangement for working together in Southeast. The arena of common interest was pre-service and in-service teacher training. A means for mutuality might well be -- the Teacher Center.

Thus through the fall and winter of Year-2 a high level "significant group" exchanged, discussed, and modified concept papers. Among them were associate deans, associate superintendents, and directors, but not the Teacher Center board. In spring Jim Kent and a College of Education associate dean drafted a new contract. It called for an MPS/UM Teacher Center, encompassing SEA's federal funds for staff development, more than doubling that amount by equal dollar allocations from school board and regents, adding University office space and staff time, and vastly enlarging the potential scope of work. The initial hard-won Teacher Center board became a subsidiary in-service committee. It would preside only over SEA funds for SEA use. For the new and more ambitious entity there was an eight-member new board, half appointed by the superintendent of schools and half by the College of Education dean. Community voice was limited to an assurance that Southeast Council would nominate school people, and that each institution would name "at least one community representative." Holding review and veto power even above the new board was a four-man administrative committee, two second-level deans or superintendents from school system and college.

Both school board and university regents approved the contract. In July 1973, the start of SEA Year-3, the MPS/UM Teacher Center came into existence. It moved on campus, into Peik Hall, as the 7th - 8th grades of Marshall-U High moved off. After a brief fuss about who would really be in charge, Hayen or Kent, Fred Hayen was chosen by the new board as director.

It is understandable, if regrettable, that all this groundwork "for future roles of the Center" robbed support from the present role, Year-2, of the Teacher Center board. They did gradually develop a process and some

priorities for receiving proposals and dispensing funds. By having its members from the schools negotiate for the schools, the board built project wide perspective while at the same time honoring each component's priorities. It could not move far, though, toward the goal of identifying common training strands and weaving them into cross-component training programs. Nor, in the midst of all else, was there much evidence of the "center as such" that Cynthia Parsons had tried to insist on.

With Hayen branching out as director for MPS/UM, the new in-service committee wanted staff of its own. The name for the position was in-service coordinator. The work was a kind of administrative assistant version of responsibilities which Hayen had held for SEA alone at the start of the project. To do it, in Year-3 and thereafter, the committee chose a teacher from the high school. She stayed on top of details that previously had tended to get lost. She provided fast response to small requests, and helped people define or budget their proposals for large ones. She prepared agendas for the committee, managed the paper flow, and kept to deadlines. Above all she kept in touch with teachers and schools, and coordinated the committee's annual project-wide needs assessment. By that process, each spring, 80 - 85% of the in-service budget could be committed in advance to known priority programs of the alternatives. The rest remained available for short-term response, and for strategic initiatives by the committee itself.

Though it intermittently talked of wanting to, the in-service committee could actually do little by way of either strategy or initiation. Institutionally, each school made its own large plans for extra meeting time, curriculum consultants, volunteers training, and the like. Individually, teachers and others submitted hundreds of requests for trips to conferences,

registrations in workshops, and time to write curriculum. With so many little things to do, the committee found no time for conceptualizing objectives of its own. They had logs and lists of what was happening, but no corporate criteria for assessing its effectiveness. In any event, by a rule of Senatorial courtesy, they were not about to intervene in each other's school's decision making.

Essentially, then, the Teacher Center in-service committee developed as a fund-granting forum for balancing requests. Almost entirely, they approved or adjusted what others proposed, without advancing to advocacy on their own. SEA staff development strategy remained the sum of individual strategies, school by school and teacher by teacher. Except that most of the money passed pretty much en bloc to the schools, that was not so very different from Year-1. What was different was that while a director could help people clarify problems and brain-storm solutions, a coordinating committee could not.

That is not to say that Teacher Center staff and the director himself did not continue to influence staff development in Southeast. Cadre teachers, now including the former Free School theatre teacher, offered training experiences ranging from integrated math/communications methods, to industrial arts, to science on snowshoes, to creative movement. The in-service coordinator kept people informed of what was available, in SEA and out. A group of British primary teachers came through, on a University project, and spent a working day in Southeast classrooms. One community liaison parent put on a seminar for parents with teen-agers; another offered futures studies for principals. Fred Hayen pushed the idea of a reorganized school week for greater staff development time.

Such activities now occurred and were made possible, however, as the smaller part of a much larger enterprise. The new Teacher Center quickly reserved its MPS/UM program funds for proposals that brought school and University people together for city-wide service and impact. Easily combined with this was a concept of Teacher Center itself as ideal agent for systemic change. Experienced teachers and administrators could take internships and course-credits in Southeast, and then return to other Minneapolis settings as trained advocates of an alternatives pattern. Enhancing this strategy there could be satellite teacher centers based on clusters of schools not unlike SEA.

Thus the grand design emerged of a new service delivery system for educational training, oriented to alternatives. By sophisticated matrix-charted organization, artful combinations of hard and soft money, and personnel time-sharing with other units of school system or University, Hayen added pieces to the package in bewildering array. Community liaison parents, for example, were partially supported by Teacher Center as trainers of volunteers. District funds and staff for all aide training were transferred to the Center. A Teacher Corps grant supported one satellite center, a separate NIE funds another. Title III was tapped for two new staff (an Open School parent and a Free School teacher) to interest schools or districts from 18 Minnesota counties in exemplary programs from across the country.

It would be premature to predict where the grand design will ultimately lead. For a significant number of individuals -- not just teachers -- Teacher Center has plainly been a breeding ground for new ideas and new program action. There are signs, though, that it has not quite caught hold as intended. The Year-5 proposal, that Teacher Center should disseminate alternatives

know-how nation wide, was rejected by NIE. More ominous, it took last minute Southeast lobbying to save any MPS support for Teacher Center at all in Minneapolis' stringent budgeting for 1976-77. Hayen's complex and unusual organizational concept does not sell itself easily in a time of retrenchment. The conglomerate change-agent Center often seems remote from day-to-day school programs. "I want to see it survive," said one friendly top administrator while struggling with budget cuts; "I wish to hell I knew why."

Meanwhile, the College of Education apparently does know why. Its vested interest in training educators, after all, is more immediately apparent than the educators' interest in systemic change. While MPS funding for the Center has been cut in half, UM's stays steady. For its extra share, however, the University will insist an "outreach and regionalization of services of the Teacher Center beyond Minneapolis Public Schools". In short, the risk grows greater that Teacher Center will belong more to the professors than to the teachers.

Be that as it may, it is a rare principal, teacher, or active parent who does not answer "staff development" when asked what resource, more than any other, has fueled SEA's vitality. The extra money dispensed through the in-service committee bought extra people, extra time, and extra stimulus for all the alternatives to work to their limits on all the changes they were willing to try. The extra skills, specialties, and linkages made available under Teacher Center auspices, provided more of the same. SEA staff did "develop", from not knowing quite where to begin in Year-1, to not even imagining an end after Year-5. It is a safe bet that without exuberant attention to making that happen, it would not have.

Student Support Services --

Deliberate Psychological Education

By comparison with other activities in SEA, these two were very quiet. They generated no great controversy, had uneventful organizational histories, and were content with limited institutional impact. Their effective work, moreover, was with individuals or small groups, almost always in the context of some other program. One was concerned to facilitate, integrate, and improve a range of traditional services. The other set out to produce some quite non-traditional curriculum. Starting in charge of the first, then developing the second, was Kenneth Rustad.

There was early hope that within the relative autonomy of SEA counseling, social work, nursing, and psychological services could be closely interwoven on a K-12 and project-wide basis. The aims were very general. Overlapping concerns and skills of the separate disciplines should be acknowledged in ways that integrated, rather than fragmented, service to students or families. Instead of being isolated from each other, support programs in the separate schools should develop common perspectives on their work with the Southeast population. There should be special coordinated attention to the process of students moving from alternative elementary programs into junior high. Everywhere, student support professionals should be understood as developmental, preventive resources, not just called on for remedial trouble-shooting.

To Rustad also fell the administrative work connected with transfers and annual option choices within SEA, and with the large number of transfers into Southeast from outside. The latter was particularly complicated because of racial-balance requirements on both the sending and receiving

school in each transfer.

As part of the overall enrichment of resources, each elementary alternative started with a full-time counselor. Later there was extra social-work time, too, and the supervised help of eight social-work interns. For schools coping with program and population changes together, and new parent involvement at the same time, these added people made an important difference. Free School, also, moved from not wanting the counselor and social-work labels, and rejecting the idea of outside psychological services, to insisting in Years-4 and 5 that all were vital.

Coordinating them K-12 and project-wide from the start, however, was simply not on anyone's urgent agenda. The first demand was to build strength and working relationships in each place. Integrating support service, teachers, aides, volunteers, and administration in one building was task enough. Collaboration across school lines could happen as occasion required, but not for its own sake. The general inter-school goals were quickly put aside, in favor of specific attention in each building to its own student support team.

Not until the end of Year-4 did the project-wide team idea emerge again -- and then largely as a strategem to gain extra Minneapolis funding, as the federal came to an end. A proposal was drawn that shared social work skills, especially, across the project. Social workers and counselors, plus two community liaison parents and a community education coordinator were to meet and parcel out common tasks as a K-12 team. Part of the rationale was to break new ground on behalf of similar K-12 clusters being developed in other parts of the city.

In its first year the team achieved mixed success, at best. Its achievements were chiefly administrative; a shared review of 6th graders

moving into the Marshall-U options; a consistent written policy on student transfers in SEA; and improved handling of the social workers' perennial headache, free and reduced-price lunch lists. Beyond this there was little. As before, the press of particular responsibilities in separate schools was stronger than the impetus to teamwork. Whether the team will be continued is uncertain. If at the expense of anything in a team-member's home building, said one principal clearly, it should not be.

For Ken Rustad, meanwhile, the chief attraction of working in SEA was a chance to work on two specific interests in combination: changing the role of the counselor, and developing personal-growth curriculum for high school students. With only light demand for coordination of services, and a social work supervisor to help him, he could give these interests full-time attention. The result was the project known as deliberate psychological education.

Without that name, the early Southeast beginnings of DPE were in the guide groups at Marshall-University. As already related, they did not go far in practice. To Rustad's thinking, they did not go nearly far enough in theory, either. Before Year-1 was out he had made contact with Norman Sprinthall, who had begun some highly praised high school work in Massachusetts, and was about to leave Harvard to become professor of counseling at the University of Minnesota. Sprinthall was glad to work with Rustad on curriculum, using SEA as a laboratory and training site for their common goals. Jim Kent, knowing something of Sprinthall from his own Massachusetts days, allocated initial funding for Year-2. For Year-3 and beyond, after convincing Experimental Schools that it was not just "Esalen for staff," DPE became part of the 1973-76 contract with NIE.

What is the deliberate psychological education project? Alone in SEA,

it is a research and experiment based effort to produce discrete affective curriculum materials at secondary level. The academic connection is important in two respects. First, it has reinforced a strong theoretical framework which guides the curriculum try-outs. Second, it has kept the emphasis on achieving a product for later use, rather than on a process of present change. In SEA context both these are unusal qualities. They account for much of the difficulty people have felt in trying to fit DPE with the overall alternatives pattern.

DPE is also unusual in having clearly limited goals. It does not aim to reshape or reorganize any whole system -- except possibly, by indirection, how counselors are trained and spend their time. It does not promise a radically different affective environment. It simply says that specific elective courses, for regular curriculum credit, can help meet the general failure of high schools to promote positive personal growth. Not as a by-product, but as what is deliberately taught, students can learn more complex and integrated self-understanding, stronger personal identity and autonomy, improved ability to communicate with others, and more complex ethical reasoning. Such courses are not offered as therapy, either. They should be as effectively taught by subject-matter specialists in their regular departments, as by counselors.

Basic to the DPE model are certain well known current theories of developmental psychology: Piaget on cognitive development; Kohlberg on moral; and Loevinger on ego stages. Teenagers' personal growth can be nurtured when they take perspectives different from their own on a continuum of stages. They learn to "experience the world differently." An effective way of "taking the perspective of others" is to practice the

skills of others. Thus involvement and reflection on "significant adult experience" becomes central to the teaching/learning strategy.

Beginning in Year-2 Rustad and colleagues began trying out their theory and strategy in new course-offerings at Marshall-U. Besides Sprinthall and University associates, the colleagues included high school teachers and counselors. They participated in a training seminar, helped design the new materials, and co-taught with Sprinthall or Rustad. Their first offerings were psychology of counseling, and moral dilemmas. The former emphasizes empathic listening and response, and students' teaching of these skills to each other. The latter works with discussion of value conflicts in both personal relationships and public policy. Both courses were social studies electives, and it was social studies teachers who first worked on the techniques of "learning psychology by doing psychology." Both courses attracted good enrollments, mostly from among academically above-average students.

In the following two years these courses were revised, and a total of six others satisfactorily developed. Among them are titles such as women's growth (English teacher), child development, and two-person relationships (both in home economics). By enlisting the counselors and some teachers at Marcy and Pratt-Motley, DPE made teaching of elementary children part of the "significant adult experience" for its students. It also began a class at another high school. By Year-5 nine teachers, 11 counselors, and a social worker had taught or co-taught at least one DPE course. During Year-5, on the basis of accumulated experience and evaluations, the DPE team prepared six curriculum guides, plus two companion monographs on theory, design, and evaluation. In their judgment, the product is tested and ready to use.

In SEA and Minneapolis, however, that use is very slight. The trained teachers are doubtless using DPE skills in other classes, but not the DPE curriculum itself. Counselors in general "are not running to pick it up," probably because it is too sharp a break with their accustomed remedial and one-to-one roles. A practical difficulty almost anywhere is the need for two-or three-hour blocks of relaxed time for the courses to be effective. A particular problem at Marshall-U is that most of the open and interested teachers had low seniority, and were lost to the school as enrollment declined.

It looks unlikely that DPE curriculum can come off the shelf without unusually strong administrator commitment, together with teachers specifically wanting to "experience the world differently" themselves.

Business Advisor Services

Business and financial services in SEA might have been just balancing the books and filing the requisitions. In fact, the thrust was to make them much more than that. The business advisor from Year-2, Rodney French, preferred never to think of budgets apart from governance. Governance is decision-making about the use of resources. Financial reports are information about the use of resources. Decision makers require information. Only people with information can make decisions, or effectively influence them. If governance is to be put in many hands--decentralized -- then so must financial reports be.

French did require books to be balanced and requisitions filed. He also ran interference with purchasing and payroll, dealt with contract monitors in Washington, and juggled route schedules for 16 SEA buses. For three years, however, the heart of his work was to teach people to think

of computer printouts not as just statements about money, but as a powerful entree to governance. He called it management training.

It was technical work, spiced with many a missionary homily about management by objectives. As a Honeywell systems analyst consulting with Minneapolis before SEA, French was familiar with the schools' recently adopted financial reporting system. This was no PPBS panacea, but it was a long advance beyond line-item budgets. It easily displayed resources and their use by school or other organization, by program within the school, and by people or materials within the program. It was capable of broad and long-term generalization or close current detail. Though introduced for accountants, it was usable for ongoing planning and program review. SEA could show the way to using it as a management tool.

The first people to train were the principals, and the persons who help principals cope with such matters, the school clerks. If principals wanted decentralized decision-making, they would share their know-how with faculties. If principals and staff believed in parent participation, program budget reports would begin to turn up in advisory councils and governing boards. The business advisor was available, even insistent, at all levels.

There is evidence that in most places the idea got through. From wishing they didn't have to be bothered, principals began to ask for their printouts. From thinking it was none of their business, teachers became adept at managing their own budgets. Instead of asking the experts whether any money was left, parents learned to glance at the figures and know why or why not, where, how much, and under whose control. School-by-school and project-wide (in Southeast Council) people became accustomed to allocating resources and planning their use for the year ahead. As a matter

of course, parents and staff expected access not only to the administrators controlling information, but to the information itself. When SEA was merged with a larger area in Year-5 and the advisory council of that area wanted to address the school board knowledgably on city-wide program and budget, it was a Southeast parent who made the presentation.

By that time the SEA business advisor's work was done. In all of SEA's last year, he was contracted for less than a month of monitoring, review, and inventory clean-up related to the federal funds. The financial functions that first were full-time for one person, had been phased-in to the normal routine of many.

Community Education -- Community Resource Co-ordinators

In September 1971, as SEA began, Community Education in Southeast was a one-evening-per-week program at Marshall-U High, enrolling about 150 adults. By spring of 1976 it was 2,200 adults in programs at all the Southeast schools, plus 200 or more children in after-school activities or day-care. The high school was open four nights each week and the Contemporary elementary three. Community Education enrolled as many adults alone as the day schools did children.

It is beyond the scope of this report to describe or analyze such astonishing growth. Suffice it to say that certainly a chief enabling factor was the partial support by federal funds of full-time direction and coordination for Community Education services just in Southeast. That provided area-wide communication and planning which previously did not exist. In the two people who have held this position, Becky Lattimore and James Cramer, it also brought leadership and a point of view which meshed well with SEA's K-12 goals. They could conceive Community Education, too, as part of a locally determined, decentralized, comprehensive change

process.

Of particular interest here, however, are the ways in which after-school and school-day programs have impinged on each other in SEA context. There are several. In one form or another all raise the question whether overlap and integration are desirable, and if desirable, whether they are feasible. Taken together, they make a mixed story.

One such question has been mentioned earlier: whether or not high school students can receive credit for Community Education courses. In Year-2 the Marshall-U faculty approved a specified list of evening school classes for elective credit each quarter. This practice continued thereafter, but on a diminishing scale. At the end of Year-4 and beginning of Year-5 the basic question was being raised again, almost as a new issue. With it, administrators were discussing the parallel question, whether adults might enroll in some daytime courses. Both the Community Education coordinator and the principal affirm advantage and opportunity for students in crossing the traditional age boundaries. But they also cite "obstacles", and the matter remains at a discussion stage.

Simpler and more familiar is the question of facilities. Afternoon and evening activities use the same space as "regular" school during the day. Usually they need the same furniture, and often the same equipment and materials. Opportunities for friction are obvious. In Southeast they were perhaps more numerous than usual because of the differing physical arrangements and in-the-building lifestyles of the alternative elementary programs. It was essential that community education people who wanted entree into the elementary buildings understand and value those differences, just as elementary people must understand the values of

Community Education. Because administrators and other staff regularly met together, with parent involvement on both sides, there was enough personal familiarity and trust to encourage the expansion which occured. Even at Free School, with the highest internal stress levels and the least neighborhood identity, sharing facilities was quite easily accomplished.

In addition to administrative support, the major drive for knitting community and school-day education together came from the people known as CRC's. The initials stand for community resource co-ordinator. They label a significant and novel staff position whose history and uncertain future well illustrate the personal and organizational dynamics of SEA. The position evolved from a coalescing of the original neighborhood-based community liaisons with parent or volunteer co-ordinator positions which had arisen in the schools almost as soon as alternatives began. By the summer after Year-2 it seemed time for a general review and some specific planning about community participation and resources throughout Southeast. Jim Kent asked Becky Lattimore to convene a task force including her own community school co-ordinators, the schools' parent/volunteer coordinators, and his community liaisons. She did so.

From that meeting came the general description, community resource co-ordinator: a person in each building to develop volunteer contributions of all sorts, strengthen parent participation, and maintain school-community communication generally. There was more than the title, though. The task force proposed an ongoing K-12 community resource team, to be headed by a project-wide CRC of its own. In a regular, structured way the team would bring together three distinct but overlapping interests:

(1) the in-school CRC's, working daily with teachers, parent, and non-parent volunteers, parents as such, and often children; (2) the Community Education afternoon and evening program leaders, serving some of the same children or families, and knowledgable about Southeast teachers and learners from a different perspective; (3) the new MPS/UM Teacher Center, through which the CRC's were funded, in whose space Community Education for SEA was now officed, and whose plans looked forward to training of volunteers and teachers to work together. As so often in SEA, an enriched ferment of new roles, new resources, and new rewards was producing its own pressures for change.

The summer task force proposal took effect. Community liaison positions, linking neighborhoods, schools, and the SEA office, were phased out. Community resource coordinators, linking school constituencies, volunteer skills, Community Education, and the Teacher Center, were phased in. Two of the original liaisons were now CRC's, and the third was involved with Teacher Center in other ways. Two parents shared the position at Marshall-U, working with volunteers only, not organizing parents. Free School hired one of its own Southeast aides, the only non-parent CRC. Job descriptions varied somewhat from school to school, but common concerns and esprit de corps were strong. By October the CRC's had their own coordinator, chosen by a committee from all the schools and Southeast Council. The team met bi-weekly. They pooled efforts in listing, recruiting, and screening community volunteer resources. They trained and offered training together. They wrote an SEA volunteer handbook. They became familiar with strengths and weaknesses in each other's schools, with what was happening in Community Education, and with the Teacher Center. They were an important mutual support group.

Three further facts must be noted about the CRC's. First, through Years-3 and -4 they grew steadily more important to program maintenance at the elementary schools and Free School. As federal funds for extra staff dwindled, organized and reliable volunteers became more vital. The CRC and her colleagues on the team were each school's link to a resource it must have -- the community. It was a position which no principal or advisory group was willing to phase out.

Second, by their very existence, their way of working, and the make-up of their team the CRC's helped blur the line between Community Education and the defined school day. It was not only that they were bringing the community into the schools as educators. They also encouraged programmatic connections between day and after-school activities (especially at Tuttle and Pratt), and were an essential communication link between Community Education and regular faculty (especially at Free School).

Third, despite all this, the CRC's were very vulnerable. Their funding, too, was federal, and quickly disappearing. In the structure of Minneapolis schools, they had neither professional standing nor even the security of para-professional aides. They were neither fish nor fowl. Despite what almost everyone agreed was their near-indispensable function in an alternatives ecology, they were an endangered species.

Putting these facts together in the winter of Year-4, Jim Cramer (now Community Education co-ordinator for Southeast) and Jim Kent drafted a clearly argued position statement. Its basic concept was "to expand the substance of Community Education into the regular school day." If that could be accepted, then local Community Education funds could go to support a CRC's organizing of community volunteers, even though much of the

community program with children took place during school, sooner than after. The CRC could have a dual report line to Community Education and to the building principal.

It was a careful effort, but it failed. The new concept could not be accepted by the central administration of Community Education. It flew in the face of long-standing arrangements and settled budget policy. Community Education must happen after the teachers went home -- in which case, moonlighting, a daytime CRC was certainly eligible to coordinate it. Whatever an earlier program might look like, it was not Community Education. The discussion came to an end, and "Our attempts to further the relationship," Cramer reported, "have been thwarted."

Back to square one. By other budget strategems (including the fractional use of teacher allotments), and by cutting back their time, CRC's were saved for Year-5. The title has also gained currency and legitimacy outside Southeast. For 1976-77 there is a tiny allocation of one salary to go toward 10 CRC positions in the administrative area of which SEA is now pa[illegible] Whether that can somehow be parlayed into larger support for the work to be done, remains to be seen.

Internal Evaluation

Of all K-12 services begun outside the schools, internal evaluation developed the closest and most constant relationship with programs inside them. Emphasis and degree of intensity varied, but sooner or later every alternative -- in the elementary schools almost every classroom -- came directly in touch with evaluators. Internal evaluation was highly visible at project-wide levels also. Through regular surveys and a steady flow of written reports it asked the attention of

every home and every staff member.

Both these aspects of internal evaluation -- school based and project-wide -- carried out some of the rather vague promises in the original SEA proposal. How they would develop, however, only began to come clear toward the end of Year-1. Until then, most of the available energy was used up in a battle over boundary lines between evaluation Level I and evaluation Level II. Experimental Schools had said, it may be remembered, that they should cooperate.

They tried, but for reasons both methodological and personal it turned out they could not. Internal Level I was to collect and provide immediate useful information for people making decisions within the project. Its audience was Southeast or Minneapolis, and it was responsible to SEA's own management. External Level II was also to collect useful information, but for purposes of summing up later how and whether the project succeeded or failed. Its audience was Washington, and it was separately contracted by Experimental Schools. In the terms of the trade, one team was formative, the other summative.

When they came to work together on an overall evaluation design, they could not agree. In fall of Year-I Level II produced bulky plan which Level I director Dale La Frenz invited community meetings to criticize, and recommended Washington reject. Washington did, but offered nothing helpful in the way of guidelines or directives for a second try. The most problematic bones of contention were how much influence SEA schools would have on the design of external evaluation instruments, especially testing; and how freely Level II could send people into the schools, especially participant observers. Over these and other issues relationships deteriorated steadily. Neither team

got much actual evaluation work done.

In April, finally, Experimental Schools asked SEA to submit its own internal evaluation plan for Year-2. Some 21 discrete tasks were defined and approved. About the same time Level II sent Washington its separate second design. With detailed critique from each component, SEA volunteered a highly qualified recommendation that it be accepted, too. That did not help at the relationships level, and neither did Level II's release to the press, two months later, of a summary Year-1 evaluation in adversary format. In fact, nothing helped, until agreement on a live-and-let-live truce in summer, and eventually some extensive changes of Level II personnel.

Meanwhile, a pattern for internal evaluation had begun to emerge. Schools were asking for very different kinds of services, feeling pressed by very different needs. At the same time, as basic measures of choice-making effectiveness, SEA and Minneapolis management needed to know what sorts of students were going where, and how well families were satisfied with the alternatives available. Together those requirements posed two different sets of tasks. There must be intra-school services specifically and flexibly tailored to the differing programs. There must also be project-wide analyses of student characteristics and movement, and of parent opinion. To get the work done in co-ordinated manner, it was not realistic to rely on a two-man staff plus occasional contracted services. There needed to be an enlarged evaluation team, some very closely identified with individual schools, others chiefly at work on wider tasks, but all responsible to a common concept of formative evaluation.

Such a team began to develop with the hiring of part-time evaluators for the Open and Free schools in winter of Year-1. When budget tripled

in Year-2, the team expanded more, allowing service not only to every school, but to summer projects and to components such as the Teacher Center as well. A crucial organizational decision was to make even "live-in" evaluators formally accountable to the Level I manager, rather than to a building principal. That helped insulate evaluation from political currents within the building, and provided important protection against their being used as utility infielders for ad hoc trouble-shooting. By keeping each evaluator familiar with all the evaluation output, also, the team structure increased the likelihood of useful data from outside a school being brought to people's attention within it.

The program-specific use of evaluators indeed varied widely from school to school, and changed over time. In the Contemporary and Continuous Progress schools evaluation service was linked closely to curriculum change in basic skills areas. Tuttle used evaluation budget for University help in systematizing an eclectic reading program. This led to the Tuttle pupil progress chart, and then to assistance from Level I staff in simplifying and summarizing the data which it recorded. In Year-4 Tuttle and Level I devised a brief affective survey to give staff a picture of how students felt about school and themselves.

At both Tuttle and Pratt-Motley -- and briefly at Marshall-U -- there was heavy investment in Comprehensive Achievement Monitoring (CAM) for math. Throughout the project the Continuous Progress teachers were assessing and re-evaluating their IMS math curriculum. Level I ha[illegible] with special testing to measure students' retention of math skills, and with gathering parent feedback. Helping interpret CAM reports for parents at Tuttle was an ongoing project, which doubtless explains in

part that school's desire, at the end of Year-5, to continue CAM despite the expense.

La Frenz and others initially hoped that CAM would provide a way for criterion referenced measurement to become "the foundation of evaluation activity in Southeast schools." That was not to be, partly because few people felt kindly about CAM's ultra-detailed computerized criteria, partly because such criteria proved all but impossible to develop in such areas as social studies and physical education, and partly because CAM was unmanageable without extra funding for aides. Finding all that out was part of Level I's in-school work.

With Continuous Progress Level I evaluators moved in "softer" areas, too. Data from the Torrence creative thinking test gave staff one kind of information they wanted. Classroom observations of where and at whose instigation children used math, writing, and reading skills offered another. Interviews with both students and staff about the Pyramid reading materials were important to the ongoing revision of that curriculum.

Pratt-Motley and Tuttle never had full-time evaluation service. For almost two years, both Marcy and Free School did. In both places evaluators were clearly chosen as people indigenous to the culture of the school itself, and committed to its purposes. For Marcy it was one of the organizing parents; for Free School it was first a friend of the staff, and later a parent. Their work was strongly oriented to observing, describing, and clarifying with their in-school peers what was going on as the school developed. It rested heavily on the evaluators' abilities to suggest or find out the questions people wanted to answer, and then to come up quickly with data to help them do it.

At the Open School that entailed a great deal of close classroom observations related to particular concerns of individual teachers. On a broader scale it led to observing and interviewing children as a prime source of data for assessing Marcy's fidelity to its own goals. Students' perceptions of how they could spend their time, of who and what were available to help them learn, and of what the staff expected all became grist for the mill of program decision-making by Marcy council and staff.

Especially influential in the Open School was a theoretical stance advanced by the evaluator and endorsed by the Marcy council. It argued that the primary accountability of a school is for the learning environment, which it controls, rather than for what students learn, which it does not. Environmental decisions are about the use of time and space, the materials and activities to be made available, and the nature of adult-to-child interaction. Evaluation concentrates heavily on developing a fully-dimensioned portrayal of the school environment in this sense, and especially of how children are responding to it. School decision-makers can assess such information in light of the school's goals, and be held accountable for adjusting the environment, not the children.

Free School worked in more ad hoc ways. Its evaluators were frequently involved in procedural suggestions for responding to immediate problems. Designing questionnaires and interviews for a personnel committee was one instance. Tracing the movement and influence of highly disruptive students was another. When the school changed buildings there was much attention to traffic patterns and use of space by students and staff. Free School evaluators, as at Marcy, labored long to help with record-keeping and reporting procedures. They had much less

success than at Marcy in winning the time of staff or governing board for reflecting on data in relation to policy. Still, there was much data. At the close of each year it was summarized and made available, with recommendations, in an internal evaluation year-end report.

The chief internal evaluation service at Marshall-University was to new projects such as AWARE and the guide-groups, early, and then to the middle school and senior-high open alternatives, late. Near the end of Year-5 a great deal of data was reported from a student opinion survey, and from analysis of the choice-making process among both students and parents. These are quite detailed studies. The problem in the high school, as anywhere else, will be finding a forum which was time to use them.

Close to half the Level I budget has gone to gathering and disseminating project-wide information. Two major and repeated types of analysis were parent opinion surveys and studies of student mobility. Parent surveys were annual and asked for response from every family. They basically had to do with how satisfied families were with various aspects of their children's schools and of the project as a whole. In addition there was room each year for each school to find out parent sentiment on current school issues or questions which would have to be decided in the future. With results summarized in the SEA newspaper, [illegible] surveys were probably the most widely and carefully looked at of any SEA evaluation data. They could be formative in their influence on staff and advisory group decision-making. As a whole, they are also summative. They answer the question whether people approved the project.

Mobility studies, at the end of the project, can also be considered summative. They show a stable percentage of Southeast elementary children choosing some other alternative than their nearest school, and

a dramatically increasing percentage of elementary transfers into Southeast. By showing how some student and family characteristics vary significantly from school to school, while others do not, these studies provided a basis for searching questions about the alternatives. Sometimes such questions did get asked. But sometimes they got shunted aside, too: on two occasions the SEA Management Team blocked publication or further pursuit of data analyses tending to show socio-economic stratification among the elementary alternatives.

A few level I project-wide efforts have been responsive to requests for formative information by administrators or non-school groups. The Teacher Center, for example, asked for logging and analysis of staff work patterns, and of how the Center was perceived in the schools. Three staff surveys have provided some measure of teachers' and aides' satisfactions, or otherwise, with working in SEA. The Year-5 student support services team used observations on its functioning gathered by a Level I evaluator.

One question which SEA addressed in various ways through internal evaluation, but did not solve, was how to measure and report on student achievement. In every school there were attempts to design an apparatus for performance-based records. In Year-3 Level I reported that SEA elementary principals considered standardized test scores of little or negative value in making decisions about general program or individual students. Each school considered its own record-keeping system far more useful. There was fairly widespread hope, both inside the project and out, that something might emerge from SEA to replace and overthrow the city-wide norm-referenced measures.

But in fact nothing did. The reason is that each school's

system was peculiar to the school itself, at some particular and impermanent stage of its development. Marcy's language arts and math grids, for example, were radically changed at least twice, and in Year-5 had been largely supplanted by teachers' private records. That may well be the most authentic and practical way of obtaining records that help teachers teach and children learn. But it could not satisfy the demands of outsiders for quantified achievement results, comparable from school to school and year to year.

The formative evaluation which SEA staff and parents will probably miss most is the close-to-home information which helped them see what they were doing as they moved into major program change. In some programs the internal evaluator position was itself an influential supportive innovation. Everywhere it served a very different function from the research and evaluation studies which most districts conduct. Both intra-school and project-wide, Level I aimed to strengthen current decision-making by providing a reliable base of shared information. A particular emphasis of the Level I manager since Year-3, Thel Kocher, has been to document such information in disseminable form, even after the fact of its local use. There is therefore a formidable library of internal evaluation reports for any who now want to research a mode of evaluation which is itself very different from the usual research.

CHAPTER VII

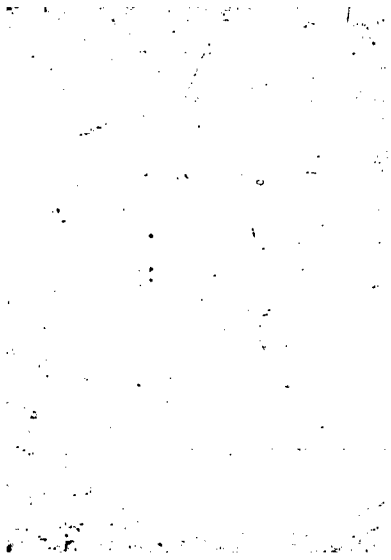
THE WINTER OF EVERYONE'S DISCONTENT:

Plans and Planning for 1973-76

A prized feature of Experimental Schools was its commitment to five-year "forwarding funding." The project would have long enough to give comprehensive change a fair try. Its managers did not have to re-justify its existence every year, and then live in uncertainty until an appropriations committee or a project officer said (probably at the last minute) they could continue work. The 1971 Minneapolis proposal, in fact, included a full five-year budget in considerable detail.

That budget was to be approved, however, in two stages. At the start only Years-1 and -2 were firm and finite. The second-stage figures, Years 3-5, were only an approximate projection. Before any final decision, there must be concrete planning, building on experience to date. Before the end of Year-2, Minneapolis and SEA would have to describe what they intended for 1973-76.

It took from November to May to do the job. During that time SEA and Experimental Schools communicated more and collaborated less than in any period before or since. A would-be partnership in reform became instead a relationship which one side could publicly say "appeared to border on enmity," and the other publicly deplore for its "debilitating effects." There is no intent now to retrace the details of this deterioration. It may be helpful to look with hindsight, though, at three general



aspects of what happened.

First, the major advantage of a forwarding funding concept, was never exploited. The five-year commitment, with mid-course review, inherently offered a negotiation framework, in which the issues were properly about planning, and precisely not about funding. There was no more need for grantor/grantee courtship games. In theory, that phase of the relationship was over. There was no question whether Minneapolis would go ahead with SEA, and there was equally no question whether Washington would fund it. In the approved original proposal, before everyone's eyes, there was even a starting-point projection of what the funding might look like -- slightly under $3 million. Presumably the refunding task was negotiated planning of how best to allocate resources in more or less that amount. SEA would take the planning lead, to be sure, since SEA was responsible for execution. But Experimental Schools should influentially join in, since Experimental Schools was more than a minor partner. Where they disagreed, about substance or about budget, they could negotiate their differences. Presumably.

Yet what happened was little like this at all. Despite forward funding, both Washington and Minneapolis immediately reverted to old behavior. The work they did neither looked nor felt like negotiation of an agreement on how to carry forward the job they had already begun. It was much more like maneuvering for a new proposal, adding to and replacing the first. The forward-funded starting-point budget was quickly forgotten. Instead of planning, the mood on both sides was grantsmanship. Experimental Schools let it be known there was money, but was very coy about saying how much. SEA fell into the come-hither trap, and expansively set out to shoot the moon.

The result, in the last of four successively more massive drafts, was a 700-page proposal with an $8.6 million price-tag. That was in April, by which time tempers were already strained. In the next month they became more so. Experimental Schools staff expressed great shock, and wondered how SEA could have ever imagined such a level of subsidy. Go back home, they told the Minneapolis delegation, and cut out $5 million. SEA registered even greater indignation, and wondered what sort of people these were who kept changing the rules in the middle of the game.

Recriminations a-plenty followed, but so did the task-oriented work of coming back to earth. On May 11 a final negotiation produced a contract at last. Its bottom-line figure was slightly over $3 million.

The second point worth attention is what happens to planning as such in a setting of grantor/grantee behavior. For most of a school year SEA's planning process was enormously profligate of time and energy. Pipedreams and falsely raised hopes -- since Experimental Schools would not discuss them piecemeal, and since there supposedly was no ceiling on what could be asked -- had to be fully explained in narrative and costed out in detail for a three year span. Much of this labor was almost totally in vain.

It was bad enough that it drew staff and parents away from primary concerns into a chase for the end of the rainbow. It was worse that it left them burned out and let down when they finished. But it was worst of all when it taught people that planning was the same as making a plan. For that was what the innumerable total of meetings first produced -- a 700-page book which few have ever consulted since.

Perhaps it was perversely fortunate that this product was so overblown, and except for the budget pages never rewritten. People could

ignore it safely, push it from memory as fast as possible, and swear never to do anything like that again. For reality-based work in that final month, and for the rest of 1973-76, all they needed to preserve was the one truly valuable aspect of this whole experience.

That was, third, the habit in all SEA schools and components of looking three, four, even five years ahead. The production of a 1973-76 plan, for all its costs and inadequacies, did at least require that. Every committee and task force had to consider how they wanted their component of a K-12 system to look after Experimental Schools went away. Even imaginary resources of people and money had to be allocated with an eye to their future impact. People got accustomed to thinking about schools in a stretched-out time frame which for most of them was new.

There is evidence that among many this kind of planning outlook -- as distinguished from mere proposal writing -- took root. In the winter-spring of 1976, there were active parent led groups in Southeast quite matter-of-factly at work extending present concerns about governance, buildings, enrollment, and the alternatives themselves into a 3-5 year future.

And perhaps the strongest evidence is negative -- like Sherlock Holmes' dog that didn't bark in the night. In June 1976, at the close-out of five years and $7 million, no one thought to organize a big SEA end-of-the-project picnic or party. In a real sense, there was no end-of-the-project. That may be because instead of putting everything in a plan, the SEA participants had grown used to planning.

CHAPTER VIII

MANY A MICKLE MAKING A MUCKLE:

The Five Schools -- 1973-76

We turn now to a compressed look at the most distinctive developments in the schools during the remaining three years of federal involvement. The first two years had brought extremely rapid influx of resources and ideas. By the start of Year-3 all five schools had more than enough opportunities and issues to fill their agendas for 1973-76. There were still important new phases, breakthroughs, and dead-ends, but no major surprises in what the schools could undertake. Successfully or otherwise, they all dealt with matters which had already surfaced.

The context for dealing with them, however, was changed and changing. Above all, factors internal and external to SEA made the schools more interdependent. They were not now just five institutions embarked on innovation and self-improvement. They were a cluster, with structure, identity, survival needs, domestic relations, and foreign policies of its own. Each school's environment for development was intimately a part of each other's. Before looking at them individually, it is important to illustrate how this was so.

Two major factors have already been discussed: the integrative impetus of SEA's own K-12 services, and the toiling together for all components on 1973-76 proposals to Washington. Both increased each school's familiarity with the others, and multiplied occasions for people to work

together. In particular, Experimental Schools insisted and SEA agreed, that all versions of the 1973-76 plan display a K-12 perspective. That in itself set an expectation that no school would act in isolation.

When a 1973-76 contract with NIE was finally signed, Moreover, its financial dimensions sharply emphasized the dropping off of federal support. Especially after Year-3, the schools faced a common challenge of maintaining alternative programs on reduced budgets. In this challenge there was inherent pressure to find ways of sharing staff and services, rather than going it alone.

A major sharing decision, required in Year-3, concerned facilities. While most Southeast buildings theoretically had more classrooms than their enrollments needed, Free School and the SEA office were using temporary federal funds for rented space. Identifying and winnowing out acceptable alternative arrangements was a winter-long task for staff and advisory groups in all five schools. Each had to know its own priorities, and become sensitively knowledgable about the others'. Not only what the decision was, but also how it was made, was vitally important. Everyone had to feel part of it.

To that end Southeast Council became the forum where school representatives presented position papers, weighed conflicting priorities, compared options, and eventually forged a common recommendation. It was accepted, and it had program impact throughout the project. In spring of Year-3 the SEA office moved into Tuttle. As classes ended, Free School moved into Motley, and the Motley part of Pratt-Motley was shoe-horned into Pratt. To relieve the population pressure there, and to increase the program pressure for alternatives at Marshall-U, children 6th grade

age could enroll in continuous progress or open middle school strands (6th-8th) at the high school the next fall. It was an extensive re-organization.

There was another re-organization issue, too, presented to Southeast from the outside. In spring of 1973 -- virtually at the climax of the SEA-NIE planning imbroglio -- John Davis announced the result of Minneapolis' own planning process for district-wide administrative decentralization. Effective that summer all Minneapolis was divided into three parts: East, West, and North sub-areas, each with its own assistant superintendent and K-12 central office. To start with, Southeast could retain its separate status as a mini-area to itself. But after a year, beginning in SEA Year-4, it would be merged with some one of the others, as yet unspecified.

To many in Southeast the three-part plan was a galling decision. There was fear that to be merged must mean to be submerged, with loss of the alternatives pattern. There were unreal hopes that SEA might keep its autonomy indefinitely; and more reasonable arguments for postponing merger until the end of federal funding. Others saw greater feasibility of expanding alternatives in a single area than in the whole district at once, and wanted SEA to get in on the ground floor of whatever area was most hospitable. In any event, every school's interest was at stake, and again Southeast Council became the forum for building community agreement from the views of staff and parent groups.

The strong sentiment was for postponement. Higher administration was apprised through a Southeast Council position paper, by Jim Kent in the superintendent's cabinet, and more informally too. By this

acting together Southeast schools won a year's delay. In Year-4, then, they had to continue acting together, as Council stated safeguards SEA wanted, sounded out the areas, and held hearings to determine which one Southeast preferred. Davis accepted their recommendation. Effective Year-5, SEA became administratively part of the West area. At that point, of course, it became the schools' and their continuing Council's agenda to participate in a new set of administrative and governance structures.

The strong interdependence of formerly separate schools is equally illustrated by the manner of administrative changes in the schools during this period. Near the end of Year-2, a new principal came to Marcy. Pratt-Motley changed administrators in the summer before Year-3. Twelve months later both Tuttle and Marshall-University did the same. At the close of Year-4 Free School had its second change of principals. That was when Jim Kent resigned, too, meaning that for one year SEA must choose a new director.

So many changes in leadership might seem to jeopardize continuity in a project whose persistence over time was essential to success. Actually they probably strengthened SEA unity, and they certainly did not bring any about-face in the alternative programs. The reason is that the new principals were chosen (recommended, technically) by interviewing committees of the schools themselves, with project-at-large members from Southeast Council. None was sent in by higher authority to carry out any outsiders' purposes. None was chosen -- probably none even applied -- who did not explicitly intend to honor the values and continue the new tradition of changes already begun. Each came not to

just a single school, therefore, but to that school as a component of SEA. All came, moreover, into Southeast's own administrative peer group, the Management Team of SEA principals and K-12 services directors.

By the middle of Year-5 Southeast Council was working again on new manifestations of some familiar concerns: five-year program planning, and the question of facilities. In both areas, plan-making this time avoided the Brobdignagian excess and soaring grantsmanship of three years before. It was much more an attempt to reaffirm for the whole system that the Southeast Alternatives were not just five schools, but a cohesive cluster -- and intended to continue that way.

Meanwhile, in this context of growing interdependence, what were the distinctive developments which characterized each school during 1973-76? Here is a selective overview.

Tuttle Contemporary School

We left Tuttle at the end of Year-2 with an expanding Community Education program, a PTA reaching out for more involvement in education discussions, and a newly technical emphasis in basic skills curriculum. Much favor was given also to specially staffed activities such as ceramics and woodworking.

Curriculum refinement continued, and extended to re-thinking the social studies approach as well. The complex and costly apparatus for math and reading, however, proved impossible to sustain as federal funds for aides and University assistance disappeared. By the end of Year-5 Tuttle teachers were shifting to new basic-texts series in both these areas. As time went by the Contemporary School faced inevitable retrenchment in other ways, too. Local budgets could not support a counselor,

for instance, nor the early level of help people enjoyed in the non-academic activity centers.

The Tuttle program which continued to grow, took root, and spread its effects most widely was Community Education. It had two striking features: it was designed to mesh with and enhance the school-day program; and it was a chief vehicle for Tuttle's increasing parent participation.

The integration of after-school Community Education and children's 9:00-3:00 learning was intentional. It was strongly begun in Year-3 by collaboration among the Community School co-ordinator, the parent community resource co-ordinator, and teachers. The collaboration meant that students were personally and specifically encouraged to expand on their classroom interests in after-school activities -- as in reading clubs, sewing, or sports. The pottery room and woodshop could be kept open beyond regular-school closing. Some teachers volunteered in Community School, and evening adult classes began to serve as a source of volunteer help for day-school. The PTA board was Community School's advisory group. It included the coordinator, Bruce Graff, as one of its members.

By fall of Year-4 Community Education was running until 9:00 three nights a week as well as to 5:30 p.m. daily for children. All told, over 1,000 people were registered in the program. In addition, it included Latch-Key for after-school daycare, and a Tuttle sponsored senior citizens program with the local park. Yet it faced a likelihood of defunding the next year. Federal funds would be finished, and Minneapolis Community Education would not support more than a fraction of Graff's time. Tuttle's new principal, Eloise Nelson, -- herself a Southeast resident -- was not prepared to be put off easily. "We are ready to take our case to the board of education," she wrote in December.

As it happened, there was enough organized and persistent pressure from Tuttle's PTA board. When they got no satisfaction from public meetings with the Minneapolis director of Community Education, the PTA formed a task force, designed a strategy, and invited him to a closed session. Eventually a combination of funds from Minneapolis, Tuttle, Teacher Center, and the PTA itself saved the program for Year-5. The task force did not let up. In Year-5 it planned and lobbied for 1976-77. This time they were more successful still. The Community Education component of the Contemporary School will be locally funded, full-time.

Even when not labeled as governance or decision-making, the commitment to community participation pays off. Without its aggressive PTA board, it is very doubtful Tuttle would still have the Community School which federal money helped start. Without the Community School it would not have after-school professionals to teach children pottery, painting and creative movement. What cannot be phased-in one way, the Contemporary School has found, often can be another.

Marcy Open School

After two sometimes stressful and turbulent years, Marcy entered 1973-76 feeling and acting like a strong school. The assurance and energy of its parent leadership were matched now by the experience and self-confidence of staff. The two groups had developed working relationships which made them peers in respect of their common school, yet adequately distinguished their roles within it. Their elected advisory council -- for all that its meetings were long and discussions repetitious -- had solid accomplishments to point to. Its integration/human relations

committee, for instance, had reached and interested enough new families over the summer to raise minority enrollment from 3% to 12%.

The world was coming to learn from open education in other ways, too. Before Year-3 two Marcy teachers, a University professor (with children at Marcy), the Teacher Center, and the Minneapolis East area alternatives co-ordinator (Marcy's former principal) worked out details of a double training program for new open teachers. One part brought experienced Minneapolis teachers to internships in Marcy classrooms for a full University quarter. The other trained 12 education undergraduates two half-days per week in those same classrooms for a whole year. To help these interns and neophytes (as well as to use with volunteers) Marcy staff made a catalogue of competencies needed by open teachers. That in itself, recalls Glen Enos was a morale-boosting experience. "It showed the staff how much they knew."

In such a state, the Open School felt ready to take on one of SEA's most ambitious brainstorms: the reorganized school week. How they tried that idea, how it worked and did not work, how it was revised and adapted to Marcy people's needs, and what residue it has left behind provide valuable perspective on this school's development in 1973-76.

The proposal for a re-organized school week -- also known as the fifth-day plan, and eventually as community day -- first came from Fred Hayen and the Teacher Center. In bare outline it was simple: run school as usual for four regular instructional days each week; on a fifth day provide optional, atypical activities for students, and for staff a required mix of training, planning, and professional development. In essentials the arguments for the idea were clear also: extensive educational change, as in SEA, requires more time for disciplined staff development than can realistically

be added on or squeezed in to the teachers' existing work-week; in Southeast, community resources and arrangements are available to offer students rich educational opportunity apart from their regular teachers; there is documented experience to show that a combination of increased staff development and decreased student time in school can yield increased learning.

It was a bold idea, and Teacher Center had money to help any school that wanted to try it out. Marcy council responded. They liked both halves: protected time for teachers' planning, work, and more involvement of children "in the real-life activities of the metropolitan area." They appointed a staff/parent planning committee, stipended for three summer weeks by the Teacher Center.

With lots of leg work, checking out, and discussion, this group had a second-draft proposal ready in September. From them came the name, community day. The school would still be responsible for its students on community day, but for most of the morning would conduct their education away from the building. A community day developer would design outside activities to connect with building-based curriculum and the children's own classroom planning. Co-ordinating people and places, supervising volunteers, and handling the imposing logistics would require close co-operation between the community day developer and the community resources co-ordinator. The program would begin with pilot trials during winter and spring of Year-3. If accepted, it would be extended through Year-4. In Year-5 it should be possible to combine community day developer and CRC as a single staff position.

Jim Kent, the district, and the State Department of Education had all been kept informed, and all approved. So did the Teacher Center

in-service committee, which voted funding for the pilot phase and a part-time evaluator. Most important, Marcy staff, council, and parents approved. For so major an enterprise, council insisted on all-school meetings and written ballots by which every family could register its opinions. Only when a clear majority of parents had approved, did council formally give a go-ahead.

The candidate chosen for community day developer was a social worker and a Marcy parent, Matti Marrow. Immediately she began teamwork with Judy Farmer, the CRC. In February, community days began. Marrow worked with teachers and children on choosing what the children wanted to do, and with the community people or places to help them to do it. They ranged from pet stores to film-makers to train stations to restaurant cooks. Farmer helped with volunteers, resource lists, student's individual follow-up projects, and all of the above. By the end of May, in varying rotations and combinations, all 10 classrooms had had at least two community days, and most more. On one memorable morning seven classrooms went out at once. At 9a.m. over 50 volunteer drivers were waiting outside, wondering where to park. By the time teachers sorted kids into cars, staff development meant taking a rest before they all came back.

That was the main problem with community day: it was fine for curriculum enrichment, but where, really, was the time for teachers' professional growth? Efforts were made in Year-4 to revive the original purpose, as well as to strengthen the advantages for children. But in Marcy's experience and evaluation, one program could not be made to serve both goals. Toward the end of Year-4 all agreed that expectations of its relieving teachers for in-service should simply be dropped. "Forgetting staff development," the classroom people were asked, "if community day can

be funded for kids only, do you still want it?" The answer was Yes.

What they wanted had by that time become a much more flexible and individualized program -- for both students and teachers -- than at the start. From experience in the pilot phase Marrow felt that children learned as much in the process of finding resources and planning to use them as they did from the content of a community day itself. She also recognized that any student's interest in an out-of-school resource might precede, follow from, or never involve a full-blown community day. Finally, she knew that teachers varied widely in how they conceived of the community in the curriculum.

Mulling all this over, Marrow and Farmer together had designed a new Marcy interest center, Other People/Other Places, to be the bearer of community day in Year-4. OP/OP was a phone, phone books, resource files, a bulletin board, and the Marrow-Farmer team. By appointment, individuals or groups could get adult help in finding out for themselves what they wanted to find out for themselves. If teachers wanted a community day, (or a community week in one case) they got it by having their students use OP/OP to implement classroom planning. If interests converged from several classrooms, OP/OP knew about it and could try to co-ordinate a common trip. If only one student wanted to meet a baloonist, OP/OP could give hints about that, too. But in all cases, with variations for age, children themselves must do the research, make the phone-calls, write the notes, and arrange the transportation.

"If it can be funded," was the question to staff. Marcy learned, in Year-5, it could not. Two Title-III applications, two foundation proposals, and appeals to local businesses all failed to produce salary for the community day developer. Community day as such had to be dropped. OP/OP

came to rest entirely with the CRC and two parent volunteers, each working a day a week. Requests for help continued plentiful, though not as numerous as when full-time staff kept the program visible to teachers and in classrooms. Presumably, with co-ordination and training of volunteers such as Marcy can count on, out-of-school use of community resources could continue a long time. But volunteers depend on a CRC, and for 1976-77 her salary itself is a question-mark.

This seems a long way from the grand scheme of a re-organized school week. But perhaps that is what grand schemes in education are meant for -- to be reshaped by parents and teachers to fit the needs and capacities of their own school community as they see them at this time. Clearly that is what Marcy did. From Year-1 through Year-5 that is generally what Marcy did best. Two other developments in 1973-76 will illustrate the same point.

One is that there were further changes in classroom age-groupings. Generally, the age-range in any room was reduced to three years. In Year-5 there was even an optional separate section for about half the five-year-olds. Such changes took place now in self-confident response to the school's self-evaluation of children's learning. Some deplored the trend, to be sure. But the days of worried conflict over conformity to external standards of open school orthodoxy, were apparently ended.

Finally, at the end of Year-3 Marcy made a knowing and significant change in its council. "Advisory" had already been quietly dropped. Now the principal became one voting member of the equally balanced staff/parent group. The change formalized actual practice: instead of asking advice on school policy, the principal and 11 others decided policy together.

Pratt Continuous Progress School

These three years were scarcely uneventful for the Continuous Progress elementary school. In Year-3 there came a new principal. In Year-4 both halves of the previous Pratt-Motley joined together in Pratt. In Year-5 the school revised both curriculum and governance. Some aspects of all these events were difficult and controversial. However, none significantly shifted the original commitment to children mastering basic skills at their own pace, making real choices, among other activities, and feeling good about themselves in the process. When there was disagreement, it often reflected the difference in emphasis already remarked, between Pratt primary and Motley intermediate.

The new principal was already familiar to and familiar with Southeast Alternatives. She was Betty Jo Zander, an organizer and writer of the original proposal. Now she was returning to Southeast after two years as administrative assistant in the superintendent's office. She was quickly back in the middle of the issues.

With Pratt-Motley budget no longer allowing (or encouraging) a principal and an assistant to divide administrative responsibility between primary and intermediate buildings, Zander saw practical possibility that a single administrator might "pull the two programs together". She also stressed the theoretical necessity of making ungraded progress truly continuous and cohesive from age five to 12. In a variety of ways the new principal gave her strong support to that end. Whole-school teaching teams in math and social studies were one example. Mid-year progression of some children from Pratt to Motley was another.

By far the most emphasized instrument for unity, however, was joint

staff development and planning. In addition to the weekly Tuesday afternoon released time provided by Minneapolis, Pratt-Motley got funding from the Teacher Center in-service committee to pay teachers for an extra two hours after school every Thursday, year-long. Tuesdays were used for program maintenance and human relations sessions. Thursdays went to advance planning and curriculum improvement on a school-wide basis.

Unity of program took on increased urgency, of course, with the winter-time decision in Year-3 to combine all continuous progress in one building the next fall. It also became more possible. In joint planning, staff agreed to drop the primary/intermediate division altogether. Instead, Pratt Continuous Progress was organized as two ungraded K-6 teams, on separate floors, each with about 200 students. Assignments to the six or seven homerooms of each team were on the basis of 14 reading levels -- which usually gave each teacher responsibility for four reading levels and a three year age-span. This basic pattern has continued through Year-5. It is flexible, and it was certainly more satisfying to most than the previous age-split between buildings.

Besides student-age and geography there had also been the differing emphasis of affective and cognitive concerns between Pratt and Motley. Primary teachers wanted to be "open and flexible in dealing with the whole child." Intermediate wanted to honor "the over-riding importance of basic skills instruction." The combined team organization required a lot of attention to integrating or composing these different mind-sets. Having regular classroom observations by an internal evaluator offered a major assist. It helped avoid ideological dispute and keep the focus on what skills children were actually practicing, in what settings, and with whom.

The differing stances of teachers, nevertheless, were paralleled by the varying expectations of parents. Those who strongly wanted continuous progress to be more like Motley than Pratt were not pleased with Zander's evident satisfaction that the merged program "is clearly more like Pratt than Motley." Among staff and parents there was fuel here for the fires of factionalism. Sometimes in Years-3 and -4 they burned rather brightly.

For similar reasons it took time and patience -- until the end of Year-5 -- to settle on a format for governance. With the buildings merged, there was much less logistical agenda for the former Pratt-Motley Coordinating Council, but at least as much need for shared decision-making about curriculum, budget, and personnel. The question, as always, was who should appropriately share what with whom. The Coordinating Council became a Pratt Advisory Council, parents and staff elected at large to advise the principal, support volunteers, and keep communication open. That left undefined the jurisdictional relationship between new Advisory Committee and old PTA Board. "With some awkwardness," Pratt was trying to "have a foot in both camps." It did not work. The result was sharp disagreement and power struggle over educational philosophy and parent involvement. More helpfully, there was also work on careful listening to each others points of view. After well over a year of work, PAC and PTA were merged. One elected body would now serve as both advisory council and PTA board.

Meanwhile, 1973-76 saw more or less constant revision and refinement of the Continuous Progress curriculum. There was considerable simplification as at Tuttle of the finely detailed skill-level sequences in math and reading. There were attempts to use year-long social studies themes throughout the school. With help from DPE, all teachers took training

in group and individual counselling skills, and used homeroom time for daily "circle groups." The optional interest group activities remained basic to overall program, but with various changes in their time and extent. As aide budgets and federal funds dropped, interest groups depended increasingly on the work of Pratt's community resource co-ordinator. In Year-5 she was also co-ordinator for Pratt's after-school Community Education activities. For students in the neighborhood, what could not be found during the day, might be available after the last bell.

Free School

A brief catalogue of major 1973-76 events in the Free School is not difficult. Identifying in it any distinctive themes of program development or continuing curriculum emphasis is not easy.

The school began Year 3 with good morale. There were enthusiastic new staff, some important improvements in physical facilities, and an influx of volunteers through the community resource coordinator. But program clarity and consistent expectations of students were still lacking. The number of students actually or happily engaged in purposeful learning was disappointingly low. Communication and confidence among the staff fell off rapidly.

In mid-winter erupted a series of intra-staff conflicts and staff/parent struggles over governance which very nearly tore the school apart forever. This year's disputes grew more bitter and destructive than before. They found their focus in a personalized wrangle over staffing patterns and salary levels, and in an attempt of the principal to override governing board's recommendation for re-hiring the counselor. With

lines drwan and charges of bad faith in the air, there was a demoralizing train of crises. Suffice it to say that for long periods neither principal nor governing board nor staff as a group succeded in raising educational program above organizational strife.

There were good moments during the year, too. Most notable among them was a five week western trip of 16 secondary students. The heart of the trip was two weeks working at United Farm Workers headquarters in La Paz, California. That included walking on picket lines, discussions with growers, floor-scrubbing for a medical center, and seminars with the union leadership. For most it was a rewarding but difficult introduction to hard work and discipline on behalf of people other than themselves. For the whole school there was experience of a more rewarding kind of controversy. There was a spate of complaints to congress and press about alleged mis-use of public funds for "radical" causes. That gave Free School and the Minneapolis system a chance to make points about what actually constitutes good learning. But for the school as a whole, this was not enough. Despite an upswing in May when ordering new materials and moving to Motley, the school ended the year drained. Not surprisingly, in addition to those dismissed or whose federal positions were de-funded, several teachers chose not to return.

In one important respect, then, Year-4 began like all the years before: a staff largely new to each other designing program in a space they were not familiar with. Secondary enrollment was high (65) and heavily female. Primary enrollment was low (33), and during the year dropped further. Middle enrollment was as projected (51), with the highest attendance rates and most difficult behaviors in the school. For all three groups staff had trouble throughout the year in coordinating

program or offering activities which attracted lasting student interest. Apart from hallway cliques and on field trips it was rare to find more than half a dozen students at work together. As before, governing board intended to review curriculum and program priorities in each age-group, but never got around to it.

Nevertheless, compared with the year before, Year-4 was relatively quiet. The chief project of the school as a whole was a stong effort to win accreditation under North Central Associations' new criteria for alternative and optional programs. Included in that effort was re-study of all previous statements of Free School purpose, and agreement after community meetings on a fairly concise new one. Preparation for the visit by a team of accreditation examiners provoked new self-evaluation within the school. In fact, governing board was disappointed by the superficiality of North Central's critique. The examiners team recommended accreditation, but it was denied higher up, on grounds that the principal did not have a Minnesota administrator certificate.

So he did not, and could not, because he had never been a certified teacher. For the same reason, Minneapolis was directed by the State Department of Education not to renew his contract. At both state and district levels, the elementary principals' association brought strong pressure for strict construction of credential requirements. Despite appeals and delaying actions, the Free School principal got his notice.

Free School's third administrator, recommended by a Free School/ Southeast Council selection committee, was Maurice Britts. He came from the Minneapolis North Area office as a former counselor, an experienced administrator and the first black to head a Southeast school. For the

several Year-5 vacancies (again) at Free School he helped recruit teachers whom he already knew. Then, year-long, he sought in a series of staff retreats to have people share their personal goals, and build from these a set of collective agreements for the school as a whole. There was nothing startling about the statements that emerged, but there was cooperation and agreement in arriving at them. Perhaps that was accomplishment enough.

With a continuing influx of transfers from outside Southeast, secondary enrollment (ages 14-17) in Year-5 rose to over half the 179 total. A high proportion of new students came for the purpose of graduating under Free School's individualized and flexible requirements. In 1976 30 of them -- three times more than the year before -- did just that.

With relatively more studious older students, fewer young ones, and stronger administrative control, Year-5 was Free School's quietest yet. This time, when governing board again applied for accreditation, North Central approved.

Marshall - University High School

In spring of Year-2, when it came time to be heartless about the great big 1973-76 plan that Washington said was ludicrous, the quickest stroke of the budget axe fell on a million-dollar section labelled Cedar-Riverside Program. Without going into detail, that part of the proposal is worth a brief backward glance. Most elements of it had to do with secondary alternatives.

Cedar-Riverside was a large new-town-in-town development beginning to open up just across the river from Southeast. It aimed to attract the kind of modern urbanite family who might in turn be attracted to an alternative school system. By special arrangement, it was becoming part of the SEA attendance area.

Available next to the new high-rise apartments was a modern, low, open-space warehouse. Imaginatively remodelled inside, it might become home base for a synergistic mix of innovative programs. Faculty who had started on new senior-high interdisciplinary electives at Marshall-U -- the wilderness quarter, off campus learning, the art/music/literature combination -- were readily interested. So were foreign-language teachers. Even more enthusiastic were those already funded for the high school TV studio. The warehouse would be ideal for a K-12 theatre program, too, picking up Free School's community theatre specialist and others skilled in creative movement. Along with all this was room for a small open middle school, ages 9-14, advancing the Marcy model through junior high. One block away was more space available, for a younger "Marcy extension," ages 5-8.

This was big thinking. Both its promise and its peril was that it effectively disconnected the impetus for secondary change from the

secondary school itself. Some senior high teachers involved in the brainstorming were those who most wanted institutional innovation, but most doubted its possibility in the Marshall-U climate. Cedar-Riverside raised their hopes for an independent start. When the warehouse bubble burst, there seemed not to be much energy left for pushing the same agendas back at M-U.

Perhaps no one was ever very sanguine about the warehouse proposal. In any event, under pressure from Experimental Schools and Jim Kent, the Marshall-University part of the same 1973-76 plan also laid out three junior-high strands, for articulation with the elementary alternatives. That was what Washington funded, and that is where organizational restructure -- as distinguished from added-on alternatives -- began to take place.

There had been some faint and faltering beginnings in parent discussions and the 7th - 8th IDEA program that same year. Except for that, though, planning of a junior-high alternatives concept began from scratch. It began late, too, under pressure of the funding battle with Washington and the summertime physical move from Peik Hall. The approved proposal gave a sketchy outline of graded, ungraded, and open options. A 7th-8th grade teacher was appointed as planner, to publicize these un-planned options, start scheduling students into them, and design an orientation for incoming 7th-graders. Most of the actual planning and staff development was reserved for summer.

Equally available year-long alternatives thus began at Marshall-U for the first time in Year-3. Junior-high students had to make a choice among three programs. To SEA people (but perhaps not to transfer students from some two dozen other schools) it was clear enough what was intended.

In some sense the 7th-8th graded program would be Contemporary, the ungraded Continuous Progress, and the open Open. Despite the aim of articulation, though, the teachers designing these options had had to do so without built-in consultation or co-planning with their elementary counterparts. Nor did they start out with ready-made administrative leadership. Ronald Clubb, new assistant principal for junior high, could not arrive until summer planning was nearly done. He came to Southeast on routine bureaucratic assignment, not because he was picked for alternatives, not because he preferred Marshall-U, and not because of any previous interest in the programs needing to be developed.

Even so, there was now a concrete and visible commitment to giving Southeast families the same range of choice in junior high as they had when their children were younger. The graded program was already familiar: English, math, social studies, and science, with some elective leeway in non-core curriculum. Ungraded stressed the same academic core, but monitored progress by individual mastery of specified skills or concepts. Whenever students completed the prescribed sequence in a given area, they could do enrichment work or move on to senior high courses in the same department. Both graded and ungraded continued the practice of core-teacher teams meeting almost daily with a counselor assigned to their program.

The open program was smallest -- 39 students with two teachers in one large room -- and had the clearest program identity. Students could remain in the open room from three to five hours daily, choosing curriculum units in the core-subject areas. Outside the room they were offered some specially designed electives.

Midway in Year-3 came the SEA re-organization decision, combining

Motley with Pratt and opening Marshall-U to students 6th-grade age in both the ungraded and open strands. That introduced new requirements for program planning; new emphasis on junior-high alternatives as such; and a direct intermixture of elementary and secondary people. It considerably changed the junior-high dynamic -- to a middle school dynamic.

Most of the 6th graders were to come from Motley. As part of the reorganization, two teachers and the Motley curriculum co-ordinator agreed to come with them. In planning sessions throughout the spring Marshall-U's ungraded staff met with the continuous progress people, including an elementary counselor. Building on the experience of both groups, they worked out a new organization of teams and times. Starting in Year-4, six teachers shared the four core-subjects in a three-hour block each day. Before long, also, IMS math materials were being introduced, and some short mini-courses offered in addition to the school-wide electives.

Indirectly, the 7th-8th graded program was affected, too. By Year-5 the teacher team for each grade were circulating among all students every day during a three-hour block for core curriculum.

Finding common ground at Marshall-University for secondary and elementary understandings of continuous progress education has proved relatively easy. There is, after all a pre-existing fundamental compatability. On the one hand is an emphasis on cognitive accomplishment plus enjoyment of elective activities. On the other is a comprehensive academic high school's emphasis on serious learning in a wide variety of fields by a wide diversity of students. The assumed educational values are highly congruent. There are large areas in which what is satisfying to continuous progress people will also be a matter of pride for the rest

of the school.

Given that, plus goodwill on both sides, it is not surprising that even so anthropologically upsetting a phenomenon as 6th-grade children and elementary teachers making themselves at home in a high school has turned out quite tolerable. It seems reasonable also that in some respects (as organization of time) Marshall-U's graded and ungraded programs -- like Tuttle and Pratt -- grow more alike than different. Moreover, the basic congruency of values very likely explains why there is little if any demand for organizationally extending the ungraded strand through the last four years. Beyond junior high there are fewer and fewer grade-level courses anyway. At those ages and skill levels, apparently, institutionalized program identity is not what continuous progress requires; individualized teaching and materials in particular disciplines are.

For open education, however, entry into the Marshall-University culture has been much more difficult. In practice this has often meant that Marcy people have felt rebuffed and given the run-around, while Marshall-U people have felt badgered and looked down upon. Sometimes an underlying sense of division shows up in absurdities of expression which make it worse -- as when the high school principal writes of open-program parents in his own school as "groups from Marcy" or the elementary principal defines his goal for Marshall-U as simply "an extension of the program at Marcy." No doubt the one imprudence provokes the other. But the difficulties came neither from imprudence nor from lack of goodwill. They stem from some hard-to-accommodate differences of perspective. At least three, which reinforce each other should be noted.

One difference is simply in the things which make people proud of their school. In a traditionally good comprehensive high school they

tend to be matters of student performance and faculty expertise. A high-value word is "professional." In a traditionally good open school they tend to be matters of nuturing environment and across-the-board sharing. A high value word is "family." The different values need not conflict, but they have very different tones. It is not immediately obvious how a good open program can enhance the self-esteem of a Marshall-U High, or vice versa. And there are some aspects of each which are sure to be uncomfortable for the other.

A second difference -- perhaps the most important -- is in perpectives on educational change. Before and during SEA, Marshall-U people have seen many innovations, some lasting, some not. It is not necessarily invidious for the uncommitted to think of a new open program as analogous to a new curriculum package or even a new instructional department. Open school people, however, cannot stand to be thought of that way. They are committed to a total and distinctive gestalt of educational outlook. For them it is incomprehensible, for example, that an open program should be restricted in enrollment, should not have its own budget, should not have strong parent/staff governance. It must be considered, in short, a full school-within-the-school. But to people who think of innovations on the scale of a new math, such claims sound overweening. Thus neither group find in the other the behavior they hope for. Disappointment-like this has been common at Marshall-U.

Finally, there is important difference of organizational perspective and experience. Open education has largely risen into Marshall-U from elementary beginnings. The open elementary school is a small unitary institution where power is quite evenly diffused through

the system, yet always sensitively linked to an administrative center. Decisions, no matter where made, tend to signal their impact everywhere, rapidly. In the departmentalized high school power is unevenly dispersed, and the institution is poly-centric, not unitary. The impact of many decisions may be narrowly contained. That makes for very different patterns and styles of communication and influence. When an open program, most of whose parents and students, and some of whose staff, are accustomed to the one milieu, takes up lodging in the other, some frustration and bafflement on both sides are inevitable. They have not been eliminated at Marshall-U, and it would be astonishing if they had.

Yet even with all this and more, there is a growing open program alternative at Marshall-University. As soon as the decision to admit sixth graders was made, teachers administrators, and support staff from the high school and Marcy began to meet -- and some Marcy parents, too. For the enlarged middle open program they agreed that one teacher would transfer to the high school from Marcy. After difficult discussion they agreed on some philosophy and requested remodelling of additional space. In Year-4 the middle open school had 66 students sharing three teachers and two rooms. When one of the secondary teachers left during the year, she was replaced by a newly certified man who had been an aide at Marcy. Year-5 enrollment rose to 80, but teaching staff was reduced to 2.5.

In Year-4, also, Marshall-U had a new principal, Michael Joseph. His chief impression of need from both Bill Phillips and Jim Kent was to revive and revise the concept of alternatives at senior high level. On arriving in the school it seemed clear that the focus of alternatives interest for older students was on open programs. So in December he appointed a planning committee of five teachers, plus Ron Clubb.

The committee reported in March, and immediately thereafter teachers who were to staff the new alternative began more detailed planning. The format adopted for senior high open was to provide students with half of each day based in a senior-high open classroom, either morning or afternoon, and the other half for elective courses elsewhere in Marshall-U.

In Year-5, when senior-high open began, 60 students enrolled. English, art, and social studies are the core disciplines of the open room, with an art teacher co-ordinating the program as a whole. There is no requirement that students stay only in the room however. Projects are defined by contract with a teacher, and carried out wherever is best.

With enrollment projected for over 80 in 1976-77 there was a brief but crucial controversy in spring of Year-5. The question was whether all who chose this alternative could enter, or whether some must be screened out. Even at this late date there were teachers and administrators who would define alternatives as abnormal programs for students not in the "regular" high school. On that misunderstanding, it was then possible to argue that admission to the open school need not be by student or family choice only, but by school-defined criteria such as being "motivated and responsible" or "not in need of imposed structure."

The argument this time was settled in favor of stated SEA and Minneapolis policy. Students attend the alternatives of their choice. In 1976-77 there will be three senior-high open classrooms.

It remains to say a word about Marshall-University governance in 1973-76. There is very little to say. The principal's advisory council so cautiously constituted and defined by Bill Phillips functioned briefly but never powerfully for the rest of Year-3. It lapsed without audible protest in Year-4, and has been replaced by a smaller group of the

same name which meets when the principal wants. Faculty and students, says Joseph, he can always see in the building; parents he prefers to poll by phone or mail. "Anytime I feel there should be input, I'll call them."

CHAPTER IX

PROJECT-WIDE GOVERNANCE AND THE PROMISE OF PHASE-IN

Legitimized community sharing in SEA governance began modestly and late. Once begun, it advanced to prominence and power, then ran into a time of troubles. Still, as federal funding finally phased out, governance was the main means in sight for making sure SEA's contribution to change continued to phase in. Some key episodes have already been sketched. It is time now to put them in order, add some others, and finish out the story.

In winter of Year-1 Jim-Kent addressed the question of what to put in place of the Marshall-University policy board idea. For community overview and K-12 responsibility -- as well as "to light a fire under the high school" -- some new group was necessary. Carefully, he proposed a Southeast Community Education Council, soon known simply as Southeast Council.

The Council's primary stated function was tame: to advise the director. In that capacity, however, it was to share in recruiting and interviewing for administrator vacancies in the Southeast schools, and to recommend allocation of both local and federal funds. Those were still somewhat novel ideas, and because the new Council would replace an interim steering committee appointed by the superintendent, its constitution required approval downtown. That obtained, in May, the Southeast Council came into being. Besides parents and staff from the five schools, it included representatives from the chief Southeast planning group, the Park Board, and the Marshall-U policy board. Sitting as chairperson was

Ben Rank, a Tuttle parent and a top administrator in a suburban school district. He would make it clear, hoped Kent, that "we wanted more than a PTA."

Council's first action was to help interview for a new SEA business advisor. Its first show of strength was in rewriting the Teacher Center proposal and prevailing on Experimental Schools to approve it. From there it moved on to community involvement at Marshall-U, and from that into 1973-76 planning.

The Marshall-U question was whether there would be any means for parents and staff to work together on shaping a high school of alternatives. Behind that was the question whether Marshall-U -- with half the SEA students -- would convincingly "join the project." Southeast Council wished it would, of course. Spearheaded (even then) by Marcy representatives, who were joined by other elementary parents with children entering junior high, the Council "mandated" that Marshall-University design and create a high school community advisory council.

From mandate to meetings is a long road, stretching beyond the period of this report. The best that could come of Southeast Council's rather brazen intervention was that "a structure for broadly based participation in governance" became one of Marshall-U's stated goals in the 1973-76 plan, next spring. Three springs after that, it is worth noting, Southeast Council meetings still included plaintive discussions of whether the principal's advisory committee meetings at the high school could be more frequent and more publicized.

Meanwhile, for the rest of Year-2, Council was fully occupied with the multiple versions and diversions of the overall SEA 1973-76 plan. There were five public hearings for school advisory groups to respond to

the first draft alone. After draft two they listened again, and made over 40 substantive changes. Among them, of course, were items concerning junior high options and the governance structure at Marshall-U. Then they had to keep at it through all the subsequent rejections and revisions until a contract was agreed in May. By that time it was no doubt true that Southeast Council was "more knowledgable than any other group about SEA."

In the midst of these concerns the Council took carefully planned part in another. That was the design of a parent/staff interviewing committee to recommend a new principal at Marcy. Because this was the first attempt at community participation in naming the administrator of a recognized school (Free School could be dismissed as a special case), all saw the need for clear-cut procedure. It would set important precedent for both school and project-wide governance.

The plan worked out was for the parent chairperson of Marcy's advisory council to name two parents and three staff, and for Southeast Council to name two of its own non-Marcy members. Those seven would interview properly credentialed applicants, and make a recommendation to the SEA director.

Kent got the plan through cabinet, and asked the city-wide principals' organization to look it over. People were willing to try. Following visits and interviews, all the applicants themselves evaluated the process. It worked. Thereafter all the new SEA principals were chosen by roughly the same method.

Pretty clearly, though only an advisory body, Southeast Council had started to operate in central, sensitive areas of school governance. School programs, school budgets, and school personnel had become their regular agenda. It was a beginning.

For Experimental Schools project officer Cynthia Parsons, however, a beginning was not enough. The summer before, as Parsons was coming on the job, Robert Binswanger had been concerned "that the SEA governance issue keeps being postponed by the Minneapolis staff." As Parsons saw it, the crux of the matter was a lack of explicit commitment by Minneapolis top administration to "our notion that SEA is providing a comprehensive test of decentralization in a large urban school system." Jim Kent's good intentions were not enough. Neither was an advisory council, no matter how capably functioning. What was needed was some policy from the top.

So Parsons addressed herself to the top. First by letter in October 1972, and then repeatedly through Kent and in person, she tried to get from John Davis a statement on decentralized governance in SEA, and on his intentions for the district beyond Southeast. Evidently the superintendent did not appreciate these instructions. Only on the final day of final refunding negotiations in Washington, May 11, 1973, did he phone something in. It was scarcely definitive: Despite legal constraints, he dictated, "there is developing a capability to transfer authority and power, and more than that, to be comfortable with the new arrangements."

The point is, no matter how hard Experimental Schools might push -- even waving its check-book -- it could not make a strong superintendent say one word more than he wanted, sooner than he wanted, on the subject of decentralized power. The further point is that it is well Southeast Council did not wait for full empowerment from on high before trying to travel as far as it could on an advisory ticket. In fact, there was still a lot of ground it could cover.

Two weeks after his Delphic message to Washington, Davis announced

the Minneapolis three-area administrative decentralization plan. That posed the first question for Southeast Council in Year-3: whether to accept the timetable for SEA merger with one of the new areas next year, or to advise Jim Kent to argue for something different. Chaired now by a Pratt-Motley parent, Richard Purple, they not only advised him, but invited position papers from the schools, composed one of their own, and sent it with him to cabinet. In the name of the Southeast community, they argued for a year's delay. The position paper as presented by Kent proved persuasive -- or perhaps what persuaded was the fact by itself that the well organized community had a position.

Year-3 also brought an administrators' mechanism for shared decision-making, the SEA Management Team. This was Jim Kent, the principals, and the chief managers of K-12 services meeting regularly together as a group directorate. Kent had final authority, but pledged himself not to veto any consensus except for reasons stated during the meeting itself. Though most of its agenda were administrative, there was high likelihood that Management Team would move also into just those broad policy areas where Southeast Council was developing a role of its own. Some people in each group were distinctly edgy about the other. Before long it was agreed that Council could send two "observers" to Management Team meetings. And a year later the Team elected an administrator representative to sit without vote on Council. For two years that meant three long-suffering people heard a lot of issues discussed twice; but they also kept communication lines open.

There was a working division of labor between the two groups. Southeast Council, for instance, did by far the greater amount of work on the SEA reorganization described in the previous chapter. It distributed and

studied Level I's student mobility data, and solicited from the schools their reasoned preferences for location. Management Team, however, probably had the greater share in discussing and detailing budget allocations. Even though Council had review and approval of the budget (i.e. advised Kent on it), the administrators were inevitably more familiar with how it affected their organizations' self interest.

All fall in Year-4 Southeast Council worked on reaching a firmly grounded recommendation regarding SEA's merger with another area. The attempt was to know which area offered the most promise of continued commitment to alternatives, decentralized school governance groups, and the K-12 outlook of Council itself. A public meeting was held for all three of the area superintendents to be questioned on these matters by groups of Southeast parents staff and students. After that, Council representatives met with Davis, to discuss with him what Southeast preferred, and why. It was the kind of honest session, said the Council chairperson afterwards, which "left you feeling like democracy can work." Council had recommended West area, and West area is what Davis approved.

In that same fall Jim Kent suggested in Management Team the idea of their functioning in Year-5 as a project-wide leadership without director. He was not just hinting that he might leave. The serious invitation was to consider phasing out the directorship a year early. While there were still funds for strong office assistance, Management Team might make one of its own members chairperson, and really manage as a team. It would be "in keeping with the decentralized consensus approach," and Southeast Council could become to the Team as a whole what it already was to the director.

There were cries of disbelief at the thought of all that work, but

for a brief while the idea, and variations on it, got some consideration. Curiously, it seems never to have been raised or discussed at all in Southeast Council. People heard of the proposal, of course, but only with the "automatic feeling that no one could do it."

In spring of Year-4 Kent announced his resignation, effective at the end of June. He was leaving to become superintendent of a district in Massachusetts. A Council committee interviewed candidates for his one-year successor, and recommended (to the West area superintendent, now) David Roffers. Roffers was former principal of North High in Minneapolis, just finishing a sabbatical when Kent would be leaving.

As they were considering candidates and strategizing for a future in West area, Council and Management Team came to an important decision for Year-5, namely, that the two groups should become one. The basic rationale was that the growing amount of overlapping work made separate meetings wasteful. There were alternative proposals, too, but support for full merger was strongest.

The most difficult problem of design was to keep the membership to a reasonable number. All five building principals retained their seats. Interestingly, the three strands at Marshall-U were now recognized as separate constituencies -- like their elementary counterparts -- and each give representation for parents, students, or staff. Functions of the new Council were to be much the same as the old, but spelled out a bit more clearly. This time Council was empowered to override a director's veto (by two-thirds majority), but the director could appeal to his West area superior.

The spring 1975 SEA parent survey reported 72% wanting Southeast Council to continue after joining West area. In its new form it would.

By mid-June it had all the necessary approvals. It was to convene for the first time in August.

Considerable preparing for merger with West area had gone on in winter and spring. Budgets were prepared and co-ordinated; Teacher Center planned for common staff development; Marvin Trammel, area superintendent, had met several times with Kent and others to prepare for transition. A major reason for Southeast Council's recommendation to Davis was Trammel's strong support for an alternatives pattern, and his encourgement of cluster groupings somewhat like SEA in the West area already. By the end of Year-4 the vast majority of SEA's financial phase-in questions had already been decided. Many prospects for smooth re-integration with the system looked good.

It took most of a year before good prospects outshone present problems, though. Three or four converging circumstances made fall and winter of Year-5 the hardest yet for SEA governance.

One was the extent to which the whole district, especially West area, seemed forced to mark time. Late in Year-4 both John Davis and his top deputy resigned. A successor was not chosen until December, and did not move to Minneapolis until May. On top of that, Trammel himself, in whom SEA had vested such hope, resigned in January. West area had only an acting administrator until late June. It was impossible to answer a crucial question; will new leadership continue an alternatives policy?

Another circumstance was the certainty of large-scale budget retrenchment throughout the system in 1976-77. The first for-discussion suggestions of ways to achieve it, in winter, slashed heavily at staff development and resource positions esstential for strengthening alternatives. The school board did not seem alarmed.

Third, entry into the working groups of West area was difficult, and sometimes unsettling. Inevitably envies and resentments of SEA's long-favored position had not faded away overnight. A good many principals and teachers clearly disliked the governance expectations, in particular, of Southeast activists. Organizational structures and organizational behaviors were very different from what SEA people had spent four years learning to like. Some in West area looked on Southeast Council as coming in to take them over.

Fourth, the new Council itself was not functioning well. The mixture of five principals and a new director with many new faculty and parent members set back the dynamics of the group considerably. Discussion did not flow, feelings were not shared, issues were avoided. For a long time such decisions as were made were the work of an executive committee only. As Roffers reported in December, the merger of Management Team and Southeast Council "shows some strain and lack of achievement."

All these factors made for a low-energy winter, with poor participation levels from all the schools in the self-governance of their own cluster. Only with spring did Southeast Council seem to draw itself together and begin to lead again.

A major stimulus, without doubt, was the threat posed by preliminary district budgets. Several Southeast people played active and welcome roles in the large group of parents, teachers, and principals which West area organized to explore different ways of budget-cutting. The city-wide alternatives task force, again with strong SEA participation, made detailed recommendations based on the district's own policy commitment to alternatives. In actions like these, people's trained familiarity with school system finances and group decision-making paid off

practically. It confirmed respect for SEA, rather than suspicion, in West area groups. Judy Farmer, CRC at Marcy, was chosen to speak for the area in making their budget presentation to the school board.

For its own part, Southeast Council went before the school board to talk about better ways of budgeting. SEA's experience with priority setting and decision-making in open discussion at the building level, they argued, should be exploited system-wide. It works not just for proposing larger budgets, but precisely for reducing them. After all, having just successfully planned their way back to 100% local funding, who has more experience in creative budget cutting than the SEA cluster?

With talk like this, spirits lifted. It helped, of course, that the final district budget came out much better than first seemed likely, for alternatives in general and the West area in particular. It also helped that the new Minneapolis superintendent, Raymond Arveson, was becoming a known quantity, and was willing to name continuance of alternatives among his top three priorities.

Perhaps most important, though, was simply the increasing discovery of ways and occasions for SEA people to act in other contexts without special pleading for SEA interests, but still with special application of SEA governance skills. For the most part these are a host of small and constructively political abilities. Many are highly informal, but genuine skills nonetheless. Others are semi-technical, but interpersonally crucial nonetheless. They include anticipating deadlines, publicizing meetings before and after, knowing the bureaucratic report-lines, inviting involvement and showing how to start work, expressing and accepting strong feeling, sharing credit, naming people to carry out decisions, using critical

evaluation, knowing how to read a budget printout, willingess to work for other people's goals.

These are the kinds of abilities which the ups and downs of governance in SEA have both demanded of people and taught them. Most important, the demands and the teaching have applied equally to parents and professionals. In Southeast Council such parents and professionals focus the potential for ongoing development of SEA itself, and for influence and change beyond.

Practically speaking, real phase-in of the SEA dynamic with the rest of the system depends jointly on how SEA maintains its own life and how that melds with the other structures and leadership of West area. It is thus encouraging to report at the end of Year-5 that there are grounds for optimism in both these dimensions.

Within SEA, Southeast Council ended the year with a presentation of community interest and ideas for a city-wide school facilities planning committee; and with a start on cluster-wide program planning strategies for the next five years. Because of Council's fall-winter doldrums, both documents fell far short of what had been intended, and were based on much narrower participation than usual in Southeast. Nevertheless, both also surfaced open-ended questions for action, and left people in motion, not stalled.

In the SEA/West area relationship people and patterns began to emerge for governance to deal with practical alternatives issues. The new area superintendent, Richard Green, began work in June with expressions of support not only for what exists in Southeast, but also for future strengthening of the alternatives cluster concept as such. Also in June the large West area parent advisory group elected Southeast

Council's chairperson, Marcy parent Timi Stevens, to chair their activities as well. She had not been shy about explaining what she stood for. The West area parents were voting for a veteran in shared decision-making for educational choice.

That is phase-in at a level where it counts. The hard open-ended questions remain: options for secondary students, community resource co-ordinators, staff development and evaluation for new programs, building-or cluster-based allocation of resources, and many others. The will of SEA in Southeast Council to keep such questions alive and answerable still seems strong. If that will continues strong, so will the process of comprehensive change.