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A CASE STUDY OF
THE WORTHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL
ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Richard Jeffrey Lear, B.S., M.A.

The Ohio State University
1976

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CHAPTER ONE:  INTRODUCTION

The history of education during the past quarter century has been characterized by drastic upheaval and demand for change. As one might expect, this upheaval and cry for change parallels and is inextricably intertwined with similar or matching upheaval and change in our society at large. Indeed, in most instances, educational change has been an attempt to adapt or respond to these societal events.

The 1952 Supreme Court decision in Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education declared that "separate but equal" was, in effect, a contradiction in terms. Public schools became a battleground—and a tool—in the civil rights struggles against white racism in the sixties, a struggle which continues today under the guise of debate over the busing of students to achieve integration.

The launching of Sputnik by the Soviet Union in 1957 precipitated calls for a more rigorous academic program in the schools, and resulted in the national curriculum projects of the Sixties: Bruner's "structure of the disciplines," a veritable flood of new curricula, textbooks, and sophisticated technological hardware.
Student unrest at colleges and universities, beginning with the Free Speech Movement in the early Sixties and culminating in the protest movement against the U.S. war in Vietnam, spread eventually to many high schools throughout the nation. This, along with a general increase in the use of violence in our society (which also spread to the schools), resulted in student protests, anxiety over personal safety, armed police patrolling the halls of public schools, demands for stronger and more effective discipline. At the same time, students were demanding that schools show a greater regard for their rights as citizens and, for the most part, were being supported by the courts.

As school budgets, requests for more tax dollars, and teacher militancy increased, the general public began to demand greater accountability from the schools, ushering in an era of management-by-objectives and vocational education.

Looking back on this period of change and innovation, Pinar noted that, "While the possibilities for rearrangement of curriculum structures and strategies have not been exhausted, they have been exhausting, and one at times hopes for rest before the next prepackaged proposal makes its appearance."
If educators have not been permitted a rest, the rate of change has, at least, slowed somewhat in the mid-Seventies. The spread of management-by-objectives, behavioral objectives, and other accountability-related schemes continues; but, generally, educators appear to be joining most of the rest of the nation in what appears to be a period of breath-catching. One senses that the end of American involvement in the Indochina War and the passing of the Watergate affair hints at a breakpoint, an opportunity for a national shift in direction and tone, but an opportunity which seems to have been met thus far with a wearied, superficial self-examination resulting in a profound uncertainty at all levels of our national being and a nostalgia for a return to a fanciful things-as-they-used-to-be world. This nostalgia accounts in part for the cry for more basics in our schools.

Given the current social and educational milieu just described, it is somewhat astonishing to observe the rapid growth of a recent phenomena in public schools. Many school districts in the past few years have begun to provide students with optional programs in which the learning environment, goals, and processes are in many ways significantly different from those offered in traditional school programs. These optional programs have come to be known generally as alternative schools or programs. The
International Consortium on Options in Public Education (ICOPE), based at Indiana University, has estimated that there were as many as 7500 alternative schools or programs in operation in public schools in the United States in September, 1975.2

Of the many attempts at educational reform over the past twenty years, the alternative school movement appears to hold the most promise of significantly altering the form and substance of schooling in the United States. Most other reforms—the aforementioned national curriculum projects, team teaching, modular scheduling, programmed textbooks, performance contracting, the currently popular management-by-objectives and behavioral objectives, to name the most obvious—are, or were, simply refinements of existing techniques. They represent what Newman and Oliver describe as the "Great Society" approach to problems. That is, these reforms emphasize new techniques and methods without questioning the basic assumptions which underlie and are often part of the problem. The Great Society technique calls for:

bold and inventive new approaches to the solution of serious social problems, but the basic tasks are seen as unfinished business, or clean-up operations, within a general context of unprece-dented prosperity and social accomplishment. There is no tendency to debate or question ultimate goals, but only to confront practical
problems of putting existing institutions to work, of devising programs to fulfill unquestioned objectives. The solution of problems as construed in the great society approach does not require changes in the institutional structure of society at large.3

The very concept of options available by choice and the nature of many of the alternatives commonly proposed confront some of the basic questions of education from a new value base and are likely, therefore, to suggest new processes, new goals, different structures, different roles for people in schools—and certainly different problems. Alternative schools have consequently engendered considerable professional interest in recent years.

Several colleges and universities have established programs which specialize in preparing teachers to work in alternative schools. The University of Massachusetts, under the dynamic leadership of Dwight Allen, was one of the first major schools to do this; the largest and best known program is at Indiana University. The School of Education at Indiana has a master's degree program in alternative education which prepares teachers through the use of a field-based program wherein students spend a year's internship working in an alternative school. The University of Vermont, Mankato State College, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, and University of North Carolina are also currently involved in preparing educators to work
in alternative schools. Still other institutions—the University of Colorado and Grand Valley State College in Michigan, to cite just two—are considering the establishment of similar programs at the graduate level. Many teacher-training institutions routinely place student teachers in alternative programs throughout the country, where they often play important and crucial roles.

Both professional and popular literature abound with articles on alternative schools. The NASSP Bulletin, National Elementary Principal, Phi Delta Kappan, and the Harvard Educational Review have each had a special issue on alternative schools; 4 many popular magazines, such as Better Homes and Gardens, have run major articles describing alternatives and extolling their virtues. 5 Vern Smith, of Indiana University and ICOPE, reported that over 1000 articles had been written about alternative schools by the end of 1974. 6

Most of this writing can be placed in one of two categories: writing which deals with the general issue of alternative education—philosophical statements, rationales, critiques—or descriptive writings, often anecdotal in nature, of some aspects of a particular alternative school (either real or imagined). The March, 1973, issue of the Phi Delta Kappan, entitled "Special Issue on Alternatives," illustrates this clearly. 7 Seven articles are listed under
the heading "Analysis, Criticism, and Observation," and seven articles under the heading "A Sampling of the Possibilities." The three remaining articles discuss teacher education and alternatives, and increasing concern for teacher-training institutions.

In spite of the wealth of writing on the topic of alternative education, there appear to be few detailed accounts of one public alternative school containing a history of its origin, development and implementation, and a description and analysis of the program. The Parkway Program in Philadelphia, generally described as the first public alternative school, has been subjected to intense publicity and examination since its inception in 1969. The Berkeley, California, schools have also received massive public and professional attention because they have led the nation's schools in developing and offering a system of alternative programs for students. But these alternatives are different from most—they served as prototypes and were launched amid much publicity, they received massive outside funding, and they were large programs in large urban areas beset with a wide range of problems. The circumstances surrounding most public alternative schools are considerably different.

Certainly the careful examination of one alternative program can yield valuable information for educators.
While certain aspects of any program will be idiosyncratic in nature, there will be considerable information that is common to other programs. Such an examination can provide much-needed information for three distinct groups: those who might be considering implementation of an alternative program in the public schools; those already working in alternative schools who could benefit from the insights gleaned from another alternative program; and those students or practitioners of education who wish to gain a clearer understanding of what appears to be emerging as a major trend in education.

This paper, then will examine in detail one public alternative school: the Worthington, Ohio, High School Alternative Program. Chapter Two will discuss some factors leading to the development of alternatives, describe the most common types of alternative programs, and enumerate some of the problems and pitfalls in the area of alternative education. Chapter Three will trace the history, development, and implementation of the Worthington Alternative Program, and will describe the program's major components and mode of operation during its first year of existence. Chapter Four will include an evaluation of the Alternative Program, along with recommendations for strengthening certain program components. The evaluation derives from four major sources: interviews with students in the program, various questionnaires used as part of the
staff's evaluation, a parent questionnaire, and an analysis of the program from my perspective as a participant observer in the program, a technique which has been widely used by anthropologists and sociologists for many years. Chapter Five will state conclusions about the Worthington Alternative Program and will raise questions about the alternative school movement in general and its place in the larger arena of public education in the United States. Hopefully, this paper will help to fill an obvious gap in current educational literature by illuminating some of the forces at work in the field of alternative schools.
NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE


CHAPTER TWO: PUBLIC ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

This chapter will discuss four aspects of the alternative schools phenomenon: the major factors leading to the appearance of public alternative schools; the rationale for developing alternatives in public schools; the major types of alternative schools in existence; and problems common to many alternative programs. The discussions and descriptions which follow are presented only to provide the reader with a brief summary of these aspects of alternative schools, particularly the first section, which discusses the major factors which have contributed to the development of public school alternatives. These matters have been examined elsewhere in much greater depth by others more perceptive and articulate than this writer. Many books, articles, and papers dealing with these topics have been included in the bibliography of this paper, and the interested reader is encouraged to read and study these writings for more detailed explanations and insights than those summarized below.

It is impossible, of course, to pinpoint precisely the root causes of any phenomenon in education, but the
impetus for reform which has resulted in the growing demand for alternatives in public schools appears to have four major sources. These sources are: rapid and far-reaching changes in American society, and the increasingly vocal criticism accompanying these changes; radical criticism of the existing school system; the growth of humanistic psychology; and the influence of the free school movement outside public education.

Societal Change and Criticism

In recent years, many writers have pointed out that we live in a highly technological, industrialized society which is based on the unquestioned assumption that more is better, which depends for its survival on continued expansion (in large measure through methods that are destructive of the environment) and on the continued exploitation and oppression of large numbers of people, which is largely out of control, and which seems increasingly senseless and destructive.¹ Not only is change occurring at an exponential rate, but we are faced for the first time with a future which is qualitatively different from futures of the past, what Margaret Mead has called a "prefigurative culture,"² wherein the guidelines and standards of the past do not seem to work. Many factors appear to support this view of modern society:
• a major war would destroy most or all of mankind;
• a scientific technology which can create made-to-order human beings is, for all practical purposes, present;
• the natural resources of our planet are clearly finite;
• in spite of limits to our resources, technology exists which has made assumptions of scarcity unnecessary with regard to the basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter on a world-wide basis;
• a technology which has made it possible to flash a picture halfway around the world in 1/5 of a second lends credence to McLuhan's assertion of a "global village," raising insistent questions about the validity of national chauvinism;
• half of the hospital beds in the U.S. are occupied by "mentally ill" people;
• suicide is the second leading cause of death among teenagers, and is rising rapidly;
• government is more and more clearly in close alliance with the rich and the powerful and is increasingly less able or less willing, or both, to respond to the expressed needs to the people it governs.
To increasing numbers of people of all ages, it seems clear that reliance on old ways of coping with problems—coercion or threat of coercion, reliance on technology and science for solutions to problems that are neither technological nor scientific in nature, submission to authority—is inappropriate and increasingly destructive.

At the same time, many Americans active in the Civil Rights Movement were raising compelling questions about our individual and collective morality. The racist nature of our society, long ignored by most white Americans, was revealed with incredible clarity during the Sixties, and became a part of our national consciousness in many ways: the sit-ins and marches throughout the South; the events of Selma, Alabama, and many other cities; the riots in most large Northern cities; the articulate, if diverse, voices of black leaders, from Martin Luther King to Malcolm X to Eldridge Cleaver; the assassinations of King and Malcolm X; the racist overtones of U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia; the racial discrimination throughout our society which forced such a high percentage of young black men to be drafted into the armed services to fight in Vietnam; the systematic destruction of black leaders by the law enforcement agencies of the government.

The Antiwar Movement of the mid- and late Sixties posed further questions about the intent and morality of the U.S.
government. The frequent and general disregard for the individual rights of American citizens evidenced by those in government positions, the increasingly apparent nature of American neo-colonialism throughout the world, and the continued government persistence in waging a war which a majority of Americans had come to believe was immoral helped to create profound doubt about our purposes and ideals. As the primary institution charged with passing on the cultural traditions of society, schools came under increasing scrutiny and criticism.

**Radical Criticism of Schools**

In *Crisis in the Classroom*, Charles Silberman wrote that "to study American education in the last third of the twentieth century is to be struck by a paradox." He notes that "the United States educational system appears to be superbly successful—on almost any measure, performing better than it did ten, twenty, fifty, or a hundred years ago." But he also makes one of the most thoroughly researched and damning indictments of public schools ever written and perhaps best summarized by this statement:

Most of all, however, I am indignant at the failures of the public schools themselves. "The most deadly of all possible sins," Erik Erikson suggests, "is the mutilation of a child's spirit." It is not possible to spend any prolonged period visiting public school classrooms without being appalled by the mutilation visible everywhere—mutilation of spontaneity, of joy in learning, of pleasure in creating, of sense of self. The public schools—those "killers of the
dream," to appropriate a phrase of Lillian Smith's—
are the kind of institution one cannot really
dislike until one gets to know them well.
Because adults take the schools so much for
granted, they fail to appreciate what grim, joy-
less places most American schools are, how
oppressive and petty are the rules by which they
are governed, how intellectually sterile and
esthetically barren the atmosphere, what an
appalling lack of civility obtains on the part
of teachers and principals, what contempt they
unconsciously display for children as children.5

Though the current roots of radical educational criti-
cism go back to the writings of Paul Goodman in the early
Fifties, it has been only in the last dozen years that such
criticism has become widespread. The critics are too
numberous to list, but their attacks on the schools follow
these lines:6

• whether as a result of "mindlessness" or of deliberate
political manipulation, schools are inhumane, des-
tructive of human values;
• they are lock-step, overly competitive, teacher-
oriented;
• they are rigid, inflexible, unresponsive to the needs
or demands of students and parents;
• they place a premium on efficiency, economy, and order;
• they systematically deny to students basic human rights
guaranteed them under the Constitution;
• they insist on and reward conformity, passiveness, and
submissiveness;
• they stifle creativity, punish independence, and destroy the natural joy of learning most people possess prior to schooling;
• they help create a "consumer mentality" by packaging knowledge and dispensing it as if it were a commodity;
• they substitute memorization for understanding, fragmentation for integration, and misrepresent both as learning;
• they are racist, elitist, and sexist;
• they invalidate personal experience by proceeding as if value and culture reside outside the individual (and within the institution);
• they are structured and operated in such a way that to succeed is to succumb to fragmentation, alienation, anomie, loss of self.

Growth of Humanistic Psychology

The theories of self and of learning which have evolved out of the work of various humanistic psychologists, most notably Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, have provided a way of viewing human growth and learning which is a radical departure from the more traditional, fatalistic beliefs of Freudian and behavioralist psychologies. These new theories of self are based on the belief that individuals have the potential to control their lives to a significant degree; and that, if left free to do so, individuals will
act in ways that are life-enhancing to themselves and to others. Rogers has proposed a number of learning principles which reflect these beliefs:

• human beings have a natural potentiality for learning;
• significant learning takes place when the subject matter is perceived by the student as having relevance for his own purposes;
• learning which involves a change in self organization—in the perception of oneself—is threatening and tends to be resisted;
• those learnings which are threatening to the self are more easily perceived and assimilated when external threats are at a minimum;
• when the threat to self is low, experience can be perceived in differentiated fashion and learning can proceed;
• much significant learning is acquired through doing;
• learning is facilitated when the student participates responsibly in the learning process;
• self-initiated learning which involves the whole person of the learner—feelings as well as intellect—is the most lasting and pervasive;
• independence, creativity, and self-reliance are all facilitated when self-criticism and self-evaluation are basic and evaluation by others is of secondary importance;
the most socially useful learning in the modern world is the learning of the process of learning, a continuing openness to experience, and incorporation into oneself of the process of change.7

Influence of Free Schools

The years since the mid-Sixties have seen a rapid rise in the number of independent schools which fall under the general rubric of "free schools." Most were begun in specific reaction to the conditions within public schools discussed above; while there are many shapes and varieties of free schools, there seem to be two general types: those that believe in the notion of freedom for students and the natural, "organic" growth of children, and those with a strong political orientation, usually in opposition to what they see as the oppressive nature of public schools, and that view schools as vehicles for widespread social change.8 Even with their shortcomings and failures, the contributions of free schools have been and continue to be considerable and of major importance. The fundamental questioning about the nature of schools and of education which they have helped generate, their focus on the child and his positive potentialities, upon process as curriculum, upon the political aspects of schooling, upon new relationships between students and teachers, the high degree of parental involvement which is common to these schools, and
the creation and maintenance of new and workable alternatives to traditional education have helped to create pressure for reform within public schools.

David Armstrong has noted the political power of those families typically involved in and drawn toward the free school movement. He points out that these families are generally highly educated, articulate upper middle class—precisely the group which has been traditionally associated with solid support of public schools. It is likely, therefore, that public education will embrace some of the objectives and programs presently in effect in many free schools in order to retain public support.

II

As alternative programs began to appear in public schools, various rationales were developed for justifying the need for such programs. Reasons differ from one district to another, depending on each particular district's needs, goals, and political circumstances. Generally, however, justification today tends to focus on such reasons as making allowances for different learning styles, for providing a different environment for the disaffected, and so on. Vernon Smith of Indiana University's International Consortium for Options in Public Education (ICOPE), has made a compelling case for providing options by citing some of their many potential advantages. His reasons supply what
is probably the most complete rationale for alternatives in public schools:

- the concept of options within public education is consistent with a democratic society and a free-world economy; freedom and diversity are desirable in education;
- options provide greater opportunity for community involvement in educational decision making;
- alternatives can be developed to be responsive to needs of minorities; since alternatives are options they do not require consensus;
- alternatives can operate as voluntary racial integration models within a community, possibly eliminating the need for forced busing;
- alternatives provide a strategy for making schools more responsive to families dissatisfied with conventional schools;
- the act of choosing from alternatives has beneficial effects: loyalty and affiliation, greater degree of involvement, need to think about choices;
- alternatives are a way of honoring different psychological and learning theories;
- alternatives provide for and reward a wider range of teaching styles than do conventional schools;
alternatives provide the opportunity for development of significantly different curricula;
accountability will be enhanced when clientele attend entirely by choice; feedback will be more immediate.10

The most widely recognized advocate of alternatives in public schools is Mario Fantini, who espouses a wide range of alternative schools or programs within each school district or, for smaller schools, a series of alternatives shared by neighboring districts. His goal is for each student and his/her parents to have a choice of learning environments, thereby allowing for a better match of learning and teaching styles. His plan for this, which he calls "Public Schools of Choice," would "legitimize a range of viable instructional programs."11 He argues that, while a 1972 Gallup Poll showed that 60% of the American public was satisfied with public schools, 28% expressed dissatisfaction with schools; this group is entitled to other kinds of educational programs.12

In his book, Public Schools of Choice, Fantini lays down some important groundrules for public alternative schools. They can serve as an integral part of a rationale for creating alternative schools. He says that an acceptable alternative:
1. demonstrates adherence to a COMPREHENSIVE SET OF EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES—not particular ones. Proposals cannot, for example, emphasize only emotional growth at the expense of intellectual development. The converse is also true. Comprehensive educational objectives deal with work careers, citizenship, talent development, intellectual and emotional growth, problem solving, critical thinking, and the like.

2. does not SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASE THE PER STUDENT EXPENDITURE over that of established programs. To advance an idea which doubles or triples the budget will at best place the proposal in the category of ideal but not practical. An important factor for reformers to bear in mind is that the new arena will make wiser use of OLD money, not set up quests for add-on money.

3. does not ADVOCATE ANY FORM OF EXCLUSIVITY—racial, religious, or economic. Alternatives offered cannot deny equal access to any particular individual or group.

4. is not SUPERIMPOSED but a matter of choice for all participants—teachers, parents and students.

5. is viewed as ANOTHER WAY of providing education alongside the existing pattern, which continues to be legitimate. Alternatives are different from special programs for dropouts, unwed mothers, and the like.

6. includes a plan for EVALUATION. Fantini goes on to answer the question of what constitutes a legitimate educational option under these ground rules:

Public schools have a responsibility to equip each learner with the skills needed for economic, political, and social survival in the stage of civilization in which we find ourselves; at the same time, we must provide each learner with the tools needed for improving, transforming, reconstructing the elements of the environment generally recognized
as inimical to the noblest aspirations of the nation or as detrimental to the growth and development of the individual.

Speaking practically, public schools must provide opportunities for each learner to discover his talents. Careers in an advanced technological society are vastly different from those required in, say, agrarian America in the nineteenth century. The fact is that our public schools are necessarily manpower development centers, linking talent to economic careers. As such, public schools encompass economic "livelihood" objectives as an important set of educational ends. If an educational option discounted this set of objectives, it would be suspect as a legitimate alternative within the framework of public education.

This may be a roundabout way of saying again that public schools must deal with a comprehensive set of educational objectives, and that the legitimacy of any option is determined by the extent to which it adheres to the achievement of the entire set, not just of certain objectives.¹⁴

These statements by Smith and Fantini, which are, in general terms, representative of rationales commonly used in proposing public alternative schools, are clearly only distantly related to either the passionate writings of the Romantic critics or the overtly political analysis of many other school critics. Such a dramatic shift in rhetoric gives rise, of course, to questions of intentionality. One wonders whether this shift represents a felt necessity on the part of radical reformers who wish to subvert the present system, or an attempt on the part of moderates to defuse the movement for radical school reform. Such a shift may also be representative of an overall shift in the national mood, of a desire to speak with less strident
voices in our public dialogues. Whatever the reasons, proposals for alternatives have in recent years been less inflammatory, less polarizing, less avowedly political than in, say, 1971, when the Berkeley Unified School District Proposal Abstract to the U.S. Office of Education cited the need to combat institutional racism as a major factor in deciding to develop a system of alternative schools:

The Berkeley Alternative Schools Proposal will adopt as its central theme the issue of institutional racism—one of America's most urgent educational problems. The assumption is that racism is inextricably woven into the institutions of this country in their organizational structures, practices, and traditions, consistently resulting in unequal "payoffs" for non-whites.15

III

A wide variety of alternative schools and programs currently exists, making a clear-cut typology impossible. Virtually all writers on the topic stress the still-developing nature of public alternative schools, and point out that many alternative schools do not fit precisely any general definition because they tend to be developed by local educators to fit the particular circumstances of their local district. In addition, there is some disagreement as to whether alternative schools should be described according to organizational scheme, or philosophy, or content, or a combination of these; all of them, of course, have a direct bearing upon what a program becomes, and can
do. To date, then, there is no satisfactory means of describing concisely many types of alternatives which exists; Fantini, for instance, uses four different ways of describing alternative schools. The method used by Smith seems to be in most common usage; he sees six major types of alternative programs:

Schools Without Walls—with learning activities throughout the community and with much interaction between school and community.

Open Schools—with learning activities individualized and organized around interest centers within the classroom or building.16

Continuation Schools—with emphasis on learning programs for students in targeted populations.

Learning Centers—with a concentration of learning resources in one center available to all of the students in the community.

Multicultural Schools—with emphasis on cultural pluralism and ethnic and racial awareness.

Free Schools—with emphasis on greater freedom for students and teachers. This term is usually applied to nonpublic alternatives, but a very few are operating within public school systems today.17

Each of these may have any of several administrative relationships to other schools in the district.

Classroom alternative. The alternative may be a single classroom within a school which is organized to provide an alternative to the dominant mode of instruction. This is most common at the elementary level, where open classrooms are frequently the alternate choice; less often, one might find a Montessori classroom or a classroom
operated on principles of behavior modification. Classroom alternatives provide a district with the opportunity to move into the area of alternatives slowly, although in such situations the teachers involved are few in number and often isolated from one another, thereby depriving them of much-needed psychological support.

School-within-a-school. In this organizational scheme, two or more schools share the same building, each offering a different educational format. They may be completely independent of one another, or may be semi-autonomous and designed so that students from one program may take courses in another. Programs under this model may have separate facilities, but have the same administrative head. This is most common where a small alternative program is initiated and is viewed as a program within the traditional school. It has the advantage of being able to make full use of existing resources, which are often limited in separate alternative schools, especially in the areas of physical education, art, music, and laboratory sciences. Its most obvious disadvantage is in the area of autonomy.

Separate alternative school. The alternative school may be a separate, autonomous school which draws students from the geographic districts of several different conventional schools. While such a school may lack some of the physical resources the larger, traditional school may have,
and from which a school-within-a-school may benefit, it has the advantage of starting from scratch in developing new concepts of teaching and learning. Insufficient or poor planning, uncommitted staff, or insufficient time to create new forms may, however, turn this advantage into a dis-advantage.

Any of the six types of alternatives, using any of the three administrative arrangements, may be the only option available in a district, it may be one of a small number of options, or it may be part of a comprehensive, district-wide system of options. In some districts, any of these options may serve as an integration model for the district, with a population representative of the "racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic makeup of the total population of the community."18

To further complicate the matter of defining types of alternatives, many schools are a blend of two or more of these types. A multicultural school, for instance, might be a school without walls, a learning center might be an open school, and so on. The whole area of defining and describing alternative schools is in need of much additional work, and the development of a comprehensive typology will become increasingly important as alternatives continue to grow in number and variety.
IV

With the rapid changes occurring in our society and our world, and with the wide range of demands being made on schools today by seemingly countless groups and individuals, it is safe to say that no facet of our educational system is free of problems. Indeed, in many instances, it appears that the problems are overwhelming. Alternative schools have their share of problems as well; and in some cases, they have been so overwhelming that the alternative school has not survived them. Certain of the problems are common to any school situation, but are magnified because alternative schools represent a departure from the educational norm and frequently generate much suspicion and doubt among both community residents and members of the professional staff of the school district. And alternative schools invariably receive considerable publicity when they first begin.

Before moving to a description of the Worthington Alternative Program, the problems most frequently encountered in alternative schools should be discussed briefly. Two potential problem areas arise before an alternative school opens its doors: the questions of program leadership and of program planning, including staff selection.

Sound leadership is crucial to any program, but especially so in alternative schools. Wayne Jennings,
principal of the St. Paul Open School, maintains that leadership is the most important ingredient in producing significant and lasting change, and feels that every attempt should be made to see that the leader is happy and that he/she is willing to make a commitment to see the program through.19

Most people involved with alternative schools—administrators, teachers, and students—see the leader as fulfilling a somewhat different role than in regular school programs. The leader is seen not primarily as a decision-maker, or as a handler of discipline, or as a building manager, or as part of a "management team." A leader is more likely to be perceived as a spokesperson for the alternative school, someone comfortable with a group-centered leadership, and someone skillful at recognizing problems in their early stages, calling them to the attention of staff and students, and facilitating their solutions. These perceptions are often at odds with the expectations of other administrators in the district, who expect the alternative school administrator to fulfill the traditional function of an administrator and to do so in the conventional fashion.

A great many problems in alternative programs are caused by insufficient planning. From his experience as director of Philadelphia's Parkway Program, Leonard Finkelstein has developed a list of several key questions which must be answered in planning and implementing an
alternative program:

Will the alternative program be designed to serve a random sampling of the school population or will it be for a specific group such as gifted learners, the alienated, the bored, or underachievers? Where will the program be housed...?
Will the emphasis of the program be affective, cognitive, or both?
Can the program be autonomous within the school?
Will it have a budget of its own?
How will the learning environment be different?
What kind of structure do the goals seem to indicate a need for?
How independent will the program be from the rest of the school?
How will the program be administrated?
What will the program actually be?
How will it increase the potential for real learning?

Insufficient planning is often due to not having enough "lead time" before implementing a program, particularly when the program is begun as a response to intense political pressure. Occasionally, however, inadequate planning is a result of one of the most unfortunate aspects of the mythology surrounding alternative schools: the belief that effective planning cannot be accomplished because the discovery and development of new forms and relationships are part of the intended process and cannot be planned. This appears to be a holdover from the early days of the free school movement, where spontaneity was all-important and the planning of activities by adults was seen as antithetical to the goals of a child-centered environment, automatically viewed as an oppressive act. The history of independent free schools is littered with the corpses of schools which expired, more or less spontaneously,
as a result of this belief; the strongest and best free schools could—and did—both plan adequately and allow room for spontaneity. They also recognized, as do most kids, what George Dennison calls "the national authority of adults," which may be used in ways which enhance the lives of children rather than oppress them.

As with much mythology, however, this belief contains an element of truth: plans, expectations, visions of the future, whatever, often have a way of limiting the directions a program or process may take. But these plans, expectations, visions exist, at least implicitly, in all of us; they ought to be stated publicly so parents, students, and other teachers may make some judgments about whether or not a particular program matches their needs and interests. Moreover, carefully stated goals and objectives can be developed in such a way as to broaden rather than limit the spectrum of possible and acceptable modes of being, relating, learning, and living. Jennings believes an important part of early planning is a clear statement of goals "in terms of what a student will be like after completing the program—his/her characteristics: what he knows, feels, and can do."22

Another important aspect of planning is its source. Most school programs are conceived and developed by educators in the upper administrative echelons and then imposed
upon teachers, students, and parents. Smith, Fantini, Jennings, and most other writers and practitioners in the field of alternative education stress the need for community involvement in the planning and operation of alternative programs. A strong belief exists that "those closest to the action should have the biggest say in what goes on;" in alternative schools, that means parents, students, and teachers. Advisory groups of parents and/or other community members are the rule rather than the exception in alternative schools.

Careful planning and a clear statement of goals can anticipate and minimize problems in many areas, but problems of one sort or another are certain to arise. For the sake of convenience, the most common problems arising in alternative schools have been divided into two groups: external problems and internal problems. External problems are those which have to do primarily with the alternative program's relationships to the conventional school, the district, and the community, and are rarely, if ever, under the direct control of the alternative program. Internal problems are those which have to do specifically with the development, operation, and maintenance of the program, and which are more or less under the direct control of program members. Although these problems will be discussed separately, it should be understood that they overlap and
impinge upon each other in many ways.

In addition to the aforementioned need for community involvement at the planning stages, there appear to be four major problem areas in the category of external problems: the relationship of the alternative program to other schools in the district, the activities of students in the community during school hours, the effective explanation of the alternative program to those not directly involved with it, and certain cultural forces affecting the role of teachers.

The problem of relationships with conventional schools in the district is one which confronts virtually all alternative schools. The most serious concern is that many educators view alternative schools as representing, at the very least, an implicit criticism of the conventional schools they believe in and work in, and are therefore suspicious, or curious, or both, about an alternative school. Also, provisions must be made for alternative program students who wish to return to the regular school program. Finally, few alternative schools are totally independent of a regular school, and most often the two schools will have to deal with each other on an almost daily basis. The alternative school may share some facilities, students may take some classes in the regular program, and so on. Common understandings and agreements about exactly what the alternative school is and is attempting to do are
necessary at the outset. Continued attention to program autonomy is crucial. This is particularly so when the school-within-a-school scheme is utilized; sharing resources and operating under the same roof necessitates concessions, and it is frequently the larger and more conventional school which dominates.

School-without-walls alternative programs actively stress the use of community resources by its students; many other alternative schools as well attempt to make better use of the many and varied learning opportunities which any community has to offer. This often clashes with the conventional expectation that learning take place in the school; the result is that students who are not in the school building during school hours are perceived as not learning. Careful advance preparation is necessary to minimize problems in this area, as are frequent messages to the community about the educational benefits it has for young people, with specific examples of how students are learning from the use of community resources and facilities. The presence of community and business leaders on an alternative school advisory board would also have beneficent effects in this area.

The problem of communicating effectively to the community about an alternative school is often made more difficult by the large amount of publicity the program is likely to receive. Extravagant claims are often made or
unrealistic goals set under the pressure to explain or justify a new program. During the OSTI evaluation of Philadelphia's Parkway Program, for instance, it became clear to the evaluators that the early rhetoric of the program had become an obstacle to the current staff:

While we could examine Parkway's goals by looking at the early statements of its first and articulate director, John Bremer (or at the list of objectives developed by the first Evaluation Team and also based on John Bremer's vision), the early rhetoric of the Parkway Program has become an obstacle, even though Parkway continues to use that rhetoric in describing itself to the media. People involved with Parkway express combinations of hostility and guilt at the ringing phrases used to launch their program:

- "a mode of education in keeping with major traditions of American life"
- "education is not something done to children by teachers, it is something that teachers and children do together"
- "the city is also our curriculum because there is nothing to learn about but the city"
- "...education and politics are inseparable activities and...every political act is an educational act and every educational act is a political act"

The hostility and frustration expressed toward this rhetoric spring from three hard years of experiencing the attempts to translate the phrases into reality and of recognizing how difficult it is to do.24

Related to this, and as much an internal as an external problem, are certain cultural forces which affect innovative teachers in any new program. Sweenson has noted three of
these: the expectation of immediate, very positive results from a new program; a definition of teaching that does not include learning through experimentation; and the attitude that students should be loved for what they might be, rather than for what they are. 25 The potential problems each of these cultural forces presents to an alternative program are obvious, whether these forces are present in individuals outside or within the program.

Within an alternative program, five major problem areas typically appear: decision-making, freedom-responsibility tensions, curricular concerns, internal communications, and staff needs. Again, these areas are separated somewhat arbitrarily for purposes of discussion.

Allen Glatthorn of the Alternative School Project, in Elkins Park, Pa., has discussed some of the reasons for seeking a new process of decision-making within alternative programs, and has listed some principles upon which this new process should be based:

- People learn as they live. Those who live in a democracy learn to operate democratically; those who live in an autocracy learn to operate autocratically. Insofar as is possible, schools in a democracy should operate democratically.

- Boundaries are needed. Every community of individuals (including schools) needs limits. In a democratic community, those limits should be set by those who are part of that community.
• Leaders lead. Even in a democratic community, someone is in charge. It's always healthier if people are honest about the authority they possess and don't play games of participation with those who have less authority.

• There is no monopoly on wisdom. Problems are best solved when all competent and informed people pool their insights.

• Students are people. Like the rest of us, they are more likely to support and implement those decisions in which they have had a voice.26

Because decision-making in alternative programs is usually more democratic than in a regular school, it is a more time-consuming and less efficient process, though not necessarily less effective. The principal, staff, students, parents, central office administrators, and the board of education all have a role in the decision-making process. These roles must be defined and clearly stated if new decision-making processes are to be developed and used effectively. If they are not clearly defined and understood, the most likely outcome will be a reliance on old, often arbitrary and unilateral forms of decision-making. Most decision-making processes in alternative schools end up following certain steps:

1. Once a problem has been identified, a decision is made about its importance.

2. For all important problems, data are gathered and alternatives are examined.

3. A specific set of proposals is developed to deal with the problem; these proposals are reviewed and discussed in a small group setting where it is possible to ensure rational discussion and reasoned debate.
4. A final decision is made only when an overwhelming majority of the community is willing to support a position. 27

The tensions arising from questions regarding the proper relationship between freedom and responsibility are often quite intense, and the sources of major frustrations for those individuals involved with alternative schools. Here is where the negative aspects of compulsory schooling are most apparent, and are reflected in what Marth Ellison of the Brown School, in Louisville, Kentucky, calls a "freedom from" orientation toward schooling. She sees two kinds of freedom usually associated with alternative schools:

"Freedom from" and "freedom to" are phrases we have used to distinguish the dominant motives of our student body for participating in our option. "Freedom from" (we have learned) carries with it no sense of purpose except escape. From what? From ghetto-like schools. From sometimes damaging academic pressures. From the over-regimentation that increases geometrically with school size. From teachers who seem to feel that an authoritarian role is the only effective one. From an emphasis upon competition which identifies winners and losers by their rate of acquisition rather than the effort spent in learning.

"Freedom to" has for students a much more positive thrust. Freedom to determine one's own destiny. Freedom to make decisions that directly affect the student's immediate and future well-being. Freedom to identify and pursue in depth those areas of learning that seem both useful and interesting. Freedom to make adjustments of time and effort to circumstantial needs. Freedom to entertain and express divergent ideas. Freedom to explore a large world of experience beyond that offered in a traditional high school curriculum. 28
Ellison believes that most alternative programs are designed for the "freedom to" student, when in fact alternative programs are faced with a large number of "freedom from" students. The major task, then, is to make sufficient adjustments in the program to bring "freedom from" students into closer alignment with "freedom to" students—in effect, to form an intermediate step between the traditional school and the ultimate goal of an open program.

In alternative schools, the curriculum is not often described as a course of study or in terms of traditional subject matter areas. It is often described as a process; in many cases, a process that is unique for each student. As a result, frustrations are felt and concerns and uncertainties are expressed by students, parents, staff members, and outsiders: the curriculum appears fragmented, an unarticulated collection of mini-courses, seminars, and independent contracts; where the emphasis is on process, there is often no product to show at the end; the use of non-certificated adults as resource persons is a move in the direction of involving citizens directly in educational affairs, something which might well cause concern among other professionals in the school system. While the curriculum is usually viewed in a different light in alternative schools, just what constitutes "curriculum" is also usually not
clearly understood within the program, a situation which leads to a multiplicity of problems. A definition of curriculum, cooperatively developed, might well be a major task of students and staff in an alternative program.

What I have called the problem of "internal communications" is more correctly two communication problems at different levels. One level is that of information-giving in its simplest form. When a program is designed to be flexible and more responsive to the needs of its constituents, schedules, procedures, and plans may change, and some effective method of informing people about changes must be devised. This was a problem at Chicago's Metro School:

A second area of difficulty was communications within the school. Communications regarding the time and place of meetings, their agendas, and the status of various decisions were often ineffective at Metro. Sometimes meetings were advertised only through informal channels. Sometimes only staff received notification. So many signs and notices were constantly bombarding students that much information was lost and some people completely tuned out these overloaded communication channels. Many communications were of generally poor graphic quality, e.g., blurred dittoes, tiny hand-written signs, or bulletin boards with several hundred nondescript notices. This communication problem discouraged the participation of all but the most committed and undercut the legitimacy of decisions that were made without most people's knowledge.

At another, deeper, more important level, "communications" refers to a way of relating to, interacting with, being with another person or group which transcends the
limitations of role and expectation, where the "feeling" content of messages is looked for, honored, and responded to in a regular and consistent fashion by all involved. This appears to be at the core of much of the expressed intent of many alternative schools to be more humane places to learn and work. It is a process, a way of valuing which includes, but extends well beyond, the simple courtesies which caring people extend to one another. It includes some things that can be taught, such as listening skills, and can be enhanced by setting aside time to focus on individual and group concerns in a variety of situations; but it appears to depend most upon a certain mental set on the part of program participants. As such, genuine communication at this level is a very fragile process and needs careful nurturance. In many alternative programs, with the press of daily routine and real or imagined pressures or deadlines, the necessary nurturance appears to be difficult.

Staff needs are many and varied. The turnover among staff members in alternative schools is notoriously high, partly because of unrealistic expectations, partly because staff needs go unmet. It is crucial for staff members to have reasonable expectations, to establish priorities for the many tasks which "must" be done, and to see that staff needs are met. In an alternative program, staff members as well as students are assuming new roles and engaging in new
processes; relationships among staff are often qualitatively different from and more involved and intense than staff members had experienced in conventional school settings. Some sort of inservice or preservice work is commonly provided when alternative programs begin; it appears, however, that the lack of regular inservice work for staff once a program is operating is a common and serious problem.
NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1. A complete listing of those who have described and analyzed these conditions in recent years would be too lengthy to include here. For this writer, four books were especially useful and enlightening, and are recommended here as representative examples of critical writings in this area: Philip E. Slater, The Pursuit of Loneliness: American Culture at the Breaking Point (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971); Charles A. Reich, The Greening of America (New York: Random House, 1970); Theodore Roszak, The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Co., 1969); and R. D. Laing, The Politics of Experience (New York: Ballantine Books, 1968).


5. Ibid., p. 10.

6. The reader interested in studying this literature is referred to the bibliography at the end of this paper; specifically, the work of the following writers is suggested: Paul Goodman, Edgar Friedenberg, John Holt, Jonathan Kozol, Peter Marin, Ivan Illich, George Dennison, James Herndon, Herbert Kohl, Jerry Farber, Paulo Freire, and Charles Silberman.


8. Many of the writers who were critical of the public schools have been among the most articulate of the free school advocates. Three books are especially recommended: George Dennison, The Lives of Children: The Story of the First Street School (New York: Anchor Books, Random House, 1969); Jonathan Kozol, Free Schools (Boston: Houghton
Mifflin, 1972); Allen Graubard, Free the Children (New York: Pantheon, Random House, 1973). Certainly the most poetic writer in the free schools movement, and one of the most influential, has been Peter Marin, whose "The Open Truth and Fiery Vehemence of Youth" has been a touchstone for many involved with free schools. Other important sources for understanding the free school phenomenon are such magazines as The New Schools Exchange Newsletter, This Magazine is About Schools, and Edcentrio (see bibliography).


12. Ibid., p. 9.

13. Ibid., p. 44.


16. This definition is adequate for open schools or classrooms at the elementary level, where they are most common. At the secondary level, a broader definition is necessary. Activities are more frequently organized around topics of interest and are usually independent of a physical place in the classroom or building. Also, "open" has become a codeword for a school or program which stresses student responsibility and decision-making, which includes a participatory democracy form of government, and which focuses on development of self-image and interpersonal relationships.


18. Ibid.


23. Smith, speech at Cincinnati Conference.


27. Ibid., p. 118.


CHAPTER THREE: THE WORTHINGTON ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM

This chapter includes two sections: a history of the development and implementation of the Worthington Alternative Program, and a description of its major components and mode of operation during the program's first year. A brief word about these descriptions is necessary. The components of the program are described to give the reader a general understanding of the program, but the Alternative Program is certainly something more than the sum of its parts. Because of this and the fact that its main ingredients are, in the end, the students and staff who inhabit it and invest it with meaning, an adequate description of the essence and flavor of the Alternative Program, what it feels like to be there for any length of time, is really not possible. Yet, perhaps a thorough description of the program, along with the evaluation which follows in Chapter Four and the transcripts of student interviews included in Appendix A, will convey some of the essence, the flavor, the feel of alternative programs which are a basic—perhaps the basic—part of their difference from regular school programs.

An explanation is also necessary of my relationship to the Worthington Alternative Program during this time.
During the 1972-1975 school years, I was a Teaching Associate in Humanities Education at The Ohio State University; my major duty in that position was the supervision of student teachers in English. Beginning with Spring Quarter, 1973, I also co-taught with Professor Franklin Buchanan, Joe Davis, and, later, Katy Gould, a seminar on Alternative Schools and Society. John Miller, who had recently been named Interim Director of the Worthington Alternative Program, was enrolled in the seminar. After learning about the program he was helping to develop and implement in the Worthington schools, I proposed to him that we—the English Education area of the Humanities Education Department and the Worthington Alternative Program—set up an internship program for student teachers in English. He was interested; I met with and explained to the staff what I meant by an internship program and what I thought it could do for both their program and our students. They were enthusiastic and agreed to include the internship program in their planning. I secured faculty approval within the English Education Department and then supervised student teacher interns for the following two years, 1973-75.

During the Spring Quarter, 1974, as part of the requirements for administrative certification in Ohio, I served an internship under John Miller, who was then the Director of the Alternative Program, and spent an average
of twenty hours a week there, during which time my principal responsibility was to assist with the first-year evaluation of the program. Those were my official relationships with the Worthington Alternative Program.

Because of a crisis involving English student teacher interns shortly after the school year began in September, 1973, I was a daily visitor to the program and a frequent participant in staff meetings for several weeks. After the crisis passed, I was an unofficial but regular participant observer in the Alternative Program, spending time there well beyond that required by my supervisory duties, sitting in on and participating at various levels in classes, Town Meetings, and staff meetings.

My relationship to the Worthington Alternative Program was, then, unique. I was more than an incidental observer, made more than occasional visits to the program, and came to know both casually and well many students and staff. I participated in the life of the program, but was not an integral part of it. As a result, I was able to maintain a certain detachment from the affairs of the program which students and staff did not—could not—have, and which occasionally seemed to give my perceptions some special value to members of the program. My descriptions and perceptions of the Alternative Program which follow are, of course, influenced and, I believe, enhanced by my role in
the program, but they remain the descriptions and perceptions of one who is, finally, outside the program. Consequently, they will differ somewhat from, and probably lack the richness of, the perceptions of someone more intimately involved with the Alternative Program.

I

In the late Sixties, the Worthington City Schools, like many other suburban school districts, was experiencing a rapid growth in student enrollment. Moreover, a recent study had projected that the district would have a high school enrollment of 3000 students by 1979, compared to the approximately 2200 high school students enrolled in Worthington High School at that time.\(^1\) With the present high school facilities already overcrowded, it was clear that the district needed to embark on a building program.

The Worthington Board of Education and the central office administration favored the creation of a second high school rather than the expansion of the present facility. The Board envisioned the current high school serving approximately 2000 students on its 80 acre campus, located just east of the Olentangy River, while a new school, to be constructed west of the river, would accommodate approximately 1000 students. Many community residents, however, favored the expansion of the present facility to house all 3000
anticipated students. The issue was placed before Worthington voters in November of 1969; the two-high-school-plan favored by the Board of Education was defeated by 42 votes.

The Board of Education decided that further study of the issue was necessary. It involved citizens in the study by means of the Worthington Citizens' School Study Council, which examined the problem for over a year-and-a-half, from April, 1970, to December, 1971. The Council recommended an addition to the present facility so that all 3000 students could be housed on the present campus in a school-within-a-school organization.

This report was followed by a report from the Central Administration of the Worthington City Schools recommending that the present facility be upgraded to house a 2000 student school-within-a-school arrangement, and that a new, 1000 student high school be constructed next to the Olentangy River. To the Central Administration, a 3000 student high school on the present campus was a "dead-end street." After several years, the issue of how best to expand the secondary education facilities was still unresolved.

The Board, at its March 6, 1972 meeting, passed a resolution which Board members hoped would resolve the issue. The resolution stated that high school students
should have different types of schools from which to choose. Three high schools, therefore, should be created within the Worthington City Schools. One, a 2000 student school-within-a-school, should be housed on the present campus; another, for 1000 students, should be constructed west of the Olentangy River; the third school to be created should be an alternative school.

This was the first mention of an alternative school during the public debate over secondary school facilities. Earl W. Lane, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, was familiar with the growing body of literature on alternative schools, and felt that the Worthington school system could benefit from an alternative program at the secondary level. At his recommendation, the Board resolution included the proposal of an alternative school. ²

The Worthington Board also provided that three separate task forces be formed to study the practical issues involved in the development and implementation of each of the three schools which had been prepared. Task Force A, assigned to the alternative school proposal, consisted of teachers, parents, students, administrators, and Board members.

Task Force A met frequently and studied in detail the literature which existed on alternative schools. Some Task Force members visited alternative schools already operating
in the Midwest, including those in Madison, Wisconsin, and Cincinnati, Ohio. Five members of the Task Force—two parents, two administrators, and one Board member—also journeyed to the West Coast and visited several alternative schools, including John Adams High School in Portland, Oregon, and schools in Berkeley, Palo Alto, and San Jose, California.

The model used by the Cubberly School, in Palo Alto, was finally adopted by the Task Force as its own model—one which would enable the proposed alternative school to meet the general goals of the Worthington City School District, but which would also allow the alternative school to provide its students with a different environment and a variety of experiences not available in the conventional school program.3

Task Force A submitted an interim report to the Board in January, 1973; its final report was submitted on February 19, 1973. At its meeting of March 6, 1973, one year after it first suggested the development of an alternative school, the Worthington Board of Education approved the recommendation of the Central Administration that an alternative program be started in September, 1973, as a branch campus of Worthington High School. At the same time, John Miller, an experienced administrator then part of the Central Administration staff, was named Interim Director of
the program, with the primary responsibility of implementing the new program.

Following the Board approval of the Alternative Program, several meetings were held to explain the program to high school students. At the same time, a brief, two-page description of the Alternative Program was made available to students, parents, and other members of the community. During this phase of program implementation, approximately 500 students expressed interest in the program; 156 students decided to submit an application. This was near enough to the stated maximum of 150 students that all students who applied to the program were accepted.

Students who were interested in the Alternative Program were invited to suggest teachers they felt would fit in well with the Alternative Program's stated philosophy and goals. Teachers suggested by students were invited to apply for teaching positions in the program; teachers in the district were free to apply on their own initiative or to suggest the names of other teachers in the district. A total of 17 teachers submitted applications for the six positions.

Candidates were interviewed by Earl Lane, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, David Cavanaugh, High School Principal, and Miller. The first four teachers selected participated in the interviewing of the remaining candidates.
Cavanaugh and Miller had decided that two positions would be filled by social studies teachers and two by English teachers because of the number of credits required in these areas for graduation, because of the apparent student interest in these areas, and because both areas lend themselves to a very broad and flexible curriculum. These four positions, as well as a math position, were filled by teachers already on the Worthington staff. The Alternative Program staff made a somewhat unconventional choice for the sixth position.

There was a recognized need for a staff member certified in another subject matter area, preferably science, art, or music. But another concern existed as well. Because of the intended focus on the development of self-image and more effective interpersonal relationships in the Alternative Program, because of the anticipated stress on staff members, who were unaccustomed to working closely and intensively with each other, and because it was unlikely that funds would be available to hire an outside consultant, some staff members felt it was desirable to have as part of the staff a person who was trained or experienced in working in the areas of self-image and interpersonal relationships. This need took priority over teaching experience, and a school psychologist was selected for the remaining position. 5
As staff members were chosen, they worked during the spring and summer on the development of goal statements and on planning and developing curricula and teaching strategies to achieve the program goals (see "Program Goals," described below). Summer planning sessions were also held with students. Staff members worked on a full-time basis for the two weeks prior to the opening of school in September.

II

The program components described below do not include all facets of the Alternative Program. They do cover the major aspects of the program, those which are essential to an understanding of the Alternative Program and how it works.

Program goals. Goals for the Alternative Program were developed by the staff prior to the start of the program. Six general goal areas were designated, and specific examples of some ways each goal might be reached were enumerated. Over the summer, parents and students were asked to make separate rankings of the goals in order of importance. The Alternative Program staff also ranked the goals, and a composite ranking was made. While there was some disagreement among the groups, and while many individuals commented on the difficulty of ranking the goals, there was common
agreement on the most important goal: development of positive self-image. 6

The ranked goals then became a priority list for the staff. While an attempt was made to achieve all six goals, greater emphasis was given to the top ranked goals of developing positive self-image and developing positive interpersonal relationships with others. The goals for the Alternative Program, which remain unchanged after three years, are listed here in the order of their composite rankings:

WITHIN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY:

1. Each of us should develop a positive self-image:
   by sharing strong and weak characteristics in conference
   by maintaining personal health
   by developing a value system by which to live
   by being pleased with our work
   by accepting failure as a part of living
   by laughing and enjoying ourselves
   by being honest with ourselves

2. Each of us should develop positive inter-personal relationships with others:
   by developing a concern and empathy for others through helping someone with a personal or academic problem; also acting upon social concerns
   by striving to establish "win-win," cooperative relationships including group responsibility
by encouraging the development of friendships through honest and varied encounters

by creating a climate of mutual trust

by creating an atmosphere that allows people to be honest and express feelings

3. Each of us should become independent learners:

by participating in setting up contracts and projects

by pacing ourselves

by students teaching students, teachers teaching students, and students teaching teachers

by learning to identify problems, developing solutions and carrying them out

by encouraging creativity, showing openness to speculation and flexibility

by using various media in learning projects

by growing in the use of basic skills

by adjusting goal and contracts when necessary

by approaching learning with joy and openness

by being committed to on-going use of experimental learning techniques

by never being cast in concrete

by continual personal and academic self-evaluation

by periodic assessment of pre-established goals

4. Each of us should involve ourselves in problem-solving situations, learning to recognize and accept the consequences evolving from our decisions:

by learning to ask pertinent and focused questions

by making use of scientific methods
by doing adequate and unbiased research before making decisions

by seeking multiple solutions before arriving at judgment

by making surveys, interviews and all available resources

by being aware of time and other restrictions

by working both individually and with others in groups

5. Each of us should learn options for using time:

by exploring career opportunities

by developing new interests through individual course work and exposure to interests of others

by considering his own values and priorities

by considering optional uses of leisure time

by preparing a flexible time schedule

by adapting to existing time schedules

by maintaining accurate and honest time logs

6. Each of us will contribute to the development of a learning community with its own special identity:

by participating in the operation and maintenance of the school

by accepting responsibility for ourselves and others

by recognizing and accepting the uniqueness of people

by participating regularly

by appreciating others, giving them recognition and attention

by behaving in a manner compatible with the community

by encouraging parent participation in the school
Selection and retention of students. Any Worthington High School student (grades 9-12) who has parental permission may apply for admission to the Alternative Program. Students are admitted to the program at the start of each semester, with the bulk of new students starting, of course, in the first semester, and replacing, for the most part, students who have graduated. No screening process is used, although staff and students have decided there ought to be a minimum number of students at each grade level to help insure balance and continuity in the program.

Students are selected by drawing names of applicants—first by grade level to fill the quotas set—until all openings are filled. The remaining names are then drawn and recorded; this becomes the waiting list, and students are taken into the program in that order as vacancies occur prior to the start of a semester. This happens when a student decides to leave the program, or when a family moves from the district. No students are admitted to the program after the start of the semester. Applications are accepted each semester, and a new drawing is held prior to each semester.

For the first two years, a student, once accepted into the Alternative Program, was permitted to remain in the program until he/she graduated or chose to leave the program. In some cases, the staff suggested to a student and his/her
parents that the main campus might better meet the student's needs, but the decision to stay or remain was the family's decision. During the third year of operation, the staff reluctantly concluded that some students should not remain in the program, and considerable time was spent counseling parents and encouraging them to return students to the regular school program. The director has the prerogative of returning a student to the regular program if he feels it is best for the student or the Alternative Program; this prerogative was exercised during the program's first three years.

Students. Students enrolled in the Alternative Program appear to exhibit the same range of abilities as students in the general Worthington High School student body, according to John Miller, the program's original director. Some statistical data on the original group of students was collected for descriptive purposes by Miller, and was part of his narrative report to the Worthington Board of Education in August, 1974. Fifty-one percent of the students were male, ninety-four percent of the students were Caucasian. Their breakdown by class is listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniors</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomores</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshmen</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

158 100
During the interviews which were conducted as part of the program's first-year evaluation, students indicated a variety of reasons for attending the Alternative Program: some students were ready to drop out of school, some were bored, some were finished with requirements and wanted to pursue their own interests. The constant factor seems to be that students were forced to think about their education and to make choices. Below is a sampling of typical reasons:

I had 17 credits at the end of last year, which was enough to graduate, and Main Campus just didn't have anything that I wanted.

Last year, when they first brought up the idea (of the program), I looked at what I had learned last year, and it was almost nothing. I got good grades in everything, but I had already known it all, so I decided to come here and pick what I wanted to learn.

I had found from being on the Debate Team and doing other things on my own that I worked better and learned more and remembered more of what I'd learned later on when I did the research on my own and found knowledge that way instead of being fed to me through a lecture. So I decided this school would give me more of that opportunity.

At the Main Campus, it was too easy to slide by in classes and not really learn anything; here, we would be judged on what you would do....I was ready to quit school.

I came over here 'cause I just couldn't hack it at the normal school. I just couldn't handle it; I was gonna drop out as soon as I turned 16....I didn't really want to drop out 'cause I wanted to finish school and go to college, but I didn't like myself the way I was, and I didn't like the things I wasn't accomplishing and I just came here 'cause it was like a last-ditch opportunity.
Seventeen students decided at the end of the first or second semester not to remain in the Alternative Program. Their reasons are listed below:10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desired structure of Main Campus</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved out of district</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropped out of school</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends were on Main Campus</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ran away</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted vocational education</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Staff.** The Alternative Program has had seven staff members during each of its three years of operation; in keeping within the guideline of operating at the same per pupil expenditure as the regular school program, the Alternative Program has essentially the same student:teacher ratio as does the main campus. This includes six teachers and one teacher-director, whose duties have been primarily administrative.

As a group, the original staff was older and more experienced than is found in many alternative programs, and this helped provide the program with a remarkable stability during its first year of operation. Of the original seven staff members, four remain with the program at the end of the third year. When the original director left to assume another administrative position in the Worthington district midway through the program's second year, he was replaced by a staff member. Members of the original staff have been
replaced generally with younger and less experienced teachers, although one teacher has considerable prior teaching experience and had recently earned his Ph. D. in Education. That a core of four staff members has remained with the program for three years has helped give a high degree of continuity to the program.

*Student teachers.* Since its beginning, the Alternative Program had made heavy use of student teachers from Ohio State University and, to a lesser degree, other teacher training institutions in the Columbus area. This has been particularly so in the social studies and English areas; it is normal for the program to have two or three student teachers in each of these areas during each of Ohio State's three quarters which overlap with the Alternative Program's school year. Multiple student teachers in these areas are common for two reasons. First, there is a heavy demand by the students for courses in these areas; second, the Social Studies Education faculty and the English Education faculty at Ohio State University perceive the Alternative Program as providing a unique and valuable student teaching experience for those students who are interested in the area of alternative education. The English Education area has made a consistent effort to set up what it calls "internships," wherein student teachers remain at the Alternative Program for two or more consecutive quarters, thereby
providing prospective teachers with a more legitimate student teaching experience and also allowing the staff and students at the Alternative Program to benefit from the experience and confidence the student teacher typically gains from the first quarter of student teaching.

Student teachers normally have full responsibility for three or four courses and team teach a course with a regular faculty member. They do considerable informal counseling, although they do not have Counseling Group responsibility. They are encouraged by regular staff to participate fully in all aspects of the Alternative Program, including staff meetings and contact with parents, two areas where student teachers often gain little or no practical experience.

Facility. The Alternative Program is housed in the Linworth School, an old elementary building which had for several years been used by the Worthington district as a receiving center and media center. It is a relatively small, attractive Tudor-style building located on W. Granville Road, about .7 of a mile west of the main campus of Worthington High School. During the first year of the Alternative Program's operation, the district media center occupied one room on the ground level of the building. In the summer of 1974, the Media Center was moved to another building, and the Alternative Program has since had the building to itself.
The building has six large classrooms, two similar rooms used for classes (one of these has a small kitchen), a darkroom, a small room used to store audio-visual equipment, an office area, and a large combination gym, auditorium-with-stage, and cafeteria common to many elementary buildings and which is called, simply, the "Big Room." The Big Room is a cafeteria at lunch time, a place for socializing and lounging at other times, and the site of Town Meeting; it is, in effect, the focal point of the Alternative Program.

The Linworth building, while old, often drafty, and in need of a painting, contributes much to the ambience of the Alternative Program. It is a cozy, often intimate building, with nooks and crannies tucked in odd corners for privacy. A wall of windows on the upper floor, looking out over the Big Room, contributes to the atmosphere of open space and physical closeness of the building. It is in many ways an ideal site for the Alternative Program.

Schedule. The school year is divided into four quarters, each approximately nine weeks long. Prior to the start of each quarter, students and staff write brief descriptions of courses they would like to take or offer during the coming nine-week period. The descriptions of prepared courses are posted, and students indicate their interest by signing their names under the course description. Courses
to be offered are then selected, with student interest the primary factor considered, although there are others as well: the total number of courses a single teacher will be responsible for, the number of new courses a teacher will be teaching, and the overall "balance" of courses offered, both within a subject area and among the various subjects.

A master schedule for the nine weeks is then developed by students and staff; included in the schedule in addition to classes are Town Meetings and, since the second year, Counseling Groups and a weekly Staff Meeting. Producing a master schedule is a cooperative, confusing, conflict-generating, compromise-producing process in which the various needs of students and staff are taken into account. Finally, using an arena scheduling process, students complete their individual schedules for the nine-week period.

Most classes meet two or three times per week; students consequently have more unscheduled time in which to work independently. Teachers have more time to spend on individual counseling, and are also able to assume responsibility for more courses than they would if each class met daily.

The school day runs from 8:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M., as it does on the main campus of Worthington High School. Classes are forty minutes long, with a twenty minute break between classes. The lengthy break is necessary to allow sufficient travel time for alternative program students who are taking
classes on the main campus; an unexpected benefit of this long interval between classes is the opportunity students have to meet briefly with teachers and, more significantly, visit with each other informally in a situation where they are not rushing from one class to another. A shuttle bus provides transportation for students between Linworth and the main campus. No separate lunch period is provided in the schedule, so students are free to take their lunch period when they wish.

Curriculum. The Alternative Program staff defines "curriculum" very broadly, and would interpret the word to mean anything which falls under the auspices of the school. In the day-to-day operations of the program, however, "curriculum" is used to mean the courses and independent contracts which are available to students. Generally, courses may cover any topic approved by a staff member, and for which a teacher can be found. A course may be taught by a teacher, a student, or a person outside the Alternative Program; if a student or an outside "resource person" teaches a course, a staff member must supervise the course to provide any needed assistance and to insure that state requirements regarding certification are met.

Courses usually run for nine weeks, although it is possible to schedule semester or year-long courses. Math courses, for instance, are generally scheduled for the year. Science was added to the curriculum in the second year of
operation, and science courses tend to run for more than nine weeks. Courses rarely run for less than nine weeks.

Some limitations are placed on course offerings because of state certification requirements, which require an employee of the district who is certificated in the appropriate field to teach or supervise each course offered for credit. Most courses the first year, then, were in the areas of social studies, English, math, and health; the second year, science offerings were available in place of health courses. Most courses fell clearly within the domain of one subject area; few interdisciplinary courses were offered the first year.

Most students at one time or another take classes at the main campus. They typically take classes not available at the Alternative Program: foreign languages, art, music, and science courses requiring considerable lab equipment. Alternative Program students are not given any scheduling priority at the main campus, so their Alternative Program schedules must be built around main campus classes.

Independent Contracts. Students who desire to study a topic not covered by a course offering or who prefer to work independently may do so by means of an independent contract. The student and a teacher or outside resource person together agree on the objectives, the process, the means of evaluation, and the length of time involved. The
student and teacher meet regularly, ideally once a week, to discuss the contract.

Independent contracts very often are used to facilitate non-conventional learning experiences for students. Off-campus experiences, such as volunteer work in community service agencies or lab work at Ohio State University, are typically set up on an independent contract basis. All students are encouraged to try at least one independent contract at some time during the year.

Credits. Students in the Alternative Program must meet all minimum standards for credit set by state laws, the State Department of Education, and the Worthington Board of Education.

Since credits are earned on the basis of the Carnegie unit in Ohio, care must be taken to see that each student accumulates a sufficient number of classroom hours. Most courses that run for nine weeks are set up to offer 1/8 or 1/4 credit—that is, they require 20 or 40 hours of classroom work or other activities the student and teacher agree are appropriate. Students keep logs in which they record time spent in learning activities for each course they are taking. Prior to receiving credit for a course or independent contract, student logs must be approved by the teacher involved.
**Student Evaluation.** Students are evaluated in each course in a written narrative statement regarding the student's work. One copy is placed in the student's folder at school, and one copy is sent home to parents at the end of each nine-week period. While some teachers unilaterally determine course requirements and methods of evaluation, these matters are typically decided cooperatively by the students and teacher at the beginning of a course. Each subject area has created its own form for written evaluation which includes some type of checklist appropriate to the subject; the quality and focus of the narrative statements varies widely among staff members.

All courses and independent contracts are offered on a credit/no credit basis: courses for which a student earns credit are entered in the student's official record; in keeping with the concept of focusing on success, no entry is made when a student does not earn credit for a course if they wish by arranging for this with the teacher at the beginning of the course.

**Town Meeting.** Within the school, the basic governing body is Town Meeting. It has authority over all operational aspects of the Alternative Program, except those areas covered by state law or Board policy. Town Meeting is the rule-making body of the school and the major forum in which school problems are discussed and successes shared.
Students volunteer to chair Town Meeting, which is run on an extremely loose kind of parliamentary procedure. All members of the Alternative Program community—students, regular staff, student teachers, resource people—are given one vote. The staff has arbitrarily restricted the power of Town Meeting in two specific areas: the length of Town Meeting and the area of teacher conduct of his/her classes. Town Meeting may not run over into scheduled class time if any teacher wishes to hold class, and Town Meeting may not interfere in the area of a teacher's academic freedom, which is viewed as a matter an individual student or class might appropriately discuss with a teacher; it has, however, been removed from the province of Town Meeting.

Counseling Group. Each staff member has a counseling group with which he/she meets regularly during the course of the year. Students are free to select their own Counseling Group, but some attempt is made to keep a reasonable balance among Counseling Groups. Counseling Group performs many of the tasks of the conventional homeroom: attendance-taking, a place for announcements, and so on. It is also a place where school operations and concerns can be discussed in a smaller, less formal setting than Town Meeting. The teacher also serves as a program advisor to each member of his Counseling Group, and assumes primary responsibility
for counseling the student and maintaining contact with parents.
Notes to Chapter Three

1. Unless otherwise noted, the information which follows concerning the history of the Alternative Program's development up to the point of final Board approval is taken from an unpublished paper by Glenn Bohmer, a Worthington High School teacher who was enrolled in the seminar on Alternative Schools and Society during Spring Quarter, 1973. I am indebted to Mr. Bohmer for the valuable information his paper has provided, and for his permission to use it as a source.

2. Interview with John Miller, original director of the Alternative Program, May, 1976.

3. Ibid.


5. Ibid.


9. These, and all other student quotations in this paper, are taken from transcripts of interviews with students during April and May of 1974. Transcripts from three of the interviews are included in Appendix A; the reader is encouraged to read these interviews for a more detailed insight into student perceptions of the Alternative Program.

CHAPTER FOUR: EVALUATION OF WORTHINGTON ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM

The evaluation will cover three areas: achievement of goal statements, specific concerns and problems relating to some of the program components described in Chapter Three, and problems general to alternative schools which were discussed in Chapter Two. The chapter will conclude with specific recommendations for the Alternative Program growing out of this evaluation.

This evaluation derives from four main sources: interviews of thirty randomly selected students during April and May of 1974; various questionnaires administered by the Alternative Program staff during the 1973-74 school year as part of their internal, ongoing evaluation; a parent questionnaire administered during May, 1974; and an analysis of the program from my perspective as a participant observer. The evaluation concerns itself only with the first year of the Alternative Program's operation; where appropriate, comments have been inserted regarding significant changes or continuing concerns of the program during its second and third years.

Students were interviewed singly, in pairs, and in groups of three or four during April and May of 1974, by the writer and two students enrolled in a seminar at Ohio
State University on Alternative Schools and Society. Because the interviews were loosely structured in the hope that students would talk more freely, no standard set of questions was developed. Attempts were made, however, to cover three major topics in each interview: reasons for attending the Alternative Program, achievement of goal statements, and student-staff relationship. All direct quotations in this chapter come from these interviews; four of the transcribed interviews are included in Appendix A.

The parent questionnaire was developed primarily by parents themselves, with the approval and assistance of the Alternative Program staff. The questionnaire was completed and returned by 62% of the parents of students in the program. It was organized around the goal statements of the Alternative Program; many questions, or course, covered aspects of more than one goal statement at once; for purposes of analysis; however, they are presented under the discussion of the goal statement they seem to deal with most directly.

Each of us should develop a positive self-image. The development of positive self-image was reflected in many ways in student interviews and in written questionnaires. Generally, students indicated that they felt better about
themselves, and that they gained considerable confidence in themselves as a result of their increased ability to manage their time effectively and to select appropriate learning activities more wisely.

Personal feelings were legitimized in the Alternative Program, and students viewed their feelings about themselves and their lives as acceptable topics for discussion with staff members as well as with other students. Because students had a large number of choices to make—courses, scheduling, independent contracts, attendance, rule-making in Town Meeting, to name only the most obvious—they felt they spent more time thinking about their personal value systems than they had in the past. (One of the most popular courses was one on values clarification.) Most students seemed to be able to recognize their own shortcomings and the effect their failures had on their self-images.

I am not going to say I dearly love coming to school, but I don't hate coming to school any more. My day now is more filled with things that are important to me so.... I am doing things that are more important to me, which is better. You know, right now I like school.

I have learned some of the bad things I didn't want to face up to but know I know they are reality and I know they are there, and I am glad I wasn't just sitting back and ignoring them and trying to push them away—I feel I know me better and I know other people better and how people operate better. I am happier with myself because I don't feel like I am sitting on my ego. Because I really know what's going on.
We've been taking a lot of trips, learning experience trips and planning things like dances and stuff like that; I just get involved. Just learning about myself and stuff like that.

I think one of the big things is not that schools prepare you for college because I know a lot of people who are not planning to go to college. But it's how people live with the other life 'cause I think this school makes people realize that they are individuals and not just robots.... They are individuals and they are worth something on their own. The kids here have seen the things they have accomplished. The kids have written out contracts and if they fulfill them they have gotten credit. They have gone out and done things....

Almost 60% of the parents responding to the parent questionnaire felt that their sons/daughters were achieving this goal all or most of the time. (Figure 1, p. 79). 

In questions relating to this goal, parent responses were as follows:

Is the Alternative Program adequately:  
Capitalizing on student potential  71  16  21 
Developing realistic self-expression  84  3  18

How do you see teacher/student relationships as:
Affecting the personal growth of your student  75  4  24
Control over own life  67  9  29
Being known as an individual by students and teachers  90  3  10

What changes have you noticed in your student this year:
16 parents indicated more self-confidence and positive self-image
8 parents indicated the student was more motivated
25 parents indicated the student liked to go to school more
4 parents indicated the student was more creative
4 parents indicated the student was less conscientious
Parent Responses in Percents

Figure 1: Parent Responses to Development of Self Image Goal
Each of us should develop positive inter-personal relationships with others. Judging from student statements, the most positive aspect of the Alternative Program was the development of positive interpersonal relationships with others. Students almost inevitably pointed to an increased openness toward others, at least toward those with whom they came into contact at the Alternative Program. The size of the school appeared to be one of the crucial factors; students knew each other's names, and they knew at least something about each person in the program; they spent a great deal of their time out of school with other Alternative Program students; their closest friends tended to be fellow program students.

The small size of the program also appeared to help create an atmosphere of informality and intimacy with adults that is missing from most young people's lives, and many students mentioned how highly they valued the opportunity for close relationships with staff members.

The structure of the program, with its opportunities for extended contact between and among students and staff, the size of the program, the emphasis upon mutual trust, the absence of artificial class distinctions (freshman, sophomore, etc.), the recognition of oneself and of others as individuals rather than "just another number," the stress placed upon cooperation rather than competition
(mentioned most often in reference to the decreased emphasis on grades) all contributed to making the Alternative Program a place where students felt they were able to develop stronger and healthier relationships with other people.

I think I am closer to a lot more people this year than I have ever been before.

I think one of the things about the learning business here is that you learn a lot more about the things you really need to know. Not just the facts. Not things about government—you learn all along with people and stuff like that, and that's really important.

I think this year has made me a lot more open towards people in general, because all through high school I had pretty much the same friends. Last year I was trying to get some new friends because I just realized that I was getting stuck in a rut and after high school was over where would I be, so I decided that I would try and start to open up more. This year has helped me a lot.

... and here there is a little more time and when you see people (teachers) are willing to help you, you are more inclined to, to want to talk.

Here, well, when I am walking around, I can say "hi" to just about everybody and not feel real uncomfortable, but on main campus it just would be really out of place to say "hi" to everybody I knew, their name or, you know, just like they had been in class or something; you don't say "hi" to people there unless you know them pretty well or something; just because it's so big. I guess.

I know that I act pretty immature a lot of times, but people don't look down on me just because I am a sophomore, but they see me as an individual.
I think it's more of a relationship, more of a caring type relationship instead of somebody being there that you might just see once in a while.

There is some question whether their experiences in the Alternative Program have altered their relationships with others outside the program. About half of those who discussed this felt their relationships with others outside the program had not changed in any appreciable manner—they were somewhat afraid to "risk" themselves, or did not know how to go about altering an already established relationship. Several students, however, felt they were much more relaxed and trusting with people in general as a result of their year at the Alternative Program; and several reported talking more with their parents about school than they had in past years.

Almost 50% of the parents responding to the parent questionnaire felt that their sons or daughters were achieving this goal all or most of the time, while 9% felt their sons or daughters were achieving this goal little or none of the time (Figure 2 p. 83). Their responses to questions relating to this goal were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>N.S.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In relation to last year, how does your student communicate?</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much does your student discuss school subjects?</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you see the Alternative Program affecting your student's acceptance of different opinions?</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you see the student/teacher relationship as affecting the student's ability to deal with all authority figures as human beings?</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parent Responses in Percents

Figure 2: Parent Responses to Development of Positive Interpersonal Relationships Goal
How do you see student/teacher relationships as affecting different opinion?  

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<th>-</th>
<th>N.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What changes have you noted in students this year?

19 parents indicated a more improved attitude with adults
11 parents indicated their child had more, friends and good relationships
1 parent indicated their child was now working with school officials rather than against

What do you especially like about the Alternative Program?

18 parents indicated the humane, caring faculty
16 parents indicated the quality of the student/teacher relationship
3 parents indicated the dramatic/musical production?

Each of us should become independent learners. Many student statements indicated their concern with their growth as independent learners. In fact, the opportunity to pursue their own interests was one of the major reasons given by students when they were asked why they had chosen to attend the Alternative Program.

Much of "pursuing my own interests" meant setting goals, budgeting time, seeking outside resources, and evaluating progress. In addition to suggesting and organizing classes, more students also asked to teach classes as the year progressed. Students also felt that, as a group, they assumed greater responsibility for the learning activities that occurred within the classroom. Students repeatedly pointed out that achieving independence as a learner is difficult; they note the ease with which they fell back into old dependencies on teachers; but they feel strongly
that they made real progress in this area. Self evaluation seemed to be of greater importance than teacher grades for those students who felt they were successful independent learners. For those who plan to attend college, the experience of working independently was considered invaluable in their preparation for college.

I feel I have done more learning. It's like... since I get to choose the areas I study—I basically study everything that the people on the main campus do, but I just go about it in my own way. I feel like I am getting a lot more out of it because I'm putting a lot more into it.

Well, I found once I came here it didn't take me very long to make—to come to terms with myself and to come to realize that anything I was going to do was going to be from my own doing. And anything that I, anything that I was ultimately going to go after, you know, I was going to have to do for myself.... You have to come to the realization that it's your life and you are learning for yourself and not really learning for just to make the grades. It should be more of an individual thing.

I think a lot of times classes hold me back. Right now I have a science fiction class and we've been in class for about four or five weeks now and some of the people still don't have a book that we're supposed to have read yesterday. And I think they hold me back more than anything else. For me, that's frustrating. With the contracts, it's completely open as to how I work.

Well, I tried an independent contract, a couple of them, and one didn't work out and one did. What I've done is I've taken a class and have stayed with the class and also gone farther on an individual contract. We had Shakespeare, which the class wasn't too great, but I kind of did things outside of class on an independent contract but keeping with class and got one credit for doing it.
Also another good thing is I have learned to find my own information. We don't have textbooks out here so we have to go to the Little Professor to buy books or find other sources; libraries or, I don't know, like the historical society and things like that. We've learned a lot of things are open to us, even that our parents and neighbors and other people in the community have information that's useful to us....

.... I spent the last four months working with the mentally retarded three hours a day on Monday. I mean, three hours every Monday and then I have done work with children's drama, I have done a research project on economic geography, I have done a field study of comparative religions, going to different churches, interviewed different people, I am taking a graduate seminar in Foust in German at The Ohio State University. And I am—there are some more things, they just seem to have slipped my mind.

I think one of the turning points—I have a class in Roots of Western Philosophy—and maybe for a couple of weeks we were just coming in and expecting Mrs. Langguth to lecture us because the subject was difficult and hard to get through, and it just seemed we were leaning towards the way of expecting the teacher to give it to us. And then we all sat in silence for five or ten minutes one day and Mrs. Langguth just got up and walked out. And it's the first time our class got confronted with each other directly, because we were really upset about her getting up and walking out and we decided we better get on the ball and we better find something that we're all interested in. And we read The Prince, by Machiavelli, and that had us all really interested and it's been that way ever since. We do have a common interest and are curious to know things.

Of the parents responding to the parent questionnaire, 53% believed their child was achieving this goal all or most of the time, while 14% felt their child was achieving this goal little or none of the time. (Figure 3, p. 87).
Parent Responses in Percents

Figure 3: Parent Responses to Becoming an Independent Learner Goal
In questions judged to relate to this goal, parent responses are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>N.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does your student have an opportunity to pursue special interests?</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How do you see the Alternative Program as affecting:

- student's initiation of projects: 69 19 19
- follow through to completion: 61 16 27
- ability to bring about change: 63 15 35
- college from subject standpoint: 60 15 30
- college from learning standpoint: 65 16 34
- college from job market standpoint: 31 19 55

Is the Alternative Program adequately teaching basic skills: reading, writing, speaking, listening?

| Is the Alternative Program challenging students? | 68 | 17 | 20 |

What do you especially like about the program?

22 responded they liked the development of independence and responsibility
9 liked the creative learning atmosphere
4 liked the realistic expectation of the school
2 liked the preparation for college
24 liked the varied subjects and freedom to choose
11 liked the concept of working at own pace
10 liked student responsibility for learning
9 liked the opportunity to follow special interests
7 liked the opportunity for real involvement in subjects?

Each of us should involve ourselves in problem solving situations, learning to recognize and accept the consequences evolving from our decisions. Few student statements dealt directly with problem solving. Implicitly, virtually all their new experiences at the Alternative Program forced students into problem solving situations, and their behavior reflected their approach to solving
problems. Setting up and fulfilling independent contracts, budgeting time, logging sufficient hours for credit, selecting courses, meeting local and state graduation requirements, dealing with both trivialities and crises in Town Meetings, and so on, all provided valuable problem solving experiences for each student. In addition, students did most of the planning and organizing for field trips. At a group level, students confronted school-wide problems in Town Meetings, and most students felt that they were able to deal effectively with major concerns as they were brought before Town Meeting.

Well, last year I was always told what to do. I never had to do anything myself, like I never had to figure out what I was going to do. I was just told what to do and told how to do it and when to do it, and up here people say "Well, you know you have got to get here but you can do that anyway you want but come let us know." For awhile it was real hard because I didn't know what to do, I was just kind of standing here saying "Well gee, I am here and I have got to get there, but I don't know how to get there." It was really a mess but now it's, you know, things kind of fall into place, you just kind of plan things more....

... a lot of times in class people would get frustrated with the way the teacher would want to run the class. And the teacher would just kind of be there, to maybe advise and in some instances to supervise, and a lot of kids couldn't deal with that. It was a completely new situation, and they were just so used to coming in and being taught and the idea of having an actual hand in teaching themselves was a thing they had never really conceived of and so it caused a lot of problems for a lot of people. But certain people started realizing it was for themselves. I think a lot of people have changed a lot.
Of the parents responding to the parent questionnaire, 53% believed their sons or daughters were achieving this goal all or most of the time; 13% believed their child was achieving this goal little or not at all (Figure 4, p. 91). Only one question was judged to relate directly to this goal statement:

How do you feel the Alternative Program is preparing your child for accepting responsibility, etc.  

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>N.S.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each of us should learn options for using time. Most students felt that making effective use of time was the most difficult aspect of adjusting to the program. A few students indicated no problems at all in this area; but for many, it was a major difficulty. By the end of the first semester, however, most students felt they had adjusted adequately. Students reported fewer problems logging sufficient hours for courses the last two quarters, and there was a sharp increase in the number of independent contracts for the final quarter, which suggests that students were learning to manage their time more effectively.

Well, I've always had a little bit of trouble using my time constructively. I have, sometimes I can only do work when I get in certain moods, and then when I get in certain moods I can really do it. My main problem is when I am not in those moods of doing something that, that when I try to do some work I just can't do it.

I think that I could spend more time in constructive use but I don't think that it's possible or
Figure 4: Parent Responses to Developing Options for Using Time Goal
useful to try to work solid the six hours you are supposed to be working; I think part of the time you just gotta be going to lunch or playing bridge or playing ping-pong or volleyball—something to break the pressure. So that's why I operate, mainly I work and then I feel like taking a break, so I go play bridge with Chris or....

Well, my whole first semester was like, just failing, but now I am doing a lot better. I think from now until I graduate I'll do a lot more. The past few months I've done a lot more studying than I did on the main campus.

... what I like about it is you have a lot of time to read; you can just sit down and read a book, just keep on reading without worrying too much about classes. I have classes Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and I have Tuesday and Thursday open for reading so I have a lot more time to study.

Almost 37% of parents responding to the questionnaire felt their sons or daughters were achieving this goal all or most of the time; 16% of the parents believed their sons or daughters were achieving this goal little or not at all (Figure 5, p. 93). One question related directly to this goal statement was:

What changes have you noted in your student this year?
1 parent indicated that his child was having difficulty adjusting to freedom
11 parents indicated students were more independent
1 parent indicated fewer new interests
1 parent indicated too many new interests

Each of us will contribute to the development of a learning community with its own special identity. While the development of a learning community was a rather low priority item, it appears to have been achieved, and appears to be crucial to the success of the Alternative Program, at least from the point of view of the students.
Figure 5: Parent Responses to Involvement in Problem Solving Situations Goal
Students indicated great pride in being a part of the Alternative Program; they were generally conscious of behaving in such a way as to reflect credit on the program; students treated each other, staff members, and visitors with courtesy and respect; there appeared to be few of the cliques so common in larger high schools; discussions in Town Meeting reflected a genuine concern for protecting the rights of individual students; Students pointed to the feeling of closeness which existed in the Alternative Program as one of the big reasons for their satisfaction with the program.

I think one of the things I like best about this school is how small it is; this school wouldn't be the same if it had thousands of people. The benefits just wouldn't be the same if it was that large. Being able to know everybody—not just their faces and their names—but learning something about them doing things with them constantly. You get to know a lot more people. I think I have really prospered in this school.

Here I feel I really have a responsibility to the school not only because I want to have my own goals set for the future and I want to get out, but because this is the first year for our school and we are the guinea pigs and a lot of the things that we do make it or break it. I really want to see other kids come in and profit from the experiences they can have here, so I really feel good about school this year—there's no two ways about it. It's just a nice place to be.

I am thinking about school spirit going downhill, but I think it has picked up now, maybe because it's springtime. I don't know, they went into a slump about the same time I want into a slump about my free time. But I do think they get kind of cliquish. And for a while
there I was spending my time with about five or six people. Right now I am spending my time with more people, but still not as much as I did at the first of the year.

Almost 59% of the parents who responded to the questionnaire felt their child was achieving this goal all or part of the time; slightly over 7% felt this goal was being achieved little or not at all by their child (Figure 6, p. 96). Questions relating to this goal statement are:

Would you like the opportunity to meet with other parents?  
45 45 0

Would you like to have individually scheduled conferences with the teacher?  
56 36

How much are you involved in school  
16 24 50
How much are you interested in school  
53 26 23
How much do you communicate with school  
9 31 58

What do you like best about the school:
28 liked the intimate community
11 liked the enthusiasm for members
10 liked the participation in school governance
11 liked the relaxed atmosphere of trust
8 felt the first year was a remarkable achievement
4 felt the idea of choice was good for people who did not want structure

II

Goal statements. It seems clear that the goal statements of the Alternative Program were in large part achieved during its first year of operation. In addition, the presence of these goal statements, and the attention given to them, has been important to the success of the
Figure 6: Parent Responses to Development of Learning Community Goal

Parent Responses in Percents

True none of the time

True some of the time

True all of the time

Parents Responses in Percent
Alternative Program. It has helped to give members of the program a stronger sense of purpose and has served as a point around which the individuals in the program could come together as a group.

The continued usefulness of these goal statements will depend, to a large extent, on the degree to which they are looked to for a continued sense of purpose and direction. It seems to me important that these goals not be relegated to the pages of a student or teacher handbook, as so frequently happens in conventional schools. It will be difficult not to begin to view the goal statements as products already achieved and therefore taken for granted. The goal statements are process goals as much as outcome goals, and must be perceived as statements of intent by each member of the Alternative Program community if they are to remain viable. Although there is no data to support the observation, I sensed a lessened attention to goals during the program's second year of operation, something which should be perceived as eventually weakening the Alternative Program.

After three years of operation, the goal statements remain unchanged. They have been discussed from time to time in Counseling Group sessions, and there has been agreement that they still describe the goals of the Alternative Program accurately.11 But, most of the students
originally in the Alternative Program have graduated (5 percent of the original group are now seniors), three staff members are new to the program since its inception, and, of course, most of the current parents were not involved with the program during its first year. Under the goal of "each of us should become independent learners" (p. 58), one of the means of achieving this goal is "by never being cast in concrete." It appears that the goal statements themselves are in danger of becoming so cast.

Recommendation:

1. A continued or renewed attention to the goal statements is extremely important to the growth and evolution of the Alternative Program. The Alternative Program should undertake to examine in detail the original goal statements, and revise them wherever it is clear that the needs and interests of the program's constituents have changed. If they are interested in doing so, this could be a project directed by the few students who remain from the program's original year, and could serve as a practical example of how well they have attained the original goals of the program.

Selection and retention of students. The open admission policy of the Alternative Program is in keeping with its commitment to student decision-making. So long as more students apply for admission to the program than can be accepted, the practice of drawing names seems to be the
least discriminatory and most in keeping with program philosophy. The decision to establish minimum quotas for each grade level has served its intended purpose and has helped to provide some continuity to the student body.

The problem of permitting students to remain in the program even though it is not meeting their apparent needs is a difficult one. When students repeatedly earn few or no credits, consistently skip school, do not respond to formal or informal conferences, nor respond to a variety of plans to change their behavior patterns, it is difficult to justify their retention in the program, at least in terms of conventional expectations for students. Counseling with students and parents appears to be the most hopeful method of solving the problem; arbitrary removal of a student from the program should continue to be avoided.

Student teachers. The use of student teachers has been invaluable to the well-being of the Alternative Program. Student teachers have enabled the staff to offer a wider range and larger number of courses than would have been possible otherwise, and have added a greater diversity to the staff. They have provided students with an opportunity to be exposed to a variety of personalities and viewpoints, and they have provided the Alternative Program with a regular, if tenuous, connection with nearby
Colleges and universities, particularly Ohio State University.

Student teachers at the Alternative Program have expressed very few feelings of exploitation, something which has been common in other alternative schools, notably the Parkway Program in Philadelphia. While student teachers at the Alternative Program do not receive the close in-class supervision which is frequent in regular schools, staff members have generally been very attentive to the needs of student teachers and have been careful not to overload them. They have recognized that the student teaching experience is a period of professional growth for student teachers, and have been supportive and encouraging of the young men and women under their supervision.

Because of a selection process which includes a screening of prospective student teachers by the University supervisor, a visit to the Alternative Program by the prospective student teacher, and a final selection which is reached cooperatively by the Alternative Program staff and the University supervisor involved, the student teachers who have worked in the Alternative Program have been of generally high quality and dedication and more competent overall than is commonly the case with student teachers in regular placements. Consequently, while there
have been occasional problems with student teachers, they have been fewer than are found in regular public school student teaching situations.

Internships, the term used to describe multiple-quarter student teaching placements, have been especially valuable to both the Alternative Program and student teachers. This is so largely because staff and student teachers are more comfortable with each other and certain of the growing competency of the student teachers in dealing with the various situations which confront them at the Alternative Program.

Recommendations regarding student teachers are:

1. The continued regular use of student teachers is viewed as being highly desirable. More regular use of student teachers in areas other than social studies and English should be encouraged.

2. The benefits of internships rather than single quarter placements are such that a greater effort should be made to have only interns at the Alternative Program. Several possibilities for doing this suggest themselves:

The Alternative Program should contact the various colleges and universities throughout the country which have undergraduate programs preparing students for work in alternative schools, and invite those institutions to send qualified student teachers to the Alternative Program for
a period of two or three quarters. This would have the added benefit of bringing to the Alternative Program student teachers with more diverse teacher-training back-
grounds. The district might encourage this by offering moderate stipends to interns to help offset the added costs of participating in more than one quarter or semes-
ter of student teaching.

The Worthington City Schools should consider the es-

tablishment of a formal program with the College of Educa-
tion at Ohio State University for the training of students who wish to work in open-style learning environments at all levels. The district has open classrooms at the elementary level, an open-space middle school, and the Alternative Program at the high school level. Taken to-

together, they provide a unique field site for a cooperative, experience-based teacher preparation program in open edu-
cation.

The third possibility is that of contracting with the Indiana University Master's Degree Program in Alternative Education on a yearly basis. The Indiana program provides alternative schools with certificated, often experienced, teachers who are in a master's degree program in alterna-
tive education. These teachers serve as interns for a school year in an ongoing alternative program in exchange for a stipend equal to one-half the starting base salary in
the district. In addition to the use of these interns, the Alternative Program would have ready access to the expertise of the Indiana University alternative education staff, who are working with many alternative schools throughout the country.

Scheduling and curriculum. The practice of creating a new schedule every nine weeks gives the Alternative Program a high degree of flexibility not found in conventional high schools. Emerging student interests and needs, subjects of current interest, special skills of student teachers and outside resource people (who come and go throughout the year) are important sources of course content, and frequent remaking of the schedule permits the Alternative Program to take advantage of these sources more readily.

The Alternative Program has been able to offer its students a wide range of courses; not including independent contracts with students, 98 courses were offered the first year, 179 the second year. Independent contracts, the opportunity to make both incidental and extensive use of community resources and outside resource people, the opportunity to become involved (primarily through the medium of Town Meeting) in a group decision-making process and to experience the accompanying responsibilities—all of these further enhance an already broad curriculum. For the most part, students have appreciated and have been
content with this curriculum. But many of these opportunities have not been fully utilized by the majority of students. The tendency to view curriculum in terms of course offerings has served to limit possibilities in several ways; the current mode of scheduling also contributes to this view, as well as creating problems of its own.

The frequent scheduling and the vast number of courses which result put a heavy demand on the staff because of the need to create what one teacher calls an "instant curriculum." That is, although many possible courses are discussed for a week or two prior to rescheduling, the courses which will finally be offered are largely determined only a few days before they begin. And, while it is true that students generally do assume much more active and responsible roles in classes at the Alternative Program, these roles are assumed once the course is in progress. The bulk of the organization and preparation for the course remains the responsibility of the teacher. Given the current scheduling process, teachers have little time for anything but a cursory sort of advance preparation or thought. This happens, of course, to many teachers in conventional programs as well from time to time, especially those who attempt to be responsive to the expressed or perceived needs or interests of their students; but to do this four times a year for several courses at a time places unreasonable and unnecessary demands on teachers.
At the same time, because most courses last only nine weeks, students generally receive only 1/8 or 1/4 credit for each course; it is not uncommon, therefore, for students to take from six to nine courses at a time, each of which meets two or three times a week. Students, then, are certainly exposed to a wide range of topics and areas of interest, but they are also frequently forced to spread their efforts and energies very thin, and it is difficult for them to investigate one topic in great depth. There is at present no means by which a student, or a group of students, can have a period of intensive study on one topic—nothing akin, for instance, to the "submersion method" of foreign language learning, or even comparable to a one- or two-week workshop. The use of independent contracts to achieve this end does not appear to be an entirely satisfactory method, although it has not been used primarily for this purpose thus far.

Another serious problem affecting both the schedule and the curriculum is the need for the Alternative Program schedule to "dovetail," or match up with, the Main Campus schedule because of the many courses taken on the Main Campus by Alternative Program students. Because of this and because Alternative Program students are not given any scheduling priority on the Main Campus, the kinds of scheduling the Alternative Program may develop at present
are somewhat limited. As a consequence, the ways in which the curriculum may evolve, or at least has evolved thus far, are limited also.

This limitation to scheduling, together with convention, the Carnegie unit, the press of time, and higher priorities which needed to be dealt with, has resulted in the aforementioned tendency of both staff and students to view curriculum as courses. These courses, moreover, generally seem to be defined within the parameters of conventional subject matter areas, with their artificial barriers. Some courses may be taken for credit in more than one area, say social studies or English, but, during the Alternative Program's first year, few courses were truly interdisciplinary in nature. The resulting fragmentation of knowledge (and, hence, of the world), a common criticism of conventional school curricula, must be seen as still occurring in the Alternative Program.

There appear to be two major reasons for the absence of interdisciplinary courses. First, there has been little student demand for such courses. Not only are students seemingly satisfied with the smorgasbord of courses offered each week, but they also seem to be sufficiently "schooled" to think only in terms of traditional subject matter areas.

Secondly, there have been few interdisciplinary courses because of the staff's failure to propose and sell
the idea to students. The bulk of staff time has been used, both necessarily and by choice, in planning, proposing, rejecting, implementing, assessing, and modifying conceptual and organizational aspects of the new program, and in attempting to deal with the personal needs of students. Also, while the Alternative Program was modeled after an existing alternative program, staff members were, in a very real sense, breaking new ground because each of them was involved in a new and different educational endeavor; what they were now doing was substantially different from their prior experience as teachers. It is also important to recognize that a model is not truly transportable in the sense that it does not need to be changed, or that it will bring the same results in another situation: communities are different, school districts are different, staff competencies are different, student needs are different, and so on. As a group, then, the staff saw the need for creating interdisciplinary courses and felt it was desirable to move in such a direction, but other needs took priority the first year.

Along with this practice of offering courses within a single subject area goes a tendency toward a rather narrow "academicness" in courses—more so, it seems to me, on the part of students than of staff. Courses often follow a typical pattern: read a book, discuss it, read another
book, discuss it, perhaps write a short paper, then start the cycle again. This derives partly from the students' prior experiences and partly because, for most students, it is convenient and comfortable. There exists at the Alternative Program a generally high level of reading and verbal ability among students; as a result, students like to read, and they like to talk about what they have read. There is certainly nothing wrong with liking to read or liking to discuss what is read, and many students are able to read and discuss very challenging and complex writings at a very sophisticated level. But when this mode of learning and of experiencing the world becomes dominant, as it seems to be at the Alternative Program, it achieves its dominance at the expense of other kinds of learning.

One kind of learning which is utilized less effectively than it might be is what the Alternative Program calls a "guided learning experience." A guided learning experience is, simply, any learning experience which occurs outside the school building; that is, those experiences which in some way draw on or make use of community resources. Students in the Alternative Program take courses at Ohio State University, have part-time jobs, do volunteer work, and so on, but community resources have not yet been used as fully and as effectively as they might be, even though the staff recognizes the value of experiences in the community.
There are six recommendations pertaining to the schedule and curriculum:

1. If the nine week schedule remains the basic schedule, courses should be decided upon and scheduled at least three weeks prior to the beginning of the nine weeks, instead of the current three or four days in advance. This would allow more planning time for teachers, and would also permit the ordering of necessary materials in time for the beginning of new courses.

2. Means should be explored by which the Alternative Program schedule could be less rigidly bound to the Main Campus schedule. Three possibilities come to mind:
   - increase the size of the Alternative Program, thereby permitting the addition of a staff member. Adding only one staff member who is certificated in art and music would do much to decrease the number of courses taken on Main Campus.
   - encourage the use of independent contracts with Main Campus teachers for all or part of a course, thereby reducing the need to attend class daily at the Main Campus. Those Main Campus teachers who handle a large number of independent contracts might be given an additional conference period to meet with contract students.
   - give Alternative Program students scheduling priority on the Main Campus. Combined with the use of independent contracts, this would enable all or most of the
Alternative Program students taking Main Campus classes to be scheduled there during a certain portion of the day.

3. More courses should be scheduled for periods of time other than nine weeks. Courses of longer than nine weeks duration would help reduce the "instant curriculum" pressure on teachers, and would permit students the opportunity of gaining a more comprehensive view of certain subjects. Conversely, some topics may not warrant a full nine weeks' study; other reasons for short courses are discussed in the following recommendation.

4. A process or means should be developed to permit and encourage students to study one subject for a short, intensive period of time. The development in the program's second year of MDS (multi-disciplinary studies) courses, where students meet for a couple hours a day for nine weeks, is a move toward this kind of in-depth study. Other ways need to be found to accomplish this, but in a briefer and more intensive fashion, and are best done through some revision of the current schedule. A two week "interim" period between semesters, similar to those in operation at some colleges, was considered at one point by the staff, but was dropped as too impractical and too massive an undertaking at the time. It is worth re-investigating now, particularly if it could be scheduled at a time other than semester break, when it would conflict with exams and the beginning of new courses on the Main Campus.
5. A major effort should be undertaken to make more and better use of community resources. Doing so would both provide a much broader range of learning experiences for students and reduce the fragmentation of knowledge which results from the predominance of subject matter courses. For this effort to be successful, it will be necessary for someone to serve the Alternative Program as a coordinator of community resources on a half-time basis, someone who could take major responsibility for identifying and cataloging resources, making contacts and following up on guided learning experiences. Part of this task would undoubtedly include contacting other alternative schools to learn what approaches they have taken in this area.

6. A major inservice task for the staff should be a thorough examination of their ideas about curriculum, with the goal being a redefinition of curriculum in terms of something other than conventional subject matter, a redefinition which would be reflected in practice as well as theory. Part of this task should be a study of curriculum theory and an investigation of models and current thinking in the field. This is admittedly a large task, but the Alternative Program staff is a skilled and talented group of educators. Given the time and resources, such a task is well within their abilities; every effort should be made
to provide them with necessary time and resources. There are undoubtedly students and parents who would like to participate in such an activity as well.

Credits. The manner of accumulating credits is determined by state law, which prescribes the use of the Carnegie unit as the means of determining credit. Under the Carnegie unit system, a student must attend a certain number of class hours and perform work at a satisfactory level before credit may be granted. Within these constraints, the Alternative Program has achieved a reasonable amount of flexibility. It is unusual, for instance, to find conventional schools which offer courses for less than 1/2 credit, yet the vast majority of courses at the Alternative Program are offered for 1/8 or 1/4 credit. The use of student logs, though frequently a tedious process, is in keeping with common practice within the Alternative Program to give students responsibility in the governance of their own affairs.

One recommendation relates to credit:

1. The present method of earning and recording credits is both practical and flexible, at least within the constraints of present state law. The development of a competency-based method of earning credits might well be explored both within the Alternative Program and the entire Worthington District; with the growing national
interest in both competency-based instruction and assessment, the Ohio State Department of Education might be receptive to a pilot program in this area.

Student evaluation. For the most part, students appreciate the opportunity to operate on either a credit/no credit basis or grade basis. The written statements by teachers appear to provide students and parents with a more valuable evaluation than does a conventional letter grade. While the Alternative Program experienced no problems having its students admitted to colleges and universities during its first year, other alternative programs using similar evaluation procedures have received some complaints about the difficulty of assessing student performance on the basis of information contained in student folders; specifically, written statements regarding a student's work in each course are not helpful to them in judging student capabilities, partly, one assumes, because of the time required to read and evaluate the many statements.

Recommendations:

1. The option of receiving a credit/no credit mark or a conventional letter grade should be continued.

2. The written evaluation of the student's work in each course should be continued, even though it is a time
consuming procedure for staff members. The written statements are an important source of information for students, parents, and other staff members.

3. To provide a more complete picture of each student, and to avoid a potential problem area with colleges and universities, staff members should develop one additional written statement on each student. This statement, which could be written yearly by the student's counseling group advisor, should present a much more comprehensive description of the student's experiences at the Alternative Program. It might summarize the information contained in individual course evaluations, but should include additional information about the student's participation in other, non-course activities, such as Town Meeting, and perhaps an indication of how well the student appears to be achieving the general goals for the school. Part of this summary statement might be done by the student him/herself; it might be the student's own assessment of his/her year, or it might be a response to the statement written by the teacher-advisor. The statement should become a part of the student's permanent folder, and could be sent to colleges or universities along with, or in lieu of, individual course evaluations. For students who are in the program more than a year, these statements could provide a valuable picture of their growth during their time in the Alternative Program.
Counseling Groups. The Counseling Groups were probably the least effective component of the Alternative Program during its first year of operation. There was some uncertainty about their purpose and, consequently a wide divergence among staff members in the uses made of Counseling Groups. They have provided a place other than Town Meeting where topics of general school interest may be discussed, and it appears to be important for students to have a place to do this. A clearer definition of the purpose and function of Counseling Groups is badly needed.

The following recommendations are made regarding Counseling Groups:

1. Staff and students should spend some time studying the concept of Counseling Groups to determine if such groups are needed in or are valuable to the Alternative Program.

2. Consideration should be given to the kinds of activities which can be pursued effectively in Counseling Groups. Some possibilities are listed below:

   - Other alternative schools have used counseling groups as a place for students to improve basic skills, and this could be done in the Alternative Program;

   - Counseling groups could be used as a place where specific information, instruction, and exercises relating to a program goal, such as improving interpersonal relationships, are presented to students;
counseling groups could be used to examine in detail some aspect of the Alternative Program, such as the goal statements, and make recommendations to the rest of the Alternative Program, either in Town Meeting, or in other Counseling Groups. In addition to a re-examination of goal statements, one area in need of study is that of making better and more extensive use of community resources.

3. Once the purpose of Counseling Groups is more clearly defined so that the time spent there can be used more effectively, consideration should be given to the question of how to best staff Counseling Groups. It may be that some staff members are more comfortable with Counseling Groups than others, and there appears to be no reason why all staff members must have a Counseling Group. One staff member could perhaps handle two or three Counseling Groups and free up other staff members for activities which they would prefer to do.

Town Meeting. Town Meeting is in many ways the most difficult program component to evaluate. It is certainly the most complex and multifaceted aspect of the Alternative Program, and understanding the role of Town Meeting in the program is basic to understanding the Alternative Program itself. Town Meeting is important at one level because of the decision-making authority accorded it in the program, and because it provides a unique opportunity for
students to make some major decisions and to gain experience in the give-and-take of the decision-making process. It is important at another level because the unilateral staff decision to withhold certain powers from Town Meeting raises grave questions about staff commitment to and trust in the abilities of students to make certain kinds of decisions affecting their own education, but which also affect the staff in ways which have traditionally been threatening to teachers. (This will be discussed in the final section of this chapter). At still another level, Town Meeting operates as a tremendous cohesive force, and at times seems to have a symbolic or representational significance which far exceeds its practical importance to the Alternative Program.

As the governing body of the Alternative Program, Town Meeting exercises considerable power, and gives students important decision-making responsibilities and experiences which extend well beyond those found in conventional schools. Town Meeting makes rules governing the daily operation of the school, allocates money and facilities, and formulates policies in many areas, including the selection and retention of students. Because this form of program government is a participatory rather than a representative democracy, each program member has the opportunity to gain direct experience formulating and
amending proposals, debating issues, seeking and avoiding confrontations, compromising with others, coming to understand that politics sometimes leads to polarization of groups and individuals, which is detrimental to some of the program's goals, and so on. Town Meeting also serves as a primary means of communication within the program and as a place where successes can be shared with others in the school.

Town Meeting has a number of weaknesses which detract from its effectiveness: the loose form of parliamentary procedure often makes it difficult for participants to follow what is going on, the lack of an agenda sometimes results in important matters being squeezed in at the end of the meeting or not being brought up at all, routine matters take an inordinate amount of time, and a few students and staff do most of the talking. Town Meeting is almost always inefficient, usually deals with routine and trivial matters in a ponderous, ineffective (and sometimes pompous) fashion, and is a regular source of intense frustration and occasional divisiveness for staff and students alike. Participants in Town Meeting are often apathetic, frequently inconsiderate or insensitive, sometimes thoughtless, occasionally self-righteous and moralistic, and, rarely, mean or venal.
Town Meeting is at its strongest during crisis situations or when major concerns are being aired. To a remarkable degree, Town Meeting follows the decision-making steps outlined by Glatthorn (see p. 38), although it does not make extensive or particularly effective use of committees. Although final or effective solutions are not always reached, several things characterize Town Meeting's important meetings: attendance is good, many people contribute to the discussion, genuine consideration is given to the viewpoints and rights of minorities, several solutions and compromises are considered, mutual courtesy and respect is accorded individuals, there is often reference to one or more of the program goals, voting tends to be delayed and discussion continued until a feeling of consensus is reached, an overwhelming majority (2/3 of those present the first year) of members must agree on a decision, and, once a decision is made, expressions of satisfaction and pride in the process, the decision, and the group's continued growth are shared. These expressions of satisfaction and pride come as often from students as from staff.

Town Meeting's special value to the Alternative Program, however, has little to do with the practical concerns of the program. Town Meeting is the one intended, common, shared experience in which the individual members
of the program participate as a group, and so is the focal point for the fragile sense of community which has developed in the Alternative Program. It is the place where struggles of individual and community conscience are waged, where the collective sense of the program is crystallized and stated, and where the difficult mission of achieving the program's ambitious goals is honored and moved forward by its members. When these things occur, the shared sense of growth as a community creates genuine feelings of warmth, satisfaction, and accomplishment among Alternative Program members, and one can perceive their quiet affirmation of its value to them.

Recommendations:

1. Many of the weaknesses of Town Meeting could be minimized by developing an agenda for each meeting and by forming committees to conduct some of the routine business of the program. Both of these steps can be taken without placing undue emphasis on efficiency and thereby hampering the flexibility and spontaneity which are important to Town Meeting.

2. Town Meeting, in spite of its weaknesses, is vital to the well-being of the Alternative Program at several levels, and should continue in substantially the same form it now has.
III

The Worthington Alternative Program was remarkably free of problems during its first year of operation. This appears to be so for three major reasons: good leadership, excellent planning, and a high percentage of students with a "freedom to" orientation, to use Ellison's phrase.

From the very beginning of Task Force A's work, a stable group of staff members provided capable leadership. First as Interim Director, then as the first Director of the Alternative Program, John Miller was a steady and effective leader. An experienced administrator, he was familiar with the personalities of others in decision-making positions, had already "proven himself" in the district, and had a reputation as a cautious, perhaps even authoritarian, administrator. He was, therefore, able to move the program along in its planning stages much more smoothly than would have been the case with a newer, less experienced, or more "liberal" person. At the same time, while working with the Alternative Program staff and students, he functioned very well as a group-centered leader who exhibited great trust and confidence in the judgment of staff and students.

Contrary to many alternative schools, the Alternative Program was provided with sufficient "lead time" to plan adequately, and this resulted in a minimum of problems.
Also, while it was the professional staff who were most deeply involved in the work of Task Force A and in the planning of the program, both students and parents were involved from the beginning in the exploration, discussion, and planning which preceded the opening of the Alternative Program. Careful selection of staff members who were mature, confident, and secure individuals was also crucial in the establishment of effective leadership and successful planning.

The Alternative Program was fortunate in that most of the students in the program during the first year had a "freedom to" orientation. While escape from the regular school program was part of many students' reasons for entering the Alternative Program, most students also seemed to view the program as an opportunity to accomplish something, or acquire certain skills, or have new experiences which were not available to them in the regular program. As a result, students were serious about the program and anxious to make it work. This, along with sound leadership and careful planning, enabled the Alternative Program to avoid, for the most part, most of the "external" problems common to alternative programs which were discussed in Chapter Two. Specifically, the Alternative Program had minimal problems in its relationship with the Main Campus staff, or, once lines of authority were
clearly established, with the high school administration, received relatively little criticism of students being out in the community during the day, and was little troubled by problems of being misunderstood by the community—partly because the staff had been careful not to make extravagant claims for the Alternative Program. The program was not described as better than, but simply different from, the regular school program.

The few serious problems the Alternative Program did experience fell more into the area of the "internal" problem areas listed in Chapter Two: decision-making, freedom-responsibility tensions, curricular concerns, internal communications, and staff needs.

In three of these areas, problems were not serious. The tension between freedom and responsibility, which is both necessary and desirable to a degree, was a continuing problem for surprisingly few students. After a period of initial floundering, most students settled into a largely responsible mode of behavior. Curricular concerns were not a major problem because, as was discussed earlier, students were comfortable with the format established by the staff, and no serious effort was made to re-define curriculum in a fundamental way.

Internal communications were rarely a problem—some meetings were missed, and some students were not always aware of changes in rules or policy, but these instances
were minimal when one considers the totality of information exchanged at the Alternative Program during the school year. Because of the attention paid to interpersonal relationships, effective communications at a personal level—"where the 'feeling' content of messages is looked for, honored, and responded to" (see p. 40)—was a strong point rather than a problem area for the Alternative Program.

For the most part, decision-making was a democratic process, with Town Meeting serving as the basic arena for community decision-making. But the area of decision-making is complex, and was the source of at least two major problems, one having to do with the relative powers of the staff and the Main Campus principal, the other relating to the power of individual teachers and the authority of Town Meeting.

When the Alternative Program opened its doors in September, 1973, the staff was operating under the assumption that the program director and the high school principal would have equal authority in resolving problems relating to the Alternative Program, and that, when they disagreed, the superintendent would resolve the matter. The staff, including the director, believed this process had been agreed upon during the planning stages of the program. Since the staff made important decisions by
consensus, this agreement meant to them that they had equal authority with the high school principal in deciding Alternative Program matters.

During the first month of operation, the staff was unexpectedly faced with a problem involving one of its student teachers. The superintendent, who was new to the district and unaware of the apparently agreed-upon method of resolving Alternative Program problems, directed the principal to resolve the matter. While the staff was considering several possible ways of dealing with the problem, the principal made a unilateral decision which resulted in the removal of three student teachers from the program. The staff was initially divided on a course of action, and reached consensus only after long discussion over a period of several days. It was many weeks before the question of appropriate decision-making powers was resolved; and, while the lines of authority were finally established more clearly, the staff experienced a period of great stress and conflict, as well as a decrease in what they had expected would be their decision-making powers.

The conflict between an individual teacher's power and the authority of Town Meeting was somewhat more complex. Two students who felt that a teacher's actions toward them—removal from roles in a school play for skipping practice to attend a three day rock festival in
Athens, several hours away—was arbitrary and excessive, and asked Town Meeting to overrule the teacher. The teacher's position was that, since play production was a class for which students received credit, overruling him would be interference with the manner in which he conducted his class, something which was beyond the authority of Town Meeting. Because the students and the teacher were well-liked and highly respected, and because it was one of the few times when individuals remained inflexible over an important matter, the issue was an emotionally charged one for the entire Alternative Program community.

Below is a portion of the Town Meeting in which the issue was first discussed:

Andy

Lisa and I feel we have been taken advantage of by a teacher, and we believe Town Meeting has the power to override a teacher. (Andy then relates the story in great detail from his point of view). There was no mention of consequences on Roger's part, and we feel the action is too harsh. We've brought the problem here because we think Town Meeting has the power to overrule a teacher in this school, and we think you should in this case.

Roger (teacher)

I don't agree with a lot of the details in your account of what happened, but I won't go into all of that..., but I think everyone should understand that I did not eliminate your chance to go to Athens; I said you just had to wait until after rehearsal.
I think the issue here is whether a teacher has the right to expel a student from a class. We agreed earlier this year that things like attendance should be determined by the class and teacher, so I think this should be a class decision.

There seem to be several misunderstandings here—maybe there is room for middle ground.

The question is whether Town Meeting has the right to decide this issue, and it's important because a precedent will be set. I agree with Bobby that the class should work things out; in fact, the class should have set up guidelines in the first place.

But Roger's decision is unfair, and because of his position as teacher, I don't feel we can go to the class. (To Bill). Anyway, if it is a class decision, Roger is not abiding by the classes wishes, since most of the class thinks his decision was unfair.

(Roger and Andy have a confusing argument about whether or not the class agrees with Roger's decision. No one really knows; much confusion before meeting continues).

There needs to be an effective avenue set up by which we can seek recourse from an unfair teacher decision.

I think we should channel our efforts toward setting up a vehicle for dealing with these kinds of problems rather than taking sides here.

Maybe the class could meet with one teacher and one student who would mediate the conflict.....

(General confusion as groups react to this suggestion).
There was no formal contract, just a verbal understanding about attendance....

Other classes usually discuss attendance and other requirements; many of the people in the class feel the play is in jeopardy because of all of this; I think it calls for a class vote, but not a decision by Town Meeting.

I feel very uncomfortable handling this in Town Meeting.

I feel uncomfortable also.... Andy, could you remove your proposal, at least temporarily, and consider other alternatives?

If we can stay here until we set up a vehicle to handle the problem, I'll withdraw it.

I agree with Rick, we need a vehicle to decide problems like this.

No one is qualified to decide this except the class.

I think it concerns more than just the class' right to decide this; it also concerns the right and power of Town Meeting to involve itself in classroom matters.

There is a real question of ownership of the problem: is it the class' problem, is it Roger's problem, or is it Town Meeting's problem? It seems to me there are also two problems—the immediate one involving Andy and Lisa, and the long range problem of the right of appeal—and I think they should be separated if possible.

(At this point, classes were scheduled to resume. Andy requested that classes be cancelled until this was resolved; Judy and Connie, a student
teacher, exercised their right to hold class, which meant that Town Meeting was forced to adjourn.

The transcript reveals much about the complexity of the issues involved, the sophisticated level of discussion in Town Meetings, the consideration for differing points of view, which was common to Town Meetings, and the discomfort which was engendered by the problem. The issue remained unresolved and the center of discussion for several days, but was not brought before Town Meeting again. It was resolved, finally, by default, in that the teacher's decision remained unchanged even though the problem was never actually settled to anyone's satisfaction. The transcript also reveals in pointed fashion the manner in which one arbitrary use of power—the teachers' right to end Town Meeting to hold class—acted to inhibit or prevent the program from confronting a sensitive and important issue.

The staff was also unable to confront and resolve adequately the problem. Each staff member saw the need for some means of student appeal, but few of them were unthreatened by the idea of officially sanctioning the right of students to make implicit or explicit judgments about the actions or competencies of teachers. Several possibilities for resolving the problem were discussed by the staff, including the formation of a panel of equal
numbers of students and staff to hear and rule on such matters. As a group, however, they were unwilling to accept this or any other plan which would give students an equal voice with staff in deciding matters relating to teacher authority.

As a result, the question of appealing a teacher's decision remained—and still remains—unresolved. Similar incidents have occurred twice since the first year, and have been confronted in much the same way: the clash of personalities and resulting discomfort have precluded an effective resolution of the larger issue. The informal mechanism for appealing teacher decisions is for students to come to staff meetings with their grievances, a clear if undeclared statement of where the decision-making powers reside in the Alternative Program. Two students who were interviewed (before the initial incident) perceived and stated with great clarity the power of staff over students. Part of that interview follows:

Bob: As teachers some of them are good; but some of their personalities... they just seem superior because they have a lot more power than all the rest of us.

THAT'S INTERESTING, THAT'S TRUE. NOBODY ELSE HAS MENTIONED THAT.

Bob: The first semester I was here I was in all kinds of trouble. I am one of the alternative school "success stories," I guess. I was in all kinds of trouble at the beginning of the year and the teachers had complete and total control
over what happened to me. They were really good about it, there were times I would have been suspended and instead we wrote contracts, and they bent over backwards more than once, but they really get off on the power kick.

SO EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE NOT ABUSIVE IN THE USE OF IT YOU RESENT THE FACT THAT THEY HAVE SO MUCH POWER. ON THE MAIN CAMPUS, WHO HAD THAT POWER?

Bob

It's a different kind of thing—main campus—because like main campus was just main campus. It's all built on words and regulations and suspensions and detentions.

AND SO YOU AT LEAST KNOW WHAT THINGS ARE THERE?

Bob

Right it's hard to... I don't really know why it's o.k. on main campus and why it's not here. It just feels that way to me.

MAYBE IN A BIGGER SCHOOL THERE IS NO ONE TEACHER WHO HAS THIS CLEAR PICTURE OF WHAT YOU ARE DOING AND WHAT YOU ARE NOT DOING.

Pam

The things that I have done here class wise I would have probably been suspended for cutting, but here it is more like a personal thing. I talk to them and say I wasn't doing very well. And there, there is some rule that you will be suspended; here, the teacher will come up and cut you down and tell you you were bad.

ARE YOU SAYING THEN THAT IT'S HARDER HERE?

It's harder to not be noticed, to not let them notice what you are doing. Cause like sometimes they will come up and one of them would say like "We're talking about you at staff meeting last night." It was a shock!
There (main campus) you know that no one really notices you. No one really remembers you, the teachers or anything. It kind of scares you to know that they were all talking about you and what they should do with you.

Recommendations:

1. The staff should state clearly to itself and to students its feelings regarding power and authority in the Alternative Program; hopefully, the staff will come to honor the concept of student decision-making more completely than it has thus far in those areas heretofore reserved for teacher decisions.

2. Some formal mechanism for hearing student appeals should be developed, preferably by Town Meeting, so that all members of the program will understand more clearly their rights and responsibilities in this area.

Problems also exist insofar as unresolved staff needs are concerned. During the first year, the multitude of decisions being made for the first time helped to insure that there would be frequent and lengthy staff meetings after the regular school day had ended. The staff operated on a high energy level that year, and were exhausted by the end of school in June. Some time and money were set aside for staff inservice work, but there was a recognized need for more time than was available.

The situation has changed little in terms of the energies expended by staff. Even so, although three of the
original staff members have left the program, none did so because of teacher "burnout." Staff commitment to the Alternative Program has been extraordinarily strong, but each year individual staff members have talked of leaving, of needing a change, or being exhausted. Thus far, the summer months have served to revitalize the staff members, but the cumulative effect of long hours and intense involvement with students and each other is certain to take its toll.

Recommendations:

1. Increased time should be found for staff inservice during the year. One possible way of doing this is to have parents or other interested community residents "take over" the school and run it for one or several days, something which would provide a wide range of benefits to the program in addition to freeing up staff for inservice work.

2. A process of giving Alternative Program teachers a break from the program rather than having them leave it altogether needs to be developed. Two possibilities are suggested:

- "recycle" one or two teachers at a time back to Main Campus for part or all of the year. At least two former Alternative Program student teachers are currently employed in the regular high school and would be logical choices as replacements. Also, there are undoubtedly
other teachers at the high school who would welcome the opportunity to experience the program first hand, something which would eventually ease some of the doubts and mistrust of the Alternative Program which probably still exist among the regular high school staff.

- a teacher exchange program might be formed with one or more alternative schools around the country. Even though teacher involvement would still be intense, such a program could be an exhilarating and renewing experience for those involved. The other benefits which would accrue to the staff and the program as a whole are obvious.
NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1. I am indebted to Marita Coronis and Alan Meredith for their time and efforts in conducting some of the interviews.

3. Ibid., p. 34.

4. "N.S." indicates "not scored," meaning responses which were neutral or were for some reason unscorable.
5. Miller, Narrative Report, p. 34.
6. Ibid., p. 31.
7. Ibid., p. 33.
8. Ibid., p. 35.
9. Ibid., p. 32.
10. Ibid., p. 36.
11. Interview with Sandy Langguth, July, 1976.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

This chapter consists of two sections: conclusions about the value of the Alternative Program and some observations and questions about the role and place of alternative schools in public education. Since the previous two chapters have examined and evaluated the Alternative Program in considerable detail, discussion in this final chapter will be at a more general level, and is intended to encourage the reader to look beyond this one particular program and consider the role of alternative schools in the reformation of public education.

There can be little doubt that the Worthington Alternative Program is a viable educational program. The continued strong support the program has received from students, parents, administration and school board indicates that it is performing a valuable service to a certain segment of the Worthington community. This observer's evaluation of the Alternative Program strongly supports the general feeling that the Alternative Program is a well-planned and well-implemented program.

Most of the recommendations in Chapter Four are intended to strengthen certain aspects of program components which are presently being performed at a functional
level in the Alternative Program. A very few of the recommendations are made to improve certain weak or ineffective areas of current practice, specifically the recommendations having to do with counseling groups, the use of community resources, and the unmet needs of the staff. The recommendations regarding curriculum are made with the intent of suggesting a somewhat altered course of the program in this area; this has been done to suggest a means by which the staff and students could make substantive changes in the program in order to become a still more significant alternative to the conventional school program. In only one area of actual practice—that having to do with the locus of power in the program—are serious doubts raised. By any reasonable standard, the staff and students have done a superior and altogether remarkable job translating the stated intentions of the Alternative Program into actual practice, and their pride in their program and their sense of accomplishment are well justified.

The Worthington Alternative Program also is of value beyond its own community as a model for other individuals, groups, or school districts who have an interest in or feel a need to provide a moderate alternative to conventional school programs. Briefly, the Alternative Program:

1. is an excellent example of a successful, ongoing program.
2. provides visible evidence that the presence of careful planning, sound leadership, and a committed and talented staff pay off, resulting in fewer problems, greater stability, and measurable successes.

3. gives visible support to the contentions of growing numbers of educators that alternative schools can
   - effectively provide for different learning styles.
   - successfully focus on such affective areas as self-image and interpersonal relationships.
   - exist next to conventional school programs without constant conflict and confrontation.

4. has shown through its practices that
   - learning can be personalized for students at the same approximate cost at which the current conventional programs operate.
   - students are capable of succeeding in an atmosphere of openness, and can successfully handle increasing amounts of freedom and responsibility.
   - parental involvement in schools has many benefits, and need not be threatening to teachers.

5. provides additional evidence that the learning theories and principles of humanistic psychology, as stated by Carl Rogers and others, are a realistic basis upon which a school may conduct its affairs.
One concern which has not yet been stated is this: a danger exists that the Alternative Program will become rigidly defined and bound by its own three year "traditions," expectations, and mode of operation, and will cease to evolve into something more than it already is. The program has established its credibility in the community; it has a sense of solidity and stability to it; it has a large base of experience upon which it may draw—now is the time for the staff, students, and parents in the Alternative Program to embark on a new journey into areas they have not yet explored sufficiently, or at all.

Part of this concern is a personal belief that, while the Alternative Program is a significant variation in schooling, it still represents moderate reform at a time when more is needed. Granted, it may be that part of the Alternative Program's success and continued existence is due to the very fact that it is a moderate and not radical reform, that it has not as yet tested many commonly accepted limits, nor ventured far from travelled paths. Nonetheless, while schools such as the Alternative Program are needed, and are an improvement over current practices in most schools, they do not begin to answer fully the many valid criticisms of recent school critics, nor to respond to nor confront adequately the changes occurring in our society (see Chapter II, pages 12-17).
The Alternative Program and other alternative schools like it are significant and necessary, but they are insufficient as well; their greatest value lies in their potential.

II

The place of alternative schools in public education has not yet been adequately defined. While there is reason to hope that alternative schools may eventually become a vehicle for significant reform, it is also very possible that they will come to serve primarily as a holding pen for those who do not fit readily into the present school programs. My personal experience over the past few years suggests that, for most administrators and teachers, the term "alternative school" means only one limited kind of program—what Smith calls a continuation school; that is, a school for those who have interrupted their education, or who may be expected to do so if an alternative is not provided. These programs, usually described as intended for actual or potential dropouts, seem to be growing rapidly. A major reason for this, it seems to me, is that these kinds of alternative programs can be instituted without any serious thought or discussion about underlying assumptions and are therefore not threatening to those educators and other adults who remain satisfied with or committed to conventional programs.
For the most part, any consideration of alternatives must take place in a very limited space. Most educators recognize and will acknowledge that there are some students who are dissatisfied with the regular school program, and who respond to the demands and expectations of the school by behaving in socially unacceptable ways, usually by engaging in disruptive behavior in the classroom, by acts of vandalism, or by being absent regularly. To proceed from this point with a discussion of solutions, the locus of responsibility for the dissatisfaction must be described as residing within the student; that is, the dissatisfaction must be perceived as a shortcoming, a defect, in the student, but not in the school. Any effort by the school to alleviate the dissatisfaction can then be viewed by school personnel as a magnanimous act, an example of the school's continuing attempts to help its clientele. Any such act in the context just described, however, is a patronizing act, an act of generosity—in Freire's term, the act of an oppressor, domesticating rather than liberating.¹

This is clearly one direction in which alternative schools may move. Others are more hopeful, particularly when they consider the potentialities of open-style alternatives. Huebner has noted that "open education points to the search for community by groups of people on pilgrimage, . . . caring for those who are pushed into their presence,
reshaping their lives together, and telling and retelling the stories of where they have been and where they seem to be going." Alternative schools hold the potential of becoming places where personal experience, including internal experience, may be validated, where both young people and adults may come to realize that knowledge and culture and value reside in the individual and not in institutions.

The most crucial questions about alternative schools, it seems to me, have to do with their ultimate purpose:

Do alternative schools represent a "Great Society" approach to problems or are they part of an attempt to re-establish a "missing community"?

Do alternative schools represent genuine attempts to bring about significant reform, or are they a vehicle by which the dominant society can adapt one of its institutions sufficiently to blunt the force of radical criticism?

Can alternatives help transform the schools and society by bringing about a shift to a new value base, or will they serve in the end to co-opt the most liberal students, parents, and teachers, who, given a choice, will probably choose the comfort of a pragmatic liberalism over a commitment to the risks of radicalism?

Are advocates of alternative schools merely seeking to prop up a dying institution, or are they committed to re-forming the institution by insisting on a public place
for the creation of new forms by those who see other possibilities, who have another vision, who seek, in Pilder's terms, "a shared way of living," a place "of mutual indwelling."}

Will alternative schools function primarily to prepare students to fit more smoothly into the mainstream of society, or will they help to empower students to challenge and change the society?

And what is to be expected of the men and women who live and work in alternative schools? If many are still uncertain, Johathan Kozol, who speaks more clearly and passionately on this matter than any other current educator, has no doubts:

If we are to live our lives as honest people, we cannot work with teachers and develop classroom materials for their use unless we simultaneously set out to introduce specific strategies for raising consciousness about the function those teachers are compelled to carry out—and then assist them in the struggle to transform that function. We cannot play the disingenuous game of trying to participate in trivial and non-substantial innovation, while hoping to "slip in a little ethics now and then, when nobody is looking." We cannot do this if, in fact, we know that schools do not exist with these ideals in mind and that even those state-authorized "alternatives" which School Boards now and then allow will be permitted only if they serve priorities that are not ours. To cruise along, make prettier classrooms and less candidly manipulative tools, if at the same time we perceive the prime indoctrinal purpose of the schools and are not willing to engage in realistic tactics to confront this goal, is to decorate the evil we perceive with charm, and to invalidate our own worth.
A corollary of these questions is this: Will alternative schools, particularly open-style alternatives, make a commitment to focusing on concerns which extend beyond the individual self? Even very good alternative schools, like Worthington's Alternative Program, which hold the potential for bringing about some significant reforms, appear to be caught up in the general retreat of groups and individuals from the tasks of confronting and resolving the contradictions which exist in our society—racism, sexism, governmental and corporate domination of citizens' lives, the variance between our stated ideals and intentions as a nation and our actions within the country and around the world, to name the most obvious—and which were so clearly and so painfully forced into the nation's consciousness over the last two decades. While self-understanding and self-development are legitimate matters of study/investigation/concern, if such study at some point fails to take into account the place of self in society, the interdependence of individuals in a society, the need for community with others, then such study becomes narcissistic and limiting rather than life enhancing to self and others.

The alternative schools movement holds great potential for bringing about a significant and lasting reform of the nation's schools, and, at the same time, contributing
to corresponding changes in the larger society. Whether or not such reform occurs depends in large measure on the manner in which these and similar questions are answered.
NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1. The reader is directed to Pedagogy of the Oppressed, by Paulo Freire. It is invaluable for its explication of the psychology of oppression and domination.


APPENDIX A: TRANSCRIPTS OF STUDENT INTERVIEWS

WHY DON'T WE START BY TALKING ABOUT WHY YOU DECIDED TO COME HERE?

Dan

Last year I decided what I was going to take and considering this and—there wasn't too much over there I was interested in, the courses—I thought that I would like to do a lot of independent study and I didn't see that as a very real possibility over there with the teachers and the way the school is run. And I just thought this would give me a better chance to prepare myself for college than that would over there because I could work on stuff the way I wanted to, and there'd be more responsibility on my part and I thought that would help me get ready for college.

SO IT WAS PARTLY TO PURSUE YOUR INTERESTS, BUT PARTLY YOU HAD YOUR FUTURE IN MIND, LIKE COLLEGE?

Dan

Yeah.

Sue

For me, I just thought "Anything has got to be better than this place,"—you know the high school—because I think I was really afraid in a way to come here but I realized that for better or worse it would be a change to come here. And rather to stay in a place that has been the same way for such a long time I would rather come where there could be changes. I really didn't think at all about courses. I just wanted a change.

HAS IT BEEN BETTER?

Sue

Yeah.

IN TERMS OF THE ATMOSPHERE OR DO YOU THINK THIS SORT OF PLACE ENABLES YOU TO ACHIEVE WHATEVER LEARNING GOALS YOU HAVE?
Sue

I think yeah, because... there are people who are willing to take an hour or so of their time, whereas at the high school people were on such a tight schedule that if—even with guidance counselors—you were scheduled to talk about something that might really be important to you and you really didn't have the time. It was just such a big time thing, like "You can talk to me about this until lunch or after class for 15 minutes."

WERE YOU ABLE TO PURSUE SOMETHING YOU ARE INTERESTED IN?

Dan

I guess so. I could have worked a lot harder than I have, though.

THE LITTLE DISSATISFACTION THAT YOU FEEL— IS IT A PERSONAL THING OR IS IT SOMETHING THAT HAS TO DO WITH THE STRUCTURE OF THE SCHOOL?

Dan

I don't know; I guess it would be pretty personal. I just don't work that hard unless I have to, and I thought maybe this would help me, and I think it has, but I know I could have worked a lot, harder than I have.

AS FAR AS YOUR LEARNING GOES, DO YOU LEARN DIFFERENTLY THAN YOU DID A YEAR AGO?

Sue

This is the first year I ever heard of people like Kafka and a lot of the existentialists, there are just a lot of wide variety of interest here, and people are able to do more what they want, because at the high school you were told—you might have had a choice between three or four books—but they were just classics that have been around for a long time, and those are good to read, but if you wanted to read something else you really couldn't. And I think I was exposed to a lot here that I wouldn't have been otherwise.

Dan

I don't know if my learning has been that much different. I haven't thought about it that much, but I think what I am learning is a lot different because of the courses I am taking.

WHAT KINDS OF THINGS ARE YOU DOING?
Dan: Mostly literature. I guess that I am doing a lot of this year. I guess the courses over there are pretty much out and dried. They pick a book out over there and they give it to you and you go back to the class after two weeks and discuss the book and then you have a test and then you go on to the next book and...

AND IT'S DIFFERENT HERE?

Dan: Well, the books—we're allowed to read what you want to. We pick out—we are doing short stories now and we pick a story every week and read that—and it's not like the teacher is saying "I think this is a good story," it's the student's thing. We get to do what we want to do.

HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO SET YOUR OWN GOALS A LOT MORE HERE?

Dan: I guess so.

Sue: I think one thing, too, is the places people go, like Washington D.C. and like next week we are going to an Iroquois Indian reservation in New York, and there have been all kinds of things outside of class, like the kids that went on camping trips last week, and there have just been a variety of field trips—things that would have just taken months. Last year in the history class we had to have all kinds of things passed just to go down to campus with a class. We wanted to go to the library down there and it never even got passed.

ON MAIN CAMPUS?

Sue: Yeah, they had trouble with busses and getting people down there and people taking off; they were just so worried about things like that we never got to go anywhere.

Dan: There is a policy now that they don't allow any field trips at all. We just took one yesterday and the students had to drive and that was the only way; really it wasn't legal. I guess, because, well, the people got pre-excused at a certain time instead of getting field trip
permission slips or waivers, or whatever they need to go on a field trip.

ARE PEOPLE ON THE MAIN CAMPUS ENVIOUS OF YOUR FREEDOM TO DO THOSE THINGS? OR DO THEY NOT SEEM TO BE AWARE OF IT?

Dan I don't know, I haven't heard that much about this program one way or another from main campus.

Sue I think they really think we are goofing off and not getting anything done. That's what a lot of the teachers I heard about have said and a lot of my friends at main campus think we are just goofing off and the easy way around... and I think they would really be surprised.

DO YOU THINK THE WORK IS A LOT HARDER?

Sue I just feel it is more of an individual challenge to get things done.

Dan You have to do a lot more out of school on your own here than you would at main campus because you just have to show up for classes every day over there and you don't have to learn anything at all. Where here, just to get the hours, you have to at least spend time on your own a few hours a week working.

Sue And then you learn something. Because when you have tests and things, it seems like the goal is to memorize until the test and then after the test it all goes blank. You just really concentrate for two or three days for the test and then you are just so relieved after the test is over you don't really care what you have learned or if you have gotten anything out of it. It's not the important thing.

DO YOU HAVE ANY TESTS HERE?

Sue I think I have had one.

Dan At the end of the Death and Dying course we had a test at the end of it. But for literature courses we don't usually have a test, just papers or something.
YOU DON'T HAVE THE PRESSURE OF TESTS, BUT DO YOU FEEL LIKE THERE IS MORE PRESSURE ON YOU HERE? YOU WERE TALKING EARLIER ABOUT INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY THAT YOU HAD TO SEE THAT YOU GOT CREDIT.

Sue

It just depends; as long as I feel like working I don't feel its a challenge at all. It's just how interested you are in learning it. If you see things it is just having to get them done to get them out of the way—I don't think a person like that belongs at a school like this. There have been days when I just haven't felt like working and I usually make up for it in one way or another, I have to.

Dan

It's pretty much the same for me.

WELL, IS IT BECAUSE YOU ARE SENIORS YOU HAVE BEEN ABLE TO AVOID COURSES YOU DON'T WANT TO TAKE IN ORDER TO MEET REQUIREMENTS?

Dan

I haven't had any requirements to meet except for English and that has been open to anything I want to do.

Sue

I think it might be a little different if I had a math or science class at the high school. OR MAYBE FOR SOPHOMORES REQUIREMENTS MIGHT BE A LITTLE DIFFERENT. YOU MENTIONED TEACHERS ON MAIN CAMPUS—ARE THERE DIFFERENT TEACHING STYLES HERE THAN ON MAIN CAMPUS? NOT THEIR PERSONALITIES OUTSIDE THE CLASS, BUT THE WAY THEY TEACH.

Dan

I think the main difference is that the teachers here expect the students to do a lot more. It's not like the teachers are preparing two hours a night for every class because each teacher is teaching like three different classes every day, and so they don't have time to do all that preparing. It's the students that have to do the preparing. And it's more like coming in and talking than having the teacher lecture, and that is kind of because of necessity and kind of because that's the way teachers want it anyway.

DOES IT SUIT YOU; ARE YOU HAPPY WITH THAT?
Dan  It makes you do a lot more to be able to pass the class. You learn a lot more than if you know you are going to come into the class and the teacher is going to give it to you. You have to do some work out of class to keep up, but it's not everyday, it's like the teacher will give you something to do, maybe once a week you will have to go out and do some work.

Sue  I think one of the turning points—I have a class in Roots of Western Philosophy—and maybe for a couple of weeks people were just coming in and expecting Mrs. Langguth to lecture us because the subject was difficult and hard to get through, and it just seemed we were leaning towards the way of expecting the teacher to give it to us. And then we all sat in silence for five or ten minutes one day and Mrs. Langguth just got up and walked out. And it's the first time that our class got confronted with each other directly, because we were really upset about her getting up and walking out and we decided we better get on the ball and we better find something that we're all interested in. And we read The Prince by Machiavelli and that really had us all interested and it's been that way ever since. We do have a common interest and are curious to know things.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH TEACHERS—ARE THEY A LOT DIFFERENT?

Dan  Well, I think you get a lot better acquainted with the teachers here because it's small and the classes are small and you get to know the teachers a lot more then you would at main campus.

Sue  I still call teachers by Mr. and Mrs. though.

Dan  I do to... If I walk by a teacher I always say hi. At the main campus it's not that way. Because the teachers, at least some of them won't even say hi when they walk by and you say hi to them.

DO YOU HAVE A MORE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP? DO YOU TALK ABOUT PERSONAL PROBLEMS OR MORE ACADEMIC KINDS OF THINGS?
Dan It's more academic things.

DO YOU FEEL FREER TO GO DO THAT HERE?

Dan & Sue Uh huh.

IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP STILL A MORE ACADEMIC ONE?

Sue Things come up, like it is not like I have planned to sit down and talk to a teacher about my problems it's just that... sometimes if I am not feeling happy on certain days, it's just that a teacher—at the high school after classes are over it's just the thing to pick up your books and walk out. When the bell rings you are not supposed to talk to the teacher you could be in the middle of a question and when the bell rings and that's it—and here there is a little more time and when you see people are willing to help you, you are more inclined to... to want to talk.

HAVE YOU FOUND THAT TEACHERS ARE MORE ATTENTIVE TO YOUR NEEDS? LIKE YOU MIGHT NOT HAVE TO INITIATE SOMETHING, THAT PEOPLE WILL ASK ABOUT YOU OR WHAT YOU NEED OR HOW YOU ARE DOING.

Sue Yeah. I think most of the teachers here are that way.

DO YOU THINK THERE IS ANYTHING ABOUT THE SCHOOL THAT MAKE THEM THAT WAY?

Sue Maybe it's the survival thing, just to get along, but... if you don't open up in a place like this you just really are going to be lost, I think.

Dan Yeah, I do too.

IS IT A HARD PLACE TO BE IF YOU WANT PRIVACY OR WANT TO BE LEFT ALONE?

Dan I don't think it would be hard, but I think... they would be on the outside—instead of being the norm like at the high school—I think it would be more obviously out of place.
PEOPLE LIKE THAT WOULD BE MORE COMFORTABLE IF THEY WERE AT MAIN CAMPUS RATHER THAN HERE?

Dan

Well, it depends on if somebody just likes to keep to himself because they like to work independently, then they could fit in good here and get a lot of work done and get a lot more out of it than at the main campus. Because opening up to people personally I don't think really necessarily means that you have to be a more or less academic.

SO THOSE ARE REALLY KIND OF SEPARATE THINGS?

Sue

That's like Bob last year was in my history class last semester and I didn't even know it. I didn't even know he was in my class for a whole semester.

Dan

It was a small class, too. It's really surprising... I think I know a lot more people this year just because I go to this school. I think I know just about everybody here; at main campus, it's usually not that way.

Sue

And too, the way cliques are there, there are certain people you are not supposed to talk to, because you are in a different group, and here. I think it's like that a little bit but I feel that I can say hello to someone if I feel like saying hello. It's not that I am pressured to stay within a certain radius.

ARE MOST OF THE PEOPLE YOU WOULD SAY ARE YOUR FRIENDS HERE AT THIS SCHOOL?

Sue

Uh huh.

Dan

Mine are, too.

DID THEY COME WITH YOU AT THE SAME TIME OR HAVE YOU MADE A LOT OF NEW FRIENDS?

Dan

I've made a lot of new friends, but the people who were in my clique at main campus all came here.

Sue

It was kind of like I was abandoned or stranded.
DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE A WIDE VARIETY OF FRIENDS HERE; HAVE YOU MADE A LOT OF NEW FRIENDS HERE?

Both

Yeah.

Sue

Yeah in a way, it was kind of... I seldom talk to anyone that I've known from the high school... maybe it's—I don't know what it is—but I had a lot of really close friends and it was kind of a choice to come here and start all over again or just kind of stay there and eventually drift off anyway. But it was a decision for me I would rather come out here.

DO YOU BEHAVE DIFFERENTLY WITH THE PEOPLE HERE THAN YOU DO AT MAIN CAMPUS?

Dan

It's really surprising. Here, well, when I am walking around, I can say hi to just about everybody and not feel real uncomfortable, but on main campus it just would be really out of place to say hi to everybody I knew, their name or you know just like they had been in class or something; you don't say hi to people there unless you know them pretty well or something; just because it's so big, I guess.

HAVE YOUR EXPERIENCES HERE ALTERED THE WAY YOU RELATE TO PEOPLE OUTSIDE OF HERE? LIKE SAY YOUR PARENTS? IS THERE A SEPARATION BETWEEN HOW YOU DEAL WITH PEOPLE HERE AND HOW YOU DEAL WITH PEOPLE IN ALL SITUATIONS?

Dan

I think it's pretty much the same although— with me at least—that might just be because I don't have any friends over on main campus so I don't—so I am not around anybody else except people here.

BECAUSE THIS PLACE IS SO MUCH SMALLER AND YOU KNOW PEOPLE BETTER, HAS SEEING STAFF—YOU SEE THEM TOGETHER A LOT MORE THAN YOU WOULD NORMALLY SEE TEACHERS—HAS THAT ALTERED THE WAY YOU THINK ADULTS GET ALONG... DO YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

Dan

I don't think so....

HAS IT ALTERED YOUR PERCEPTION OF THE ADULT WORLD?
I don't know... I guess for teachers—I didn't have much of an impression of them except they sit in front of the class and talk all period. They seem a lot more human out here because I see them interacting among themselves out here and you don't see that at main campus.

And there they always sit together at lunch too, and here some of them get lunch and just sit with the students and that wouldn't happen there. It's like there are 10 or 15 teachers at one table and... one thing I think that's awkward about this school is like next year and the year coming, deciding how to accept people because I don't... I felt bad just having to reject anyone—I don't know how to deal with that...

IF YOU HAVE TO REJECT ANYONE DO YOU THINK THERE IS A BETTER WAY OF DOING IT THAN DRAWING NAMES?

I think that's the only way because when you go through analyzing everyone and critiquing... they, I don't know. I don't think that's good, because you can't go on the assumption of five or ten minute interviews—like this. (Laughter). No, I am just kidding.

HOW ABOUT YOU? DOES THAT BOTHER YOU?

It does, but I have kind of decided there is not that much you can do besides what we are doing. People are too complex to be able to judge them on a set of any arbitrary set of values somebody sets up.

And then one person I accept might not be the person you would want. And so who plays God accepting people?

WHAT ABOUT OTHER THINGS ABOUT THE WAY THE SCHOOL IS ORGANIZED, LIKE SCHEDULING? YOU MENTIONED A LITTLE BIT EARLIER THERE WAS A GREATER VARIETY OF COURSES.

Yeah, it's just that teachers are... I guess they expect to teach more than one course and on main campus, most of the time a teacher
might plan to teach at least two courses or maybe three different courses, not usually more than that. When they are teaching a lot of different courses here, then you have a much more open schedule, so that you can have a lot more courses to choose from. And making out the schedule every nine weeks I think is really good too, because the number is so small it is possible to do. And it enables you to change what kind of things you want to take throughout the year. And at the main campus you have to decide a year and a half or more what you are going to be interested in.

Sue

Like right before summer, in April, you decide your schedule for the next year. And here, if there is nothing you like, you can just write up a bunch of individual contracts and work on your own if there is absolutely nothing you like.

Dan

On main campus, most teachers are against independent work. I got really frustrated last year because in the math class that I was in, the teacher was... I was trying to go faster than the class, so I asked for an independent study and she said that I had to get an A average for the next nine weeks to do that, and I just came in and went to sleep every day; it really made me mad that she did something like that.

AND THAT PROBABLY CONFIRMED HER OPINION THAT PEOPLE AREN'T ABLE TO DO INDEPENDENT STUDY... IT'S SORT OF LIKE A VICIOUS CIRCLE.

Dan

Yeah, I know, it's...

Sue

And it kind of, I think to say a student can work on his own is kind of a maybe a threat to the teacher, like "Hey, maybe they don't need me."

I WONDER WHY; DO YOU THINK TEACHERS HERE ARE THREATENED BY THAT?

Sue

No because—

Dan

At least not outwardly.
THAT'S A GOOD POINT.

Sue

I think they see themselves too as learning, like in the beginning of the year you still saw a lot of the dittoes flying around... just thousands of dittoes, and teachers saw that you don't always learn everything from dittoes. They were willing learn too.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR TOWN MEETING AND COUNSELING GROUPS?

Dan

I think counseling groups are really good. At least I do.

Sue

Sometimes I don't have the stomach to come to Town Meetings... but what do you expect in the morning with 150 people?

IS THERE REALLY A COUNSELING TYPE OF THING... IT'S NOT JUST A TEN-MINUTE ATTENDANCE THING, IS IT?

Dan

No. We just like, we have volleyball teams and we are going to try and go swimming sometime. And a couple of weeks ago our counseling group of us went fishing and for a hike in the morning. So we do some stuff together; it's really surprising, because on main campus the home rooms are drab.

Sue

Mr. Smith would pound with the mallet when he wanted us to be quiet... he had this huge camera. Or else a teacher will throw a book if he gets too upset.

DO YOU FEEL PRETTY HAPPY WITH YOUR COUNSELING GROUP?

Sue

Yeah.

WHAT ABOUT TOWN MEETING; WHAT CAN YOU DO TO IMPROVE IT?

Sue

Oh I enjoy them, they're unique... there is never one the same but a lot of important things—people are willing to deal with serious problems—like we stuck it out that whole day with attendance, and being in Town Meeting all day—everyone was drained, teachers, but we saw
something had to be done because a lot of the responsibility was falling on Mr. Miller and that wasn't right. We were willing to deal with it.

DO YOU TALK AT ALL?

Dan

Well not usually.

IS IT MAINLY THE SAME PEOPLE WHO DO?

Dan

Mostly.

Sue

It depends on what the issue is. Like if you get all the camera freaks talking, or... it just depends on what everyone is talking about.

IS IT SOMETHING YOU THINK THAT OUGHT TO GO ON OR SHOULD YOU FIND SOME OTHER WAY TO GOVERN YOURSELVES.

Dan

I think it's pretty good because... it's just that most of the business is, seems pretty trivial. But it needs to be done and the whole school needs to do it—it's just one of those things that has to be done, like clean-up.

DO YOU THINK YOU CAN BE BETTER ORGANIZED? OR DO YOU THINK PEOPLE WOULD BE LESS LIKELY TO SPEAK OUT IF IT WERE?

Dan

The only reason I don't usually bring things up is because... like, I think of something to say and then somebody else says something and instead of raising my hand and repeating something and taking up a lot of time I... usually if somebody doesn't say it I'll bring up my point if I think it's important.

WHEN THERE ARE THINGS THAT BOTHER YOU, THAT YOU THINK ARE SERIOUS AND YOU DON'T BRING IT UP AT TOWN MEETING, HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT DOING ANYTHING?

Sue

If I have a second I usually talk about it in my next class—we usually bring things up like in some classes, when things have really affected people in Town Meeting is into making some kind of decisions, we'll take class time.
The thing with the union lettuce we spent an hour in the next class talking and people were really opposed to it... and I think if you feel strongly enough about something it will be heard.

Dan

I do too. Usually if I have something that is bugging me and I don't feel like bringing it up in Town Meeting, I then I just kind of say to myself "If you don't have the guts to say it in Town Meeting then you might as well forget it." So either I say it or I let things fall.

Sue

It's not... in Town Meeting or in front of people it's not that I am embarrassed to say anything, it's just that sometimes I can't communicate without stuttering or something and I feel myself just flushing. This big red sometimes when, and it doesn't come out to what I mean and people just say "shut up." And you are so relieved to get through one sentence and then someone says "I didn't hear."

Dan

I can't think of any way to be better organized. May be somebody could think of something after awhile. But I haven't heard anything that I think would be a better alternative.

HAVE EITHER OF YOU DONE MUCH IN THINGS IN THE COMMUNITY OTHER THAN OCCASIONAL TRIPS?

Sue

I can never organize things too well.

Dan

I had one class and Mr. White taught it and that's the only thing... I have another class, the teacher comes in from outside too. I think she teaches at Worthingway and Harding Hospital too. She comes out and teaches.

WHAT DO YOU SEE IN YOUR FUTURE? HAS YOUR YEAR HERE CHANGED YOUR GOALS FOR THE FUTURE?

Dan

I don't know. I really don't have real tangible goals that I set out for myself I don't think. So I don't know if they've changed or not.
Sue

I have always thought—even last year, I wasn't—I say how wrong school was where I was—... I just knew that this wasn't right, and a lot of people have tried to argue about high schools, the way they are now, but they just don't ever get heard so they just keep quiet and just go along with everything else, but I think I know what education can be.

IS THERE ANYTHING THAT HAS HAPPENED HERE THAT IS GOING TO CHANGE THE WAY—LIKE IF YOU ARE GOING TO GO ON TO COLLEGE OR ANY OTHER KIND OF SCHOOL—THAT WILL CHANGE THE WAY YOU BEHAVE IN THAT SCHOOL?

Sue

I have always been kind of at my own war at public high schools. I just never have been able to—if I have no one to argue it out with I argue it out with myself—here, I am satisfied, because other people feel the same way and there, thinking that the high school is bad, you're really out of place. I have just always seen education as a pleasure thing as well as learning.

WHAT ABOUT IF YOU LOOK FOR A JOB—IS THERE ANYTHING FROM THIS PLACE THAT WOULD MAKE THE KIND OF JOB YOU LOOK FOR DIFFERENT THAN YOU WOULD HAVE A YEAR AGO, OR WOULD YOU BEHAVE DIFFERENTLY ON A JOB? FROM WHAT YOU HAVE SAID YOU ARE TREATED MORE LIKE AN INDIVIDUAL HERE AND THERE'S MORE ATTENTION TO YOUR NEEDS AND TO YOUR FEELINGS.

Sue

I realize at the same time that not all people are willing to be that way. You can't expect everyone to treat you that way because some people have never been treated that way themselves and they don't know how to be themselves; they don't know how and... I don't know about jobs....

Dan

I think that this year has made me a lot more open towards people in general, because all through high school I have had pretty much the same friends. Last year I was trying to get some new friends because I just realized that I was getting stuck in a rut and after high school was over where would I be, so I decided that I would try and start to open up
more. This year has helped me a lot.

Sue

People think you're crazy at the high school if you show any signs of being yourself; they think you are crazy....

ARE THERE ANY OTHER GENERAL THINGS ABOUT SCHOOL THAT YOU THINK ARE WORTH MENTIONING? IS THERE SOMETHING THAT YOU ARE DISSATISFIED WITH THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE CHANGED?

Sue

Right now I don't. I don't see... I feel bad, I think a lot of the staff now are under tension because of the state inspector. I feel bad that people have to worry about things like that, and what the community will think about something we do, and worrying about that because in a way we kind of depend on that to keep in existence... and you wonder if it is good to try and change them or work around it for awhile. Because we are not really in a position to ask favors, although... maybe it's that people are so afraid of change that they don't always see things as...

Dan

Sometimes I get a feeling of—I get really frustrated with this school. I really don't know why, maybe just a general feeling that the whole thing isn't working and that people aren't interested in it. I don't know if that's valid or not.

IT'S AT LEAST YOUR OWN FEELINGS.

Dan

Yeah, sometimes. I mean, just the fact that the cleaning never gets done and things get ripped off and sometimes I get really frustrated, and people don't show up for Town Meetings. Especially on Fridays. Usually there aren't more than 50 people here and I wonder where the other people are and I get really mad.

SO AS MUCH BETTER AS THIS IS MAYBE THERE IS STILL, ISN'T THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION FOR A LOT OF PEOPLE. THEY DON'T DO WHAT THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO DO.
Sue

I don't know how I would be if I were here and were a freshman or sophomore. Because I realize that I have got to get through my classes or I am not going to graduate.

I wonder if freshmen are getting their credits or if there are a lot of them sliding by thinking they are going to make it up next year.

Dan

I know at the main campus, I usually get five or five and one half credits a year and here it's about four or four and one half.

Sue

I think I have about three... yeah, I know I do. I have to have three and one fourth.

II

WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHY YOU DECIDED TO ATTEND AN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL.

Tom

Well, last year when they first brought up the idea, I looked at what I had learned last year and it was almost nothing. I had gotten good grades in everything but I had already known it all so I decided to come here and pick what I wanted to learn.

Larry

I found that being on the debate team and doing things on my own that I worked better and learned more and remembered more of what I learned later on when I did the research on my own. And find out knowledge that way instead of being fed through lectures and so I decided that this school would have that opportunity.

Maria

I had 17 credits at the end of last year, which was enough to graduate and main campus just didn't have anything that I wanted.

AS FAR AS LEARNING IN SCHOOL, YOU HAVE BEEN IN THIS PROGRAM FOR ALMOST A YEAR, HOW DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE PROGRESSED? YOU SAID LAST YEAR YOU FELT YOU WEREN'T GETTING ENOUGH OUT OF IT. RIGHT? THE GRADES BUT THAT WASN'T ENOUGH? HOW ABOUT HOW YOUR PROGRESS AND WHY. HAVE YOU REALLY LEARNED A LOT MORE THIS YEAR THAN YOU DID LAST YEAR?
Tom

Yes, I would say a lot more. I'm not sure if it would be that much more than high school and their courses there because I haven't taken their courses there for seniors there. But I have definitely learned a lot more, in English especially. And history. And math; it's just the course after the one I took last year so I wouldn't say that I learned any more than at the high school.

Larry

Yeah, I think I have learned a lot more. I think at the beginning of the year I had 16 1/2 credits I probably would have sloughed off and taken as little as I could. And just let it go by because I wasn't having much fun over there. But here I have been taking almost a full load even though I didn't need the credits and I'm working hard and learning a lot.

I WANT TO ASK A QUESTION. YOU BOTH SAID YOU ALMOST HAD ENOUGH TO GRADUATE. A LOT OF THE KIDS DO GRADUATE EARLY. WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE YOU WANTED TO GO ANOTHER YEAR?

Maria

You have to let them know a year in advance.

YOU DO?

Larry

I had permission to graduate a year early but I decided not to, because of the alternative school partly and because my plans for this year didn't work out like I had planned. So I decided to come here instead.

Maria

I think I have learned a lot more this year. I learned more on independent contract than from going to class. I think for me that's worked out real well. I have gotten into a lot of things that I didn't before.

WHAT DO YOU DO ON INDIVIDUAL CONTRACTS? COULD YOU TALK ABOUT ONE OF THEM OR DISCUSS SOMETHING THAT YOU ENJOYED ON ONE OF YOUR CONTRACTS? DO YOU LIKE THE IDEA OF CONTRACTS? YOU LOOK LIKE YOU DO.

Maria

I like the idea of independent work.

WHY?
Maria: I think a lot of times the classes hold me back. Right now I have a science fiction class and we've been in class about four or five weeks now and some of the people still don't have a book that we're suppose to have read yesterday. And I think they hold me back more then anything else. For me that's frustrating. With contracts it's completely open as to how I work and.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF INDEPENDENT WORK?

Larry: I pretty much concentrate on classes this year. I have taken a couple of independent contracts and I enjoy doing them also. I did like working with other people, when I am working. I also—I plan to work with somebody else, share what we have found and you find out more that way, things like that. So I have done a couple of independent contracts with somebody else and I like that the best.

IS IT HARD TO DO AN INDEPENDENT CONTRACT? THE WHOLE RESPONSIBILITY IS YOURS, THERE IS NO ONE THERE TO TELL YOU YOU HAVE TO DO THIS OR...

Maria: The hardest thing about an independent contract is finding your advisor.

Tom: Finding the time when they can talk to you because they are so busy.

WHAT IS YOUR PHILOSOPHY ON THIS?

Tom: Well I tried an independent contract, a couple of them, and one didn't work out and one did. What I've done is I've taken a class and have stayed with the class and also gone farther on an individual contract. We had Shakespeare which—the class wasn't too great, but I kind of did things out of class on an independent contract but keeping with the class and got one credit for doing it.

WHAT ABOUT ALL THE FREEDOMS THAT YOU HAVE? THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF FREEDOM. HOW ARE YOU HANDLING IT? WAS IT HARD FOR YOU TO HANDLE IT AT FIRST OR DO YOU?
Tom  I don't think it was that hard. I have always done by myself anyway.

HAVE YOU?

Larry  At home and I haven't really depended on other people doing my stuff for me.

NOW I MEAN OVER AT MAIN CAMPUS, COMPARED TO MAIN CAMPUS. THE FREEDOMS YOU HAVE HERE COMPARED TO OVER THERE.

Larry  You mean like open lunch, things like that?

WELL, YOU CAN COME AND GO AS YOU PLEASE RIGHT? CAN YOU DO THAT OVER THERE?

Larry  No.

O.K. THE REASON I ASK IS ONE GIRL I INTERVIEWED, SHE COMMENTED THAT FIRST IT WAS HARD FOR HER TO BELIEVE SHE HAD ALL THIS FREEDOM. SHE SORT OF SLOUGHED OFF AT FIRST AND ALONG ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE YEAR SHE REALIZED, "WELL, IT'S UP TO ME." THAT TYPE OF SITUATION. HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT IT AT FIRST? WERE YOU ABLE TO HANDLE IT LIKE FROM THE BEGINNING? OR YOU DIDN'T HAVE ANY PROBLEMS AT ALL?

Larry  I think my problems increased as time went on.

OH REALLY?

Larry  I think maybe it's because I'm a senior maybe it's because I don't need the credits to graduate. I find that when I don't have a class—I always go to my classes and I always get the amount of work needed for the class—but at the beginning of the year I did a little more or was more apt to do independent contracts, but like now I don't have a class; I purposely scheduled my classes so I would have them all in the morning. So I could leave early in the afternoon.

I THINK THAT'S SORT OF NORMAL.

Larry  Yeah.
Tom

Well, I didn't have too hard a time at the beginning of the year and I'm not having any trouble now but along Christmas and January. It always happened at regular school too, at the end of one semester and the beginning of another I always slumped off. I still do it here.

ANY COMMENTS?

Maria

I haven't had any trouble. I think I came here with the idea that what I was going to get I was going to have to get myself. And I didn't come out here with the idea of being dependent on anybody, so I don't think there really was a period of adjustment to all the freedoms I had.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT HAVING GRADES AND THE OPTION OF GRADES?

Larry

I think it's important that the option to have grades is there. For me the school I applied to wanted to know what my class rank was and they wanted to know how many A's and B's, what my point average was. And I probably wouldn't have gotten to go to that school if I hadn't gotten grades. I would have much rather have gone through high school not having to worry about grades. So I think it's good we all have the option.

Maria

I don't think I ever placed... I don't think about grades. I am getting grades mostly because my father thinks they're necessary. So for my father I get grades. They don't mean anything to me.

IT'S GOOD THAT YOU FEEL THAT WAY. YOU KNOW MANY TIMES YOU FIND YOURSELF WORRYING ABOUT GOOD GRADES.

Tom

Well, I don't know, they always seemed quite superficial to me. Because I know in some classes I didn't put any effort into, and I would get an A it seemed like it was kind of useless to even try.
HAVE YOUR GOALS CHANGED FROM LAST YEAR AT SCHOOL? NOT ONLY SCHOOL BUT YOUR LIFE, YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

Larry

Not in theory but in practice. Last year I did just what was necessary to get a good grade rather than what was necessary for in-depth learning. I finished out a course in math and the next day if I took a test on anything we had had all year I would probably flunk it. I just learned things for the test, and that's not the way to remember anything. But now there is a different attitude when I prepare for tests I don't have to cram anything.

Maria

I don't think before this point I had any long-range goals to meet so I don't think they have changed any.

WELL, WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR THE FUTURE?

Maria

I am planning on going to Ohio State in political science.

HAD YOU PLANNED THIS BEFORE COMING HERE?

Maria

About the end of my junior year, yes. That was about it for far-range plans.

HAVE ANY OF YOU GONE INTO THE COMMUNITY TO WORK?

Tom

Well, I worked at University Hospital. I don't do that anymore though. A couple weeks ago was the last time.

DID YOU THINK YOU PROFITED FROM THE EXPERIENCE?

Tom

Well, a little, not a whole lot. They didn't give me enough to do.

WELL, WHAT'D YOU DO?

Tom

Well I worked in a central supply. I was supposed to get into transportation but the place never opened and so I got sent to central supply where you take stuff to the nurses stations. So that's not exactly what I had in mind when I first signed up for it.
WELL WHAT DID YOU HAVE IN MIND?

Tom
I wanted to take the patients to different places. First I wanted to work in Dodd Hall but they wanted me from 11:30-1:30 and I had classes on main campus at 1:00 so I couldn't do it.

WHAT IS YOUR INTEREST THERE?

Tom
It wasn't anything long term. I have no plans of going there, but it was something I wanted to do.

WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING?

Tom
I am planning to go into political science.

ARE YOU GOING TO OHIO STATE?

Tom
No. I am going to Transylvania University.

IS IT PRETTY SMALL?

Tom
Yeah about 730.

IS IT SIMILAR TO THIS SITUATION?

Tom
More traditional I think. But they do things—that kind of place is good. I did tell them about it—only after I got accepted though (laughter).

HOW DO YOU THINK THIS ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL WILL HELP YOU WHEN YOU GO OUT INTO THE REAL WORLD? DO YOU THINK IT WILL HELP YOU?

Tom
The real world isn't what we had on main campus, either, and we had the main campus for three years.

Maria
We got completely destroyed there, is that what you're asking?

Tom
So we have got both types; that might be important. I don't know if it's a good idea to go here four years.

WHY?
Tom

I always thought it was important to have the structure of main campus at least some time. Maybe they'll appreciate this more if they get main campus for a couple of years.

THEN SUPPOSEDLY-THEY HAD STRUCTURE IN THE LOWER GRADES.

Tom

Well it's not the same as high school is.

Maria

I don't think it is.

WELL, LET'S TALK ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR TEACHERS, AND YOUR PEERS. HAS YOUR RELATIONSHIP CHANGED FROM LAST YEAR TO THIS YEAR?

Larry

I think one of the things I like best about this school is how small it is; this school wouldn't be the same if it had thousands of people. The benefits just wouldn't be the same if it was that large. Being able to know everybody-not just their faces and their names, but learning something about them, doing things with them constantly. You get to know a lot more people; I think I have really prospered in this school.

Maria

I think I have done more things this year with people I have gone to school with than my friends on main campus. I think I am closer to a lot more people this year than I ever have been before.

Tom

I kind of say the same thing. Like, most of my friends last year weren't because I met them at school and I have done more stuff with people I have met in school this year than I have previous years. I am sure if I was on main campus right now I wouldn't do things with Juniors and Sophomores and Freshmen that we do here. Because here I didn't know they were Freshman or Juniors or Seniors until about halfway through the year. Then I was surprised when I found out.

WHAT ABOUT PARENTS? WHAT DO THEY THINK OF YOUR ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL? HAS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM CHANGED?
Maria: I don't think my parents treat me any different then they did before. I...

THEY MUST HAVE BEEN GUNG HO ABOUT THIS SCHOOL OR THEY WOULDN'T HAVE LET YOU GO.

Maria: They didn't start out gung ho, no. When it was first announced that they were going to do this, when they were thinking about doing it, I was talking to my mother and she thought I was nuts, and I guess that was mainly because nobody really knew anything about it and she just wasn't really sure about it. She came to the Parent's Meetings and after that both my parents were for it.

THEN YOU FEEL YOU HAVE A VERY OPEN RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR PARENTS. THIS IS A TOUCHY SITUATION WITH THE GENERATION GAP.

Maria: I don't think my home life—my relationship with my parents—has changed.

Larry: My parents have always been really gung ho about alternative type schools. I had no problem convincing them, and they had no problem accepting the changes in my life, the differences I have had in my education. Nothing has changed.

THE REASON I AM ASKING IS BECAUSE MANY TIMES PARENTS WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND THIS. THEY WOULD JUST THINK YOU WERE PLAYING AROUND, NOT LEARNING ANYTHING IF THEY DIDN'T UNDERSTAND, AND IT CAUSES A CONFLICT IN THE HOME AND THIS IS WHY I AM ASKING.

Maria: Well, my mother taught classes down here for a semester so she knows what's going on and I'm not worried about that.

Tom: My parents just always kind of let me do what I wanted to do anyway. I mean as far as education goes and so they thought it was a good idea for me but they would never let my brother do it. They haven't changed.

IS YOUR BROTHER YOUNGER?
Tom  No older, but I mean when he was in high school. He wasn't a very good student. They thought it was a good idea if you were a good student. And it hasn't changed at all. I do more work at home so they think I am doing a lot more work.

WELL, IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU ARE.

Tom  Well, not really because I am not doing as much here. I do more at home than I have ever done.

HOW'S YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TEACHERS HERE? COMPARED TO THE TEACHERS ON MAIN CAMPUS.

Larry  Because all the teachers chose to come out here they all had the educational philosophy pretty much geared to the school's philosophy and just because of that I have gotten along better with the teachers because I haven't had any battles with teachers. Also I can have a more personal relationship with the teachers and I really like that a lot.

WHY DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE ACQUIRED A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TEACHERS HERE THAN OVER THERE?

Larry  Well, partly because they think a lot the same as I do. And because you have a lot more contact with them. Anything you want to do you have to go through a teacher. And your classes are a lot smaller and the teachers get to know you better; because of that, you get to know the teachers real well.

Tom  Also it's much more open. I had to tell a teacher here that I didn't like what they were doing, and I might not tell them at the high school. And they don't get mad at you for that. I think they would rather be told that they are not doing something very good.

CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM.

Tom  Yeah, and you can pick your teachers. If you like a certain teacher you can pick them for your classes; like, if you like a certain English teacher you can pick all your English classes with that English teacher.
THEY CAN DO THAT HERE?

Tom: Yeah. They were going to make us switch.

Larry: Really?

Maria: Yeah, with the survey classes.

Tom: They changed their mind; I don't know, it's really English, I don't have any preference over any teacher anymore.

Maria: I don't know... the biggest factor that student relationship to staff has been amount of contact that we have and just that with contracts you have to meet with your advisor. You're in smaller groups. I think it's a big factor. Not only knowing the staff but knowing the students.

WHEN WE CAME OVER TO SURVEY THE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS ONE OF THE PROBLEMS WAS USING YOUR TIME CONSTRUCTIVELY. IT SEEMED TO BE A PROBLEM-NOT ALL BUT GENERAL. NOW FIRST THING I WOULD LIKE YOU TO TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK CONSTRUCTIVELY MEANS. AND THEN I WANT YOU TO TELL ME DID YOU HAVE ANY PROBLEMS WITH THAT? WHAT KINDS OF PROBLEMS DO YOU HAVE AND GO FROM THERE. CAN YOU DEFINE CONSTRUCTIVELY FIRST.

Tom: Well, constructively would be something that gets you toward your goal whatever your goal, whatever you want to do, that brings you closer to whatever goals you are setting.

DID YOU HAVE ANY TROUBLE USING YOUR TIME CONSTRUCTIVELY?

Tom: Well, I've always had a little bit of trouble using my time constructively. I have... sometimes I can only do work when I get in certain moods, and then when I get in those moods I can really do it. My main problem is when I am not in those moods doing something that... that when I try to do some work I just can't do it; like here I play bridge a lot—which I don't consider bad. Some people do. But I have always used other time... if I play bridge,
I have always used other time to do my work, so I have always used enough time I thought constructively.

**CAN YOU GIVE ME AN EXAMPLE OF AN AVERAGE DAY?**

**Tom**

An average day? Well, right now I have two average days—Tuesdays and Wednesdays because...

**THE REST ARE NOT AVERAGE?**

**Tom**

Well, no Monday, Wednesday and Fridays are different than Tuesday and Thursdays because all my classes are scheduled on Tuesday and Thursdays. So Tuesdays and Thursdays is mostly classes all day and then after school I go to work and then I go home and I do homework. I don't usually do too much homework on Tuesdays because I don't have any classes on Wednesday. And Wednesday I come and do work first period; I have a class second period. I play bridge at ten to maybe about eleven and that time we wouldn't have enough people to play bridge anymore so I do work. And then we eat lunch and when we eat lunch we play bridge at the same time. And about 12:30 I go to main campus classes and then I go to work and then after work I have homework to prepare for Thursday.

**Larry**

You want a definition of constructively. I would say that it really... you should spend your time meeting goals but I think also it should be extended further to say that if you are using your time constructively you should be gaining something from it. I think not necessarily goals you have set previously but as long as you are getting something from it whatever you are doing like I think you can consider that constructive time. I think constructive is a relative term though. Some things are more constructive than others.

**DO YOU HAVE ANY KINDS OF PROBLEMS USING YOUR TIME CONSTRUCTIVELY?**

**Larry**

I think that I could spend more time in constructive use but I don't think that it's possible or useful to try to work solid the six hours you are suppose to be working, I think part of that time you just gotta be
going to lunch or playing bridge or playing ping pong or volley ball—something to break the pressure; so that's why I operate mainly, I work and then I feel like taking a break so I go play bridge with Chris or...

DO YOU HAVE AN AVERAGE DAY? IT SOUNDS LIKE TO ME THAT NO ONE AROUND HERE HAS AN AVERAGE DAY.

Larry

An average day. I get here in the morning and probably spend the early morning talking to people and doing work I have to get done. Then I have classes from 9-11 or 12 and then I do any work I have to do or play volley ball or leave early then I have to be back at 3:00 for play rehearsal. It lasts till about 5:30, then I go home, eat my dinner and then spend my evenings however...

Maria

To me, something constructive would be anything that I do that I gain something or someone else does. And I think that's how I justify playing bridge, for instance. I spend most of my time here doing things with other people and to me that's pretty important because I don't have as many classes and the only way I am really around the other kids is if I spend time with them during the day. I think a lot of the staff tends to look at me as if I am sitting out there horsing around with people and it's really not true. I have a contract with just about everybody in here and if they would look at the time that I spend doing things they would realize that I am working too. I spend a lot of time at home doing work; for me it works out better that way.

DO YOU HAVE ANY PROBLEMS WITH ADJUSTING TO SCHOOL AND USING YOUR TIME CONSTRUCTIVELY?

Maria

No, I don't think so. I had more classes the first nine weeks and, I think I have four and there is no problem there. I think maybe if there would have been any adjustment problem it would have been coming from main campus having a class every period and out here doing nothing. Having no classes. The first
two nine weeks I did have classes, the third nine weeks I was totally contracted. And right now I am taking English classes mainly because of the staff shortage. Its kind of hard to find English teachers now so it works out better that way—taking classes.

YOU SAID YOUR PARENTS KNEW ALL ABOUT ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS EVEN BEFORE YOU CAME HERE RIGHT? O.K. DID YOU TWO HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT AN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL WOULD BE WHEN YOU WALKED INTO THIS BUILDING?

Maria

I spent a lot of time last year doing some research for alternative schools and I was pretty involved in what was happening getting this program through the school board and I read all the reports given to the school board; I read the Task Force. I was pretty aware of it but I think both my parents are teachers—well neither one of them are teaching now but it is not as if they didn't know what it was.

Tom

All I knew about it is what we were told by the...

WHAT WERE YOU TOLD?

Tom

Mostly I was told by Mr. Studer. He was my history teacher last year. A lot of it was very vague and I did have a little misgivings about coming for awhile. But I can't really remember what the information was, but I was aware that if it didn't work—if the classes didn't work—that I could always make it work myself by going individually. So I wasn't too worried about it.

WHAT ABOUT TEACHING METHODS? HAVE TEACHING METHODS CHANGED ANY THIS YEAR AS COMPARED TO LAST YEAR?

Maria

I had Rick Studer, and Duane Butler, and I don't think either one of them has really changed their teaching habits. As far as Duane Butler goes, the only thing that there is a lot more independent work in the classes. Last year it was you go in, you have your
homework, you go over your homework and he assigns you homework. This year the students have contracts each nine weeks and you're supposed to cover a certain amount and they do independent work. There are class lectures and stuff like that but...

O.K. I UNDERSTAND FROM OTHER STUDENTS THAT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR THERE WAS AN ATTITUDE, AT THE MIDDLE OF THE YEAR THERE WAS ANOTHER ATTITUDE. GENERALLY THE ATTITUDE HAS CHANGED. DO YOU FIND THIS TO BE TRUE? DO YOU KNOW WHAT I AM TALKING ABOUT?

Maria

Yes, I know what you are talking about. At the beginning of the year I think everybody was so excited that we had a fantastic community atmosphere. I mean clean-up was done and all these things were done and everybody just going all out to help everybody else. Everybody was doing everything they could to make this work. And then January the garbage in the halls was starting to stink and things got pretty much letting down.

WHY?

Maria

You didn't ask that...(laughter). Well usually when it smells bad down here somebody takes it upon themselves to empty the garbage cans. I think we have gotten more cliquish then we were at the beginning of the year. I think at the beginning of the year there were a lot of people who didn't know anybody and now the people have gotten to know others and they have picked the people out they prefer to be around. You spend more time with those people. I think it has changed the overall community atmosphere.

IT HAS CHANGED FOR THE POSITIVE?

Maria

Yes.

Larry

Yes, I have noticed the same change; I think one of the things this school that is going for it and is not going to be permanent is that it's not a permanent school, that it's experimental and everybody is worried if they are going to be here next year and whether it's
going to become permanent or not and as now with the state inspector coming, people are committing themselves making sure they get their clean-up done and things like that. I think that school spirit is still there. And I think we have more school spirit than the main campus, but I think it's going downhill. I guess it's just natural.

Tom

I am thinking the same thing about school spirit going downhill, but I think it has picked up now maybe because it's springtime. I don't know—they went in a slump about the same time I went into a slump about my free time. But I do think they get kind of cliquish. And for awhile there I was spending my time with about five or six people. Right now I am spending my time with more people... but still not as much as I did at the first of the year.

I AM GOING TO ASK YOU WHAT YOU THINK SHOULD BE CHANGED IN THE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL.

Larry

The thing I think should be changed, which is impossible being a public school... it can't be changed is that—what the school is doing is to fight the natural tendency of people to... they say we are taking advantage of our free time because we decide to leave the school and go home or work or something or just go to a park and lay out in the sun... I don't think that the restrictions that they have like the sign out book or the six-hour day are necessary. I think that the way it should operate is that you come to school you are supposed to come to school to learn—and I think the way you should decide if you're learning is if you are learning you are getting credit for courses. If you are spending time working you are getting credit for courses. If everyday you go out and lay in the park under the sun you obviously shouldn't be getting any credit for the courses. I think that the restrictions put on us that are to help us get our work done are not necessary. I don't think they are necessary. I think if possible they should be eliminated and simply that you get the work done and if you are learning you get credit for the course. If you are not you don't get credit for the course. If you don't
get credit you can't graduate. But that's just not possible if I understand the state law.

Tom

I kind of feel like they say here, "You have freedom to do what you want but don't do this, and don't do this and this," and mainly what Larry says, but they have a Town Meeting which takes, which tries to influence the teacher-student relationship and the class relationship. They try to... I think things should be more individual. And not have a Town Meeting tell us everything to do. Like they told us we had to write a class contract. I think that should be strictly up to the class. And contracts between students and teachers should be strictly up to the teachers and students and shouldn't be controlled by the big mass out there. Maybe they're trying to carry the community thing too far. At the beginning of the year when they gave us goals they said that one was to establish community feeling. I have that last on my list.

Maria

I think that one of the most important things is that is to get more staff. I think we are kind of pushing it with some of our staff. In that they don't have a whole lot of free time. I know that's changed some this last nine weeks—they've scheduled more free time but as far as contracts go they really don't have a whole lot of free time to be able to work with all the people they have, and do it effectively. I think that should be the big thing that they work on.

III

I HAVE ABOUT SIX AREAS I WANT TO ASK YOU ABOUT. O.K. I GUESS THE BEST PLACE TO START IS WITH YOUR REASONS FOR COMING TO THE ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM.

Bob

Well, I think it was basically I was sick of the main campus. I was ready to try something different. I didn't know what this school was going to be at all before I came.
Pam: It was the same for me except, I went downhill in my grades gradually since eighth grade, and I just thought, anything different.

HAS IT HELPED? DO YOU FEEL BETTER HERE?

Pam: Well, my whole first semester was like, just failing, but now I am doing a lot better. I think from now until I graduate I'll do a lot more. The past few months I've done a lot more studying then I did on the main campus.

WHAT YEAR ARE YOU?

Pam: Junior.

HAS IT BEEN BETTER FOR YOU? OR ABOUT THE SAME?

Bob: Well, it did take a long time for me to get adjusted. A semester; but I feel what I have learned so far this semester has been a lot more than on main campus. I just feel like since I am doing things I want to be doing I am putting a lot more effort into them and getting a lot more out of them.

WERE YOU IN TROUBLE AT THE OTHER SCHOOL OR JUST DISSATISFIED? WERE YOU IN TROUBLE WITH THE TEACHERS?

Bob: No, I was passing all my courses and getting my credits, but I wasn't learning anything. So I was looking for a change.

ARE YOU A JUNIOR TOO?

Bob: Yes.

SO YOU THINK THEN COMING HERE, THAT THIS SCHOOL IN SOME WAY ENABLES YOU TO PURSUE YOUR OWN LEARNING ACTIVITIES? YOU HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SET YOUR OWN GOALS?

Pam: What do you mean by goals?

'I MEAN BEYOND, SAY. JUST GETTING OUT OF SCHOOL. IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WANT TO GET FROM SCHOOL?
Yeah, but right now I am in just such credit trouble, it's just getting credits. Now it's if I can get credits in all these things I can still pursue my interests. There are a lot of things I just take for the credits... maybe if I had started as a freshman.

Do you think it is easier for a freshman just coming here than for juniors and seniors?

It seems like they are doing real well. Because we're used to that over there...

Are there things you have done here, like activities outside the school, that you wouldn't have been able to do on the main campus? Have you used resources besides the school?

What I am doing is I am taking one course that I am teaching; everything else I am doing outside the classroom on contract. And everything I am doing is things I want to do. I am not doing one thing that I don't want to do.

Are all your contracts with people here at the school? Are you using outside resources?

Yeah we are using a lot of outside resources.

The only thing that I have done that wasn't really based at the school was I took speech and hearing at OSU, but I had to drop it. But that was good. We could go down there and just...

So dropping it didn't have anything to do with the class itself.

No. I just couldn't get the hours and I was falling behind in everything else.

O.K. You said you felt the relationships with teachers here were a lot different here and you said, at least as far as classes go, if you don't like something, you can change them, but beyond that outside of classes are things different.
Pam: Well I talk to them... I get sick really sick of the teachers.

HOW ARE THESE TEACHERS DIFFERENT?

Pam: Just that they are more like friends. They're more like people you see all the time. I get kind of sick seeing the same old ones, but they are just like more normal human relationships you have with them.

WOULD YOU PREFER IT THE OTHER WAY?

Pam: No.

EVEN THOUGH IT'S TIRESOME FOR YOU AT TIMES?

Pam: It's just sometimes... they'll seem too much like teachers. And then I get tired because I don't feel like talking outside of class. They start controlling (unintelligible). The student teachers are really like friends, but it seems like a lot of the other teachers have had a lot of trouble getting rid of their teaching thing.

Bob: Why don't you repeat the question for me.

THIS QUESTION HAD TO DO WITH WHETHER OR NOT YOU HAD DIFFERENT RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEACHERS HERE BEYOND CLASSROOM, BEYOND SIMPLY IF YOU HAD MORE FREEDOM IN CLASSROOMS... YOUR RELATIONSHIPS OUTSIDE OF CLASS.

Bob: Well, it's hard to say. Like the cross section of teachers we have here is really strange. We have all kinds of teachers in terms of personalities. Like I have gotten really close with one teacher and most of the rest of them are just teacher relationships.

IF YOU HAVE PROBLEMS OTHER THAN ACADEMIC PROBLEMS, ARE THEIR ADULTS THAT YOU GO TO TALK ABOUT. IF YOU DO, ARE THOSE ADULTS TEACHERS HERE?

Bob: Well I talk to Judy sometimes. Besides her no.
I can't think of any time that I'd go to a teacher. I have once. Once I was talking to Mr. Studer about like school because I thought I was going to be expelled, and I ended up telling him all these personal problems. I kind of was sorry that I did that. I don't think I would do it again. I don't feel that close to him. It was like telling a stranger all these problems and now I have to... like I just felt that I had told too much about myself, because I still consider him a teacher and I don't like to go around telling.

DO YOU FIND THAT SOME OF THE TEACHERS SHARE THEIR PERSONAL LIFE WITH YOU?

Most of the teachers here are really prickly. As teachers some of them are good; but some of their personalities... they just seem superior because they have a lot more power than all the rest of us.

THAT'S INTERESTING, THAT'S TRUE. NOBODY ELSE HAS MENTIONED THAT.

The first semester I was here I was in all kinds of trouble. I am one of the alternative school "success stories," I guess. I was in all kinds of trouble at the beginning of the year and the teachers had complete and total control over what happened to me. They were really good about it, there were times I would have been suspended and instead we wrote contracts, and they bent over backwards more than once, but they really get off on the power kick.

SO EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE NOT ABUSIVE IN THE USE OF IT YOU RESENT THE FACT THAT THEY HAVE SO MUCH POWER. ON THE MAIN CAMPUS, WHO HAD THAT POWER?

It's a different kind of thing—main campus—because like main campus was just main campus. It's all built on words and regulations and suspensions and detentions.

AND SO YOU AT LEAST KNOW WHAT THINGS ARE THERE?
Bob Right it's hard to... I don't really know why it's o.k. on main campus and why it's not here. It just feels that way to me.

MAYBE IN A BIGGER SCHOOL THERE IS NO ONE TEACHER WHO HAS THIS CLEAR PICTURE OF WHAT YOU ARE DOING AND WHAT YOU ARE NOT DOING.

Pam The things that I have done here class wise I would have probably been suspended for cutting, but here it is more like a personal thing. I talk to them and say I wasn't doing very well. And there, there is some rule that you will be suspended; here, the teacher will come up and cut you down and tell you you were bad.

ARE YOU SAYING THEN THAT IT'S HARDER HERE?

Pam It's harder to not be noticed, to not let them notice what you are doing. Cause like sometimes they will come up and one of them would say like we're talking about you at staff meeting last night. It was a shock! There (main campus) you know that no one really notices you. No one really remembers you, the teachers or anything. It kind of scares you to know that they were all talking about you and what they should do with you.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER PEOPLE IN THE SCHOOL? WHEN YOU CAME, DID MOST OF YOUR FRIENDS COME TOO, OR WERE YOU KIND OF ALONE?

Pam Most of my friends came.

Bob A lot of mine came too, but I've made a lot of new ones.

WAS THAT A LOT EASIER TO DO HERE?

Bob A lot easier. On main campus you don't see anyone except out in the smoking area and that was all the personal contact you had so you don't (unintelligible) them, and it's secure in the fact that no one will find out. But here people see you and know what you're doing; you know, it's a lot more open.

ARE YOU COMFORTABLE WITH THAT?
Bob

Yes I am, it's comfortable. Most of the people around here are pretty good.

Pam

I was thinking, at the high school we had a few best friends and it seems like they last for years, but here it seems like I have gone through ten groups of people. I mean it changes all the time because it's so easy—you see them all the time. It's really good to have new people coming in, new faces to see.

BECAUSE IT'S BEEN EASIER TO MEET PEOPLE AND MAKE FRIENDS HERE, HAS THAT AFFECTED THE WAY YOU TREAT PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL? DO YOU CARRY THAT FEELING YOU HAVE HERE OUT?

Pam

I don't think I act much different; it's just that I act the same with all people. I mean it just seems like last year I had one or two friends that I was pretty open with and this year it's just more... so probably with strangers outside I act the same way that I would have before.

Bob

Well, some of it carries over to the outside, but I don't see any particular change.

HOW ABOUT YOUR PARENTS, HOW DO THEY FEEL ABOUT THIS SCHOOL? DO THEY HAVE MUCH TO SAY ABOUT IT?

Pam

They just, they worry about it, they don't think I'll be getting into college and they ask me about it, and I always just tell them; they worry more because it's like this experiment; like over there if I am not doing o.k. they will hear about it right away and here they won't hear. But they like it; they can tell that I'm happier so they just have to like it.

DO YOU WANT TO GO TO COLLEGE?

Pam

Not right now... it kind of scares me that I might not get accepted. If I suddenly decide to go to some college and I won't have the grades to get accepted. Right now I just don't want to go.
DO YOU THINK BEING HERE HAS FURTHERED YOU ACADEMICALLY? APART FROM THE GRADES— IN TERMS OF WHAT YOU ARE LEARNING?

Pam

I am learning a lot more. But like on the records it will probably come off that as a lot less because I am not getting the grades and I've dropped some of the classes. But even in those... I learned a lot in those even before I dropped them.

HAVE YOU TALKED TO THE STAFF AND THE PEOPLE ABOUT THAT? YOUR CONCERN IF YOU EVER DECIDE TO GO TO COLLEGE?

Pam

My mom went to some meeting to write to colleges and most of them said they wouldn't accept kids from here without grades, but I always figured if I did decide I could go to OSU. Because they don't really go on grades.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR PARENTS?

Bob

I think my mother likes it. I haven't said too much about it. My father hasn't said anything about it but probably doesn't like it. They kind of just let me do what I want in terms of school; they haven't given too much comment, except saying "Are you doing o.k. in school?"

LET'S TALK A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT THE SCHOOL ITSELF IN TERMS OF THE WAY IT'S SET UP— LIKE COURSES AND SCHEDULING, THINGS LIKE THAT. ARE YOU PRETTY SATISFIED WITH THE CURRICULUM AND THE WAY COURSES ARE SCHEDULED EVERY NINE WEEKS? IS THAT GOOD FOR YOU OR HAS IT CAUSED PROBLEMS?

Pam

The only thing that causes problems is it's really hard for me to get hours because it just seems like we shouldn't have to get as many hours as we have to and like those 1/8th credit courses it seems like they aren't even worth two credits in them. But I like the courses.

YOU'D LIKE THE CREDITING CHANGED?

Pam

Yeah, but I can see that they can't because of the school board or the state or something.
I like the 1/8th credit courses, but I think that there should be more student taught courses; I'd like to see more students teaching courses.

YOU'RE TEACHING ONE THIS QUARTER: DO YOU FEEL PRETTY GOOD ABOUT THAT?

Yeah, it's really good. We are having no typical attendance problems. No problems getting people together, it's just been working all the way.

DO YOU FIND WHEN YOU'RE TEACHING A COURSE THAT YOU PUT MORE WORK INTO IT THAN YOU DID WHEN YOU ARE IN A COURSE THAT YOU ARE A STUDENT?

I've put in a lot of work. I've put in more work than... I haven't put in an awful lot of work but it took me a couple of hours before the course started to get some information together. Some of my own information through my personal experiences and I make a file of things... from there is pretty much five or ten minutes deciding what we are going to do.

HAVE YOU DONE MOST OF THE DECIDING OR DO YOU GET TOGETHER AS A CLASS?

I pretty much decide with the other student who is teaching it. We have been pretty much running it without student ideas. We haven't gotten too much flack.

WHAT ABOUT TOWN MEETING?

It's got its good points and it's got its bad points. I think its basically the foundation of it, the idea is really good. But in practice it doesn't work out as well as it could.

WHY DO YOU THINK THAT?

People are just not interested... a lot of people are not listening. A lot of people are out in the smoking area, which I do occasionally, playing cards and checkers, you know, just not being real interested. But I think it's worth it; it would be nice if we
could have some more people active and listening. The most important part is the voting. I think they vote pretty truthfully. So I think it's not bad—I don't have any alternative to suggest.

AND THE IMPORTANT THINGS, IT WORKS REAL WELL?

Pam

There's a couple of things that I go to Town Meeting for; when they are going to make a big rule about something, then I go to it and seriously vote. The rest of the time it's just like entertainment. I just like to go and watch and just laugh. I am just that kind of person. It might be doing really good, but it just seems pretty humorous.

DO EITHER OF YOU TALK IN TOWN MEETING?

Bob

No.

HAS THERE BEEN ANYTHING YOU WANT TO SAY OR....

Bob

There have been a couple of times but it's hard to say anything when there's so many people...

Pam

Yeah, like they always say like why doesn't someone who cuts or smokes dope outside stand up and argue the point for us, and no one could stand up and say that... and you always feel that someone, out of all of those people—they are all like actors, there is Roger Johnson, Andy Modd, Rick Studer, and they all... it seems like they cover most any point of what they are talking about so you can just wait for these people to say.

DO PERSONAL FEELINGS ABOUT SPECIFIC PEOPLE TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER THE ISSUES IN TOWN MEETING?

Pam

Yeah.

Bob

Once in awhile.

Pam

Especially between teachers... it's really noticeable; sometimes they have big fights on an issue. Sometimes it gets real tense and uncomfortable and you'd just wish they'd go
outside and fight or something. There's been two or three times when it's just been really tense and quiet because of two teachers arguing... it becomes real personal. But usually between students it's not.

**WHAT ABOUT COUNSELING GROUPS—HAVE THEY BEEN USEFUL FOR ANYTHING BEYOND ATTENDANCE?**

**Bob**

Not at all... my counseling group has not done one thing all year. We haven't accomplished one thing... I never go any more. We very rarely have them... we just come in and have attendance taken and leave, but I usually don't go. We went to breakfast once—that was fun... I wish we did more things like that... played volleyball once or twice... but as far as the school is concerned, we haven't done a thing.

**ARE YOU IN THE SAME COUNSELING GROUP?**

**Pam**

No, but mine's the same way... it seems like they should just take attendance and then leave, 'cause there's...

**HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE IDEA OF A COUNSELING GROUP, A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO ARE TOGETHER ALL YEAR?**

**Pam**

I don't really see what they're supposed to do, what it's for, unless it's like to talk about things... I think that's what they are for...

**THAT'S WHAT I'D UNDERSTOOD THEY WERE FOR.**

**Pam**

Usually there isn't anything to talk about... like sometimes he'll tell us that maintenance hasn't been done lately, but there's not much you can say...

**WOULD YOU BE IN FAVOR THEN OF DISCONTINUING COUNSELING GROUPS OR—**

**Pam**

Yeah.

**Bob**

It has no use, except... maybe they should just call it attendance groups. It'd be nice if we could get together and go out to breakfast
and things like that, but nothing is really... discussing things in counseling groups doesn't really mean anything 'cause it has no point— you don't vote, you don't... everyone knows that people are smoking joints out in the back lot... what can you say? The same thing with maintenance—everyone knows you're not doing maintenance, so what can you say? All those things that are almost always brought up in Town Meeting...

HOW WOULD YOU DEAL WITH THOSE PROBLEMS, THOUGH?

Pam

I don't think they're as big a problem as everyone else seems to think; I think they need some problems to talk about, and so they... because, like the smoking dope, there's like a hundred kids smoking dope between every period at the main campus—it's incredible. And here, it's maybe once a day... I don't think there's a problem at all. I haven't heard anyone call the Alternative School a drug den... And maintenance, it's like, one Town Meeting... I hadn't been doing it for a long time, and I just decided if they're gonna be that upset about it I'd do it, so I've been doing it ever since. I don't think the school's had any big problems at all.

DO YOU THINK IF IT DID HAVE ANY BIG PROBLEMS IT COULD DEAL WITH THEM?

Bob

I think that we've seen with the attendance problem—we had couple of all day Town Meetings, pretty long discussions about attendance...

Pam

I don't know, it doesn't seem like we still have the problem, but we didn't really deal with it at all... Like, they've got the Linworth 7, and I'm supposedly on that, but I've never gone to a meeting... but I don't think they have a big problem; everyone just kind of started going to classes...

O.K., WHAT YOU'VE BEEN SAYING, THEN, IS THAT WHEN THERE IS A PROBLEM, OR AT LEAST AN IMAGINED PROBLEM, PEOPLE TALK ABOUT IT AND AS A GROUP, THE SCHOOL SEEMS TO ASSUME SOME RESPONSIBILITY— LIKE YOU STARTED TO DO YOUR MAINTENANCE, AND
ATTENDANCE SEEMS TO HAVE TAKEN CARE OF ITSELF...
PEOPLE DO SEEM TO FEEL SOME RESPONSIBILITY...

Pam
Yeah, it's not like any of these committees that are set up ever work, it's just kind of, everyone decides if it's gonna be that big of a thing that we'll just start doing better.

Bob
At the beginning of the year, it was beginning to be something of a dope smoking problem out back, and they brought it up in Town Meeting, and we just kind of agreed—not Town Meeting People, the dope smokers—we'd simply leave school property when we want to do it... and it's worked pretty well that way: sometimes there'll be people out in the alternative area, or out on the other side of the maintenance shed... you know, it's no major thing, really.

O.K., LET'S GO ON THEN. HAS THIS SCHOOL HELPED YOU THINK ABOUT YOUR GOALS FOR THE FUTURE: THAT IS, AFTER YOU GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL?

Pam
I've thought about it in the past year a lot, but I think it's more personal—it's just about that time for me to be thinkin'...

Bob
This has been one of my biggest changes I know that; I don't think it has to do with the actual school—learning, class, that type of thing—but just the overall environment and the people around the school, have brought about a lot of changes...

DO YOU SEE THEM AS LARGELY POSITIVE CHANGES...?

Bob
Yeah.

HAVE THERE BEEN NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES TO COMING HERE? YOU BOTH SAID YOU STRUGGLED THE FIRST SEMESTER.

Bob
No, I don't think so... except for the fact that I'm three credits short or something...

AND IF YOU'D BEEN ON MAIN CAMPUS YOU PROBABLY WOULD HAVE BEEN GETTING THOSE CREDITS?
Bob

Right. I would've gotten those credits. But I think I'm getting so much out of this school that I really don't think I'll mind staying or working a little bit harder next term.

DO YOU EXPECT TO BE ABLE TO MAKE UP THOSE CREDITS NEXT YEAR AND STILL GRADUATE ON TIME?

Bob

Hopefully.

O.K. ARE THERE ANY OTHER COMMENTS YOU WANT TO MAKE ABOUT THE PROGRAM? THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

IV

ONE OF THE AREAS WE WANT TO DISCUSS IS WHY YOU CAME HERE. WHAT WERE YOUR REASONS FOR THE ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM?

Karen.

Well, I guess there's a lot of reasons I didn't like basic structured classes. Your basic high school. And I thought it would help me by being more of an individual. You know?

Bill

Well, I felt as though I had gone through a lot of changes since my high school. Since this was my senior year and I felt I had gone through a lot of changes and I was ready for something else and high school stayed the same. And also it was too easy, it was too easy to slide by. And just go through the classes and never really learn anything. It was just a question of whether your body was there. You just went through the actions, but out here the only marks or grades you would get would be on what you would do, would or would not do. So that was one of the reasons I came here. It seemed like a logical place to come. I was ready to quit school.

(To Patty, a late arrival.)
THE QUESTION IS WHY YOU CHOSE TO COME OUT HERE.

Patty

Oh gee. I don't know because there was a lot of things I wanted to study. Things I had an awful lot of interests and it didn't seem like it seemed like the classes I had to take at main campus had a lot of requirements and none
of them were anything I really wanted to study. And it was just sort of getting to me after awhile it was like I was going to spend my whole life doing a lot of stuff I didn't want to do and finally I decided what's the point of learning all this stuff. If it's something I don't even want to go into. It's not anything that interests me at all. And like history—we have to take it out here too—but they all had a lot of requirements like history and its just I don't think I could have stood it if I had to take it at main campus. Just the classes I don't think I could have even sat through it because I don't even like history. And just a lot of requirements like that. And you have to take composition and stuff like that. We still have the same requirements out here but the only thing is we have a lot more choice on how we can do it. We have an awful lot of options I mean we can study it in our own way and put a lot more individual interest into it and that's why I wanted to come out here so I could get my own interest into it.

Jay

Well, I wasn't able to develop my full ability over at the main campus. I had been in a special English, well a modified English a couple of years 9th and 10th grade, and I knew I would be in it 11th and 12th. So I couldn't put up with like regular English. It was too difficult for me. So in modified I really wasn't able to develop all my skills in English and over here I have more of a choice of what I want to study. And I can develop more.

Lynn

I came over here because I just couldn't hack it at the main school. I just couldn't handle it. I was going to drop out as soon as I turned 16. And I really didn't want to drop out because I wanted to finish school and go to college. And I didn't like myself, the way I was and I didn't like the things I wasn't accomplishing. And I just came over here because it was like a stitch off the turmoil.

O.K. NOW I HAVE ABOUT FIVE MORE AREAS THAT I WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU ABOUT. I WOULD LIKE
TO FIND OUT A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR LEARNING AND HOW YOU PROCEED THROUGH YOUR LEARNING. WHAT TYPES OF THINGS YOU DO TO LEARN HERE, MAYBE AS OPPOSED TO ON MAIN CAMPUS. THE THINGS THAT YOU DO HERE THAT YOU DIDN'T DO ON MAIN CAMPUS. SO WHAT ARE THEY AND WHAT IS YOUR EVALUATION OF THOSE THINGS YOU ARE DOING?

Bill
Well, I found that once I came out here it didn't take me very long to make, to come to terms with myself and to come to realize that anything I was going to do was going to be from my own doing. And anything that I... anything that I was ultimately going to go after, you know, I was going to have to do for myself. It was all up to me, because the teachers are here to teach and everything, but they don't really care what or what not you do. It's like my parents told me. You know, they would give me directions and things to go but it was my decision because it wouldn't really affect their life one way or the other. You have to come to that realization that it's your life and that you are learning for yourself and not really learning for just to make the grades. It should be more of an individual thing.

Patty
Well, there's more of a purpose to learn things out here because a lot of kids aren't getting grades so you can't say that there's grade motivation to learn. There's more—you get out here and that was one of the first things I learned is that it sort of shocked me at first because I found out that everything I wanted to learn I could just do. You know an independent study and it was sort of hard to get into it but I don't know I am really happy with the way I am doing it now because I always thought it would be really fun to be able to teach yourself something completely on your own. Like a language; I don't know, do something like that. That you teach yourself and I am doing pretty much that this year because I have been on independently on an independent contract learning French. And I don't know when I was on my own learning it I got really ahead of the class. You know in their textbook I was about a hundred pages
ahead of them and stuff. I don't know I just got tuned to my own pace and that was one of the neatest things to be able to learn the way I wanted to.

Lynn

I really didn't know. Just getting a goal. We've been taking a lot of trips, learning experience trips and planning things like dances and stuff like that I just get involved. Just learning about myself and stuff like that.

Jan

Well what I like about it is you have a lot of time to read you can just sit down and read a book just keep on reading without worrying too much about classes. I have classes Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and I have Tuesday and Thursday open for reading so I have a lot more time to study.

Karen

As far as learning, the difference is between saying this school and then campus well there are differences. I still do the same basic things and you know reading, writing, things like that—as far as English goes—but in other courses, like I was out in the community working on a community project, that is something I couldn't do if I was back in the regular school. But whether or not I am meeting all my capabilities, you know it's hard to say.

THE NEXT AREA IS THAT OF STAFF METHODS, THE COMPETENCY OF THE STAFF, YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE STAFF, WHAT TYPES OF METHODS THEY USE, AND JUST HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THOSE THINGS. HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THE STAFF, ETC.

Jay

We get along pretty well with teachers. If you have a problem you go to the teachers and tell them about it and they will try and help you. Whereas on the main campus the teachers are always too busy. They are pretty busy over here too because they have a lot of classes but main campus you have to go down to the office and it's just bureaucratic red tape. You can't get anything done. Nobody listens to you or anything. You finally see a counselor, and the counselor has to go through a rule book, and you end up finding out there is nothing they can do for you.
Bill

Right, I found out here there is no big cult of in personality. You're just like one big happy family. Everyone comes here gets along with everyone and the staff and I noticed that the staff—a lot of times in class a lot of people would get frustrated with the way the teacher would want to run the class. And the teacher would just kind of be there, to maybe advise and in some instances to supervise, and a lot of kids couldn't deal with that. It was a completely new situation, and they were so use to just coming in being taught and the idea of having an actual hand in teaching themselves was a thing they had never really conceived of and so it caused a lot of problems for a lot of people. But certain people started realizing that it was for themselves. I think a lot of people have changed a lot.

Karen

It's on a lot more personal basis, even in town meeting at the beginning of the year. I think we decided that the teachers and the students would all have equal voting power. Equal power in anything; you know, calling teachers by their first name was something a lot of schools, it's just not done. But I think this personal basis is crucial in learning, in a learning atmosphere, whatever. It's very beneficial for a student to be able to talk to the teacher.

Patty

I think something that is very important when you are learning is to get along with the teacher and get to become friends with the teacher and like on main campus or in any other school, you become, well you have a friendship there, but you become just a surface friendship. You are not like you may greet them and sit and talk about a few things, but it's mostly what happens in class and it's not real personal like about their family life and things that maybe the teachers want to do with their lives. And over here, we sort of broke it all down and it's a real sincere friendship and I feel—I don't know, it has really sort of amazed me, because I feel really close to the teachers out here and I enjoy just sitting down and having a discussion with them. And not necessarily something about class work. Sometimes just about things they like to do on their vacations or whatever. And I even got to play bridge with
one of the teachers at their house. And when
I just sort of thought about it and how I
never would have gotten to do anything like
that on main campus because they are just not
that close with the teachers. It's just
different completely.

Lynn
I kind of see that side of it, but I see
another side of it. I am on pretty good
friendly terms with some of the teachers and
there are teachers here that come across very
cold and aloof and very superior, it's the
same situation at the main campus. "I know
all and if you do not follow my ways"—I
still see that over here, with all the tea-
chers at some time, just more with some than
with others. The only difference here is that
I can really talk to them about it, and I can
ask them, "Well, what's wrong with my way?
And I don't really see where I went wrong, and
if I'm wrong then tell me." They say let's sit
down and talk about it. And that's the dif-
ference here; even if one of the teachers is being
very superior you can still sit down and talk
to them.

HOW ABOUT THE TEACHERS' METHODS. DO THEY SEEM
to KNOW WHAT THEY ARE DOING? ARE THEY COMPE-
tent in their fields?

Bill
Well that is pretty hard to say. I think some
of them do, some of them, there is such a wide
variety of classes taught by the teachers. Some
teachers are better at different things. But
I think generally we have a knowledgeable staff.
I mean if I was to pull staff members out of
the main campus, I probably would have come to
something close to what was out here. They
may not be the best teachers in the world, but
they are the best teachers in Columbus.

WHAT TYPE OF RELATIONSHIPS DO YOU HAVE WITH
ONE ANOTHER AND WITH YOUR PARENTS AND DOES THE
SCHOOL ENHANCE THIS TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP?

Karen
I am on very very bad terms with my parents
and I live with my dad and I like to stay here
at the school in afternoons just sitting here.
I think this school has helped a little because
my dad was a teacher and he believes in high academic standards and all that. When he sees me working and really enjoying learning, he respects me a little bit more.

HOW ARE YOU GETTING ALONG WITH YOUR PARENTS?

Patty
I have always gotten along with my parents pretty well. I don't usually have too many arguments with them. I rarely do, but I think mainly one thing I think I have probably matured a lot in this year. Also I have gained a lot of responsibility and in that respect I think I have become closer to my parents. I think it has helped.

Bill
There has always been a close relationship in our family with all the children in the family. And I think in terms of relationships with other people, I think the alternative school has really brought a lot of kids up and just kind of cultivated the kids and taught them responsibility, and I think that's really good. And I can see that in a lot of people that I could never see that in before. And that's a really good thing to see, a nice thing to notice.

IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP AMONGST YOURSELVES DIFFERENT THAN IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ON MAIN CAMPUS?

Patty
You mean students to students?

Bill
I think it's more of a relationship, more of a caring type relationship instead of somebody else being there that you might just see once in awhile.

Jay
Because of the program, people have to work together to accomplish the things they want to because, if someone wants to do something...

Karen
You have to get the approval of everybody.

Jay
... right. So everybody just kind of works together. It's kind of like a big family.

Lynn
I think one of the big things about it is that you don't really see people as being freshmen or sophomores...
Bill Right, that has a big thing to do with it.

Lynn I know that I act pretty immature a lot of times, but people don't really look down on me just because I am just a sophomore, but they see me as an individual.

Patty I think that's so partly because sophomores and freshman and juniors and seniors can all take pretty much the same class. And like at the other schools they usually separate you and say this class is only for seniors you know and it makes you feel like it's not really fair because...

Bill It puts the idea of inferiority right there.

Patty Yeah it does and a lot of kids that are sophomores may be much more mature than a lot of seniors. Maybe they would be much more capable of taking that class. Maybe they would understand it better, but that's not necessarily the way it is at a lot of other schools. But out here that's one of the big things that has made everybody closer. Because the age group, you don't look at people by age, you just look at them as sort of individuals.

Lynn It's also doing things together, like a whole bunch of us went to Washington together. Mostly they were juniors but John's a senior, and I'm a sophomore and we've been going out and planning dances together, and we've been planning a lot of things together. It doesn't really have anything to do with our ages or anything. It's just whose interested in what. And we have a common interest together.

Patty Also one thing that at a lot of regular schools they have something like the prom where they sort of like where only juniors and seniors can go to this. It's a special dance and when you're older and more mature you are ready to go to this special event. And they make such a big deal out of it. The juniors and seniors get this little invitation in the mail and it's—I don't know, I just don't like that whole thing. Out here we have a lot of dances
and everybody comes to them, all different age groups and it's just a lot better.

Bill

Yeah, it makes it really is obvious like I said. It's all made up you know. It's just put in people's head that others are superior; and the way you were shoved around down there created that idea.

Most comments have been quite positive, with a few exceptions. If you were going to change anything, what would you change?

Patty

One thing that I sort of bothers me this year is that some kids, I don't know, can't seem to get it together what they are going to do or don't know what they want to learn and cut a lot of classes. And that's not everybody; I think it's just a few that do it a lot of the time. And I think those people even need to be helped or we need to set up some rules to help them or to sort of I don't know to make them know it's better for the whole school to stay together. They are really hurting themselves and they need to see that they are not only hurting themselves, but they are hurting our school. People in the community if they see a few hooking and cutting classes they'll think "wow" everybody in that school is just playing around and not learning anything. And it's usually that's how a lot of the nicknames for this school get started, like the zoo. It just comes from a few kids the public sees doing something wrong. And things like that I think what we need to do is show everybody that what they do as an individual affects our school too.

Bill

I see people who have not yet come to the realization of the learning trip they have to get themselves on. Because of a thousand different reasons. I think if I could change the school I think maybe I would get some kind of a volunteer program for people in the community whether it was parents or whether it was merchants or what, to have like a not a counseling service but a time designated for each student so that they would meet with that person for a half an hour a week or something so the gap was taken care of. So the student
wouldn't have to make the first move if something was going wrong or if he thought something should change. Or there would be a time out where they would talk about anything, about how he was doing or what he was going to do this summer so he could plan for it. Or just anything, not going through the rule book. Just a time allowance where that first step could be taken so that there wouldn't be a grinding there and I think that could be done with a volunteer program where people could come in and do that would be fine. You know it doesn't take anybody you know a psychologist or anything with a degree you know, just be a go-between.

Lynn

One thing that I would really change is to get some art things and some music things and some science things down here because one of the problems comes from kids cutting classes and right now I am cutting chemistry. I don't go to chemistry very often; I can't stand chemistry, for one thing I am dumb for it. But just the whole system of sitting in rows the desks are in rows, and the teacher, you can't talk unless you raise your hand and you have to listen to these bells all the time, like we don't have any bells down here and it's really freaky trying to adjust back and forth. I can't just hack it right now, it's getting worse and worse.

Patty

I don't know, things like that it's just such a switch of personality. You get used to being out here and all at once you have to go out there and...

Bill

It's almost like a different world.

Patty

... yeah, it really is, you have to be like a robot. And when that bell rings then you have to get used to it. It's like a herd of cattle you have to remember how it was last year or else you just get kind of trampled or knocked over. It's sort of hard to move back and forth like that. I don't know, that's why I think a lot of kids when we have trouble with kids cutting on main campus is because they don't like things like that. I would really like to see a lot of things like science programs...
and art programs out here because I really like them. We really need them. We're a little bit unbalanced. We have a lot of English and history classes and math classes and like everything that we have to go back to main campus for and it's sort of I don't know you sort of get used to being out here. You get used to this way and it kind of breaks your trend of thought when you have to go back and shuttle back on the bus and I don't like it because it breaks up my day and it just sort of ruins everything.

Lynn

I think it creates a really big conflict within people too. Because I know kids like me that cut pretty often. We don't really like the fact that we're cutting, but because we know it's hurting the school and it doesn't help our grades any to cut and it doesn't help the school's image and it doesn't help us any, but yet we don't want to go back there. It's like a punishment.

Patty

One thing that, like for classes, like chemistry you said maybe you think that you are dumb for it, but maybe what you need is to be able to take it individually and like do it on some kind of contract, do it over here so that you can do it in your own way and learn the things you want to learn and do it at your rate. That's one of the biggest things that some kids can learn things quickly and others can't. And over there you just all have to move along and that's why some kids are failing, they just can't learn at the same rate. It's just not working.

Bill

I would like to see some more creative things come up here like art and music and things like that. Although it's really nice to see some of the English and history courses and math courses that are here on a creative basis, but I would like to see some things like art or music come out here and I think that, like I'm a senior this year, and I don't have many classes on main campus and I haven't been there in about three months. When I went down there it was very depressing. All the people that I had known before had
stayed just the same from when I had known them a year or so ago and like I had, whether I had gone up or not, I felt at a different level. I had gone on and these people had stayed the same. It's like the school. They didn't really realize what they were doing. They were just kind of going through the steps, going to class and then out the door and it just seemed like a real depressing thing seeing these kids going through this and not really realizing, or if they did, suppressing it. I don't like to see it so I don't go very often, to say the least.

Lynn
It's kind of like when you go down there you die a little bit. You're not allowed to really live when you're down there.

Bill
It's kind of like the bus between here and there like a reality tunnel that you have to like...

Patty
Passing from one life to another.

Bill
Right, from one world to another.

Lynn
And when you are going down there the bus is a lot quieter and depressed than coming back.

Patty
Yeah. I remember coming back at the beginning of the year. It was really strange, we would sing and whistle and that bus lady would just go nuts. Those ladies really liked our rides. For once it's really nice.

Bill
And going down people would not say a thing they would just kind of get off and...

Patty
We always have so much fun riding back on the bus. Going over the bumps, wow.

HOW DO YOU FEEL THE SCHOOL HAS PREPARED YOU FOR THE FUTURE?

Patty
Well, I know for me there's a lot of subjects that I'm interested in and I would like to go further in college and in that area I think I have gotten into it more here than I could have at main campus. Maybe if I have some sort of interest that isn't at all taken
care of at main campus, then I can go into it more here and see if that's what I want to go into in college or not. Like here a lot of the study habits and stuff are the same thing you're going to have to do in college. You have to push yourself to work. You have to do a lot of it on your own time. You just have to get the work in because there is nobody behind you saying, you know, do this and so I know that working out here like I wonder if I can make it at college because it sounds so hard. Especially you are at the other school and you always think about college being a long way off in the distance and you always think of it as being for real smart people and I always wondered if I could make it and now that I'm out here I think I've built skills towards being in college. I think I can make it a lot better than I could have than if I was just graduating from high school. Just like I have read so much this year because I don't know, I love to read and I never had the time to read at the other school. Just like Jan said earlier, like I've probably read 15 books this year and I've written tons of papers and stuff like that. I think you need to learn for college not just busy work that you do in class. I think we have really gotten down to studying the important stuff.

Bill

I envision a lot of people at the other school not just not being prepared for college but being lost in college. And not being able to make the grades. Whether or not if they go or not I don't think they would really be able to do it. Because it is not a personal thing, you know, down there is the only reason down at the other school the main campus the only reason you are really doing it is to make a grade, to get to the next grade or to get out of school. And not really doing it for yourself. There is such a code you have to go there's such a stairway. You have got to go from one stairway to another. Whereas out here you can kind of in your own head choose where you want to go and take that road and lead you through all the courses you can take on contract and you can really build your own intellect.
Patty I think one thing that is very important is that for me it has really helped me to make decisions because I tended to push decisions onto other people and here I just can't do that. I have to make a lot of my own choices and that has been sort of it was really hard getting used to. You know like say even now it's a little bit strange because in the back of my mind I, like I went to the other school for two years and it has sort of been drilled into me, like even now I am getting out of it, I say to my teachers "What would you like me to do?" and they just turn to me and say "Well, what would you like to do?" And it's strange because now I am being pushed to make choices that I wouldn't have had to make before. Also another good thing is that I have learned to find my own information. We don't have text-books out here so we have to go buy books at the Little Professor or find other sources; libraries, or I don't know like the historical society and things like that. We've learned a lot of things are open to us even that our parents and neighbors and other people in the community have information that's useful to us, like a lot of the kids that want to learn about law. You can't just learn about law out of a book, so they went down to the courtroom and learned just right there, and a lot of people went and I think it's important. Like in college you have to be able to learn on your own and know where to get information and know what things are open to you and where you can go for something.

Bill I think the school has helped a lot of girls make decisions.

Lynn Go away.

Bill No seriously, the school has made it a fact that you had to make your own decision. That was the only way you are going to get through and you know if you didn't you were pushed off to the side till you realized you had to make the decision; no one was going to force you to go to class anymore. If you didn't go to class you didn't go to class and you didn't get credit.
Lynn

I think one of the big things is not that schools prepare you for college because I know a lot of people who are not planning to go to college. But it's how people live with the other life cause I think this school makes people realize they are individuals and not just robots. They are individuals and they are worth something on their own. The kids here have seen the things they have accomplished. The kids have written out contracts and if they fulfill them they have gotten credit. They have gone out and done things and have planned things and planned trips and gone on trips.

Bill

They really learned how to learn.

Patty

Yeah. And they've learned to be people instead of robots. I think this school is a lot more alive than the other school. People just know how to live better and they know how to live with other people and they communicate better because to get along in the class you have to talk to the kids and that's all there is to it.

Bill

Out here there's a much more natural atmosphere. At the main campus everyone was either scared to talk to somebody else or too proud to talk to somebody else. I don't know what it was, but out here people are just people. It just seems to flow a lot better here.

Patty

One thing that's a little bit strange is that when I go back to main campus you go down the hall and a lot of people look down as they go along and last year when you said "hi" when you saw somebody you knew you had to yell to get their attention. It was like they were in a daze. I know that happened to me a lot of times and sometimes even when you are walking in a hall and people say "hi" to each other it sounded so insincere like if you see me you better say "hi" just because you recognize me and that is sort of strange. Out here you just sort of go up and maybe slap somebody on the back and say "hi" how are you today and this is a lot more sincere. When I do it I know I
am saying it because I like this person and there when I go back for one day I go back into that routine it's really strange.

Bill

I think there is something wrong with main campus, seriously. There is something happening to people. They are not natural at all. Things are happening that aren't good for the growth of the personality. That might really be self-righteous to say, but that's the way I see it.

Patty

Probably like after all these things we say we sound like we are a real elite group. We have our heads really together, we sort of sound, wow, we are really special but I think it's just that we discovered what mistakes we made before and we're on a path to better ourselves and we are going in a much better direction off in the direction of our lives. Usually you don't start your life until after you graduate and then you have all these paths open to you and which are you going to take and now our life is open to us now.

Bill

It seems to me that they are still going in circles.
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