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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the St. Luke's-Area III Learning Center, which deals with problems of urban youth. Its operational model coordinates instructional activities of the Atlanta Public Schools with Social Services of numerous governmental agencies of the Atlanta area, along with business, civic, and religious groups. The learning center provides a referral opportunity for the school districts' high school students who do not function properly in the traditional setting. The Learning Center is separate from the schools, but it provides the basis for an in-school approach. Project Propinquity is an off-shoot of the Learning Center. It applies the concept of integrating educational and social service resources to inner city schools. Students in the program include 120 15-year old youths identified for the project by the high school administration on the basis of identified needs for social services, chronic absenteeism, and general low achievement levels. The structure of the project provides the opportunity for existing human service resources to come together with educational resources. Results of an evaluation of the project indicate that at the beginning of the project the learners were severely retarded in their achievement. Through project participation, some students improved their attendance markedly and with this improvement came increased passing grades and increased learning of math skills. This pattern occurred with only a part of the total group, and the overall mean attendance did not improve. (Author/AM)

A MODEL FOR SCHOOL-COMMUNITY AGENCIES COOPERATION FOR EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IN AN URBAN AREA

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ABSTRACT

One means of dealing with problems of urban youth is identified in the operational model which coordinates instructional activities of the Atlanta Public Schools with social services of numerous governmental agencies in the Atlanta area, along with business, civic, and religious groups. Exodus, Inc. provides funding and personnel for the administration of the combined services. Evaluation of the operation is done by the Research and Evaluation Division of the Atlanta Public Schools and by Emory University Center for Research in Social Change. The discussion suggests legal, administrative, and governance implications for other school districts.

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A Model for School-Community Cooperation for Educational Effectiveness in an Urban Area

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BACKGROUND

The problem of school dropouts in urban school systems has been well documented and many solutions to the problem proposed. The tendency usually is for the schools to cajole, coerce, bribe, or otherwise insist that young people submit to the regular school programs. In many urban areas, alternative programs and schools of various sorts have been developed which appeal to numbers of students who previously had been "turned off" to traditional methods of secondary schooling.

One group of youngsters which constitutes a large portion of those "turned off" is the group which, because of the great need for a variety of social services, either attends school erratically or drops out of school altogether. This group of young people in the Atlanta schools has gradually increased in size over the past ten years as the population served by the school district has changed from 30 per cent lowest socioeconomic levels to 70 per cent at these levels, requiring many special services. An alternative instructional program is not enough. A coordinated program of services is needed.

In September of 1974 the Atlanta Public Schools, in cooperation with Exodus, Inc., piloted a project for an innovative approach to solving the problems of educating urban youth. Several of the founders of Exodus had been working in the streets of New York City with adolescents. Educating these youth to enable them to escape the cycle of poverty became a priority. Storefront schools were created for this purpose. Education, however, could only take place in concert with an attempt to meet the other social needs of the students. It was felt that teachers, who struggle through their tasks virtually alone, often were ineffective because of a lack of supportive services. It became clear that if scholastic defeat were to be avoided, the storefront schools would have to deal with drug habits, economic necessity, home problems, legal entanglements, inadequate housing, poor health, and other problems.

The storefront schools evolved into street academies which became a pilot project of the United States Post Office in six cities. The Atlanta Street Academies opened in May of 1970. In 1971, some of the originators of the Street Academy Project founded Exodus, Inc. which was designed to administer the street academies in Atlanta. Workers in Exodus saw as purposes of the academies, not only to provide educational skills and resources for youth caught in the frustration of urban living, but also to serve as an important model for the integration of educational and youth social services.

The success of the Atlanta Street Academies caught the attention of the President of the Atlanta Board of Education and the School Superintendent. The result is a partnership between the Atlanta Public Schools, a local church, and Exodus in the creation of the St. Luke's-Area III Learning Center in February, 1975.* The learning center provides a referral opportunity for the school district's high school students who do not function properly in the traditional setting, as well as providing remedial and compensatory

learning activities. The church provides classrooms, office space and equipment, and some social services. Exodus provides salaries for a director, secretary, and streetworker. The Atlanta Public Schools provides teachers, aides, and instructional supplies and equipment. Similar arrangements have developed in Area I and Area IV between a street academy and a local high school.

While the area learning centers were separate from the schools, they provided the basis for an in-school approach. Project Propinquity**, as it was called, applies the concept of integrating educational and social service resources to an inner-city high school. Through the project, social services resources are brought to the school site in the form of agency staff persons with expertise in dealing with the needs of urban youth. The structure of the project provides the opportunity for existing human service resources to come together with educational resources.

The propinquitized service delivery structure offers four immediate major benefits:

1. It coordinates the impact of everyone involved.

2. It personalizes services. With the additional personnel, more informed staff persons spend more time with the students.

3. It accounts for staff efforts more readily by assigning a small group (say ten students) to each staff person for primary responsibility.

4. It raises morale by giving teachers and social servants in the inner city a daily opportunity to share the complex problems of their student/clients with a team of colleagues.

Funding for Exodus, Inc. is provided by grants from private foundations and corporations in Atlanta to allow that agency to provide coordination of all the services. The Atlanta Public Schools provides the teachers and the facility. Educators, social service providers, and government officials all watched the development of Project Propinquity. The project experienced success in improving students' grades, attendance, and attitudes. Although the increments were small, the consensus of all those involved was that the project deserved to be in operation for a second year. The Atlanta Public Schools again agreed to provide teachers and the facility. Funds were needed for project administration, program expense, and social service staff salaries. Project facilitators pursued the possibility of funding from the Georgia Department of Human Resources. The commissioner of the department had visited the project during the 1974–75 school year. In the Spring of 1975, he was asked to make an initial commitment to locate funds within the department for social service staff salaries. Through the commissioner's efforts, and those of others within the department, the social service personnel were funded through Title XX of the Social Security Act. Local foundations and corporations continued to support the project.

* Area III refers to one of four geographic-administrative divisions of the Atlanta School System.

** Propinquity — a nearness of place, time and relationship. . .proximity, affinity or nature, similarity, to be near, to have people know and understand because they are close to you. . .a sense of communication, interaction, and community.

Project Propinquity is now in its third year. Funding for 1976–77 is through the Georgia State Crime Commission under a Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) grant. City and state-level government, private interest, and LEAA's previous involvement with Exodus* were factors in the awarding of the State Crime Commission grant which covers all aspects of the project for one year.

The LEAA grant also provides the opportunity for the project to pursue institutionalization, a key factor in the concept's longevity. In order for the project to proceed and to be reproduced in other inner-city schools, participation by institutions and agencies, in addition to the public schools, is needed. The project can operate with a minimum of new funding if public and private agencies will release staff to work at the project site. For example, the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety in Atlanta, toured the project during its first year of operation. The commissioner was kept up-to-date on the project's progress and problems. When the State Crime Commission grant was awarded, the Department of Public Safety was asked to participate by releasing two staff persons to work in the project. Their salaries would be paid through the grant. During the Fall of 1976, a contract was established between the Department of Public Safety and Exodus, and now two police officers from the Community Relations Department are a part of the project staff. A similar arrangement was made with the Department of Family and Children Services, the Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Juvenile Court of Fulton County.

But before this bridge can be approached, the facilitators must continue to promote broad-based support for the concept. This means getting individuals and groups from the public and private sectors: (1) to learn of urban youth needs, (2) to see the importance and feasibilityof bringing educational and social services together to meet those needs, and (3) to work at causing the project to succeed.

ST. LUKE'S — AREA III LEARNING CENTER

The St. Luke's-Area III Learning Center opened February 22, 1974. St. Luke's Church in downtown Atlanta provides the physical plant, classrooms, office space and equipment, plus some social services; Exodus, Inc. provides salaries of the director, streetworkers, and secretary; and the Atlanta Public Schools provides teachers, aides, and some supplies and equipment.

In addition to the major goal of achieving high school graduation, the Learning Center offers comprehensive supportive services — social and emotional, job placement, and career development. Reading abilities have increased dramatically for some pupils; attendance at St. Luke's approaches average high school attendance systemwide.

* If the project results justify, the participating agencies will be expected to continue for this rests on the agencies being convinced that they are getting more constructive results from their staff in the propinquity service formation than they were when staff were in the traditional agency arrangements. The project's facilitators are responsible for communication with agencies so that an informed decision can be made.

The Learning Center is now well into its third year and has about 85 pupils enrolled. There is stronger emphasis on self-control, discipline, and improving reading skills than in the first year, but the essence of commitment to the "turned off" youth is as strong or stronger than ever.

Students at the Learning Center are earning high school credits toward a high school diploma, not just a high school equivalency diploma; thus, each course incorporates all of the objectives required in the Atlanta Public Schools' Curriculum Guide, and is cross-referenced by number to a specific course. The intriguing course titles are designed to be more motivating than the titles listed in the curriculum guide. Some samples are listed below. Continuing evaluation will cover attendance, follow up of longitudinal pupil status, longitudinal test data, courses offered, and number of courses completed, cost analysis of the Center, discipline, enrichment, and innovation and change.

The program has been always on the move, adapting both to the needs of its participants and to the needs and demands of a public institution — the Atlanta Public Schools.

Some Courses Offered at St. Luke's Area III Learning Center

Studio of Governing

1. The Revolutionaries (U. S. Reform) — A study of the role of various reform movements, such as the NAACP, Black Panthers, SCLC, SLA, etc.

2. Watergate Country (U. S. Democracy) — A study of the origin of American Democracy, the Declaration of Independence, the branches of the Federal Government, and the Colonies.

3. Soulville (Area Cultural Study): Africa — A study of the early Kingdoms of Africa, African culture, music, art, and religion. A comparison of Afro-American culture and African culture.

4. Superfly (Science and Society) — A study of drug abuse. A study of drugs such as LSD, marijuana, and heroin.

5. The Study of Life (Biology) — Botany: A study of plant growth and reproduction. A study of leaves, roots, stems, etc. . . and their functions.

Studio of Making

1. Tight Money (Business Math) — A review of fundamental math skills and an introduction to personal record keeping, banking, and taxes.

2. Nothing from Nothing (Lab Math 211) — a review of the decimal system and a practical introduction to percentages.

3. Known to Unknown (Math 201) — Elementary Algebra: A review of numbers and their relationship and an introduction to algebraic concepts.

Studio of Meaning

1. Spreading the Word (Mass Media) 302110 — An indepth look at mass media — radio, television, and newspaper — techniques, and influence on the public. Field trips to include media studios.

2. Verbal Self-Defense (Self-Expression) 303120, 302140 — Course designed to improve communicative ability through effective writing.

3. You are What You Eat (Nutrition 811030, 813330) — Principles of nutrition with emphasis on current food fads, fallacies, and facts.

PROJECT PROPINQUITY

Students are 15-year-old youths identified for the project by the high school administration on the basis of identified needs for social services, chronic absenteeism, and general low achievement levels. They are scheduled for classes in the same manner as are regular students in the school. Propinquity students are considered a "block" scheduled together.

The locus of operations for the project is a small frame house directly across the street from the school, rented from the owner by project funds. The building contains an office, photographic workroom, and three rooms in which small groups, tutorial sessions, counseling sessions, conferences, and the like may be held.

The classes generally work toward the objectives in the Atlanta Public Schools' Curriculum Guide. Difficulties are encountered in all subjects because of the extremely low levels of achievement of most pupils in reading and mathematics. Remedial work is provided in reading for those scheduled for English who have the greatest handicap in reading. In mathematics, a volunteer works in the classroom with the assigned certificated teacher to give remedial help to those who are severely hindered by their lack of basic arithmetic skills.

In each class, diagnostic tests are used to identify the specific needs and to determine the level of specific skills acquired over the four months of the project operation covered by this report.

Extra curricular activities provided by the project for building motivation, social skills, and self-concept include camping, skating, handcrafts, sports events, and dramatic presentations. Civic groups and individuals provide many tickets, for which students sign up according to their interests. One student was helped by a staff member to get proper clothes, transportation, and other requirements for participation on a local television program.

Attempts are made to involve parents in the project. They are all invited to a meeting at the beginning of the year and asked to commit themselves to working with the project. After that, most contacts are on an individual basis, with counseling to help families solve their problems and to provide more effective support for the young person in the project. One staff member is specifically assigned as parent educator.

The 120 students are arranged in "family groups" for counseling and various activities, providing a "surrogate family" to the many who come from ineffective family units.

Goals and Objectives of Project Propinquity

The principal goal of the project is to provide a support system for adolescents which will allow each one to acquire the self-sustaining knowledge and skills which would reduce the need for social welfare dependency. Neither formal research nor layman observation has given assurance that any particular course of action will develop the desired support system or that such a system will lead directly to the goal. The objectives, however, have been identified as those accomplishments which would most likely be evidence of growth toward the goal. At the time of this report, the first experience in intervention with this particular group of students had been in operation for less than six months in attempting to achieve the following objectives:

1. At the end of the school year, there will be a significant increase in attendance for the whole group in homeroom and classroom.

2. After diagnostic testing in reading and mathematics, specific objectives will be written for each student. A majority of the students will reach their objectives, resulting in improved reading scores for the entire group.

3. Academic productivity as reflected by grades in the regular school program will improve over two quarters.

4. Project records will indicate a reduced frequency of disruptive incidents as shown on reporting forms used by the instructional staff in referring students to social service staff for supportive activity.

5. Participants will exhibit more positive attitudes toward school as measured by the instrument, School Sentiment Index.

Because of understandable sensitivity and resistance to any type of testing on the part of the young people in this project, measurement of variables was limited to the use of instruments employed by the instructional staff (except for attitude tests). This practice resulted in less than ideal reliability of the results. However, the limited evidence is interpreted for each objective below. Though group norms often show little evidence of progress, the record of some individuals and the opinion of staff members in the project and in the school's regular program suggest that there is reason to continue the project over a longer period of time.

1. Probably the most obvious problem of participants in Propinquity is chronic absenteeism. In a school quarter of 60 days, there were 17 students who were absent more than 20 days. Much of this extreme absenteeism can be charged to poor parent attitudes and other family circumstances as well as to health and attitude problems of the individual students. Much time is spent by the streetworkers and counselors in contacting families and in identifying the factors which inhibit good patterns of attendance. In addition to the work of getting students to report to school, it is a problem to require attendance in classes once the students report to homeroom. The attendance figures in Table 1 show that progress was made in improving class attendance even though days absent from school (as reported by homeroom figures) increased during the spring quarter.

TABLE I

AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS ABSENT

	Fall		Winter		Spring	
	Students	Avg.	Students	Avg.	Students	Avg.
Homeroom	113	15.7	106	15.7	99	18.9
	No. of Courses	Avg.	No. of Courses	Avg.	No. of Courses	Avg.
Classroom	652	19.4	620	19.1	567	18.7

Several individual cases are noteworthy for their reflection of the nature of the problems encountered in working with the young people in the project. One student's record indicated that he was absent from homeroom and all classes the majority of the days in the quarter, but attended band all but 13 days. He failed all courses except band, in which he made an "A." Another student had a similar record — 38 days absent from homeroom and all "F" grades, except in the activity of teacher aide from which she was absent only twice and received a grade of "S" for satisfactory (no "A," "B," or "C" grades are given for activities.) These cases, and many others, indicate difficulties in self-discipline and also possibly an extreme tendency toward immediate gratification rather than working toward long-range goals.

2. A diagnostic test was used by the reading teacher to assess the level of specific skills in reading of project participants at the beginning of their participation. Working with the 69 students over a period of six months, the teacher was able to assist them to improve at such a rate that the group mean showed a gain in each of the seven subtests of the diagnostic instrument. See Table 2.

It is apparent from the figures that less than six months of time produced considerable growth, but the fact that the test was at an elementary school level indicates the distance yet to be covered (and the additional time needed) before high school graduate proficiency is reached.

TABLE 2

PRETEST AND POSTTEST RESULTS OF THE STANFORD DIAGNOSTIC READING TEST, LEVEL I, FORM W
N = 69

	Stanine		Per Cent Correct Responses		
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Gain
Reading Comprehension	2	5	57	83	26
Vocabulary	3	4	55	65	10
Auditory Discrimination	3	4	57	71	14
Syllabication	3	6	55	85	30
Beginning/Ending Sounds	2	3	58	78	20
Blending	3	4	61	72	11
Sound Discrimination	2	4	36	64	28
Average	2	4	54	74	20

One difficulty in conducting the math program was that the teacher assigned, though certificated, was not a regular, experienced teacher who had a specific interest in the project but was, instead, an assigned supply teacher. The volunteer teacher had no special training in math or teaching; therefore, much of the instruction was based on "trial and error." When final assessment of pupil progress was done, some subjective judgments were made concerning progress. Formal pretests and posttests were not available to provide reliable scores, so the score used for this analysis is one which reflects the change made by students in increasing the number of specific skills mastered. Table 3 provides information about pupil progress.

TABLE 3

PROGRESS OF STUDENTS
IN MATHEMATICS CLASSES

Total number of students	92
Absent more than 15 days	41
Absent less than 15 days	51
No observable improvement*	49
Minimal improvement*	31
Significant improvement*	12

*Improvement is defined as increase in number of specific skills mastered as shown by diagnostic tests.

The problem of excessive absences is clearly evident in the information in Table 3. Nearly one-half the class was absent more than the number of days (15) sometimes held as a standard for maximum absences for passing a course.

3. Academic productivity was judged by the report card grades which are reported through the regular school channels. Project participants take reading, mathematics, science, and social studies from teachers on the Propinquity staff. One or two additional courses are taken in the classes of regular school staff. In recording the grades, all "A," "B," and "C" grades were considered passing, and all "D" and "F" grades were considered failing in order to reflect significant progress in improvement. Table 4 summarizes the record of passing and failing grades.

TABLE 4

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF PASSING AND FAILING GRADES PER QUARTER FOR PROPINQUITY PARTICIPANTS

	Fall (N=119)		Winter (N=106)		Spring (N=99)	
	Passing A,B,C	Failing D,F	Passing A,B,C	Failing D,F	Passing A,B,C	Failing D,F
Total	191	452	233	382	225	336
Average	1.7	4.0	2.2	3.6	2.3	3.4
Per Cent	29.7	70.3	37.9	62.1	40.1	59.9
Systemwide*		13.6		14.5		15.2

*Only grades of "F" are included in these per cents.

The per cent of passing and failing grades, compared with system-wide figures, suggests that the trend toward more passing grades in the project is in contrast to the system-wide pattern of more failing grades toward the end of the year. It is possible that the highly compassionate teachers in the project inflated the grades to some extent in order to encourage the chronically poor achievers. However, grades in other courses taken by the participants follow the same general trends as in the academic subject. Inspection of the records indicates that students who fail the academic courses also fail such courses as tennis, automobile mechanics, piano, ROTC, food preparation, track and field, sewing, distributive education, welding, and typing.

4. In dealing with students who interfered with teaching or learning, the teachers referred them to a "time out" room where a person, usually a counselor, discussed the offense, kept a record of the offenses, and referred the student, when appropriate, to other resources. As the school year concluded, it was apparent that the actual number of referrals increased, but the reasons for referrals changed somewhat. See Table 5.

TABLE 5

FREQUENCY OF DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR INCIDENTS

	Winter	Spring	
Number of Students	26	44	
Number of Incidents	96	105	
Type of Behavior			Total
Fighting	0	0	0
Abusive language	14	10	24
Playing	5	36	41
Refusal to do assignments	11	8	19
Failure to follow instructions	32	36	68
Under influence of drugs	0	0	0
Health problems	1	1	2
Failure to cooperate with other students	3	2	5
Failure to bring materials to class	3	0	3
Class-cutting	9	0	9
Lack of attendance	6	0	6
Reporting late to class	6	5	11
Destruction of classroom materials	0	3	3
Others	6	4	10

The great increase in the incidence of "playing" suggests that as the students became better acquainted with the informal climate of the project, they began to take advantage of it. In addition, several of the teachers commented that they gradually increased their reliance on the "time out" room to help produce the classroom conditions they felt were required to redirect the attitudes and attentions of the students.

5. The attitude tests were administered at the beginning and end of the two quarters of the project operation in the second school year. Students are wary of any type of test, often refusing outright to take one if they cannot see that it is of immediate value. Also, the attendance of many is so poor that administering a test on any one day will inevitably miss some students. For these reasons, the results shown in Table 6 may be biased because the scores are those of the participants who would take the test and were present on the days the tests were given. The results indicate a stability, however, that may be unexpected by many observers.

TABLE 6

PRE AND POST MEAN SCORES AND
PER CENT POSITIVE RESPONSES
SCHOOL SENTIMENT INDEX (SSI) AND
SELF-APPRAISAL INVENTORY (SAI)

	SSI	
	Pre (N=56)	Post (N=56)
Teacher	102 = 65%	90 = 51%
Learning	19 = 68%	18 = 64%
School Climate	52 = 65%	44 = 56%
Peer	16 = 66%	18 = 75%
General	31 = 71%	30 = 68%
Composite	44 = 66%	40 = 60%

	SAI	
	Pre (N=54)	Post (N=59)
Peer	54 = 68%	54 = 68%
Family	55 = 69%	56 = 70%
Scholastic	54 = 68%	52 = 65%
General	57 = 71%	56 = 70%
Composite	55 = 69%	54 = 68%

The fact that there is little change in most of the subscale scores from pretest to posttest seems to suggest that, as would be expected, apathy characterizes the students whose background qualifies them for participation in the project. In the SSI, there is no dramatic change from the beginning to the end of the term in the project, and in the SAI, the scores remain very close. In the two subscales of SSI where there is considerable pretest/posttest difference (School Climate and Peer), score was lowered in one and raised in the other.

All of the scores represent a majority of the possible points for positive responses, indicating that attitudes were fairly positive at the time of both tests.

It may be speculated that any negative attitudes which changed to positive did so between initial contact with project staff and the beginning of the new school term, in January, when the pretest was given. The project staff contacted pupil and family before actually enrolling a young person in the project. This action alone may have given something of a "new hope" so that attitudes registered positive on the pretest. The self-appraisal test maintained the positive scores from pretest to posttest, as did one subscale of the school sentiment (Peer). There was an overall slight decline in the school sentiment

scores. The slight decline could reflect the attitude of those pupils who did not see any significant gain in their success in school as a result of project participation in spite of their beginning feeling of "new hope" for improvement. The one subscale of school sentiment which increased was that of peer relationships. The nine-point difference may appear deceptively high until consideration is taken of the small number of points possible in that subscale (24) as compared with other subscales (maximum 156). The 14 percentage point decline in attitude toward teacher probably reflects the frustration felt by students as a result of their struggle to overcome the deficit in their achievement levels.

Relation Between Social Services and Other Variables

A record was kept in the data file of Emory University Center for Research in Social Change indicating which students had received contacts by any member of the staff regarding social services delivered. A contact may have been by a counselor; it may have been a home visitation, health care, a juvenile justice concern, or in some other category. There were 757 such contacts recorded during the time. Many more were left unrecorded because they were the informal behavior-management type which occur in the "family" setting at the site on the school campus. Plans are made for revising the method used for recording these data so as to indicate more precisely the nature of the client contacts. Table 7 shows some relationships among the variables.

TABLE 7

CORRELATION MATRIX SHOWING RELATIONS AMONG SIX VARIABLES

Variable	Variable Number 1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Improved Attendance	1.000 (85)	.390** (85)	.190 (85)	.006 (17)	.131 (46)	-.264* (85)
2. Number of Passing Grades on Spring Report Card		1.000 (99)	.014 (99)	.048 (22)	.423** (55)	-.227* (99)
3. Number of Disruptive Behavior Incidents			1.000 (119)	-.118 (22)	-.312* (55)	.428** (119)
4. Reading Improvement				1.000 (22)	-.389 (19)	.076 (22)
5. Math Improvement					1.000 (55)	-.208 (55)
6. Social Service Contacts						1.000 (119)

*Significant at .05.
**Significant at .01.

Note: Numerals in parentheses indicate number of student records included in computations.

Some generalizations which appear to be appropriate are:

1. Students whose attendance improved the greatest also had the greatest number of passing grades on spring report cards.

2. Those who had the poorest attendance records had the greatest number of contacts from social service workers.

3. The students who had the highest number of passing grades in the spring also were those who showed greatest growth in math.

4. Those with the greatest number of passing grades in the spring quarter had the least social service contacts.

5. High scores for disruptive incidents were often associated with low incidence of passing grades in the spring quarter.

6. Social service contacts were most frequent with those who had high disruptive scores.

Although cause and effect relationships cannot be inferred from these statistics, it is appropriate to speculate that the increase in attendance of some students does affect, to some degree, the academic performance. It might appear to some that the more social service contacts, the poorer the attendance. It seems reasonable, however, to observe that the poorer the attendance, the more frequent contacts are required. Likewise, the more a student exhibits disruptive behavior, the more need there is for the social service contacts. Over a longer period of time in the project, a trend might be seen in decline of disruptive behavior associated with decline in number of social service contacts for those with high scores at the present time.

The association of high numbers of passing grades with math improvement and with low social service contacts, together with the passing grades associated with increased attendance, seems noteworthy. This pattern seems to emerge: The learners were severely retarded in their achievement at the beginning of the project. Then, some of them improved their attendance markedly, and with this improvement came increased passing grades and progress in learning of math skills. It is obvious that this pattern occurred with only a part of the total group, as the overall mean attendance did not improve. This lack of improvement is very likely due to the fact that, although some improved markedly, some others declined in number of days attended over the two-quarter period of time in spite of the efforts of the staff to encourage attendance.

Although, statistically, no significant relationships appeared between reading and other variables (possibly, because of the small sample size), it can be speculated that the relationship would be similar to that in the math classes, thus leading to the assumption that some of those who advanced greatly in reading also did so in attendance and in overall passing grades.

Staff Evaluation of Project Propinquity

An opinionnaire was distributed to the regular staff of the school soliciting the general attitude of the teachers and support staff toward the project. A somewhat more detailed opinionnaire was given to the Propinquity staff. The results of the inquiry from regular staff suggests that a large majority has a positive view of the effect of the project. Table 8 shows the actual results in detail.

TABLE 8

A SURVEY OF ATTITUDES OF SMITH HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS TOWARD PROJECT PROPINQUITY

	Yes	No
1. Do you feel that you know something of the objectives of Project Propinquity?	33	11
2. Do you think the objectives are being achieved?	28	5
3. Do you feel that the staff of Project Propinquity tries to work cooperatively with the regular instructional and support staff?	48	3
4. Do you have in any of your classes any students who are in Project Propinquity?	35	16
5. Do you have any contact through school activities with any Project Propinquity staff?	37	8

6. What do you see as the chief strengths or weaknesses of Project Propinquity?

Strengths: The students seem to enjoy the program; small group contact; teachers are cooperative and help students beyond the call of duty; personal interest shown in students; improved student attitudes toward regular school program.

Weaknesses: Informal structure gives students too much freedom; bringing back drop-out students who are frequently absent lowered overall school attendance record.

The Propinquity staff commented in considerable detail on the questionnaire provided them. The majority felt that the objectives of the project were achieved to a moderate degree and, to the same extent, management procedures were thought to be effective. A stronger positive attitude was expressed concerning relations with regular school staff and with students. Specific statements of strengths of the program included (a) cooperation and attitudes of regular school staff, (b) informal contacts with students, (c) number and variety of support staff, (d) knowledge of community services available, (e) contact with families of students, and (f) interdiscipline approach to student problems.

Suggestions for greater effectiveness of the program included (a) staff should work more as a team, (b) teachers need a homeroom-type space to have "boundaries" for students, (c) voluntary student participation in project, (d) smaller "family" groups within the project, (e) more daily tracking and follow up of attendance, (f) field trips more clearly related to objectives, especially instructional objectives, (g) improved counseling system, (h) more Urban Corps workers with teachers, (i) more supervision and management directed toward objectives, (j) more parent participation, and (k) better transportation for field trips.

Although the statistical data do not present a dramatic view of attainment of the objectives of the project, the adults involved with the project as staff or observers seem to feel that the project is succeeding. Possibly, they can see trends in effects on students, whereas, the five months of implementation is too short a time to demonstrate through objective measures the results of the activities.

Problems Encountered by the Project

Although one might expect that a person or group offering to provide help for a segment of the school population would find unrestrained welcome, reality does not fulfill that expectation entirely. Whereas the school staff, in general, welcomed the project (as shown by results of staff questionnaires), there was a feeling of defensiveness in some quarters. There seems to be a kind of "territorial imperative" for the established unit to resist the intrusion of a new unit. A few teachers seemed to view the need for the project as an insinuation that their job had not been done well. One or two were heard to comment, "If I had only 10 or 15 students in a class, I could do a better job, also."

With the great number of inner-city youth needing help of some sort, it seems incredible that competition for students could exist. However, the situation does occur and causes problems. Often, the underlying problem is one of scheduling difficulties. But problems have arisen with one social agency "claiming" students enrolled in the program of another. This suggests that persons planning projects of this sort should carefully detail the procedure for selection of participants.

Within the project there was a desire to have a warm, friendly, supportive climate for participants. It was quickly seen that there is a limit to the amount of informality which is possible and still have "boundaries" and "limits" which are required for helping students become self-directed and productively independent. The project staff discovered that they must require a great deal of order for themselves for the sake of helping the young people to learn about orderly procedure.

Setting realistic expectations at the beginning is important. When, after two and one-half years (each year a different set of students), a project does not show a dramatic change in the educational climate of a school, the project's detractors are inclined to say, "I told you so." However, at each step of the way, observers must be reminded that 15

years were spent in the development of problems in the lives of project participants. It can only be expected that it will take more than one year in a special project to build a new mode of existence for them.

IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL POLICY

It is generally assumed that institutions and bureaucracies change slowly, that power structures within them are strong, and that they give up power very reluctantly. Accordingly, it can be seen that setting up a working relationship among several units of institutions and/or bureaucracies must take these assumptions into account.

"Is it good for kids?" This question should be the initial one when reviewing the legal, administrative, and governance aspects of a program such as Project Propinquity. Often however, though the rhetoric of the question is presented, the real concern for youths' welfare is camouflaged or lost. The real issue becomes "the kid as turf," with various agencies seeking the returns of power rather than the most effective delivery of service. Whether the issue is child care, teaching the basics, alternative education, or lifetime learning, too often the struggle is over, "Who gets the kiddies, who gets the goodies?"

In the Propinquity Program, at least the kid is no longer wrenched apart in eight different directions when there is the need for a variety of social services. Under the usual approach to education and social services, often there is a centrifugal struggle, and the client becomes the object of number checking and record keeping. How many of this and that each month. The model presented here demonstrates an integrated instructional-social service model. Here, implosion is possible if the young adult becomes the object of a supervision battle.

Whether as the object of head counts, or as the object of supervision struggles, the kid is still turf. And in either case, the young person can lose. Policy to provide the most effective program must allow for organization which provides jurisdiction over each child which facilitates, not hinders, delivery of services.

Legal, administrative, and governance tentacles strangling the client are not inevitable. They are probable, but they may be viewed as hurdles to be eliminated or leaped. For example, funding, supervision, and evaluation can be handled by one agency, by a different agency for each function, or shared by agencies. In this model, an objective nongovernment group facilitates the cooperation between the agency for instruction (school) and the agencies for social services delivery. Other arrangements are possible. The point is to get a cooperative agreement and to make it work. Everyone can win if costs are reduced, clients are served, and jobs completed effectively, efficiently, and equitably.

Supervision by the schools makes sense. They have a geographic location where young people are required by law to gather. But supervision may be provided by other agencies. Funding by different agencies and governmental levels is likely, but all bills and income can come through one office.

If a fear exists of "where does the buck stop," perhaps the need is to learn that the buck can stop in different places for different functions even if delivery of services is in one location. Some school districts are already working on health and counseling

functions, and a propinquity model including additional services at the instructional site could strengthen tried and true approaches. As one school administrator said, "Propinquity just makes common sense, and the legal-governance regulations do not have to be obstacles."

Other national voices such as Francis Keppel, of the Aspen Institute, recently stressed that educators must get involved in noneducation issues, form coalitions, and press for social service needs. Training of human service managers, coordinators, coalition builders, and facilitators is needed.

And if the experience of school people, the insights of leaders, and the success of Propinquity are not enough, the poetic message of a youth should remind us of the benign neglect of some systems:

> "The laws made by our Government today do not help us in any way. They arrest the rich and poor like they say, but the rich get up and walk away. Yes, like a spider's web I say because if you're not rich you can not get away."
>
> - - Marty Moore

Yet to paraphrase the hopeful experience of the schoolboys of Barbiana,* "When I arrived there it did not seem like a school. Just big tables around which we sat, ate, and worked out our difficulties, fears, and hopes with teachers, lawyers, nurses, and counselors. A family changing, discovering, learning, writing, and discussing." Project Propinquity.

* Rossi, Nora and Tom Cole, Translators. Letter to a Teacher by the Schoolboys of Barbiana. New York: Random House, 1970