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## A study of the development of secondary alternative schools

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## A study of the development of secondary alternative schools

### Abstract

If there is one idea that educators today might agree on, it's the idea that no one program will ever begin to fit the needs of all students. Students learn under different circumstances, in different atmospheres, and in different ways. Yet American education for many years has tried to teach every child in the same way and at the same time. Our present model of education has prevailed for many years. The format of a single school serving a local community dates back to earlier centuries in American history. It was sufficient for local community members in the early 1900's to have one general store and one single public stable. The conventional school was not designed for its present day responsibilities.

A STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECONDARY  
ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

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A Research Paper  
Presented to  
the Department of Educational  
Administration and Counseling  
University of Northern Iowa

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts in Education

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by  
LuAnn Boss  
May 1983

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Entitled: A STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECONDARY  
ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

has been approved as meeting the research paper require-  
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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

"There is, and can be, no one curriculum suitable for all time, or for all students at a given time" (26:332).

If there is one idea that educators today might agree on, it's the idea that no one program will ever begin to fit the needs of all students. Students learn under different circumstances, in different atmospheres, and in different ways. Yet American education for many years has tried to teach every child in the same way and at the same time.

Our present model of education has prevailed for many years. The format of a single school serving a local community dates back to earlier centuries in American history. It was sufficient for local community members in the early 1900's to have one general store and one single public stable. The conventional school was not designed for its present day responsibilities.

The public schools of today serve mainly those students who learn best in traditional programs. It is this traditional way of thinking that has governed the whole concept of public education in this country. Many educators are now beginning to feel that a traditional model of schooling was not designed for a constitutional democracy (29).

When the educational model designed to fit the needs of every student fails, a natural response is to try to change the model. However, many students, parents, and teachers take offense at such reforms, since they feel quite comfortable in the traditional academic model of education. This could be an explanation of why educational reform is not always popular and is sometimes strongly resisted.

Reforming public education to meet the needs of every student is an impossible goal. Instead, a society that wishes to educate every citizen needs a variety of learning models to meet a plurality of learning needs (29).

With the development of alternative public schools comes the potential for making schools more sensitive to the needs of their students and to the society they serve.

It is important for educators today to realize the importance of exploring alternative methods of education. Many alternative school teachers believe that if alternatives were not available, many students would not complete their education. As a teacher at an alternative school, the author of this study shares that belief. No matter how enticing educators feel a traditional type of education is, they should realize that not every student was meant to fit into one certain mold.

The purpose of this study is to trace the development of public alternative secondary schools from colonial America to present day. Nonpublic, church-related secondary schools and other private schools, often viewed by the public as alternatives to public education, are not included in this study. Such schools often serve the ends of those institutions which sponsor them, and are consequently not alternatives built around student needs. The secondary alternative schools discussed in this study are funded by the public.

It is important for educators to learn from what has happened in the past and put that knowledge to use in the future. It is an obligation of educators to seek out every possible avenue of success for students, so a study of past efforts to respond to the needs of students may be useful to today's educators who are still engaged in that search.



## CHAPTER TWO

### A Historical View

There are also within the present systems of education, invariably, subtle options available to parents and teachers based on the different styles of teachers. The problem, however, is that if I send my child to school I really don't know what teaching style will be imposed on him. I am also not sure that the style that is being imposed is really a match for the type of style the learner brings to school. My concern is that these options are emerging by chance, rather than by choice. We must begin to take inventory of the different teaching styles, enable teachers that desire to work in a certain style to develop a structure to facilitate their approach, and then carefully describe the different learning options for parents and students so they can make intelligent decisions about their school experience. This would help move education from a chance to choice level, and enable parents and students to select educational approaches most conducive to their interests, needs and learning styles. I want us to begin to legitimize the alternative learning experiences so that parents can at least have two learning environments to choose between. This is terribly important, for all youngsters do not learn best in the same environment, and all youngsters do not have the same interests and needs. I have been in situations where kids were turned off, were not happy, sometimes even crying and refusing to attend school in an open setting. This kind of mismatch can be avoided by providing parents and students with educational choices (11:2-3).

Alternatives have always existed in American education. The variety and availability of these alternatives have varied with social, economic, and political conditions, and with race, religion, and other cultural factors. But for the most part, as America developed from colonial to

modern times, educational choices have dwindled. For children growing up in the third quarter of the twentieth century fewer options in education were available than in any earlier period in America's 200-year history (29).

### Educational Alternatives in Colonial America

Smith quotes Lawrence A. Cremin who described educational alternatives in the colonial period (1607-1783):  
(28:2)

By the middle of the eighteenth century, the educational institutions of provincial America constituted a fascinating kaleidoscope of endless diversity and change. . . . Furthermore, given the continued novelty and unprecedented opportunity of the provincial situation, all these institutions, each in its own way, found themselves wrestling in their day-to-day operation with insistent problems of stability and change. Parents were inevitably caught in heart ending dilemmas as to whether to hold their offspring to older ways or encourage them along newer lines. . . .

It is difficult to generalize with any degree of precision about the extent of schooling in provincial America, largely because of the phenomenal variation of types and modes of instruction and the consequent difficulty of determining exactly what to call a school. . . .

The combinations and permutations were legion, and the larger and more heterogeneous the community, the greater the latitude and diversity of the arrangements of schools.

. . . With the proliferation of types of schooling, the concomitant increase in the variety of printed textual materials for instruction and self-instruction, and the development of libraries for the collection

and dissemination of such materials, the range of possible life-styles open to a given individual beyond the particular version proffered by his family, his church, or even his neighboring school or surrounding community, was vastly enlarged. A particular school might or might not have been liberating for a particular individual; but the institution of schooling in general, when coupled with the flow of didactic material from the press, was indeed liberating, in that it provided genuine life alternatives. . . .

According to Cremin, many different types of schools were available for students, particularly in the cities and large communities (28).

By 1800 the English or common school, the Latin grammar school, and the academy were the three general types of schools that were available in large communities. (Parochial schools including Anglican, Catholic, Huguenot, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Quaker schools were also common. Classes in some schools were held in the evening to accommodate those students who worked during the day.)

Cremin also reported the wide variety of teachers in reading, writing, ciphering, grammar, bookkeeping, surveying, navigation, fencing, dancing, music, modern languages and embroidery (11).

Even though there were many opportunities available for youths to choose the style of schooling best suited for them, education was basically unimportant to the average citizen in colonial America. At the time of the Revolution the majority of American adults had never

attended school. For those adults who had attended, their education consisted of only a year or two. Education ranked last after (1) the family and home, (2) the neighborhood and community, and (3) work, either on the family farm, in the family business, or in an apprenticeship arranged by parents for their children. Religious beliefs also held more importance than an education (30).

In communities where schools were available, only a minority of those students who were of school age attended. The school "year" for these students was short. Expected attendance for such schools was only a few years. Responsibilities at home took precedence over an education.

The educational choices for youth were endless during this period of time in history. However, the parents of these children had the ultimate choice; that is, if they chose to send their children to school at all.

Education is not mentioned in the U. S. Constitution, ratified in 1789. According to Richard Pratte, the reason for this was either because the idea of free public schools or a federal school system had not occurred to the founding fathers or they thought the issue would be too controversial. He also suggests that it is possible that schooling just wasn't very important to the majority of those who wrote the Constitution (28).

Thomas Jefferson was a proponent of mass education. In 1779 he sponsored a bill in the Virginia legislature

that would have provided three years of schooling without charge for each free child in the state. It was defeated. Thirty-five years later, in 1814, he proposed a similar bill which also was defeated. Neither one of these bills promoted compulsory education. He never advocated compulsory education because he was fearful of opposing the will of the parents.

Some fifty years later, Smith quotes John Stuart Mill who carried on with Jefferson's way of thinking (28:5):

All that has been said of the importance of individuality of character, and diversity in opinions and modes of conduct, involves, as of the same unspeakable importance, diversity of education. A general state of education is a mere contrivance for molding people to be exactly like one another. And as the mold in which it casts them is that which pleases the predominant power in the government, whether this be a monarch, a priesthood, an aristocracy, or the majority of the existing generation in proportion as it is efficient and successful, it establishes a despotism over the mind, leading by natural tendency to one over the body. An education established and controlled by the state should only exist if it exists at all, as one among many competing experiments, carried on for the purpose of example and stimulus, to keep the others up to a certain standard of excellence.

Up to this point, compulsory education had not even been considered as a possibility. Historical benchmarks, such as the Massachusetts law of 1642 that made parents responsible for the literacy of their children and the 1647 act that required every town of 100 families

or more to provide a school, implied that a well-schooled colonial society existed. However, state laws requiring public schools were ignored by the local communities that were supposed to build them (11). It is apparent that these laws did not produce universal education, because 200 years later, in 1852, Massachusetts became the first state to pass a compulsory attendance law requiring all children from eight to fourteen to attend school for twelve weeks a year including six consecutive weeks.

By 1860 universal elementary education was accepted and, by 1900, over half of the states had compulsory elementary attendance. Secondary attendance laws were not firmly established at this time.

### Alternatives in the Nineteenth Century

In the nineteenth century youth between the ages of twelve to fourteen were usually expected to find full-time employment. Following the establishment of the first public high school in 1821, interest in secondary education grew. However, by 1890, only about seven percent of the fourteen- to seventeen-year olds were attending a secondary school, and a majority of these students were attending school for the first time. Secondary education, public and private, was designed only for the few who were academically successful in the elementary school and who would, if successful in the secondary school, continue on to college (29).

The first vocational high school, which provided an alternative to the academic and a replacement for the apprenticeship, was started in St. Louis in 1881. Because vocational education was becoming more popular and entrance examinations for secondary schools had been dropped, high schools were becoming more desirable to students (30).

By 1940 mass secondary education, or universal compulsory secondary education, was secured.

America's continued interest in education grew following World War II (1941-1945). This was partly due to the growing educational needs of a technological society, and partly due to growing world competition in politics and economics (29). The fifties and sixties were characterized by: (1) a growing popular interest in education in general and in the public schools in particular, (2) significant increases in the funding for public education, and (3) a burgeoning of educational innovations (29).

When Russia launched Sputnik I, the first space satellite, in 1957, public concern over education reached a peak. Critics of the schools took every opportunity to criticize the ineffectiveness of America's public schools. Books such as Why Johnny Can't Read, Compulsory Miseducation, Why Children Fail, Death at an Early Age,

Our Children are Dying, Crisis in the Classroom, and School Is Dead became best sellers. Congress came to realize the critical importance of education in our competition with other nations while acknowledging that educational reform was essential to the national interest. In 1958 The National Defense Education Act was developed. This was the first massive dose of federal funds into the public schools.

Along with the increasing funds for public education, came an increasing need for reform. The "New Math" craze in the early 1950's led to other educational innovations that thrived in the public schools for the next two decades--curricular reforms, programmed instruction, staff utilization, flexible modular scheduling, phase-elective programs, and performance contracting.

Despite these attempts to better the quality of education, significant results were not produced. However, one obvious characteristic marked all these reform efforts: once more these reform attempts were designed for everyone. Nevertheless, the issue of education was back in the public's eye.

In the mid-1960's issues such as the Vietnam War and the civil rights movement caused the public to question the legitimacy of the public schools. The civil rights movement, in particular, precipitated growing criticism



of American public schools as education, like other fundamental institutions of society, was accused of suppressing the poor and disadvantaged in order to perpetuate a military-centered and exploitative economic society (10). The socially middle- and upper-middle class youngsters protested what they considered to be sterile, uninspiring, and rigidly designed secondary school programs (10). The dropout rate among all social classes was rising. Social critics such as Paul Goodman, Edgar Friedenberg, and Jules Henry noted the difference between the official rhetoric about the purposes of school (for example, to widen the horizons of students) and the real purposes of school, and they found it enormous (10). During the next few years, similar criticisms of the traditional school system were voiced. Armed with this information, educators started searching for alternatives.

## CHAPTER THREE

### The Modern Alternative School

It was in the late 1960's that many alternative schools came into being. They were called "free," "experimental," or "alternative." A. S. Neill, author of Summerhill, in 1960, became a "founding father" for many nonpublic free schools. The "free school" movement in this country was based on Neill's idea that the learner be taken completely on his own terms and that individual freedom was at the heart of motivation and learning (22).

Richard Kammann popularized the argument for alternatives in a vivid and much-quoted passage (25:552):

Imagine a town where every family is assigned arbitrarily to one local doctor by a ruling of the board of health. Imagine that the board of health assigns families only on the basis of the shortest distance from the home to the doctor's office. Imagine, finally, that when a family complains that the assigned doctor is not helping one of its ailing members, the board of health replies "Sorry, no exceptions to doctor assignments."

If this sounds like a totalitarian nightmare, it also is a description of the way school boards assign children to schools and teachers. . . .

With the opening of the Parkway Program in Philadelphia in 1969, the birth of the alternative public school movement began. This program has become the

symbol of the alternative public school. The Parkway Program was the first alternative public school available to any student in Philadelphia and the first to use the community as a learning environment.

The Parkway Program is an experimental high school that has no building of its own, but uses all of downtown Philadelphia as an educational resource. Instead of sitting in classrooms memorizing textbooks, Parkway students learn through direct experience in hospitals, universities, cultural institutions--among them the Museum of Art, the Franklin Institute, and the Free Library--that line the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, an elegant boulevard stretching from City Hall to the Art museum a mile away (14:146).

Because of the national recognition of Parkway and the strong recommendations that came from major national reports in support of alternative schools, a logical assumption would be that alternative schools are thriving in America today. Such is not the case. While more than 5,000 alternative public schools are in operation today, their enrollment is probably about one million, or approximately two percent of the total elementary or secondary school enrollment (29).

#### Characteristics of Alternative Schools

It is sometimes difficult to pinpoint exactly which schools are legitimate "alternatives." Fantini defines an alternative school as one which: (a) demonstrates adherence to a comprehensive set of educational objectives; (b) does not advocate any form of exclusivity;

(c) is not superimposed but a matter of choice for all participants; (d) is viewed as another way of providing education alongside the existing pattern; and (e) includes a plan for evaluation (14).

The Iowa Department of Public Instruction emphasizes many of these same characteristics in its correspondence with districts which sponsor alternative schools, drawing particular attention to the importance of the district's alternative school's differing from conventional programs in the areas of the instructional environment and instructional methods (3).

Pascal and Miller have suggested twelve characteristics common to all alternative schools (23:14-16):

1. It is essential to have the option of choosing to participate in the program.

2. Faculty, parents, students, and administrators should all be involved in the decision-making process.

3. Each program should be "home grown."

4. An alternative school should be able to rearrange its resources and function near or at the same level as a regular program.

5. Alternative schools should always have clearly stated purposes and objectives.

6. Alternative schools should seek to have a diverse and representative student body.

7. Alternative schools should work to build a working relationship with the "parent" school or school system.

8. An alternative school should be a departure from the existing program.

9. Alternative schools should teach the basic skills, but in a personal and responsive way.

10. Alternative schools should develop students' talents and interests.

11. Students should be the central focus for organizing an alternative school.

12. An alternative school should meet the state and local district requirements for graduation.

A common characteristic shared by all alternative schools, however, is some sort of departure from the educational status quo.

### Types of Alternative Schools

Alternative public schools vary in size, structure, curricula, instructional program and resources. However, the majority of alternative schools fit into the following types or into a combination of these types.

#### Open Schools

Open schools are organized around interest centers or resource areas and are usually characterized by flexibility in their operations. The learning activities of the students are individualized.

The Brown School, Louisville, Kentucky, is an open school that formed in 1972. The school currently has an enrollment of four hundred students in grades 3 through 12. The Brown School is an open multicultural school and serves as a voluntary integration model within the Louisville community. Enrollment is open to any family in the city. The curriculum is developed around learning centers in the school and learning experiences in the community. Many of the classes are nongraded. The curriculum for the high school is problem-centered. Subject areas are drawn upon for solutions to existing problems (1).

The St. Paul Open School opened in the fall of 1971 and currently has an enrollment of five hundred students, K-12, ages five through eighteen. Before the end of its first year, there were 750 students on the waiting list. This school is organized around seven major learning areas: art, music-drama, humanities, math-science, industrial arts, home economics, and physical education. Each one of these areas has a library-resource center and a variety of activities that are available to each student. In this school there are rooms for quiet study, group or individual study, or group activities (2).

### Schools-without-Walls

Schools-without-walls have learning activities that are carried on throughout the community. Each school-without-walls is unique because each community has its own unique characteristics. A school-without-walls often uses community members as resource guides.

Walden III, a school-without-walls in Racine, Wisconsin, opened in 1972 with 175 students in grades 11 and 12. The school is available by choice, to all students with parent permission. The curriculum for the school is developed by students and staff. The community is used as a major resource for the program. The students become involved in the community by implementing and/or helping implement problem solving programs. Survival skills for the future are stressed for the students (20).

City School in Madison, Wisconsin, opened in the fall of 1972 with an enrollment of 105 students in grades 9-12. The curriculum focuses on the community resources. Classes are taught by community teachers, nurses, veterinarians, social workers, policemen, lawyers, and salesmen. Many classes involve internships within the community (22).

### Learning Centers

Learning centers provide learning resources that are concentrated in one location and available to all students in the community.

The John Dewey High School, Brooklyn, New York, opened in 1969. The school operates eight hours a day, twelve months a year. There are no grade-levels, no grouping of students, no Carnegie units, and no set curriculum. Within each subject area there is a broad choice of course options. Both the students and teachers are involved in the planning of the curriculum. Emphasis is placed on individual progress and independent study (22).

The Skyline Center, Dallas, Texas, is a unique example of a learning center. The center is a fourteen-acre building complex on an eighty-acre campus. Students from any high school in Dallas are eligible to attend. The center's goals include extensive preparation in career education, individualization of instruction, and involvement of community. Positive educational change is the intent of the center. The center also provides continuing-education programs for adults and for out-of-school youths. These programs include adult basic education, distributive education, trade schools, vocational office education, and a general-education diploma program (2).

### Continuation Schools

Continuation schools provide students with an opportunity to continue their education if for some reason it has been interrupted.



The Metropolitan Youth Education Center, Denver, Colorado, is designed for students who wish to obtain high school diplomas and for students with diplomas who would like to improve their skills for college entrance or employment. The academic and vocational courses offered are completely individualized. Emphasis is placed on the unique needs of the students that may have been overlooked at a conventional school. Day and evening classes are offered on a twelve-month basis. A student may enter, drop, or reenter at any time (28).

The Pacific Shores High School, Manhattan Beach, California, offers small classes, individualized instruction, and flexible scheduling. Students work independently and receive credit when the work is completed. Emphasis is placed on the students' relationship to self and to others (28).

### Multicultural Schools

Multicultural schools emphasize cultural, ethnic, and racial awareness. Different racial and ethnic backgrounds are often represented in each student body.

The SAND Everywhere School, Hartford, Connecticut, is located in a warehouse in a black and Puerto Rican neighborhood. The school has an enrollment of 194 black and Puerto Rican children in grades 1 through 5. All students attend the school by choice. The curriculum

emphasizes four areas: math-science, human relations, language arts, and creative arts. Great emphasis is placed on cultural awareness (28).

Agora, Berkeley, California, is a multicultural school that actively recruits minority-group students. The population of this school consists of approximately one-third black, one-third Chicano, and one-third white. Emphasis in Agora is placed on student decision-making. Students help in the evaluation of the staff and in the determination of the curriculum. Students may also attend the weekly staff meetings. Multicultural events are held throughout the year. Along with the traditional subjects other activities such as Chicano studies, black seminars, modern and Afro dance, math games, black drama, American Folklore, Mexican folk dance, international cooking, and human awareness are offered (14).

### Free Schools

Free schools give students the freedom to plan their own learning experiences. Few restrictions are placed on the students or staff. Parents of the students in free schools often help in the classroom.

The Murray Road Annex, Newtonville, Massachusetts, provides the students with an opportunity to become actively involved in planning their own education. Students and staff make decisions about curriculum. Students examine

their interests and needs, plan their own programs, and evaluate their own efforts. Written comments by the students and staff are the only form of evaluation. Emphasis is placed on the student taking responsibility for his education (29).

The West Philadelphia Community Free School consists of several renovated homes with no more than two hundred students per house. The Philadelphia Board of Education, the University of Pennsylvania, and the business and residential communities of West Philadelphia have cooperated in sustaining the school. This school is non-graded and individualized. Students take electives in the community and required courses in the houses (20).

### Schools-within-Schools

Schools-within-schools use classrooms, a wing of a building, or a separate floor in a conventional school building. These types of schools have a separate facility with administrative ties to a standard school. Some conventional schools, usually those enrolling large numbers of students, often employ the term "school within a school" to describe an administrative structure. Such designation typically does not, however, have significance for curriculum or instructional approaches.

The Cambridge Pilot School opened in 1969 as a joint effort of the Cambridge Public Schools and the Harvard

Graduate School of Education. Informal human relationships and cultural diversity are stressed. Students, parents, and staff share in the decision-making process. Student input is also important in the governance of the school. Classes are generally ungraded and very informal (28).

Harambee Prep is a school-within-a-school in New York City. Students range in age from sixteen to twenty. Emphasis is placed on innovation and informality. Responding to the needs of students who were unable to adjust to large conventional schools is a major goal of Harambee. The school is available to any student in the district (20).

#### The Complex of Alternative Schools

The complex of alternative schools is a school in which many alternative schools or minischools are housed.

Qunicy Senior High II in Quincy, Illinois, is a complex of alternative schools. Students may choose from seven schools: the traditional school, the flexible school, the PIE school (Project to Individualized Education), the fine arts school, the career school, the work-study school, and the special-education school. The staff tries to match the learning style of each student with the school that would offer him/her the greatest potential for educational growth (1).

New School, Cleveland Heights, Ohio, is a complex of six alternative schools. Each school designs its own individual style of learning. There is no one specific leader. The students and staff decide how their school will be governed. The New School is under the general jurisdiction of the administrative principal of Cleveland Heights High School (29).

The strengths of successful alternative schools are many. Because of the flexibility of schedules, facilities (resources in the community) and location, alternative schools seem to use time and space more effectively than conventional schools. Many alternative schools are small and willing to be housed in almost any facility available. Because of this willingness, the cost effectiveness of many alternative schools is a major reason for their success.

The screening process that each alternative school develops enables both the parent and the student to take an active part in planning the student's education. It is through this personalized process that the plan best suited for a particular student is made. Special attention is given to each student's needs and interests. Accommodating the student is a priority of many successful alternative schools.

The low student-adult ratio is a significant aspect of success in many alternative programs. Alternative

education ratios range between 1 to 8 and 1 to 15 (28). This low ratio can be achieved by using student teachers, university interns, parent and community volunteers, and specialists in a variety of areas. Because of this low ratio, positive relationships have the potential to be fostered. It was found in alternative education that teachers showed a genuine interest in their students, allowed students freedom along with responsibility, established warm, friendly relationships, and treated their students with respect.

Relevancy of education is another reason for successful alternative programs. Many alternative schools realistically connect education to the students' future. Doing so enables the students to see how school can relate to the real world. Through on-site and hands-on experiences students can start to grasp the meaning of "life after high school."

Some alternative experiments in secondary education do fail in their attempts to produce quality education. Four explanations for their failure are most commonly cited (12:10):

1. Alternative schools do not accomplish educational goals as well as traditional schools do.
2. Alternative schools have a tendency to fold when funds become scarce.

3. Alternative schools sometimes can't take the pressure that the "establishment" places on them.

4. Alternative schools are sometimes placed in the category of "counter culture". This gives them a negative connotation.

Many times supporters of alternative programs become over anxious and try to accomplish too much in too small amount of time. When they feel their program is becoming a success, they try to expand it further too quickly. Careful planning is essential; without it, the program is doomed for failure. Time and patience are virtues of effective alternative program supporters.

Often alternative schools are thought of as dumping grounds. The public sometimes has this image of alternative schools because of poor communication of program goals and weak public relations. Alternative schools that don't try to enlighten the public about their program face unwanted negative publicity.

A feeling of antagonism sometimes is felt between alternative schools and traditional schools. Conventional schools may feel slighted by the attention, privileges, money, and facilities granted to new alternative programs.

Techniques that may seem to be "innovative" or "new" sometimes prove to be disastrous if not handled properly by the alternative school teaching staff. Teachers some-

times have a tendency to use new methods strictly because the methods are non-traditional. This situation can be frustrating for the students and the staff.

Some alternative schools that fail do so because of internal reasons: they are unable to cope with the organizational problems produced by new authority patterns and by highly complex educational processes (12). Such schools usually go through three stages before the schools either resolve their difficulties, dissolve completely, or become conventional. The first stage is one of euphoria. Both the students and staff feel that things couldn't be better. They are both extremely happy with the way the school is set up. The second stage is one of psychic upheaval. Both students and staff feel depressed. Too many changes have taken place and placed both groups in a state of crisis. The third stage is one of dissatisfaction. The students and staff feel that their efforts have gotten them nowhere. They feel that their situation is no better than anyone elses.

Developing an alternative school requires time, patience, and dedication from all involved. Students, parents, and administrators must work together to overcome the problems that sometimes arise. Only with this cooperation can alternative schools survive.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### Conclusion

An underdeveloped resource for solving the problems of the future is the present generation of children and youth. If this precious resource is not developed soon, it will be too late. Exploring alternatives is one way to tap this resource and produce quality education. The role that alternatives can play in such an important task is described in the opening paragraphs of the North Central Association's Policies and Standards for the Approval of Optional Schools (24:1):

In recent years the concept of educational choice (optional schools, alternative schools--call them what you will) has penetrated deeply into the American system of education. It seems likely that in the foreseeable future many different types of schools will exist side by side within the total educational structure each designed to meet a different set of specified learning and living needs of your people. These schools will not be competitive with nor antagonistic to one another, but rather will be complementary in effort and thrust, helping American education redeem its long-term commitment to the fullest education of every child.

While the standard school certainly will continue to be major institution in American education, it will not be the exclusive one. Other types of schools will develop, seeking to provide more fully for the total educational needs of the community. Wide spread educational options--the coexistence of many types of alternative schools and programs--should strengthen American education as a whole.

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