

## 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 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 reassessed 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 through 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 regrettable, 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 organized as 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, but no 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 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, school was physically a long way from home. Psychologically, for students 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 Free 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 working 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 he 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.