

## CHAPTER V

### CHANGES IN THE SCHOOLS: THE FIRST TWO YEARS

September 1971 - June 1973

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

#### Tuttle Contemporary School

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

who did not want change.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### Marcy Open School

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

There was another crowded meeting, of course. Acknowledging people's strong feelings, principal and teachers reviewed why they and others had found Model II unworkable. They explained their proposal for change, outlined some alternative ideas they had rejected, and put it to a vote. Model I $\frac{1}{2}$ , as it was called, carried. Everyone had taken part in the decision. Until another day, the crisis was contained.

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

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

Also over vacation, people pitched in to rearrange rooms and schedules for Model I $\frac{1}{2}$ . The new pattern established double size multi-age open classes, called families. Two physically opposite rooms, including a furnished segment of the broad carpeted hallway between them, were home base for a single family of about 60 children. They shared the space, the interest centers in the space, and a team of two teachers and two aides. The separate woodshop, gym, music, art, and media centers were shared by all the families and by the unaltered Model I classrooms.

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

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

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

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

other for 9-11's. There would still be mixed ages in both rooms, and teachers would still team together in activities where that seemed valuable. But Model I $\frac{1}{2}$  should be modified in the direction of finer age-group distinctions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### Pratt-Motley Continuous Progress School

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

At Pratt, with primary children, teachers stayed with generalist

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Southeast Free School

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

force reconsideration of anything the board decided.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



### Marshall-University High School

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

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

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

By the school administration and among the department chairpersons

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

overall school policy.

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

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

With such careful balancing of interests and protecting of administra-

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

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

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