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Southeast Alternatives

Final Report - 1971 1976

Prepared for the National Institute of Education

By the Minneapolis Public Schools
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MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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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 solely 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 key 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 that 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 than 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 contrasting 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. They 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.