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Choice ← Charter Schools
1993

Project on Alternatives in Education

Steering Committee

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SYNOPSIS

THE PROJECT ON ALTERNATIVES IN EDUCATION

1981

A broad-gauged research/reform plan for secondary education

-- in the tradition of the famous Eight-Year Study

Director

Mary Anne Raywid

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1933
8-year Aiken Study
Progressive
Ed. Assoc.
NEA
Involved in
this 1981 study

The Project on Alternatives in Education (PAE) seeks secondary education reform -- through detailed research that will disclose what programs work for which students, in relation to which educational values. Building carefully upon what has been learned from both the successes and the failures of earlier innovations efforts, the PAE strategy is to examine promising programs already in operation. And the research plan is to explore the selected programs in depth, from multiple research perspectives.

The Project seeks to answer the central question "Which alternatives well serve which youngsters, in relation to which educational values?" It hypothesizes that the diversity of choices available to students, parents, and educational staff is associated with the effectiveness of educational experience and with client satisfaction.

The PAE Research Plan

- To employ a variety of quantitative and qualitative research techniques bearing upon the central question of the inquiry, "Which alternatives well serve which youngsters, in relation to which educational values?"
- To complete intensive studies of classroom teaching, learning, and curriculum, by methods of observation and interviewing; and to carry out comparative studies of post-secondary school education, careers, and activities of alternative and conventional school graduates.
- To carry out a comprehensive survey of all U.S. public secondary alternative schools.
- To analyze the governance, organization, finance, and cost efficiency of alternative schools as compared with conventional public secondary schools.
- To complete a comprehensive survey of the estimated 7000 alternative schools and programs at the secondary level -- and more intensive studies of 11,000 youngsters in approximately 100 schools.

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH DESIGN
PROJECT ON ALTERNATIVES IN EDUCATION

ALL
KEY +
LONGTIME
CHANGE
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ASCD
NEA

- To produce a series of research and policy publications that explicitly lay out the methodology, results, and practical implications of the research.

The PAE Involvement Plan

- To involve alternative school staff and students in all major phases of the research effort.
- To involve, over a four-year period, a coordinated team of approximately twenty investigators, as well as drawing on the research efforts of other investigators at institutions and agencies across the country.
- To involve participants in all the programs studied -- teachers, students, administrators, parents -- in a national network that will exchange information and materials, insights, visits, and requested services throughout the life of the Project.
- To involve a wide range of professional organizations in education in participatory sponsorship of the venture.
- To involve a number of government, community, business, professional and other leaders in planning for the Project.

The PAE Reform Plan

- To ascertain far more clearly than we now know, what works for different kinds of learners -- and what kind of schooling well serves which educational values.
- To work with and assist participant schools in the examination and refinement of their own programs.
- To legitimize effective practice on the basis of firm knowledge.
- To produce audience-specific materials about programs -- as well as about research findings -- so that teachers will find classroom implementation detail; boards and legislatures will find policy-related concerns and information; parents will find general information; and administrators will find organizational data and suggestions.

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SYNOPSIS

THE PROJECT ON ALTERNATIVES IN EDUCATION

A broad-gauged research/reform plan for secondary education

— in the tradition of the famous Eight-Year Study

The Project on Alternatives in Education (PAE) seeks secondary education reform -- through detailed research that will disclose what programs work for which students, in relation to which educational values. Building carefully upon what has been learned from both the successes and the failures of earlier innovations efforts, the PAE strategy is to examine promising programs already in operation. And the research plan is to explore the selected programs in depth, from multiple research perspectives.

The Project seeks to answer the central question "Which alternatives well serve which youngsters, in relation to which educational values?" It hypothesizes that the diversity of choices available to students, parents, and educational staff is associated with the effectiveness of educational experience and with the satisfactions of all involved.

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- ° To employ a variety of quantitative and qualitative research techniques bearing upon the central question of the inquiry: "Which alternatives well serve which youngsters, in relation to which educational values?"
- ° To complete intensive studies of classroom teaching, learning, and curriculum, by methods of observation and interviewing; and to carry out comparative studies of post-secondary school education, careers, and activities of alternative and conventional school graduates.
- ° To carry out a comprehensive survey of all U.S. public secondary alternative schools.
- ° To analyze the governance, organization, finance, and cost efficiency of alternative schools and options systems as compared with conventional public secondary schools and systems.
- ° To complete a comprehensive survey of the nation's estimated 7,000 alternative high schools and programs -- and more intensive studies of 11,000 youngsters in approximately 100 schools.
- ° To produce a series of research and policy publications that explicitly lay out the methodology, results and practical implications of the research.

ABSTRACT

Ensuing pages seek to tell in detail just what the Project on Alternatives in Education intends to accomplish, how, and why. Part I opens with a brief statement of what alternative schools are and how they have developed (pages 4-10). PAE purposes are described in pages 12-26 — with attention to our design principles (pages 24-26), what we have borrowed from the Eight-Year Study (pages 12-14), and our 'case' for the particular venture we have designed: the urgent need for reform in secondary education; the difficulty of effecting desirable changes in schools; the promise of alternative schools as reform medium and tool; and the need for research into alternatives (pages 15-23). Some key features of the plan and its execution round out the background statement with attention to our blueprint for collaboration, service, and the organization and governance of PAE (pages 27-32).

Part II of this prospectus offers a research design with a year-by-year breakdown of the several inquiries to be interwoven to yield a full, widely credible account of alternative schools, their operations, their effects on those most closely associated with them and on the systems of which they are a part (pages 33-60).

The PAE Involvement Plan

- ° To involve alternative school staff and students in all major phases of the research effort.
- ° To involve, over a four-year period, a coordinated team of approximately twenty investigators, as well as drawing on the research efforts of other investigators at institutions and agencies across the country.
- ° To involve participants in all the programs studied -- teachers, students, administrators, parents -- in a national network that will exchange information and materials, insights, visits, and requested services throughout the life of the Project.
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INTRODUCTION

Overview

Since more than half the workforce in our nation is devoted to the production and distribution of knowledge, it behooves us to study the effectiveness of the institutions chiefly responsible for imparting knowledge, and the skills required to acquire new knowledge -- the public schools. With respect to productivity, if education is the largest industry in the United States -- involving nearly all the people at some time during their lives and perhaps a quarter or a third at any given time -- then even small gains in effectiveness and human satisfaction can bring about immense savings, including conservation of those precious resources, the time and energies of both educators and students.

But in addition to basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics and even such higher mental abilities as understanding and critical thinking, Americans have long sought more from the public schools for their children -- education toward such fundamental ideals as civic responsibility, physical and mental health, vocational and career preparation, moral and ethical conduct, and more. Are the schools achieving these ideals today? Although the ranges of fact and opinion are wide, it seems clear that support for public education has faltered. Increasing concerns are voiced about its effectiveness for different kinds of children, and divisiveness escalates about what goals the schools should try to achieve and the best means of attaining them.

For approximately a decade now, one response to these concerns has been the idea of providing genuinely different educations for individual choice. The notion received a considerable boost with the appearance in 1974 of a new interpretive history of American education, David Tyack's The One Best System. For despite the fact that we have long talked about diversity as an ideal within American education, Tyack's book raised to consciousness for many that we have also assumed that there is in education -- prospectively if not now -- a one best way to keep school: a single

best set of aims for all, a one best curriculum, a one best set of instructional methods, a one best way to organize and administer schools, and a one best way to prepare teachers. Awareness that this was, indeed, a deep-set operating principle opened it for the first time in the century to serious scrutiny and challenge. The effect was to greatly extend the discussion of whether multiple educations could be a preferable arrangement and to strengthen the legitimacy of the alternatives idea. ✓

Meanwhile, a number of parallel efforts also dealt with the ideal of diversity in public education. In a worldwide radio series and book, American Education: Research and Diversity edited by Herbert Walberg for the Voice of America (Office of the President), such thinkers as Mary Jean Bowman, Harry Broudy, Joanna Williams, George Spindler, Robert Havighurst,* John Goodlad, Michael Kirst, and Harry Passow attempted to convey the kinds of diversity represented and to be encouraged in our schools, as well as the research efforts necessary to document their effects. In particular, instructional psychologists such as Richard Snow and Lee Cronbach at Stanford, and David Hunt at Toronto, have drawn attention to the great need to discover the educational outcomes of different environments and forms of instruction on different children. ✓

Alternative school advocates have also been quick to point out that the notion of alternative educations offering choice to students and their families is highly consistent with the principles of a democratic society, a pluralistic culture, the need for community involvement in education, the need for institutional self-renewal in schools, and the need for financial austerity. This broadly based rationale -- which appeared in the first issue of the alternative school bulletin Changing Schools -- suggests something of the scope of the appeal of alternatives. They seem to have a remarkable capacity to respond to a wide spectrum of concerns. CHOICE

As a result, public alternative schools have grown from a handful in 1970 to more than 10,000 today. Alternatives are found in 80% of the nation's larger school districts (those enrolling 25,000 or more), and they have begun to appear even in the smallest districts -- with one out of every five enrolling fewer than 600 students claiming one or more alternatives. An estimated 3,000,000 of the nation's youngsters are currently enrolled in these programs.

very left

What are they like, these alternative schools that have proliferated at such a rapid rate across the country? It is difficult to generalize because what they represent is institutionalized diversity -- even, in many cases, it would appear, very extensive uniqueness. Some alternatives continue to show clear affinity with their forebears, the Free Schools and Freedom Schools which began outside the public system during the 60s. Many seem marked by a casualness and informality and laid-back, low pressure atmosphere rarely found in other schools. There is also a strong tendency toward close personal relationships instead of rules as the basis for social organization and control within the school. There is typically also a charismatic basis for accepting the leadership and authority of teachers, in preference to formal principles of role and function. The curriculum is chosen from a wider range of knowledge and life than is the case in other schools -- and it may be pursued in novel ways and in unusual settings. But having said all of this, it must be added that one of the faster-growing alternatives over the past five years has been the so-called 'fundamentalist' or 'back-to-basics' programs which contradict earlier trends with their emphasis on formality, deference to authority, traditional curriculum, and heavy reliance on such instructional strategies as drill, recitation, and rote. Between these extremes lies a vast range of types of schools and programs with varying emphases, thrusts, and operating assumptions. There are career programs and open education programs, environmental and military programs, schools for disruptive youngsters and schools for the overly docile. As many as 300 types or variations have been identified.

Changes in mood and tone have been noteworthy within alternative public schools when one looks back across the full decade of their existence. Early public school alternatives were quite likely to be one of two types. Many of the spiritual progeny of the Free Schools were heavily concerned with the Existential angst of all participants. There was much talk about being free to do one's thing, without having someone else's trip laid on. But a thrust common to many other early alternatives was the desire for sufficient freedom from standard school procedures and requirements to get on with a more substantial education. While programs of the first sort

tended not to put much emphasis on cognitive learning, some remarkable scholarship emerged from alternatives of the second variety.

The values and goals of the early alternatives were quite typically individualistic and private -- rarely oriented toward increased group consciousness or commonality. But programs stressing group awareness and responsibility, and seeking quite deliberately to build a sense of community, began to appear in the mid-70s. It might be said, however, that Greta Pruitt, who has worked extensively with alternatives in California, finds an insufficient group orientation a continuing feature of alternatives -- giving rise to the quite plausible possibility that patterns and emphases may be regional in character.

The early emphasis on collective decision-making via participatory democracy has become less pronounced. The fact has been greeted variously in different quarters. One comparative study of alternative school evaluations lists it as a serious common problem. On the other hand, an early, very sympathetic analyst -- himself a director of an alternative school -- suggested that unless alternatives struck a compromise on participatory democracy, they would probably run into trouble. His suggestion was to limit student involvement to certain key decisions and to seek genuine involvement in those. There have since been a number of other types of compromise on the matter. What remained common to most of the earlier alternatives, however, even in the absence of much collective decision-making, is the bottom line sort of freedom and authority over one's person that Allen Graubard urged in his Free the Children (and John Dewey had urged some years earlier). It is, in effect, the power of the veto: no youngster should be forced to do what he is determined to reject for himself.

One remarkably persistent feature of alternative schools of all types is the commitment they seem to engender from all within them, students and staff. The devotion of the youngsters is something strange and wondrous to behold. Incredible as it may seem, they fall all over themselves in their desire to testify on behalf of their school!

Because of the paucity of systematic objective research to date, surprisingly little is known firmly about the effects of alternative schools.

Hyde
School
Bath

Notwithstanding a 600-item collection of written materials about alternative schools, and a 200-page review of these as an initial phase of the PAE research, few well documented studies of governance and finance, organizational structures and processes of alternatives, interaction patterns, and outcomes are to be found. Case studies have been undertaken, and a large number of evaluations, since almost all public school alternatives are required annually to document their effectiveness. These suggest that alternative schools typically lead to increased academic achievement on the part of their students. At least some alternatives send a substantially higher percentage of their graduates on to college than do comparable schools in the same district -- and the only inquiries to date suggest that the alternative school graduates may out-perform the others in college. Such results assume special significance, researchers usually point out, given that so many alternative education students have earlier been dropouts, delinquents, and poorly motivated under-achievers. There is also a great deal of suggestive evidence that alternatives have a positive effect on their students' attitudes toward school -- and on their attitudes toward themselves. Most critically, so far as success in school is concerned, alternatives students seem to come to experience a heightened sense of control over their own lives.

One of the reasons for the rapid proliferation of alternative schools is surely the fact that so many groups, with such disparate agendas, have seen alternatives as the means to their own purposes. Youngsters who have hated school have looked to alternatives as the way to a much more liveable arrangement. (In Plainview, New York, a group of high school students met for more than a year and then presented a detailed formal proposal to the Board of Education for the alternative they had designed.) Teachers seeking a practicable way to individualize instruction in a real classroom have looked to alternatives -- as have teachers who have felt as locked in and restricted by conventional school procedure as have many students. And school administrators, leaders, and policy makers have looked to alternatives as a way to bring about educational reform. For some, the goal was nothing less than the humanizing of the entire system. But the 60s had taught much about the change process, showing that would-be reformers had simply been barking up the wrong tree. They had sought substantial change

by modifying a single facet of the school -- curriculum or methods or teacher deployment or scheduling arrangements. They failed to appreciate the school's capacity to absorb and co-opt and defuse. Analysts began to conclude that realistic hopes for improvement would have to focus on the whole institutional structure -- the social organization and its culture or climate. Many saw in alternatives just the mechanism for introducing different institutional arrangements and climates. In fact, some perceived alternatives a key to institutional renewal -- and that on a continuing basis, since demands for a new alternative, and diminished interest in an existing one, would be the means whereby the system could inform and then reform itself.

A number of more specific interests have also come during the decade to focus on alternatives, accounting in considerable part for their growth and burgeoning popularity. Student disaffection has been evident in many ways -- including school vandalism and violence, and high truancy and drop-out rates. From the earliest evaluations it was clear that alternatives were an extraordinarily effective solution to these problems. Agencies interested in delinquency and juvenile crime prevention quickly came to see alternatives as a solution -- and even preventor -- of their problems. As school desegregation difficulties intensified, it appeared that attractive alternatives -- "magnet" schools -- might draw youngsters from various neighborhoods on a voluntary integration basis. This was, indeed, the crux of Judge Garrity's plan for Boston. And, as public schools failed to serve the children of some groups in ways that were adequate -- or otherwise acceptable to the families involved -- some embraced alternatives as a means of rendering public education more directly responsive to the differing needs of youngsters and expectations of their parents. Particularly in the inner city where feelings of powerlessness and disenfranchisement were widespread, policy analysts saw alternatives as a way of bestowing immediate efficacy, with the chance to decide what education one's child would pursue -- and this insight created still another set of advocates for the options idea.

Thus, in a relatively brief period of time -- approximately a decade -- alternative schools seem to have become a significant feature of American public education. Their responsiveness to the cultural ideal of

diversity -- and to the psychological needs of diverse youth for differentiated educational environments and treatments -- have led many to see them as among the brightest hopes on the educational horizon. This accounts for the wide advocacy alternatives have enjoyed. But much remains to be known about them, their internal dynamics, and their short and long-term effects on the youth and adults who work within them.

Toward a Definition of Alternative Education

Given the above considerations and the maturing nature of alternative education, it would seem that an explicit and consensually-satisfactory definition of the term could be stated. Unfortunately the experience of various individuals and working parties over the years reveals that such a definition is not easily forthcoming. Indeed, one of the chief research purposes of PAE is to provide a more comprehensive set of conceptual and empirical descriptors. Mary Anne Raywid, in the initial phases of the PAE research, has already written a 100-page philosophic analysis of alternative education, identifying nine essential sets of characteristics or dimensions, such as teaching and interpersonal relationship styles, that may be profiled for a given alternative classroom or averaged for a school. In addition, as part of the further work of the project, Herbert Walberg will write a psychological analysis of the components of alternative education.

We will be confining the inquiry to secondary schools, and initially -- for purposes of the comprehensive survey launching our investigation -- we will include all public schools, and programs within schools, calling themselves alternatives. In our present and tentative working conception of alternative education, we are disposed to assigning special weight to: (1) the element of choice as the mode of affiliation -- for students, parents, and staff -- marking those schools we want to study; and (2) the programmatic or other departure from local school practice which lends meaning to the choice. (A choice is worth little unless one can choose between entities marked by genuine and significant difference. So we want to examine the nature of the differences.) Such a broad conception enables us to examine the full ideological spectrum which alternatives reflect --

from basics and fundamentalist programs to open and free schools. It also enables us to include schools designed for representative cross-sections of local students, as well as schools intended for special populations (e.g., disruptive students, overly dependent students). These advantages as to conceptual breadth are accompanied, however, by distinct disadvantages, too; and so we will be working in two ways to refine and elaborate this tentative definition: the Conceptualization Council described on page 31 will be tackling the definitional problem as its first task; and we expect the empirical inquiry eventually to help substantially in this regard by identifying distinguishing features not now evident.

THE EIGHT-YEAR STUDY AND ITS RELEVANCE TO PAE

In our earliest thinking about the study projected here, allusion to the Eight-Year Study proved a quick and easy way to communicate in broad terms what we were thinking about -- as to general purposes, scale, and so forth. As the plan developed, it further seemed helpful to look to the Eight-Year Study as a springboard for developing the detailed plans for this one. Thus, in dealing with numerous questions we have looked to the way in which the Progressive Education Association's Study dealt with each.

PEA

In 1933, the P.E.A.'s National Commission on the Relation of School and College launched the study which has come to be known as the Eight-Year Study, or the Thirty Schools Inquiry (and in some alternative school literature, as the Aikin Study). The study began after two years of discussion within the Commission. It sought to stimulate reform and open the way to programmatic revision by determining the success of students and programs freed from the confines of college entrance requirements. Several hundred colleges agreed to accept the graduates of the thirty participant high schools on the basis of recommendation instead of curricular requisites. Then the Thirty Schools went to work on developing their programs, with the help of the Study staff. In 1936, after three years of program development and trial, the evaluation phase of the project began, with the entrance into college of the first class of students involved in the inquiry. Ultimately, 1475 youngsters in the experimental schools were carefully matched with the same number in control schools. The Study ended in 1941.

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Succeeding pages offer further details about the Eight-Year Study as these pertain to specific questions. These have aided our planning but not bound us. We have designed a contemporary parallel to the P.E.A. inquiry, not a replication. The advantages in thinking in these terms have included the accomplishment of the earlier Study, the respect it continues to command, plus its image as having made the empirical case for reform.

PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

The purposes of the Eight-Year Study, as gathered from several volumes of its report, were:

1. To see what would happen to high school programs when freed from the restrictions of college entrance requirements.
2. To see what would happen to high school students when freed from the restrictions of college entrance requirements.
3. To see whether traditional entrance requirements and examinations made any difference to success in college.
4. "To establish a relationship between school and college that would... encourage reconstruction in the secondary schools."
5. "To find, through exploration and experimentation, how the high school in the United States can serve youth more effectively."
6. "...to develop new programs which would be better for young people, for success in college, for success in life, and for the future of our society..."

Some additional guiding concerns (or evolving purposes) and accomplishments (or purposes served) were:

7. To develop programs in accord with the principle that "the general life of the school...should conform to what is now known about the ways in which human beings learn and grow."
8. To develop programs in accord with the principle that "the high school in the United States should re-discover its chief reason for existence." ("Perhaps the most fruitful experience of the Thirty Schools in the early stages of the Study was that of thinking through and stating plainly the results they hoped to achieve.")
9. "The investigation...identified certain principles upon which the more effective curricula were built, and developed many evaluation instruments by which some of the more intangible results of education may be appraised."
10. The study developed the summer workshop to facilitate curriculum revision via "opportunity for groups of teachers to work on their problems...with the aid of a selected staff and the facilities of a large university."

11. "demonstrated the value to teacher motivation and morale of participating in educational experimentation..."
12. "...led to a series of similar projects among groups of secondary schools throughout the country."
13. "...led dozens of dedicated teachers who took part in this kind of process to go on to make important contributions to American education." who?
14. "...the establishment of a new method of working, a new style of participation...and the recruitment of many academics who might otherwise have remained in their ivory towers...the enlistment of relevant professional organizations, the simultaneous encouragement of research and...the training of teachers who could use that research..."
15. The simulation and nurture of "the advance guard of a movement or of a development in a discipline, those who lived on the growing edge of change.....Their series of projects...took many forms: a massive inauguration and study of new programs in thirty schools...the Hanover Seminar on Human Relations in the summer of 1934 charged with developing an outline of all that was known about human behavior; a study of physical growth of adolescents; systematic attempts to develop curricula that would teach adolescents whose needs had been freshly explored, and production of books that would embody these insights and materials." (The author of the statement, Margaret Mead, identified fourteen volumes growing out of these efforts.) !
16. "The processes of the Eight-Year Study may be even more significant than its products, valuable as they were, and are. Those processes had the effect of making teachers more receptive to help from outside the schools, more critical of their own and each others' work, more concerned with the growth of students in their uniqueness as separate individuals, and more conscious of the direct relationship between education and the social order."

Purposes of the PAE study, as these have emerged to date, are:

1. To identify, within alternative schools, what appear to be effective practices in realizing specific values with different students.
2. To identify the kinds of educational, organizational, and administrative contexts which conduce to productive and satisfying school experience for all concerned.
3. To help participating schools and districts to explore and refine their practice.
4. To conduct the project, and to disseminate its findings and conclusions, in such fashion as to enable it to have maximal effects upon public decision-making regarding school practices and arrangements.
5. To conduct the project, and to disseminate its findings and conclusions in such fashion as to provide maximal assistance to educators wishing to establish similar programs.

WHY IS SUCH A STUDY NEEDED?

The need for the Eight-Year Study is summarized in the opening pages of its 1941 report, in a list of assertions about the state of secondary education as of the early Thirties. Some of the claims seem hauntingly familiar:

"Secondary education in the United States did not have clear-cut, definite, central purposes.

Schools failed to give students a sincere appreciation of their heritage as American citizens.

Our secondary schools did not prepare adequately for the responsibilities of community life.

The high school seldom challenged the student of first-rate ability to work up to the level of his intellectual powers.

Schools neither knew their students well nor guided them wisely.

Schools failed to create conditions necessary for effective learning.

The creative energies of students were seldom released and developed.

The conventional high school curriculum was far removed from the real concerns of youth.

The traditional subjects of the curriculum had lost most of their vitality and significance.

Most high school students were not competent in the use of the English language.

There was little unity nor continuity in the typical high school program.

The high school diploma meant only that the student had done whatever was necessary to accumulate the required number of units." 1993

Five sets of reasons suggest the need for the projected PAE study. They are: (1) the need for educational reform; (2) the difficulty in introducing effective reform; (3) the promise of educational alternatives as an effective renewal mechanism; (4) the promise of alternatives as an educational reform; and (5) the need for research into alternative education practices and outcomes.

The Need for Educational Reform

- ° According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, "It is clear that neither 13-year-olds nor 17-year-olds receive a great deal of direct instruction in writing or are required to do much writing in school." As one editor summed it up, "Good writing became a little harder to find in American high schools during the 1970s."
- ° Average scores on the College Entrance Examination Board's Scholastic Aptitude Test continue their steady 13-year slide. Since 1967, the average verbal score has dropped 42 points and the math score 26.
- ° The school's efforts to accommodate all youngsters are simply not succeeding. The evidence lies not only in low achievement levels, but in national dropout figures. A 1978 investigation predicted that three-quarters of a million of the youngsters then in New York State schools would drop out prior to graduating. The investigators urged that we view it a pushout problem, not a dropout phenomenon.
- ° Students vent their rage at schools in vandalism rates that are staggering. NEA figures cited a \$600 million toll for vandalized school property in 1975 -- a year when Chicago and New York City schools alone spent \$13 million on security measures. A recent Gallup Poll showed that one-fifth of the nation's teenagers fear for their own safety while in school. And according to the NEA, almost 60,000 teachers were assaulted in 1978, with more than double that number subjected to malicious property damage.
- ° In 1964, 25% of the school bond issues put to American voters failed; by 1974 the rejection rate had more than doubled, standing at 54%.
- ° Proposition 13 now seems only the beginning. Like legislation is in effect or pending in approximately 20 states. And in Massachusetts, Proposition 2 1/2 -- passed without benefit of the state surplus which deferred full effects on California schools -- may lead to the shutting down of entire school districts.
- ° The annual Gallup Polls on education have disclosed steadily declining overall public ratings for schools over the last seven years (with the sole exception of a single percentage point gain in 1980). As of 1974, almost half the public (48%) assigned public schools a grade of A or B. As of 1980, only a third (35%) were willing to do so. Almost half (47%) assigned grades of C, D, or F this year -- reflecting mild to strong dissatisfaction.
- ° A group committed to "increasing citizen participation in the affairs of the nation's schools" -- on grounds that "For too long, school decisions have been made primarily by professionals, and usually in private, removed from public view" -- claims to represent 225,000 people, including 335 affiliate groups, as well as individuals.

- ° A number of parents are expressing their dissatisfaction with public schools by removing their children. Although public school enrollments dropped by about 5 million between 1970 and 1978, non-public schools have increased by 1% or more each year since 1975. Estimates suggest that enrollment in Christian schools increased by 118% from 1971 to 1975. And the flight to the suburbs phenomenon shows clearly in the racial figures of city schools: Washington, D.C., public schools are 94% Black, 2% Hispanic, only 4% white.
- ° Ex-Commissioner of Education Ernest Boyer has warned, "If the schools -- especially the high schools -- don't make dramatic reforms in the 1980s, the public school will become more and more rejected. It will lose constituency support. And...[in that event]...there will be more alienation among young people, parents and the public than we have ever seen in this country -- with disastrous consequences. We will be losing an essential resource at the very time it is needed most."

The Difficulty in Introducing Effective Reform

- Public education expenditures rose by 250% during the 60s. Between 1964 and 1974 the U.S. Office of Education spent more than \$200 million on educational research, and foundations spent millions more on development. The returns were disappointing at best. As Paul Nachtigal concluded after examining the Ford Foundation's grants to schools, "I'm not sure we have any real clues at the present time on how to reform the educational system."
- A number of the innovations introduced during the optimistic 60s did not outlive the extraordinary funding intended just to facilitate start-up. Others fared even less well, with some apparently not implemented at all, and others pursued on such a pro forma basis as to be judged "co-opted."
- As Harry Gracey established, "the structural forces at work in the school system overwhelm the attempts of educators" to implement ideas lying outside the limited range congruent with the underlying bureaucratic structure of the school. Eventually such innovators either leave the organization, redefine their goals, or so absorb themselves in daily urgencies as to abandon the innovative hopes.
- Efforts at involving parents and other community members in the control of their schools have not to date met with much success. According to Miriam Clasby, advisory councils, for instance, "remain at the periphery of school policy and practice."
- Efforts at decentralizing curricular control have failed to date to actually shift much decision-making authority, according to Gordon Cawelti.

Clasby

Cawelti

- As Seymour Sarason has suggested, a school is a complicated social system with a subculture of its own -- and those who would introduce change into a school must first have some understanding of that particular system and the content of its culture if their efforts are to be successful.
- According to the Rand study, the attempt to reform schools from the top down simply does not work. *

The Promise of Educational Alternatives As A Reform Medium

- ° Alternative schools have a greater chance of success than many other reform efforts since neither the initiation nor survival of any single program must depend upon district-wide majority support. Keeping these schools as options requires only that they well serve and maintain the backing of one segment of the school population and public. Hence, triumph on the scale required of earlier reform efforts is not necessary to the success and durability of these programs.
- ° Alternative schools already appear a going and growing phenomenon. The number and variety of such programs already established in the past twelve years recommends them as a reform hope that need not look to an intervention strategy and the introduction and support of change agents. These programs don't have to be initiated; they are already in existence -- and in many cases, thriving.
- ° Alternative schools may have greater hope of success than other reform efforts since these schools represent new entities rather than attempts to modify old ones -- and, as Seymour Sarason has suggested, it seems easier to create a new social organization than to change an existing one.
- ° Alternative schools supply the conditions many analysts have independently found necessary to school reform of any sort. These include: they are likely to be relatively small, with few exceeding 200 students. They are likely to enjoy greater autonomy than other schools and programs within the same district. And they are likely to have been chosen by their teachers and other staff, as well as by their students.
- ° Alternatives independently place a premium on the features critical to significant sustained reform. According to Milbrey McLaughlin, these features are: extensive, continuing interaction among participants, and shaping and adaptation of the effort by those who are to implement it. (The successful change process appears very much a matter of reinventing the wheel -- with the "reinventing" every bit as important as the "wheel"!) Alternative schools, with their stress on 'home-grown' programs, and on interpersonal interaction and process, seem to emphasize the ideal conditions.

- ° Alternative schools may supply the means not only for introducing change, but for institutionalizing it and thereby keeping it happening. Since new alternatives can be established as needs and interests warrant, and existing ones can close as interest wanes, these organizational units constitute a mechanism enabling schools to become self-renewing systems.
- ° Alternatives have provided ideal contexts for effectively operationalizing significant proposals originating outside them -- e.g., James Coleman's concept of the information-rich, action-poor society; the National Commission on Resources for Youth's insistence that young people be allowed to participate in productive activities and assume real responsibilities; and the idea that learners have significantly different learning styles that might be matched to mutual advantage with the similarly differentiated teaching styles of their teachers.
- ° Alternatives proved responsive to the themes which dominated public policy for the 70s: the pluralism and subcultural identification that were nurtured, the commitment to equality, the right to a voice in the decisions by which one must live. But they seem equally responsive to the policy themes emerging for the 80s -- e.g., the right of families to choose an education, the return to increased local control of education, and particularly the restoration of greater autonomy to individual schools, decentralization and de-bureaucratization. *
choice
- ° Educational alternatives have been recommended by a growing list of national committees and commissions -- virtually every one charged in the past decade with examining the state of secondary education and how to improve it. Endorsers now include the 1970 White House Conference on Children, the 1974 Panel on Youth of the President's Science Advisory Committee, the Office of Education's Panel on High Schools and Adolescent Education, the Phi Delta Kappa Task Force on Compulsory Education and Transition for Youth, the Council for Educational Development and Research, the Kettering Foundation's National Commission on the Reform of Secondary Education, the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, and the National Advisory Council on the Education of Disadvantaged Children.
- ° Alternatives have also been recommended by agencies seeking to resolve problems that are not primarily educational -- e.g., by federal courts seeking to desegregate public schools, and by the Senate's Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency concerned about youthful offenders.

The Promise of Educational Alternatives As A Reform

What is it that makes alternative education desirable? Here are the points most often cited:

- Diverse educational arrangements (programs, methods, teachers) are necessary to provide adequately for the array of interests, needs, and abilities of American youngsters.
- We are a people with diverse worldviews, life styles, and value systems -- calling for very different educational structures and practices, as well as aims and content. *
- The opportunity to choose something as significant as one's education -- among options that are genuine -- is fundamental to the freedom of choice to which democracy is committed.
- Youngsters have learning styles that differ sufficiently as to make it unlikely that a single type of school program can optimally accommodate all.
- Teachers have teaching styles that differ sufficiently as to make it unlikely that a single type of school program can optimally benefit from all.
- To gain in providing for each individual the education best suited for him or her is a social gain, no less than an individual benefit.
- Perhaps among the most educative of all activities in which an individual can participate is the development of his/her own education.

What marks alternative education as a going and successful phenomenon? Although much of the existing evidence must be viewed as limited or tentative, here is what that evidence suggests to date:

Alternatives experience such remarkable success with disruptive student behavior as to prompt researcher David Mann to ask at the conclusion of his study, whether the initial problem had been "Disruptive Students or Provocative Schools?"

- ° Alternative schools seem to foster self-esteem, feelings of personal potency, self-reliance, and a sense of fate control -- all of which appear to be closely associated with academic success as well as with positive social behavior.
- ° Vandalism is sharply lower in alternative schools than in other schools within the same district, and violence is almost totally absent. Optional alternative schools were the most frequent recommendation proposed to the Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency for tackling school crime.
- ° Most alternative high schools send a markedly higher percentage of their graduates on to college than do comparable schools within the same district.

Alternatives need be no more costly than conventional programs. Most public school alternative programs "operate on the same per pupil budget

as conventional schools at the same level in the same community," according to a survey made at the University of Indiana.

- ° There are now 10,000 alternative schools in the United States, located in 5,000 school districts. Two-thirds of the nation's largest school systems currently offer alternative educational programs, and a number of them have placed their entire educational offerings on an alternatives-options basis.
- ° The evidence shows remarkable declines in truancy and dropout rates in alternative schools -- despite the fact that many of the students in some alternatives are disaffected youth and previous dropouts. As the Ford Foundation reported, "Attendance rates almost without exception exceed those in regular schools."
- ° In alternative schools where remedial work is stressed, previously weak students experience consistent academic gains. This has been the case in Grand Rapids' several alternative programs; it has been dramatically evident at Harlem Prep, which sends a reported 95% of its graduates on to college.
- ° Evaluations which have sought and compared parent reactions suggest that parental approval, support, and appreciation for alternative schools are consistently higher than for conventional school programs.
- ° Students in alternative schools display consistently more positive attitudes toward their teachers, their schools, and education in general than do their counterparts in conventional schools.
- ° There is growing evidence that alternatives yield more satisfaction for teachers, as well as for students and their parents. In fact, suggests Daniel Duke, looking to alternative schools "may help those who want to reverse declining teacher job satisfaction, morale, and productivity."
- ° Analyses of studies and evaluations completed to date lend support to the conclusion that the cognitive achievement of alternative school students equals or exceeds local district norms. "In short," concludes one such analysis, "one could be assured that most students would achieve at least as well, if not better, than in the comprehensive school system available to them."

The Need for Research Into Alternative Education Practices and Outcomes

- ° It is certainly the case, as Art Wirth has pointed out, that "advocates of alternatives can...find elements in the current situation which vindicate their contentions. The truth is, however, that we have created no large scale effort to evaluate alternatives vis a vis conventional schools... Nor do we have systematic comparative studies of different kinds of alternatives.

- The numerous studies of alternative schools carried out to date have remained minimally helpful in gaining additional professional and public support. For practical reasons as well as reasons of principle, many of the evaluative studies have been formative rather than summative in nature, and have not been designed to inform and convince outsiders of the merits of the program.
- One of the reasons that conclusive findings about success have not emerged from the alternatives studies to date may be that we lack adequate measures for assessing short-term growth and benefits.
- As Terrence Deal and Robert Nolan have noted, "Although alternative schools are having and will continue to have a marked impact on the field of education, we actually know little about them. There is a voluminous...literature which either extols the virtues or denigrates the basic character of alternative schools. But there simply is not much...which approaches these new institutions theoretically, describes them empirically, or provides operational guidelines based on thoughtful analysis or case studies."
- According to Daniel Duke, "the literature on alternative schools includes few systematic studies of their objectives or programmatic features....[The] archival value...[of the studies available]...outweighs their usefulness as input for decision making."
- An article in Integrated Education severely criticized the lack of research into one city's program. In "Alternative Schools: A Network of Unknowns," the author was concerned that the schools were "without any controlled research data on how well children in the alternative program learn in comparison with similar children in neighborhood schools.... Most assessments of the program, both pro and con, come from personal observations."
- Daniel Duke and Irene Muzio found a number of shortcomings in alternative school evaluations, which remain the major source of claims about alternative education. In the nineteen evaluations they reviewed, the weaknesses shared include a lack of comparison data, poor recordkeeping, a failure to randomize when sampling, a lack of data on per pupil costs, and a lack of follow-up data on graduates and dropouts.
- There are currently at least four major studies of secondary education underway. (See Appendix C, pages 69-70.) None, however, will yield knowledge about what programs work for which youngsters and in relation to which values. And none seems committed to pursuing the policy impact purposes of the Project on Alternatives in Education. Although the Coleman Study includes youngsters from 30 alternative schools, it will involve no effort to ascertain the kinds of organizational arrangements and practices which appear important to explaining alternative school outcomes. The other three studies seem to focus largely on curriculum -- which some alternatives hold a lot less critical than other features of a school's program. Thus, it would appear that neither the particular knowledge-seeking nor the policy impact purposes of PAE are likely to be duplicated by other current efforts.

* * * * *

By way of summary, it is, then, the need for educational reform, which when coupled with the difficulty of implementing and sustaining genuine reform, lends this project great urgency. Educational alternatives offer unusual promise as a reform medium and mechanism. There are also significant indications of their success in their own right. But careful, systematic study remains important to confirming and clarifying the presumptive evidence. It is also essential to enabling us to claim with any confidence what educational programs are likely to prove successful for which youngsters and in relation to which educational values — since this particular question has received virtually no attention in alternative school inquiries.

WHAT DO WE WANT TO FIND OUT? DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The Eight-Year Study's procedure consisted of helping participant schools articulate their objectives, and then devising evaluation measures to discern how well individual students had succeeded at these goals. The objectives stated were:

1. The development of effective methods of thinking
2. The cultivation of useful work habits and study skills
3. The inculcation of social attitudes
4. The acquisition of a wide range of significant interests
5. The development of increased appreciation of music, art, literature, and other esthetic experiences
6. The development of social sensitivity
7. The development of better personal-social adjustment
8. The acquisition of important information
9. The development of physical health
10. The development of a consistent philosophy of life

Student progress and achievement of the sort the Eight-Year Study measured is important. We still want to know what kinds of educational programs conduce to maximal academic achievement in various fields of learning, mature and sophisticated habits of mind, social concern, artistic appreciation, mature interaction with others — and the PAE study will seek to answer these questions. It is also important to the potential use and impact of the projected study that we produce comparative data on them, showing the success of alternative school students in relation to that of students in conventional schools. Public confidence in education is such -- and current educational emphases are such -- that this sort of information may well be of paramount concern to a number of educational policy-makers in this country. Thus, our inquiry cannot aid very substantially in the expansion of alternative education without producing this kind of data. Since the most meaningful sorts of comparisons often examine an individual's accomplishment in relation to his or her previous achievement, this sort of measure will be stressed; but it will be impossible to avoid comparison groups without foregoing the information many decision-makers want most.

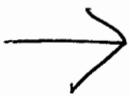
We are aware, however, of the reservations of many alternative schools to the usual kinds of evaluations, and we are much in sympathy with their

hesitations -- e.g., about undergoing assessments in relation to goals not their own, while their own goals are ignored; and about being pitted, in effect, against other programs, and often in ways yielding systematic bias against them. We will respond to these concerns by attempting to avoid the kinds of biases and distortions that have accrued as research instruments and strategies designed for others' purposes are used as sole measures of alternatives' success; and we shall seek to devise ways to enable the newer programs to document accomplishment in relation to their own values. One thing that will help in several of these connections is the fundamental premise of the PAE inquiry: We do not assume that any educational program is good for all youngsters, or that any can respond to all educational values. Thus, our attempt is not so much to assign marks to programs as to determine which students they seem to benefit and which values they appear to serve.

These several concerns mean that the PAE study will be looking at a good many things in addition to achievement outcomes, and employing research strategies in supplement to traditional comparative techniques. There is much to be learned in construing educational goals in other terms than destinations to be reached or products to be made. As John Bremer suggests, perhaps an education like a symphony, is better judged in the immediate experience it provides than on the basis of what might be said after the last bar has been played. Whether or not one is prepared to accept so novel a view, it is surely the case that a meaningful assessment of an education cannot be limited to destinations reached or products yielded. As Michael Scriven has reasoned, it might make sense to evaluate an education on the basis of outcomes alone if it could be accomplished in a matter of a single minute. But since an education is instead a matter of years, there are a good many other things we want to require of it in addition to outcome quantity and quality. Thus, a good assessment will tell us also of the nature and quality of the school experience, the structures and arrangements which yield it, its unintended consequences as well as its intended ones, its effects in relation to values and objectives not its own, and the way it is experienced by those associated with it -- teachers and parents as well as students.

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This calls not only for extensive investigation, but for inquiry of multiple types. We will thus be engaged in standard sorts of quantitative impact studies approaching a quasi-experimental design. But we shall also be pursuing inquiry in the person-environment interaction mode. And our inquiry question recommends the use of the recently evolved 'effective schools' approach. Moreover, we shall be employing organizational analysis measures, document and demographic analysis, and ethnographic studies, as well as seeking indications of satisfaction and of achievement.

These multiple types and targets of investigation are recommended not only by the breadth of our inquiry question, but also by the fact that different audiences are interested in different types of information arrived at and warranted in different ways.

COLLABORATION, SERVICE, STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

Collaborative Patterns of Inquiry

PAE's commitment to reform purposes means that it must have positive impact and make a genuine difference. This, in turn, calls for generating a considerable amount of reliable knowledge we now lack. And it also calls for knowledge which prospective users will accept as psychologically credible and meaningful to themselves.

These two sets of needs -- for reliable new knowledge, and for meaningful knowledge -- combine to recommend a great deal of participation and collaboration, including collaborative inquiry. (There are also a number of other reasons, of course, why collaborative inquiry is desirable, but the practical argument would alone seem compelling, given our purposes.) There are at least three forms which such collaboration will take. The first type will involve making systematic use of studies already underway. A second type will involve those being studied in the inquiry process. We will, that is, make the objects of our inquiry in some sense the subjects of it too. A third type of collaboration will involve a number of researchers in doing the inquiry.

Using Studies Underway

We will establish a research network with major research efforts in alternative education already underway. Formal arrangements will be reached with such researchers, to such diverse effects as: gaining early access to their data and performing our own analyses of it; offering support and/or dissemination advantages to such researchers; convincing such researchers to modify or augment their designs and/or data somewhat to meet PAE interests (depending on the stage of the inquiry in question).

There are currently four major studies of American secondary education underway and in various stages. Each one has ramifications for alternative education, some are very directly concerned with it. PAE has been in touch

with the directors of each of these studies and all would appear receptive to mutually advantageous arrangements, including the provision of early access to data. This will enable us to incorporate relevant findings as they emerge, and these may in turn also be suggestive of emerging hypotheses for our consideration. The four studies are James Coleman's "High School and Beyond" study of the effects of secondary education on the graduates of 1116 high schools; the "Excellence in Education" study of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Education; the National Academy of Education's study of the value assumptions underlying secondary education; and the study heralded as the new Conant report, co-sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the National Association of Independent Schools, and directed by Ted Sizer. (See Appendix C, pages 69-70, for a brief description of each of these studies.)

Involving Those Studied in the Inquiry

Our plans call for involving alternative school people directly in the inquiry process. Staff, students, and parents associated with the schools being studied will be involved in important ways with several parts of the inquiry. Staff will be involved in the ethnographic study of other alternatives as process observers and as document reviewers and analysts. Students and parents will be sought to aid in the collection of demographic data and documentary materials. They will also aid in the review of activities of parallel groups at other schools -- i.e., students will review student activities at other schools, parents will review the modes of parent and community involvement at other schools. All three groups will be asked to participate in the taking of the oral histories and anecdotal accounts to be a part of project records and the repository to be described later in this document.

Involving Multiple Researchers

The Steering Committee has spoken of the PAE study as consisting of a "congeries" of inquiries or representing a "confederation" of studies

rather than a single one. This kind of characterization follows from our multiple methods, 'saturation' study notion. But we will also represent associated inquiries in other ways as well. Here are several ways in which they have been planned.

Several major thrusts have been identified for the project, and these will be carried out separately, although in coordination. One team of researchers will examine governance, and organizational and financial dimensions of alternative education at the individual school or program level. Another will be exploring these concerns at the district or system level. At least two separate teams will be pursuing qualitative inquiry, one including ethnographic investigation of the classrooms of alternative schools, and another doing a phenomenologically-oriented follow-up study of alternative school graduates, including their perceptions of and attitudes toward their former schools.

The Project Director will be responsible for coordinating the project and for maintaining liaison and service activities with school staff and students. She will also be responsible for content analyses of alternative school documentary materials and for further accumulating materials such as computer tapes, student project materials, and oral histories to contribute to a national repository of quantitative and qualitative materials to be located in a university library or other agency.

The PAE Research Director will direct the inquiry and serve as principal quantitative investigator in the areas of measurement, evaluation, and statistical analysis with a primary substantive focus on the psychological effects of alternative education on outcomes for different youngsters. As Research Director, he will assist the Project Director in the design, analysis, and interpretation of the large-scale national survey scheduled for the first year of the project.

This model of collaborative, cross-disciplinary inquiry to attack massive and complex educational questions has worked efficiently in other areas of educational research inquiry. Walberg, for example, is presently completing a large study for the National Science Foundation in which the University of Illinois in Chicago, as prime grantee, is conducting psychological studies of science education at elementary and junior and senior high school levels. Under sub-contracts, a sociologist at the University *

of Minnesota is analyzing mathematics education, a political scientist at Northern Illinois University is analyzing social studies. The Education Commission of the States is supplying massive amounts of machine-readable data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress. A dozen policy papers have been produced by senior and junior members of these teams. Fifteen research workers from seven other universities have been trained to use the data, and have already launched a second generation of research inquiry.

Walberg is also currently serving as a team member along with Sarah Lawrence Lightfoot, a Harvard sociologist and psychoanalyst, in a project on school and home relations in ten ethnic groups. The inquiry is led by a former high school teacher and an anthropologist with several years of experience in Africa working with Beatrice and John Whiting. Such cross-disciplinary efforts are just the sort essential for the present project.

Service

The provision of services and assistance to participant schools will be an important dimension of PAE. It will be important to participants' desire to be a part of the study -- and to remain sufficiently committed to it to render our knowledge-seeking efforts successful. Moreover, aiding these programs in improving their practice falls squarely within the project's reform intent. And the Humanist ethos of many alternatives yields a separate reason why service to participant schools is important. That ethos holds that no individuals or groups should ever be used merely as means to others' purposes. It follows that if we want these programs to allow us to study them, we must be prepared to offer something in return.

But there are other reasons also why services to schools participating in the PAE study might well receive our attention. Ralph Tyler feels that one of the significant achievements of the Eight-Year Study was its invention of the summer workshop for teachers. PAE may likewise pioneer new modes of interaction for giving and receiving help. It would surely fall well within our purposes to do so.

Finally, the PAE office now has a wealth of material on alternative education -- including periodicals (most of them hard to find, some out of

print entirely), analyses, studies, research reports, books, articles, program descriptions and evaluations, and numerous other 'fugitive documents.' Given overall purposes, it would be to our advantage, that of participant schools, and perhaps other schools as well to make these materials available to interested people.

With such multiple concerns as these in mind, what kinds of services and assistance should PAE offer participant schools? This and other questions are answered in Part II, which specifies the research and service activities for each of the four years of the project.

Structure and Governance

Preceding pages have told nothing of the Project's structure and the way it will be organized to carry out the tasks which we find warranted by the foregoing, and which subsequent pages will detail. The needs we have described call for innovative structural and operational features as well as creative plans to be carried out. Here, then, is an account of how the work of the Project shall be organized and coordinated.

Overseeing the work of the Research and Project Directors, and making policy for the entire venture, will be the PAE Steering Committee. The original 10-member body has now been expanded to include the Research Director and representatives of each of PAE's participant sponsor organizations. An Executive Committee of three represents the Steering Committee in advising its fourth member, the Project Director. The Committee is nominated by the Project Director from among the members of the Steering Committee and is confirmed by that body for three-year terms.

Three other bodies have been planned to date: a Conceptualization Council, an Advisory Council, and a Research Advisory Board. The Conceptualization Council is to be organized and begin functioning immediately. Its purpose will be to assist with the theoretic and conceptual problems attending the Project's work by generating, and soliciting critique on, relevant materials. For example, the Council's first task will be tackling the question of a conception of educational alternatives. It will also explore explanatory theories which can be brought to bear on the inquiry.

An Advisory Council will be named, consisting of representatives of non-educator groups, as well as of the relevant educational constituencies -- teachers, administrators, teacher educators, and scholar-researchers. This body will recommend and react to plans for Project activities and functions. It will try to reflect at the national level the kind of broad community involvement for which alternatives have stood at the local level.

Finally, a Research Advisory Board will be established as we approach identification of schools for site study. This group will include one person from each of the schools where the ethnographic inquiry is to be carried out. Its purpose is twofold: to provide input on the part of participant schools into design and Project extension and reformulation; and to contribute to the interchange among participant schools that is very much a part of overall PAE purposes.

The deliberate involvement of investigators located in a number of institutions, rather than centrally, introduces the need for distinct control arrangements. Contracts will be drawn up for each major part of the total inquiry. These contracts will be subject to renewal once a year on approval of the Project Director and the Research Director, with the concurrence of the Steering Committee. These contracts will be specific with respect to time allocations of investigators and support staff, work plan, scheduling, scope of activities to be conducted, and deliverables. Detailed accounting of total and sub-contract expenditures and activities will be submitted to the funding agency as required. The Director and Research Director will be responsible for arranging meetings and communications to insure coordination and cross-fertilization between (1) the major parts of the inquiry, and (2) related groups such as alternative school staff and students, educational organizations, and investigations in related projects. (See Appendix C, pages 69-70.)

PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND PLAN OF WORK

We have projected a four-year plan of work and activities. The overall intention of a multi-year plan, with several distinct investigative thrusts, is twofold: it will enable subsequent years of investigation to be informed by the work of prior years; and it will allow the several major thrusts of the project to retain investigative autonomy, while at the same time deepening and enriching one another as the study progresses and culminates in the fourth year -- one of intensive, reflective discussion and writing. The course of the project moves from a large-scale, extensive survey of alternative schools -- as the primary and already funded activity of the first year -- to more intensive and convergent quantitative and qualitative research and service activities for the second and third years.

YEAR ONE

The purpose of Year One is to survey the extent and nature of alternative education in U.S. schools, and to analyze and summarize a substantial body of writings on alternative education, including all published and a great deal of relevant unpublished research and practitioner-produced material. Year One also permits further planning, instrument development, coordination among the investigators, and site selection for the intensive studies of Years Two and Three.

Extensive Survey

The purpose of the extensive survey is to provide a comprehensive list of alternative schools and programs in the United States. The list will enable more reliable estimates of the size and growth of the universe of schools than have ever been possible. The questions on the survey questionnaire will be few in number (perhaps 30), concise, and will elicit responses of such straightforward information as school size, target population, type, and governance -- as well as reports of the philosophical, psychological, and educational assumptions and environments generally prevailing within the school. The survey will not only provide valuable information about alternative education across the nation but will also serve as the basis for selecting a stratified, random sample of schools for more intensive study in subsequent years of the project. The stratification will include size, region, and type.

We want to take advantage of the opportunity to actually launch our inquiry in 1981, with this national survey of alternatives already funded by the National Institute of Education, and the National Education Association. NEA has agreed to collaborate in the survey by handling the technical aspects for PAE, once we have made further detailed decisions about the questions to be used, and the respondents to be polled. At that point, NEA will aid in the finalizing of the survey instrument, distribute it, and receive and tabulate replies. PAE, however, (namely, Raywid and Walberg) will retain responsibility for specifying the analysis and interpretation of results.

We are designing the survey instrument partly in accord with suggestions made at a January, 1981, design meeting; and partly on the basis of the schedules used in earlier alternatives surveys (e.g., by the National Alternative Schools Program, the National School Boards Association, the New Schools Exchange, and selected State Education Departments); existing knowledge about those demographic characteristics of schools, their populations, and communities which appear to be of educational significance; and research to date on what appear to be the central aspects of educational alternatives.

Completion of a first draft of the survey instrument will be the primary responsibility of the PAE Director; Walberg will offer technical advice and consultation. Kerry Homstead, one of the authors of the NASP's National Directory of Public Alternative Schools, published in 1978, has agreed to aid in the actual design work, and it is hoped that her experience will enable us to anticipate and avoid pitfalls involved in earlier surveys. To this purpose, we will also consult in the early stages of our preparation with Jim Mecklenburger who directed the National School Boards Association survey reported in 1976.

We will arrive at the most comprehensive survey list of alternative schools ever undertaken. Contacts across the country will be of significant help in assembling the list, and we will work in various ways in compiling it. For instance, we have just been informed of a newly completed list of all public school alternatives in the State of Washington -- which will reduce our task considerably in relation to that particular area. In some areas, State Education Departments may be helpful, in others, different contacts will be indicated. NEA has offered assistance with this location-identification problem, and other participant sponsors -- especially the National Association of Secondary School Principals -- will be in a position to assist, along with NIE and other government agencies.

Public alternative schools have been estimated at 10,000. Since we are pursuing the frequent practice of restricting the "alternatives" label to schools of choice (as distinct from assignment), then the total might run about 9,000. With the elimination of elementary schools, the eventual universe is likely to be 7,000. It is impossible, however, to estimate survey size until the search and selection procedures are completed. It

seems likely that we can survey all schools and programs within the universe selected; but a rigorous randomized sample may be necessary. NEA has committed itself to distributing a minimum of 3500 surveys and to a maximum expense figure of \$10,000. PAE will assume costs in excess of \$10,000 occasioned by increasing the number of respondents.

Content Analysis

As mentioned earlier, PAE has accumulated in excess of 600 published and unpublished writings on alternative education. This corpus of material may be the largest of its kind in the nation, and parts of it served as the material for a project-completed 200-page review of the literature as well as a 100-page philosophical analysis of themes that appear in alternative schools and in the documents they have generated.

This collection of documents will also be subjected to a thorough content analysis along the lines of John Dollard's Criteria for a Life History, Gordon Allport's The Use of Personal Documents in Psychological Science, and Louis Gottschalk's The Use of Personal Documents in History, Anthropology, and Sociology. However, following the Walberg-Thomas procedures for analyzing "open education" (concerning elementary, mainly infant and primary schools), the unit of analysis will be documents describing schools, classes, and human relations within them rather than individuals (further discussed below).

To supplement Raywid's philosophical analysis of nine constructs of alternative education, Walberg will write a psychological review of conceptual and empirical research in education and other social settings on the central concept of the effect of social and personal choices among alternatives and their effects on psychological environments, processes, and outcomes. In addition to previous writings by Walberg and others on these and related topics, Janice Garber and Martin Seligman's Human Helplessness: Theory and Application will be useful. This broadly based work shows that in a wide diversity of environments, helplessness, passivity, depression, motivational deficits, anxiety, and boredom often result when humans of various ages are denied at least partial control of their activities and circumstances.

Each of the writings in the collection will be analyzed to determine the degree to which the philosophical and psychological constructs are represented and emphasized. A smaller sample will be done twice to gauge the inter-coder reliability. The analysis is meant to take seriously those thinkers and alternative school practitioners who have taken time to put sometimes nearly ineffable ideas on paper. The salience of the features will be assessed across the writings from earlier and later periods, different parts of the country, different types of schools, and insiders and outsiders. Factor analyses will be employed to characterize the clustering of the constructs as well as the writings. Themes of these writings will be incorporated into subsequent survey instruments and into the four major parts of the project. The analysis will be carried out by Raywid with technical assistance from Walberg and consultation with the other investigators and school practitioners.

Walberg will also undertake a parallel analysis of the literature related to the matching of teaching and learning styles. A considerable corpus of such material has now been developed by two groups, working almost completely independently of one another: by psychologists whose work has largely taken the form of aptitude-treatment interaction analysis (e.g., Lee Cronbach, Richard Snow, Penelope Peterson, David Berliner); and by educational practitioners whose efforts have undertaken the matching of instructional styles and environments to learner needs (e.g. Rita and Kenneth Dunn, Joseph Hill, Robert Fizzell). This literature will be reviewed as grounds for formulating the current study's approach to the matching possibility.

Meta-Analysis of Previous Research

Science proceeds by accumulation of evidence and replication, in addition to theory and hypothesis formulation. Although the project is highly ambitious, it cannot afford to ignore previous empirical research on alternative school environments and outcomes. The 200-page review already produced by PAE, as well as the discussion of previous findings on effectiveness in an earlier section of this document, are based on about 60 previous research studies (as distinct from the many additional materials that are non-research based). An additional task in the first year will be

a careful critical assessment of the research designs, results, and conclusions, using quantitative synthesis methods -- as developed by Gene Glass, Richard Light, and Robert Rosenthal -- which permit explicit numerical summary of results obtained by different investigators using different methodologies.

Meta-analyses of large collections of empirical studies of open education, by four independent teams of quantitative reviewers -- Robert Horowitz of Yale, Penelope Peterson of Wisconsin, Donna Hetzel and Herbert Walberg of Illinois, and Nate Gage, Ingram Okin, and Larry Hedges of Stanford -- are in close agreement that open education on average produces achievement equal to conventional classes on standard achievement tests, but higher scores on persistence, creativity, and other cognitive traits, as well as self-concept enhancement and school satisfaction. Although the results across a series of small and miscellaneous studies are not always significant or perfectly consistent, it appears that more "authentic" open classes -- those in which, by observation, there is greater teacher-student joint planning of learning goals, means and evaluation -- produce more positive results on the latter outcomes.

These results are suggestive for PAE because the concept of alternative education employed in secondary schools often resembles open education found mostly in the early grades. For this and other reasons, a meta-analysis of prior empirical studies of alternative education will be conducted by Walberg during the first year so that subsequent phases of inquiry can be built upon previous findings.

Policy Study


The Project's broad purposes call for two fairly distinct kinds of policy investigation. Both will begin in Year One and will probably need to continue throughout the inquiry.

Alternative schools are taken within the Project as a route to desirable educational change. If the venture is to make the policy impact intended, then it must concern itself with the policy ramifications of establishing alternatives and options systems. This calls for a mixture of analytic and hypothetically-oriented inquiry, examining pro's and con's in principle, and an assortment of prospective scenarios with respect to the

national sociopolitical scene and to public education's future. Thus, systematic policy inquiry ought to be directed at such logical issues as: "Alternative Educations vs. the School's Melting Pot Function"; "State Mandating of Alternative Schools"; "Alternatives and the Avoidance of Tracking and Elitism"; "Public School Alternatives vs. Vouchers." And we ought also to be exploring such more contextually-oriented questions as: "Under What Conditions Are Options Systems Likely to Be Widely Adopted?" "Under What Conditions are Options Systems Practicable within School Districts?" "What Sociopolitical Conditions Would Render Educational Alternatives More or Less Desirable Than They Currently Appear?"

A second and quite different kind of policy study must address the question of educational values. The Project's primary inquiry question -- "Which alternatives well serve which youngsters, in relation to which educational values?" -- calls for inquiry into what kinds of alternative schools and programs respond to which educational preferences and priorities. At the conclusion of the inquiry, we want to be able to say, for example, "If you are interested in a program that will reflect and cultivate skills related to independence, self-reliance, and critical thinking, then alternatives A, B, and C appear good prospects. If you are interested, instead, in programs committed to manifesting and stimulating obedient, responsible, rule-governed behavior, then alternatives D, E, and F appear better prospects." To be able to arrive at such claims, we need to assemble the educational values lists to which alternative schools subscribe. The assembling and ordering of these lists will be the task of the Policy Study group.

It might be appropriate to conveying the nature of the task involved to state that it goes considerably beyond the additive compilation of the goals statements promulgated by schools. Alternative schools are committed to process values as well as outcome values. And according to some, conventional schools also manifest values not rendered explicit in their goals statements. (This claim is a prominent feature of many of the studies of the "Hidden Curriculum.") Thus, any attempt to arrive at a list of educational values and priorities will need to involve extensive analysis of alternative school materials, and of the literature of alternative education. The Policy Study group will undertake such analysis.



Services

This initial year of the study will largely lay the groundwork for services to come. We will be doing so in two major ways in connection with the survey that is to constitute a main thrust of the Year One inquiry. First, the questionnaire going to all secondary alternative schools in the country will inquire about interest in being part of project activities and receiving news and materials from and about other alternatives. A large affirmative response is anticipated and this will yield our initial mailing list to alternatives.

A periodic mailing to these schools will begin shortly thereafter. The mailings will occur with fair frequency (every three to six weeks). They will sometimes consist of articles contributed on a volunteer basis, sometimes on an invitational basis; sometimes of questions to be tackled by other readers and by project staff; sometimes of program reports or descriptions or statements on particular problems. The publication will be highly flexible in content, then, of varying length (perhaps 1-6 pages) and will probably be reproduced from typed copy. In addition to general open invitations to contribute, invitations will be addressed to specific programs to report on activities of wide prospective interest, as exposed initially by our survey. There will be few turn-downs of such an invitation. The commitment of those involved in alternative programs is widely known. Their dedication is such that an opportunity for talking about and sharing what they do enjoys enormous appeal. Moreover, the periodical here described can accomplish a number of things of considerable interest and concern to alternative school people, and treat a number of the problems that plague them.

The comprehensive survey of alternative schools will also aid in another key way in laying the groundwork for services to come. The survey will ask respondents to submit a variety of materials with their replies -- school or program descriptions, curriculum plans and accounts of activities, instructional materials, student work, evaluation instruments and reports. The cataloging and microfilming of these materials will begin so that eventually they can be made available to other alternatives seeking program information.

PAE is already receiving a number of requests for information and advice from and about alternative schools. The sort of clearinghouse

functions involved in responding will increase during Year One of the inquiry and subsequently. The project's reform interests render highly germane the extension of such services to non-alternatives inquirers also.

YEAR TWO

The intent of the second year is closer, more intensive studies of alternative schools. The broad survey of the first year will elicit the more straightforward facts about these schools and their variations. Years Two and Three will see the more intense study of psychological environments, social processes and educational activities, and student accomplishments; the initiation of governance, organization, and finance inquiry at school and district levels; ethnographic studies; investigation of alternative school graduates; and the further building of school liaison and augmenting of service activities.

Intensive Survey

In a random stratified sample from the comprehensive list of approximately 7,000 schools, 100 will be chosen for moderately intensive survey investigation using constructs from the writings that PAE has already produced, the content analysis, the meta-analysis, and the advice of alternative school people. The sample is likely to be stratified by the following factors: per-student expenditures, size, type of alternative school (from a factor analysis), rural-urban-suburban location, and school socio-economic status and primary ethnicity; and region of the country. These stratification factors are likely selection criteria not only to insure representativeness of the sample but also to examine their relation to the degree and type of choices provided and to the quality of student/staff experiences provided by the schools.

Depending upon school size (as revealed in the first-year survey), samples of approximately 100 second and third year students and staff from each school will be given 30-minute questionnaires concerning their school environment and experience, social and psychological processes in their education within and outside the school, their perceptions of teaching and learning activities, and their accomplishments during the past six months. In addition, released achievement items in language, mathematics, science, and social studies from the National Assessment of Educational Progress

will be used on the questionnaire. To afford the maximum amount of information and simultaneously reduce time required of students, a common core plus differential combinations of a universe of items will be administered simultaneously. During the 30-minute period, a writing sample on the topic "What I Think of My School" will be obtained from a randomly-chosen set of five youngsters.

The questionnaire will be based on the literature review, philosophical and psychological papers, content analysis, meta-analysis, and panels of alternative school staff and related study questionnaires. In addition, the qualitative investigators and service workers will be asked to complete the questionnaires and essay to provide an independent judgment of the school environment and other characteristics, on the basis of their field observations and service activities.

The essays and questionnaires will be scored according to the a priori philosophical, psychological, and practitioner constructs formulated during the first year. Other themes and constructs that emerge from the essays, clusterings of the items, qualitative studies, and service activities (discussed below) will be considered and represented both in the second year analysis and, more extensively, in the third year instrumentation and analysis.

The multivariate statistical analyses will serve at least five purposes. They will assess the degree to which hypothesized alternative school environments, processes, and outcomes are actually found in the schools; determine the degree to which these variables reflect such stratification factors as size, region, governance pattern, and student characteristics; determine the degree that the constructs, including psychological environments and processes are associated with student achievement, morale, and accomplishment; determine the degree to which the last-mentioned association applies to different groups of students, for example, the artistically inclined, dropouts, ethnic groups, and social classes; and facilitate further quantitative and qualitative development and refinement of the questionnaire and methods for the third year. Despite the process of development in the last point and throughout the course of the project, the results and findings of the second year will answer with a fair degree of confidence the central question of PAE and many major related

questions -- for example, the degree to which schools are extremely "alternative" on several dimensions and which composites of these are associated with extreme environments and with accomplishments for which students. The third year, in which the findings will be tested again, permits a replication, extension, and intensification of the methodologies.

A particularly critical question for the overall study to be addressed in the intensive investigation is the notion of the matching of students and educational environments. Many alternative educators find the matching of instruction or milieu to student needs as central to alternative education as are the notions of distinctiveness and choice. A similar notion, called "aptitude-treatment interaction," has not proven fruitful scientifically or educationally in research of the past decade; but much of the work has focused on narrow cognitive abilities under contrived or laboratory conditions, rather than on classrooms and other natural settings. However, a recent synthesis of the research on David Hunt's conceptual matching models (Review of Educational Research, Spring, 1981) now suggests grounds for more optimistic conclusions. Moreover, not only the diversity of educational means in alternative schools but also the interest on the part of many such schools in developing student uniqueness and individuality, make such conceptions deserving of thorough investigation in the intensive study. The psychological review, content analysis, and meta-analysis of the first year will guide the formulation and selection of specific student and environmental variables for measurement and analysis.

School Organization, Governance and Finance

The school-level governance, organization, and finance part of the research will focus on a selected representative subsample -- 20 of the 100 schools -- plus 10 conventional schools. Here the focus will be on the school as the unit of analysis rather than on students, teachers, or classrooms. The substantive thrust of this research will be sociological and administrative, and it will complement the inclusive survey which focuses psychologically and quantitatively on teaching and learning, and the case studies that employ ethnographic and other anthropological methods in pursuing the lived experience of alternative school students, staff, and

parents from a more qualitative perspective.

The organization parts of the research will concern Max Weber's constructs of bureaucracy, collegiality, and charisma in relation to organizational effectiveness; problems of, and solutions to, student and staff stress, alienation, and authority; school-level indications of constructs associated with student-level learning effectiveness, as indicated by the research of Ronald Edmonds of the New York City schools, and Geraldine Brownlee of Chicago; and the role of choice and its impact at the school level. This part of the research will also investigate Karl Weick's notions of tightly and loosely coupled organizational systems. Weick maintains that schools are loosely coupled in the sense that a school's members are free to do many things not connected with outcomes. Alternative schools, it can be maintained, may actually be more tightly coupled than regular schools in the sense that goals and objectives are intensively discussed and agreed upon by staff and students, and that organizational and social pressure is brought to bear on both to attain them. Certainly these hypotheses are highly worthwhile to investigate since the commitment to goals, and the means of maintaining it and bringing them to fruition, are close to a central purpose of the study -- the role of choice in education and its impact on different students.

Another part of the school-level research concerns the role of alternative school principals or program administrators. How do they relate to the central district officers? To what extent do federal, state, and district bureaucracy impinge upon, or lend authority to, the leadership and governance of the alternative school? Do alternatives rely on democratic, bureaucratic, professional, or charismatic authority to get things accomplished? Must they form alliances with school board and community members to prosper? Are they isolated from, or in competition with, principals of other schools, including other alternative schools? Must they mediate or take sides among cliques or sub-groups within the school, such as "scientists" and "humanists"? Are important learnings omitted to keep the peace? Can principals hire their own staffs, and do teachers, students, and parents participate in recruiting and selecting new staff and students? How are new members of the school put in touch with its ethos and operating methods?

Lastly but importantly with respect to school-level questions are the matters of school budget, cost per student, and authority over expenditures. One large-city principal at one of our planning conferences reported that of his \$4 million annual budget, school staff had discretionary authority over only \$30 thousand -- less than 1%. School-site budgeting, used in some schools, is much more compatible with the notions of choice and autonomy. The delegation of authority over such important decisions as expenditures for goods and services seems importantly related to the simultaneous need for accountability for the wise and effective use of scarce public monies and student time. To what extent does (or could) such delegation of political, educational authority -- implied by increased school-level decision-making -- help or hinder alternative and conventional education? If little such authority is found in some alternative schools, how are extra discretionary funds raised, and how do the procedures differ from those in conventional schools?

And what are the operating costs of alternative schools? Some claims are made that they are often cheaper on a per student basis than ordinary schools; but such claims appear to ignore the possibility that such schools have young staff that are paid less, and that these costs are likely to increase as staff move forward in salary lanes each year. A careful and comprehensive budget analysis is required to make reasonable comparisons among alternative schools. A related issue concerns the effects of current reductions in student-age populations on enrollments, spending, and other factors in alternative programs.

Issues associated with these several topics at the school level will be investigated by a combination of questionnaire, and direct and telephone interviews with alternative school directors, teachers, students, and with relevant district staff. Questionnaires will be distributed to people at all 30 schools; people at 10 schools will be personally interviewed, and, as a check on results of direct interviews and questionnaire findings, people at the remaining 20 schools will be interviewed by telephone.

There has been for some time a widespread interest in methods of making public schools more responsive to the needs of their participants. Alternative schools represent one vision of how this might be accomplished, and there are things to be learned from the study of the governance of alterna-

tive schools which can be of help to people who manage public school systems with and without alternatives. There are four major areas in which this part of the study can make important contributions to our understanding, and hence our practice:

1. How one goes about managing professionals within a bureaucratic organization. Alternative schools may have made significant improvements over traditional public schools in this area.
2. How one selects and socializes staff members into a school site.
3. How one sets about resource allocation to and within schools.
4. How one might enhance the career development of teachers.

For a list of the specific hypotheses to be investigated, see Appendix B, pages 67-68.

District-Level Organization

Almost all relatively large school districts (i.e., 10,000+ pupils) now report operating alternative schools or programs. Only a much smaller set, however, have adopted alternative education as an intentional strategy for organizational development and system renewal, or for specific problem resolution (e.g., attaining district-wide ethnic balance). This latter set of options systems that are employing alternative education as a device for system renewal is the focus of this district-level study.

The purpose of this part of the total study is two-fold: (1) to describe the structural relationships of alternative education as it develops in school districts to "conventional education" and the school district organization as a whole, and (2) to track effects which occur at the level of the system as a consequence of employing alternative education as a vehicle for system renewal.

As alternative programs and the concept of choice have spread rapidly through the nation's public school systems during the last half decade, there has been an almost equally rapid shift in the way organizational theorists propose that we view organizations and organizing. The orthodox view of organizations as rational, goal-bound, bureaucratic systems has

been challenged by a variety of conceptual structures which depict them instead as loosely coupled systems, organized anarchies, incentive exchange systems, collectives, clans, and dialectical constructions.

A fortuitous theoretical link seems to unite these less conventional views of organizations with the concept of educational system renewal through alternative programs and schools. Alternative education seems to emphasize a looser coupling between and among supervisory levels and across programs in school systems. Organized anarchies emphasize problematic preferences, unclear technology, and fluid participation as key characteristics of educational organizations. Alternative schools and programs seem to exhibit these characteristics. The concept of an organization as an incentive exchange system is based on the assumption that organizational purposes are subordinated to personal demands for satisfaction -- that it is not at all clear that organizations have comprehensive goals in any normal sense of that term. The diversity of alternative schools, and the emphasis on personal choice, reflects these concepts. Participants in alternative schools and programs frequently report their experiences in such a way that the listener is reminded more of a clan or a collective than of a bureaucracy.

We plan to examine alternative education in school systems employing a variety of perspectives -- including, of course, the bureaucratic model -- to assess the interactive effects of alternative schools and the systems in which they live, on one another. We hypothesize that there may be a synergistic effect between the concept of choice in public education and some of the structural features of public school systems; an effect which has been obfuscated by the nearly exclusive use of the bureaucratic perspective in studying school systems and schools.

Descriptive phase: Twenty school systems will be chosen to participate in the inquiry. Five will be selected from among the nation's 23 districts with student populations of 100,000 or more. A second set of five will be selected from the 37 districts with 50,000-99,999 pupils. The remaining two groups will be selected from those districts with 25,000-49,999 pupils (124 in all) and those enrolling 10,000-24,999 (511). Representative sampling of these groups is out of the question since a case study approach is being suggested for this and the subsequent year phase of the study. Two purposive intents are obvious in the sample to be employed:

(1) over-representation of the largest school districts where the problems of system-level secondary school renewal are most aggravating, and (2) selection of districts which have made obvious an intent to employ alternative schools as a strategy for system renewal.

In the descriptive phase, the focus will be on the structural relationship of alternative schools and programs to the system as a whole. How are alternatives generated, planned, nurtured, sustained? What are the points of conflict and complement between alternatives and their conventional counterparts? How do alternatives live organizationally on a day-to-day basis? Are there distinctive organizational forms that can be used to describe types of alternative schools or programs? How do alternatives fit within the expectations held for the system as a bureaucracy -- i.e., are they viewed as exempted from certain constraints of accountability or authority? Who or what groups accept or reject alternatives of different types?

To provide a rich description of alternative schools vis-a-vis the system, data gathering will be undertaken independently from several vantage points, e.g., the top-down -- the board of education, the superintendent or district superintendent's staff, the professional education association; up-close -- teachers, pupils, parents, administrators working in the alternatives; next-door -- teachers, pupils, parents, administrators working in conventional programs in the same or near-by sites; after the fact -- the documentary reconstruction of how the alternative emerged and how it fits. Explicit effort will be made to diversify the perspectives as well as the vantage points -- e.g., respondents will be queried about aspects of coupling, decision-making, incentives and power; and program participants will be asked to develop cause maps describing their place in and relationship to the school system as an organization.

Ethnographic Investigation

During Year Two we will produce approximately 30 capsule case studies of a sample of alternative schools and programs representative of the full range and types found in Year One. The primary focus of these case studies will be the experience of being a member of an alternative school, as this is elaborated to us by those involved in it -- by students and teachers

primarily, but also by parents and others associated with particular alternative schools. Explicitly, we shall be interested in:

- the significant components of the school setting and school day, as perceived by those who live through them; the important events that happen therein, at what times, involving which people, and members' understandings of why and how they exist and occur;
- the impact on participants of such components and events, again as perceived by those who experience them, in terms of emotional development, academic learning, sense of self, personal goals, etc.; the varying impact of such components and events on students of different needs and backgrounds, and the extent to which the school's "routine" adapts to the needs and backgrounds of students;
- ways in which participants in the school perceive that their experiences are different from those of similar people in conventional schools, and their assessments of the significance of such differences, for themselves and for the others;
- changes over time in the perceptions of school and self by participants, as revealed through contrasting statements of individuals who have been members of the school for a few months versus several years, for example; and contrasts in the perceptions of members as (and if) they vary by sex, ethnic/racial group, age, school role, etc.

In the field work in each school, then, we will try to understand and to summarize, in its full diversity, school members' construals of the institution they people. We chose phenomenological goals for this phase of the project for several reasons. First, alternative schools often exist for students for whom the experience of conventional education has been unproductive and/or unpalatable. For many of them, the experience of alternative schooling is refreshingly otherwise. Both alternative and traditional educators need to know which aspects of alternative education are especially meaningful for which groups of students. Often, we predict, aspects that are minor to or even unintended by school planners may prove central to students, staff, parents, and even to many outside the school.

Second, phenomenological inquiry seems a good choice for this phase of the study to supplement orthodox, "objective" data about each school and its students from Year One surveys, records made available by the schools to the fieldworkers, and psychological assessments from instruments used in other parts of the project during Year Two. Finally, we suspect that the members of most alternative schools will be pleased at the opportunity to reflect upon and share the meaning of their experiences with us.

The scale of application of essentially qualitative research techniques contemplated for this project is unusual, we believe, in recent social science. During a school year that spans 42 weeks, including vacations, we will visit and prepare case studies of approximately 30 schools, stratified according to criteria emerging from Year One of the study. It is not practicable to undertake participant observations at the usual pace. But we envision briefer visits, involving what would be a full-time staff of four program evaluators, especially but not exclusively trained and experienced in qualitative research techniques, split into two field teams of two members each. These teams will be scheduled for two-week visits to each of the 30 schools participating in this phase of the project. The full team for each site will be augmented by 2-3 teachers from other local alternative schools, supplemented where feasible by a student and/or a parent from one of these other nearby alternatives. Where possible, we will obtain teachers from other alternatives also a part of the project -- and, of course, acceptable to the host school -- to join what will be a 5-6 member "site visit committee" to study, analyze, and write the report for each school. To facilitate the interchange of teachers on visit committees, and to reduce expenses, schools selected for inclusion will be somewhat clustered geographically.

Participant schools will be asked to make available as much documentation as possible for use by the site committee, on site and later. Two weeks will be set aside for each visit, but only the equivalent of one will be spent on site. During the other, site committee members will write up their field notes, share and discuss observations and conclusions, and complete at least the first draft of their case study.

During the 42-week academic year, each two-member fieldworker staff team will study and write up approximately 15 schools (one week on site, one week discussing and writing), thus achieving the target of 30. The director of the ethnographic inquiry will recruit and train the staff during the six-month period previous to the beginning of the actual field studies. Several themes will be emphasized during this training, and during the field work itself:

- a. the attainment by all staff of shared, operationalized understandings of the dimensions of alternative education, as these have been elaborated in Year One.

- b. agreement on the phenomenological topics of special interest in the qualitative phase of the research, and the formal and informal techniques that will be used to elicit information;
- c. explicit training in the mechanics of field note-taking and filing to be used in the study;
- d. self-analysis, within the setting of the group of field staff members, aimed at helping each member identify his/her biases concerning alternative and other forms of education, and at devising personally effective strategies for minimizing or neutralizing such biases in data collection and writing;
- e. familiarization with the nature of the quantitative and "objective" data available on each school, so that this information can be incorporated into the case studies;
- f. development of strategies for maximizing the contributions of the teachers, students and parents from the other alternative schools who will be site committee colleagues during each visit.

Most of this training will be accomplished by means of 'pilot' field or site visits to cooperating alternative schools or programs, with subsequent periods of discussion, analysis of field notes, and trial-writing of reports. We aim for a secure and imaginative field staff at the beginning of Year Two.

The downfall of many qualitative research projects of considerably lesser scope than the one proposed here has occurred in the preparation and/or later use of field notes. Two or more fieldworkers, observing in one or more settings, often see different aspects of the "same" phenomena and record them disparately -- using different organizing principles, vocabularies, criteria for inclusion, etc. We hope to minimize this problem in part through the training program just outlined, but more particularly via an adaptation of the daily note-writing and coding scheme outlined and used by Howard Becker et al. in the book Boys in White. During each site committee visit, fieldworkers will be expected to write, code, and file their notes on a daily basis and also to justify their choices of topics and codings to fellow committee members. Thus, in the middle of the second week, all members' notes, topically arranged, will be available for us, and the first draft of the case will normally be completed by the time the site committee adjourns.

Each case study will be similarly organized, since all will be based on notes prepared according to a common structure. This common format will in turn facilitate cross-case comparisons. Many different techniques for gathering data will be explored during the training/planning period. For example:

- semi-structured interviews with students, teachers, recent alumni, parents, administrators in the school and external to it in the system, elected officials, and students in associated conventional schools;
- content analyses of student publications, school statements and brochures, etc.
- observations of various school-related activities, such as social events, assemblies, plays, PTA meetings, school meetings;
- ethno-scientific interviews with a limited number of school members to ascertain their understandings of the 'domains' of "school," "teacher," "student," as well as core words in the argot of the particular school;
- a site committee member, perhaps one of those from another school, occupying the role of "student" for a week, or a part thereof, and keeping careful field notes of the experience;
- "spot observations" conducted at planned intervals during each day by all team members to determine who is present with the observer, in what setting, what each person is doing, etc. (Accumulation of such observations can produce a surprisingly rich set of data for later analysis);
- whenever possible and appropriate, participant observation duly recorded among the worker's field notes.

Service

Service activities will become fully operational in Year Two. We will continue the periodic mailings to interested alternatives and other groups as initiated in Year One. But these mailings will probably be increased -- and they will come increasingly to be marked by a new dimension: They will be used for disseminating the practical implications of Project findings as these become available. We hope eventually to produce materials intended to improve the effectiveness of various educational practitioners and decision-makers. Early versions of some of these materials can initially be circulated in the periodic mailings under discussion -- with a request

for feedback and revision. Some of these materials will, of course, be ultimately targeted for groups other than the alternative school staff who will probably be the major recipients of the Project's periodic mailings (e.g., for district administrators, parents, board members), and it will be desirable to seek other ways to reach such groups. Nevertheless, it may be highly desirable to send even such materials to our regular mailing list. In this way, they can become valuable consultants on materials targeted for other groups; and they can also become disseminators by forwarding such statements and seeking reactions to them as they deem desirable.

We will also make available to all of the schools where site visits are made, the service of documenting school effectiveness. Unlike what has long been standard practice in conventional schools, most alternatives are required to submit regular evaluation material, supplying annual evidence of their effectiveness. It will constitute a substantial service to participant schools -- and an inducement to district administrators as well -- for PAE to assume responsibility for the year's evaluation of each school where extended site visits are made.

Direct on-site assistance will also be extended to those alternatives where site visits are underway. Such assistance will primarily take two forms: (1) direct advice and aid with such matters as materials preparation, organizational development, and curriculum and activities selection; and (2) help and involvement in enabling participant schools to become alternatives centers in their own locales. Although alternatives people are not as likely today to seek the aid and advice of outsiders as were the recipients of such services from the Eight-Year Study, the relationships essential to the critical element of trust will have been initiated through the mailings described earlier. (See page 40.) The aid in enabling participant schools to become centers for nearby schools and programs will also contribute further to the development of trust. This service will place participant schools in the position of being able to serve others as centers of information and advice.

YEAR THREE

The third year is the most intensive with respect to data collection. The several major thrusts of the project will be thoroughly intertwined and mutually enriched, while at the same time preserving the autonomy and authenticity of each, as well as the free and independent inquiry of each investigator to gather data and reach conclusions within the schedule and budget.

Comparative Study

From the extensive and intensive surveys and all other aspects of the research mentioned above, a final set of questionnaires including sets of environment, process, accomplishment, and achievement items will be given to 30 selected alternative and 30 matched control schools. The matching, although not a complete ruling out of all rival causal hypotheses, will sample a corresponding conventional or "regular" school that is as alike as possible in student body, per student expenditures, location, and other relevant characteristics brought out in the second year. The schools will also be chosen within such important stratification factors as size and type, as discussed in a previous section. (See page 34.)

The third year comparative study will repeat the work of the second year, using a refined methodology. In addition it will focus on the critical comparison of alternative and matched control schools. It will be further enhanced by a growing theoretical and practical understanding of fundamental processes within alternative schools. The comparisons of indications on all the research constructs will be controlled for school and individual student characteristics; and the analyses will be carried out across all schools and students, and also on selected subgroups of boys and girls and other groupings to address the central questions of the inquiry. Both traditional multivariate procedures such as the general linear model and canonical analysis, as well as frontier statistical techniques of econometrics and psychometrics such as systems regressions and analysis of covariance structures, will be employed to control the analysis of the quasi-experimental data.

District-Level Organization

The second phase of our study of alternative education from a system-level perspective will attempt to answer the question "Does the existence of alternative schools have any significant impact on the school system as an organization?" Here, the individuals with whom we shall be dealing will be the district-level administrators, members of the board of education, system-wide community and parent groups, and teacher organization officials.

When one considers the relative numbers of students and teachers involved in secondary alternatives, it is not self-evident that any system-level effects can be tracked. Does the existence of choice for students and parents affect the feeling of community support for the schools? Or the community's attitude toward the responsiveness of the schools? Do alternatives improve or exacerbate relationships between the organized teaching profession and the school policy makers and administrators? Or have no effect on this relationship? Do alternatives create a sense of accomplishment or efficacy among district-level administrators -- make them more open to or more cautious about change? Does it affect the relationship between district and school-level administrators?

As effects within and among groups are tracked, the research team will be building indicators of system effects which deal directly with the concept of system renewal, e.g.:

- (1) System adaptability - The extent to which the system is able to take on new practices and slough off outmoded ones.
- (2) System responsiveness - The extent to which the system can respond to new demands from diverse community interest groups.
- (3) System efficacy - The extent to which system participants feel the system is effective in meeting the demands placed upon it.
- (4) System competitiveness - The extent to which the system can meet the challenge of educational options for students, i.e., private schools or other public school systems.

Although the emphases of the first and second phases of this investigation are quite different, the same twenty school systems will be involved and the data will be shared across the phases. The final product will consist of twenty discrete and interesting case studies in their own right.

However, the staff will employ an adaptation of the Rand Corporation comparative case study analysis technique to track variables across the twenty cases so that we can deal with such issues as the impact of size of school district on system-level effects; variance attributable to different patterns of initiating or organizing alternative schools; apparent strength of the relationship between alternatives and discrete effects, e.g., system competitiveness, across cases. Overall, the team hopes to be able to offer policy makers practical guidance about the utility of alternative schools as a strategy for school system renewal in secondary education.

Student Follow-Up Study

A follow-up study of alternative and conventional school graduates is also scheduled for the third year that will draw on the concepts and instrumentation of the first two years. The inquiry will address the following kinds of questions: What happens to young people in both groups at one and five years after their high school careers end? Do they go on to colleges and universities, trade and vocational schools, or into the marketplace? How successful are they in their post high school endeavors? Do they complete their programs, find employment, and carry forward ideals that arose in school? How do they rate their academic and social skills? What views do they hold about their high school experience? What views do they hold on contemporary social, economic, and cultural issues? To what extent are they informed about, and do they participate in, scientific, political, artistic, and other affairs of their community and nation?

Data for the follow-up study will be derived from two sources: a mail survey of all graduates of the prior year and of five years prior to the follow-up study. For purposes of rough estimation, assuming a 70 percent return on the prior year sample, and a 40 percent return on those graduating five years earlier, and graduating classes of 50 and 150 respectively for alternative and conventional schools, the expected sample sizes are 1,650 and 4,950 for the two types of schools. Special follow-up telephone interviews will be conducted on smaller 10 percent school samples, including both those that did and did not return the questionnaire to check the

possibility of sample bias in the return samples and replies to the questionnaire.

Service

The service activities described for Year Two will continue, including periodic mailings and effectiveness documentation and direct assistance for schools where site study is continuing. It is anticipated that inquiries from and correspondence with alternatives and others not directly involved in the project will increase considerably during each year.

Work will continue during the third year toward building, cataloging, and duplicating a repository of materials to be made available to those interested in developing and/or studying alternative education.

YEAR FOUR

Year Four will be devoted to three tasks: completing and integrating the three years of effort and the four thrusts of the project; writing and editing a series of book-length reports for the many audiences for the study; and establishing the center or repository of study materials for practitioners and future investigators. Each of these activities deserves further discussion and comment here.

Although a series of meetings of the principal investigators are projected during the first three years of the project and although nearly all analyses will be complete by the end of the third year, it will be necessary to meet for two more extended sessions during the fourth year. The first of these will take place during the beginning of Year Four. It will involve not only the principal investigators and selected colleagues but also members of the Steering Committee and representatives of the Advisory Council and the Research Advisory Board, thus involving practitioners, staff and possibly students from participant schools, and representatives of funding agencies, and related large-scale studies (Appendix C). Each of the principal investigators will present her and his results, and findings will be discussed and interpreted by all. The discussions will be taped, summarized, and preserved. The purposes of these discussions are to suggest: further mutual enrichments of the separate thrusts of the study (and possibly, further analyses of the multiple sets of data); broader and deeper theoretical policy and practical implications of the results; and likely strategies and vehicles for dissemination and implementation of the findings within American education. Each investigator should benefit greatly from these discussions and incorporate the insights from the discussions into her and his writings.

Raywid and Walberg will edit a book summarizing the plans, methods, results, interpretations, and implications of the project. The book will contain chapters, some co-authored, others single authored, on the premises and overview of the project, the philosophical, psychological, and content analysis; the synthesis of previous research; the quantitative analyses; the qualitative findings; the governance, organization, and economic results; and conclusions and implications. In addition, the principal

investigators of each of the major thrusts of the PAE study will write more extensive research and practitioner monographs on their parts of the study, and Walberg will write several articles on the technical aspects of the quantitative research. Co-authors will be sought from among the project's constituent groups (Steering Committee, Advisory Council, participant sponsors, Research Advisory Board and participating schools) to work with the Project Director on a publications series to be addressed to the project's several audiences -- i.e., alternative school staff, school administrators, school boards, parents, state officials with education-related authority and responsibilities.

All royalties from these writings will be used to support the repository for alternative education study materials. Raywid will collect all study materials and be responsible for establishing or choosing a repository or center for their permanent storage and continued use. Indiana University, the University of Massachusetts, and Hofstra University are current candidates by virtue of their leadership in alternative education. But because of the national and historical significance of PAE, larger university research libraries, and the Library of Congress, will receive primary consideration.

CONCLUSION

This completes the story of our plans to date for a landmark inquiry into secondary education. It is not a modest proposal because, as we have tried to show, a more modest solution could have little chance against the odds posed by the challenges of our time. We have doubts as to what might be expected in the wake even of the finest research -- or of the recommendations of the most distinguished panel -- or of the demonstration efforts of the most dedicated and talented practitioners. But a venture that could combine these several kinds of effort, and more -- strengthening each with the coordinated support of all the others -- gathering large numbers and diverse specialties and interests in the restoration of American secondary education ... that just might matter.

We urge your participation and support.

APPENDIX A

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

DRAWN FROM DATA COLLECTED ON FOUR
ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS*

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Following are statements of conclusions that are generally true based on fourteen years of data collected from four alternative school programs over the past five calendar years. The data were collected from pupils, teachers, parents, administrators, aides using: systematic observations, interviews, questionnaires, parent reports, community person reports, examination of pupil products and other measures. Some evidence exists to support each of these statements and much exists to support most of them. They can suggest hypotheses for those wishing to do further research on alternative programs.

I. Alternative School Programs:

1. Have general objectives that are similar to the objectives of the programs to which they are alternatives.
 - a. offer alternative means to reach objectives
 - b. adjust method and content to meet the needs of particular groups of pupils
 - c. offer enrichment experiences beyond those available in regular programs
2. Produce extensive conflict with programs to which they are an alternative, including informal opposition from professionals and lay persons.
3. Schedule time in terms of tasks and activities which often are measured in days and weeks rather than in 55 minute or shorter periods of time. The rate of learning is flexible and negotiable. Time is organized according to the amount needed to produce a product or provide an experience rather than for synchronized movement of other individuals.

*Reproduced with permission of the first author from Changing Schools: An Occasional Newsletter on Alternative Public Schools, 1976, 4, (No. 4), pp. 3-6.

4. Offer teaching-learning modes which are markedly different from regular programs even though alternative programs usually make use of text assignments, tests, carnegie units, grade levels, and similar regular program devices. These are used in ways that are unique to the product of the experience that the student has contracted for. Alternative programs also make use of libraries, laboratories, and out-of-school facilities.
5. Alternative programs place emphasis on personal-social growth as well as emphasis on intellectual achievement. This is accomplished through planned group programs, family organizations, and a planned and evaluated personal-social support system.
6. Students and teachers who participate in alternative programs elect to be included and are selected by a systematic process.
7. Personnel involved in alternative programs have high morale, have low drop-out rates for pupils, but may have higher dropout rates for faculty.
8. Are better evaluated, have better program wide planning, have given their goals more examination and emphasis.
9. Include parents in meaningful ways and develop strong parental commitment to the program.
10. Are organized into small units of from 10 to 150 pupils and 6 or 8 adults.

II. Alternative School Pupils:

1. Are selected and elected in the program structure.
2. Have more responsibility for own conduct and learning.
3. Expect to learn from peers and accept responsibility to help peers learn.
4. Express dissatisfaction with traditional school program or organization.
5. Programs are individualized.
6. Are involved in a program which has enrichment or therapeutic components.
7. Are likely to be involved in a community project. ✓
8. Contacts with teachers are one to one or in a small group. ✓
9. Are closely scrutinized by "regular" teachers, administrators, and the community, especially if the alternative school program is housed with a conventional school program.

10. Participate in planning of learning, establishment and enforcement of rules, and evaluation of cognitive and personal-social learning.
11. Are a major source of data to the evaluator. If education is what students perceive as happening to them, the students' reports of their perceptions provide valuable data.
12. Have much parent support due to their parents involvement in the alternative program.
13. Are highly loyal to the alternative program.
14. Judge they and the alternative program are "special."
15. Are more apt to focus on education rather than schooling.

III. Alternative School Teachers:

1. Have directly applied to participate and are selected by project administrators alone or are selected by a combination of administrators and existing project teachers.
2. Are extensively involved in joint planning and evaluation of the content of instruction, the teaching-learning methods, the overall program, individual pupils, and other teachers. They are usually not involved in formal organized evaluation of administrators.
3. Have long range goals and expectations: for the program, for the content of their instruction, for the contribution they are making to the entire program, for pupils, but not necessarily for themselves.
4. Place much emphasis on immediate objectives, and on the pupil behaviors and activities necessary to accomplish the goals and objectives. ✓
5. Are involved in a wide variety of teaching and learning experiences.
6. Discipline students through conferencing, obtaining commitments, holding pupils accountable, expecting self-discipline of pupils. ✓
7. Use complex recordkeeping systems to record pupils' behaviors in both personal-social and academic areas. ✓
8. Have much emotional involvement with pupils and with other teachers. Teachers change emotionally as a result of their participation in alternative programs.
9. Are involved in high-risk activities concerning: the content of instruction, the environments in which the teaching-learning

occurs, the emotional conditions that surround the teaching and learning. ✓

10. Provide strong peer support as an ongoing part of the program.
11. Are involved in long, irregular hours extending to 60 to 80 hours of work.

IV. Administrators of Alternative School Programs:

1. Are a dominant and crucial force in the program.
2. Insist on heavy self-evaluation and program evaluation and use the results to strengthen and shape the program.
3. Become increasingly skilled and creative at structuring, at constructive pupil accounting and personnel accounting, and at all other components of supportive and facilitating administrative skills and educational accountability.
4. Interact intensively with teachers, pupils, parents, community persons, outside teachers and administrators concerning significant educational issues.
5. Become vividly aware of the importance of and interrelationships between cognitive and affective education, and the contributions and limitations of each.
6. Work extended hours, at an extended range of administrative and leadership tasks, with individuals and groups from a large number of populations.
7. From their immersion in vital activities, miss the advantages of selective memory and awareness that may be available to an "office" administrator.
8. Are forced to reexamine accepted institutional regulations, traditions, power group influences, and administrative and instructional practices.
9. May become an attractive scapegoat for dissidents who are normally attacking administrators.
10. Build complimentary relationships between flexibility and organization.
11. Mediate between the program and other forces to promote an environment of creativity and responsibility for alternative teachers and pupils.
12. Succeed more excessively and fail more miserably than other administrators.

V. Parents of Pupils Involved in Alternative School Programs:

1. Are extensively involved in alternative programs.
2. Where pupils are selected because the program is built to provide unique services, parents are often involved in the screening of students and are usually asked to make a commitment to support and participate in the program.
3. Parents often volunteer their services and make personal and material contributions to the success of the program.
4. Parent participation in activities connected with the alternative program usually leads to the influencing and the receiving supportive of the alternative program.

VI. Community Persons Involved in Alternative School Programs:

1. Judge themselves to be an important part of the school program because they contribute directly to instruction, dialogue with teachers and pupils on important issues, and participate in evaluation and analysis.
2. Extend curricular possibilities sometimes further than the program design.
3. Create direct learning experiences which stimulate intellectual and social development, help pupils to become aware of career opportunities and requirements. ✓
4. Usually become members of the alternative program's support team, have increased ownership in the program.
5. Have increased opportunities to directly experience the school program.
6. Teach the program participants increased ways to utilize social agencies, and may reduce future social burdens. ✓
7. May resist extensive demands of personal resources or time.
8. Have increased opportunities for in-put on goals, objectives, and learning activities where these influence the community.

APPENDIX B

HYPOTHESES REGARDING
ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL GOVERNANCE, ORGANIZATION, AND FINANCE

1. Alternative programs are more likely than traditional schools in the same school systems to treat their staff as members of "professional bureaucracies," in the sense described by Mintzberg: Professional bureaucracies are designed to acknowledge the complexity of the professional's work, and rely on monitoring of inputs (e.g., instruction) and outputs (e.g., student achievement) as methods or organizational control or coupling. It is our belief that in contrast, traditional large city school systems tend to treat their staff as parts of a "technical bureaucracy" and have developed extensive sets of rules for governing their conduct. These technical bureaucracies do not recognize the interpersonal complexity of teaching, do not account for legitimate ways of avoiding the spirit of rules, and tend to produce alienated staff members uninterested in developing professional relationships with students. The PAE research effort will allow us to adduce quite useful data on the operation of professional bureaucracies.
2. Staff and student morale will be higher in alternative schools than in traditional schools in the same school districts. In addition, both staff and students will have a greater sense of control over their destiny than is the case in traditional schools. Morale, while rarely showing as an important predictor of student or staff success, is an important variable in its own right. Students' control over their fate has been shown to be associated with achievement in several studies. We expect that in both the case of students and faculty members this will be an important variable.
3. Students and faculty will be less alienated from the alternative programs than is the case in traditional schools within the same district. Alienation has to do not only with feelings of power, but also with involvement in school activities, acknowledgement of the school's normative system, involvement with other people in the school (thereby contributing to the development of a school community), and the development of a sense of meaning around school activities. This concept will prove useful for investigating both students and faculty, and there are well validated instruments available for use with each.
4. There will be less specialization by function in alternative as opposed to traditional schools. Faculty and students alike will approach the teaching-learning process in a way which is more integrated. There will be fewer people saying "that's not my job" and fewer signs of attempts to break curricular and other responsibilities into small components.
5. Alternative schools will be viewed as healthier places to work than are traditional schools in the same school systems.

6. There will be a greater sense of institutional jeopardy in the alternative as opposed to the traditional schools in the same school district. The school will be seen as having to justify its existence at every budget session. The consequence will be heightened commitment on the part of staff, students, and parents. Erickson and Nault have documented this sort of phenomenon in private schools, and have suggested that the sense of jeopardy may be a key ingredient in enabling private schools to elicit parental involvement and assistance.
7. The "organizational metabolism" of alternative schools will differ from that of traditional schools in the same school system. By metabolism, we mean the induction and transmission of faculty members through the school. Alternative schools, for example, are apt to have a much higher degree of control over the selection of new faculty members than are traditional schools in the same district. Staff members are more likely to be involved in the selection process. Staff, on the other hand, appear to last a shorter period of time in alternative schools than is the case in traditional schools in the same district.

Moreover, our early hunch is that the alternative schools are selecting a different type of teacher. For the most part, we see these schools as selecting younger, differently trained faculty members than do traditional schools.

8. Alternative programs are financed differently than are traditional schools. For the most part, we believe that we will find alternative schools having more control over their budgets and hence giving the school manager greater discretion over how funds are spent.

There is some dispute as to whether alternative schools cost more or less than traditional schools. In our preliminary investigation this question appears to be a very difficult one to answer, especially for public alternatives. The reason for the difficulty is that there is tremendous diversity in the manner in which costs are assigned to units like schools. Some systems allocate fixed charges like central office support, depreciation, maintenance to separate buildings; others do not. Some consider average teacher salaries when considering the cost of operating a school, others only the cost of the personnel assigned to the school site. All these variables make estimation of the cost of alternative education difficult, but we will attempt to obtain comparative cost data.

9. Parents of students in alternative schools will feel that they have more control over the education of their children than do parents of children in traditional schools in the same school district. If true, this would have obvious consequences for the support of public schools and also for the possibility of involving parents in the operation of the schools.

APPENDIX C

MAJOR STUDIES OF AMERICAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CURRENTLY UNDERWAY --

- The base-year data have recently been completed on a longitudinal study of the impact of secondary education on students. The study, "High School and Beyond," conducted by James Coleman, involves students from 1116 high schools, including 30 alternative schools. Eventually 75,000 students are to be involved in the study which surveys and will periodically follow up sophomores and seniors on their attitudes and aspirations -- as well as test them on cognitive achievement and abilities. Although Professor Coleman's contract with the funding agency (National Center for Education Statistics) specifies that his data are not to be released, he feels that since PAE is funded by NIE (which is bureaucratically related to NCES), accessibility might be obtained.
- The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching last September launched a "comprehensive study of the American high school" titled "Excellence in Education." A staff of up to seven researchers will be visiting schools to study them, their curricula, and their teachers. The project will also review the existing literature on secondary education and seek to fill in the gaps in earlier research via surveys, document review, and visits. The study will issue reform proposals and a set of grants will be awarded to pilot projects in schools reflecting or implementing these proposals. We have talked with Paul Houts, the director of the study, who seems receptive to the possibility of collaboration and might give serious consideration to a proposal for an appropriate mode of cooperation.
- The National Academy of Education is conducting a study of "The Value Assumptions Underlying American Educational Policy and Practice." They are looking for "value premises, implications, and contradictions -- particularly those related to issues of equity, quality, and pluralism." The panel conducting the study will recommend a new curricular core for middle schools and secondary schools, growing out of their study. Although the study will not undertake fresh empirical inquiry, it is concerned to find out what we profess with relation to secondary education, what we actually do, and what we ought to profess and do. Dr. Stephen Bailey, President of NAE, has been the major spokesman for the study which is now in the data-gathering stage. Since PAE has a special interest in the pluralism question, Project files on related matters are extensive, and we have offered to make these available to the values study staff in the Project office.
- The National Association of Secondary School Principals and the National Association of Independent Schools are co-sponsoring a study announced as the most thorough examination of the high school since the Conant Report. The study will combine extensive review of the existing evidence with visits, observations, and interviews, in order to determine: (1) the purposes of American secondary education, including their conflicts, and the effects of these on schools, students, and teachers;

(2) The adequacy of prevalent assumptions regarding adolescents and how they learn; (3) The high school curriculum, and its relation to educational purposes on the one hand, and to students on the other; and (4) Modifications needed in the high school in light of both the foregoing and the school's institutional history. This study is just being organized, under the direction of Ted Sizer.