

CHAPTER VIII

MANY A MICKLE MAKING A MUCKLE:

The Five Schools -- 1973-76

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tuttle Contemporary School

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Marcy Open School

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pratt Continuous Progress School

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Free School

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Marshall - University High School

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

of the school.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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