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A modified ethnographic study of two exemplary public Iowa alternative schools

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A MODIFIED ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF TWO EXEMPLARY PUBLIC IOWA
ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

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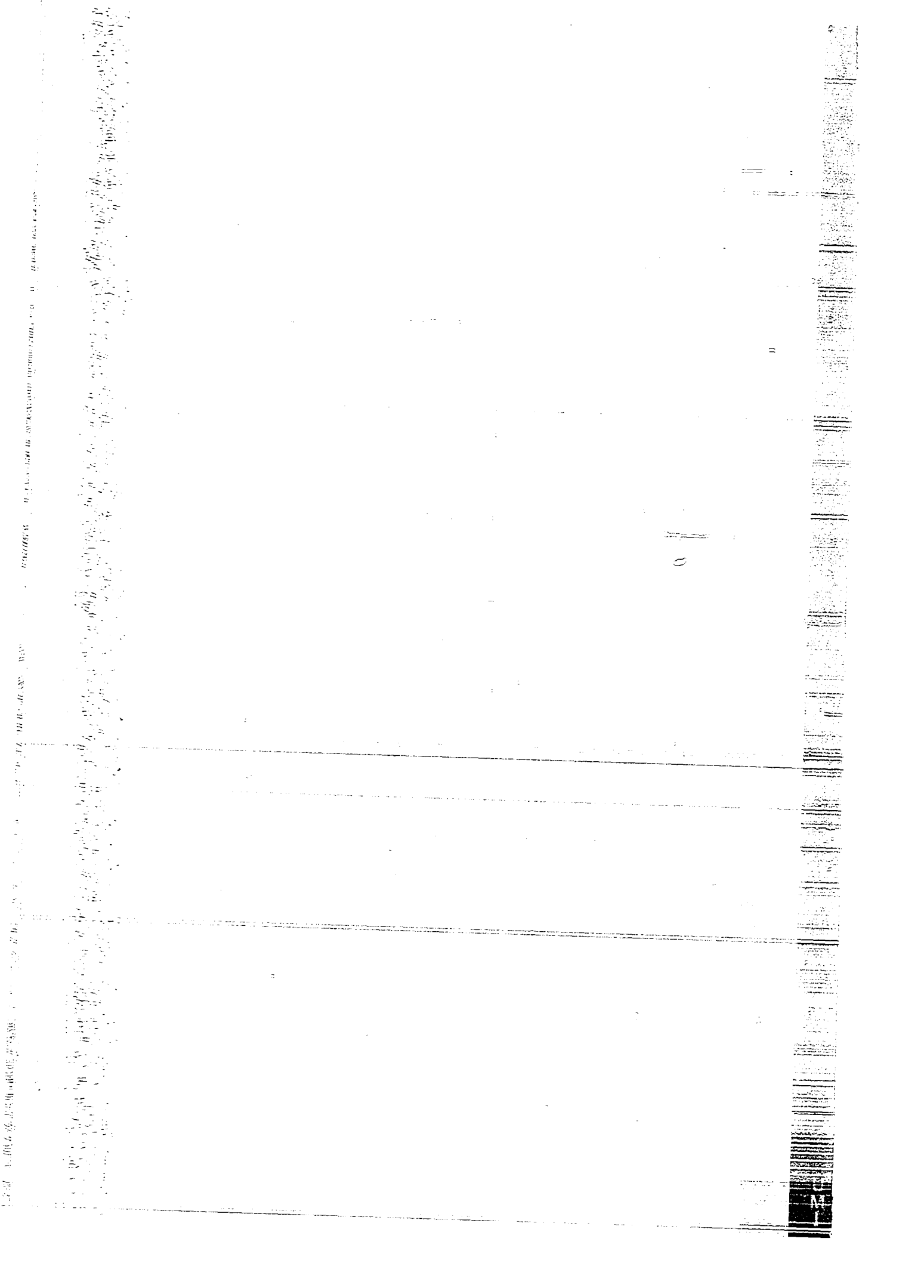
A modified ethnographic study of two exemplary public

Iowa alternative schools

by

Clemmye L. Jackson

A Dissertation Submitted to the

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INTRODUCTION

Meeting the needs of students is one of the primary purposes of schools. Most parents, students, teachers, and administrators are likely to agree on this point, even though they may differ on what the needs are and how to meet them. For many years, the methods of meeting students' needs, with respect to learning, were the same for all students regardless of the students' abilities, habits, or emotional states (Smith, Gregory, and Pugh, 1981). As a result, more than 40 percent of America's children dropped out of school before high school graduation (Leither and Siebert, 1968), and another 23,000 functioned at a level below their intellectual competence. ·To combat this tremendous loss of human talent, alternative schools came into existence in the late 1960s and 1970s.

These schools were developed within public school systems through-out the United States as a legitimate alternative to conventional school programs. It was believed that such schools would help provide an educational climate and curriculum structure compatible with the needs of students who were not responding to conventional school programs. The first alternative schools were not alternatives in the present sense of the term. They grew out of the educational upheaval of the 1960s which envisioned existing schools as cold, dehumanizing, irrevelant institutions largely indifferent to the humanity of students. Early leaders in the alternative movement were not educators but opponents of the American way of life and supporters of the "counter culture

movement." Although the term "alternative" was used with respect to education, it seems to have been introduced to highlight the displacement of classrooms by other arenas rather than to suggest that there were other more productive ways of educating American youth (Raywid, 1981).

Alternative schools have mushroomed from 100 in 1970 to more than 10,000 today, serving an estimated 3,000,000 students. Research on alternative schools suggests they lead to greater academic achievement on the part of students when compared to similar students in conventional schools (Barr et al., 1977) and that a higher percentage of alternative school graduates go on to college and graduate (Duke and Muzio, 1978). These positive results assume special significance since many educators indicate that many students in alternative schools supposedly entered as poorly motivated underachievers. Despite these reported positive results, little systematic research can be found that clearly links results to any tangible factors within the school. In a sense, the research results, important as they are, have done little to remove the concept of alternative education from the counter culture and trial-and-error schools of thought.

Most of the school effectiveness research has been done on conventional schools (Brookover et al., 1979; Edmonds, 1979; Rutter et al., 1979; Sweeney, 1982). Few researchers have discovered what makes alternative schools effective. The proposed study is designed to examine the factors associated with the effectiveness of alternative schools.

Format of the Study

The dissertation format used is approved by the Graduate Faculty at Iowa State University. This format presents the research in manuscript form suitable for publication in professional journals.

This presentation will include an introduction, review of literature, three articles written for publication, and a summary. The methods, procedures, and results are represented in the three journal manuscripts. The three journal manuscripts from the research were selected by the investigator, for each contributes to the purposes of the study.

Article I describes the factors associated with two exemplary alternative schools located in the state of Iowa. Qualitative research methods were used to determine what made the two exemplary alternative schools special.

Article II describes the type of leadership found in the two exemplary alternative schools. The article addresses the following questions: 1) What do teachers in alternative schools expect from their administrators? 2) What do effective principals do? and 3) What additional factors make a difference in the two schools?

Article III presents one of the exemplary schools' unique approach to teaching and learning. It offers some very viable alternatives to many of the dilemmas plaguing educators, parents, and governmental officials.

The final chapter or summary of this dissertation provides a discussion of the findings and implications for practice. Additional information pertinent to the study is located in the appendices.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study was to examine the factors associated with effective alternative schools. Specifically, this study was designed to answer the following questions:

1. What are effective alternative schools?

2. What are the leadership techniques most frequently used in the alternative schools?

3. What are the most frequently used teaching methods of the faculty?

4. What type of feedback system exists for students, faculty, and staff?

5. What are the goals, and how are they developed and implemented?

6. What is the philosophy of the alternative schools?

7. What interactions exist between faculty, staff, and students?

8. What type of communication process exists between faculty, students, staff, and administration?

9. What are the common teacher behaviors which make a difference in alternative schools?

10. What type of school climate exists in the effective

    alternative schools?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The background literature directly related to this study can be grouped into the following categories: 1) historical development and growth of alternative schools, 2) the use of an ethnographic approach as a research tool, and 3) factors associated with effective schools.

The Historical Development and Growth of Alternative Schools

In the mid 1960s, the field of education was introduced to a multitude of ways to improve the effectiveness of schools: open classrooms, team teaching, head start, structured learning, compensatory education, individualized instruction, and Title I (created for innovations for other populations).

In the latter part of the 1960s, the trend toward changes in education continued to grow as citizens became more frustrated with the public schools.

During this same era, some parents, supporters, and educators of the counter culture movement felt public schools were not meeting the needs of all students. According to Leither and Seibert (1968), many students dropped out of school and many were functioning at a level below their intellectual level of competence. From this frustration, a large number of new institutions were developed; some were inside of the public schools, and others were established as alternatives to regular public schools. Many of the new schools followed the nondirective model (Freedom School) described by A. S. Neill in his book Summerhill.

Although the schools had different philosophies and objectives, many of the newly developed alternatives had a common bond--they believed that students learn in numerous ways at different stages of their lives, and some students learn better in different environments, whether open, formal, informal, competitive, or non-competitive (Case, 1981).

Many scholars in education contend that the present thrust of alternative education can be traced to the civil rights movement of the 1960s (Fantini, 1973; Deal and Nolan, 1978). They believe that desegregation gained momentum because parents and community leaders boycotted public schools and collaborated to continue the education of children in Freedom Schools. The purpose of these schools was to provide an educational experience for students that would make it possible for them to challenge the realities of learning and the myths of our society (Wolf et al., 1974).

For many blacks and whites alike, the Freedom Schools, as they were called, provided a glimpse of alternative programs tailored to students' needs. They included curriculum geared specifically to the self-determined concerns of students and sympathetic adults working with children (Barr et al., 1977). To ensure that educational concerns were not overlooked, teachers established a flexible procedure that expanded the boundaries of schooling to include the community and its resources. Smaller educational units were created to humanize the experience (Case, 1981). These ingredients are still present in the current alternative school movement. The continued growth of alternative schools was

further stimulated by the growing critique of education and the increased pressures on schools to better serve each student. Declining test scores, coupled with a decline in public confidence in schools, increased the pressure on schools to do better jobs. Many educators saw the alternative education movement as a means of tailoring educational program content, approach, structure, and climate to the specific needs of different groups.

Another social trend that contributed to the alternative school was the counter culture movement. The participants in this movement saw public schools as dehumanizing, cold, and irrelevant institutions. Many thought that educational institutions were authorative, reflecting bad values of a rich, dominating society (Raywid, 1981). The backing of John Dewey also contributed to the primary concept that led to alternative education--"learn by doing." This concept gave to the learner more freedom to maximize his/her talents. Other scholars (Graubard, 1973; Dennison, 1969) all supported the concept of individual freedom, believing that if a child is innately curious and realistic and left to himself/herself, that child will develop as far as he/she is capable of developing. Bloom also emphasized his beliefs on learning styles. He believed that each child can achieve, if given the time to master learning skills (Bloom, 1976). In other words, educators must realize that different students learn at different rates, and, given the opportunity, they all can achieve.

The civil rights movement, counter-culture, Freedom Schools, and learn-by-doing helped highlight the development of such schools as the open schools, which had learning activities centered around individualized attention, each student receiving the help he/she needed from an instructor who worked with the student each day on the same concern until the student felt that he/she no longer needed the help. Other alternative schools, known as magnet schools, were oriented toward a student's specific interest area, such as the performing arts, music, science, and math. The school without walls concept is an example of an alternative school which used the resources of the community to help educate students. In these schools, classes were held in office buildings, museums, and public libraries rather than in the traditional classroom. The drop out, drop in alternative schools were developed to help dropouts and potential dropouts find themselves by providing them with a second chance for an education. The objective of these schools was to teach students what it would be like to make it in the real world (Smith, 1973).

The above are a few of the types of alternative schools which existed to give students a choice with respect to completing an education. There are many others--like the school for disruptive students, free schools, career schools, and survival schools. Although they may differ in structure, is the belief that all students can learn and learn in various ways.

Ethnography as a Research Tool

Ethnography is the work of describing a culture. For years, this
method of research has been the field arm of anthropology. Ethnography
is a systematic way of learning from people within their own cultural
setting. It has other labels, such as observation, field study, or
qualitative research; but, regardles of the terminology, it has become
an effective research tool for educators. For educators, the
ethnographic technique has made it possible to study the behaviors of
students, faculties, and staff persons in the settings where they teach,
study, work, learn, and live.

To understand the variety of approaches available to those who use
ethnography, it is essential to examine some of the studies which have
been done in education using this method. One of the first ethnographic
studies was by Spindler and Spindler in 1951 (1982). They studied the
day-to-day professional life of a young fifth-grade teacher. Their
concerns focused on the self-perceptions of the teacher as teacher, the
perceptions of his supervisors, and the perceptions of his students. In
order to determine these perceptions, the Spindlers used projective
techniques drawn from the discipline of psychology: rating scales,
questionnaires, and sociograms from sociology; and interviewing and
observation techniques drawn from the conventional methods of the
anthropologist.

Harry Wolcott (1973), like the Spindlers, was curious about the
ways in which the principal of an "ordinary" suburban elementary school
went about his or her work, hour by hour, day by day. Therefore, he

"followed" his subject (a male) as he carried out his work as principal for a two-year period. He also gathered information from those who interacted with the principal--teachers and other staff members, pupils, and parents--but the focus of the study was clearly on the man--the principal. This study was one of the first of its kind to study a particular leadership role.

In 1978, Kathlene Wilcox was curious about the role different kinds of schools play in socializing children for the world of work. Thus, she studied two classes in two different elementary schools. The first school was located in a largely working-class neighborhood, the second in a professional, executive-level neighborhood. The focus of her study was to compare the ways in which children are socialized for adult work roles by teachers in two different schools. Through intensive classroom observation, she conducted a "controlled comparison" of children and teachers at work in two different environments. Others have followed a similar vein.

Ray Rist (1975) used the observation arm of ethnographic research to study the experiences of black children attending a given school during the first year of its integration. He observed the process from the moment the first black child stepped off the bus. He wanted to find out what would actually happen to the children and reports their reactions as well as those of teachers, parents, and principal. Very few scholars in the field have used the ethnographic method as did Chris Stevenson (1979). He was interested in the nature of the transition of

25 adolescents (ages 14-19) from a child-centered elementary school to a variety of types of conventional, traditional, secondary schools. Each student was interviewed at considerable depth to arrive at what he calls the "essence" of their values and beliefs concerning the nature of their elementary schooling, secondary schooling, and the transition itself.

In an attempt to understand the nature of social interaction among various groups, Heva Varenne (1982) made particular use of the techniques qualitative researchers have come to call "proxemics," that is, the study of the cultural use of the formal and, more important, informal social functions of spaces, such as bathrooms, stairway landings, specific tables in the cafeteria, seldom- occupied offices, or "back stage" in the auditorium.

In 1968, Philip Jackson used the ethnographic techniques to describe the quality of life in elementary school classrooms. His lengthy observations and interviews resulted in a description of a number of issues affecting teachers and their pupils. For example, children must learn to adapt to a number of situations that are new to them: associating with large numbers of children, adjusting to new conceptions of power and authority, dealing with a lack of privacy, coping with a series of adult strangers who will have profound influence and control over them, being judged by peers and teachers, learning to wait for things, e.g., teacher's help, a drink, to be called upon. He concluded that a child's "success" in school is largely a function of his or her ability to "accommodate" or adjust to a series of new psychosocial demands. Perhaps most important, he learned that children

appear to accept these changes in quiet resignation as those in prison, where one must do one's time until the day of release.

One of the most extensive uses of the ethnographic method was made by Kay Doost (1979). She traced the development of a single child's thought in a classroom setting over an eight-year period from 1971-1978. The child was five when the study began. Doost's basic source of data was the documents produced by the child, which included painting, drawing, building, and other three-dimensional work and writing. She found that there was continuity and coherence in the meaning of the work produced over an eight-year period. Doost describes in great detail the themes, motifs, and mediums as they were presented in Neil's work. His motifs ranged from vehicles to structures; his themes from "battles" to "search."

No ethnographic study has been more helpful to educators than Dan Lortie's study (1975). The study might have been more aptly named "the culture of the teacher." Using the basic research question, "What forces influence teachers' self-concepts, the images of their social purposes, and their understandings of their roles as teachers?", Lortie conducted hundreds of interviews with classroom teachers, observed classrooms and analyzed other data as well. Among other findings, Lortie concluded that American teachers are often lonely, neglected, isolated professionals. They receive little support, little constructive criticism, few rewards. He concluded that, above all, they seem to need more contact with other adults in their day-to-day

classroom work as well as more opportunity for genuine interaction and
dialogue with their peers in the course of their professional lives.

While all of the above studies are unique with respect to purpose,
each added to the field of educational research through the use of the
ethnographic technique. One major advantage of ethnographic research is
the diversity of techniques it employs. Scholars, such as Barr, Wolf,
Smith, and Wilson, who study alternative education have found this
method (Participant-Observation and ethnographic interviews) most
fruitful in understanding the complicated interrelationships of specific
practices, process goals, and outcome goals as they are reflected in
people's day-to-day behavior. It provides the best means for
understanding the crucial issues of subgroup behavior and is the best
method for understanding and studying vital institutional functions.
Finally, this approach meshes well with the style of alternative
schools, where cooperation with the techniques of ethnographic research,
while extensive in the time it involves, is willingly given by people
who are relatively open to having a person around observing,
participating, and asking questions.

Factors Associated with Effective Schools

Since the Coleman report (1966), educators have been attempting to
identify those factors associated with effective schools. George Weber
(1971) was one of the first educators to test the hypothesis that
schools can and do make a difference. He examined four inner-city

schools--two in New York, one in Missouri, and one in California--that were successful in teaching children to read. He found eight factors that affected reading achievement: strong leadership, high expectations, good atmosphere, strong emphasis on reading, additional reading persc: el, use of lesson plans, individualization, and careful evaluation of student progress. He further found that almost always all of these factors were usually under the direct control of the principal, who set the tone for the school and assumed responsibility for the instructional program and the allocation of resources to reach school objectives.

In similar studies, Brookover and Lezotte (1977) concluded that successful or improving schools had staffs that believed that all students could learn and therefore made demands on students. The principals in the successful schools provided strong and direct leadership. Principals periodically observed and critiqued teachers' classroom skills, provided supervision, encouraged and supported teacher participation in seminars, workshops, and in-service programs designed to increase their effectiveness in the classroom. The opposite was found to be true in less effective schools. The principals were almost exclusively bogged down in administrative and discipline problems; the teachers were preoccupied with maintenance and survival and thus made few demands on students.

Other studies on school effectiveness seem to support the findings of Weber, Brookover, and Lezotte. One such study was done by Edward A. Wynne (1981). His analysis of characteristics that distinguish

successful schools from unsuccessful schools was based on his ten-year
study of 140 schools. He concluded from his research that successful
schools had (1) coherence--people working together for a common goal,
(2) staff who accept responsibility, (3) administrative leadership which
is clear and strong, (4) on-going monitoring of student progress, and
(5) high student-teacher expectation. Additional research by Ronald
Edmonds (1979), after examining a series of studies involving more than
500 schools, reported that effective schools displayed certain
characteristics. Among them were: 1) an orderly atmosphere, 2)
frequent monitoring of pupil progress, 3) ensuring of instructional
effectiveness for all pupils, 4) clearly stated goals and learning
objectives, 5) a plan to successfully deal with reading and mathematics
achievement problems, and 6) strong leadership with a mixture of
management and instructional skills.

James Sweeney (1982), in an overview of the literature on effective
schools, clearly states that principals do make a difference, and that
their leadership behaviors were positively associated with school
outcomes. He also found, for those schools which were well-managed and
noted for high academic achievement, six leadership behaviors were
carried out by the principals. They 1) placed emphasis on achievement,
2) set instructional strategies, 3) provided an orderly school
atmosphere, 4) supported teachers, 5) coordinated the instructional
program, and 6) frequently evaluated student progress. Additional
research by Rutter, et al. (1979) and Shoemaker and Fraser (1981)

supports the finding of studies done by Weber, Brookover, Lezotte, Edmonds, and Sweeney.

Rutter (1979) concluded, after an extensive study which included more than 1500 junior high school students, that leadership contributed significantly to student achievment and school atmosphere. In his study, Rutter found that there appeared to be a connection between teacher team "ethos" and urban school leadership. For example, he discovered that school outcome tended to be greater when the curriculum and approaches to discipline were agreed upon and supported by the staff. "Ethos" in his study was defined as a positive attitude of teachers toward young people and toward teaching and learning. Shoemaker and Fraser (1981) found that incentives for teaching and learning were present in effective schools. Such incentives included honor rolls, honor societies, awards assemblies, local newspaper stories, the posting of photos of successful students, and badges, pins, or ribbons awarded and worn on a schoolwide basis. They also discovered that the good schools maintained a system for identifying and rewarding students who were not performing at grade level. Such students were given special help and were recognized for their improvement. This practice of rewarding students for outstanding achievement was found to be effective in many alternative schools. Vernon H. Smith (1973) found this procedure widely used in alternative schools where the key objective is to be more responsive to student needs. In an article entitled "The Quiet Revolution" (1973), he points out:

The alternative schools usually have a more comprehensive set
of goals and objectives than their conventional counterparts.
While most alternative schools are concerned with basic skills
development and with college and vocational preparation, they
are also concerned with the improvement of self-concept, the
development of individual talent and uniqueness, the
understanding and encouragement of cultural plurality and
diversity, and the preparation of students for various roles
in our society--consumer, voter, critic, parent, and spouse.

Smith further discovered that alternative schools attempted to be more

humane toward their students and teachers and, thus, more flexible and

responsive to planned evolution and change. This, he believed,

contributed to an evaluation designed to student, staff, and

administrative feedback.

In an evaluation study of 15 schools, Glatthorn (1975) and Barr and

others (1977) noted that most evaluation studies of alternative schools

include an evaluation of teacher competence and performance, student

progress and overall program achievement of goals and objectives.

Glatthorn (1975), in a study of two successful alternative schools,

discovered that in each school the governance was sound; that is, the

principals had the authority to make and change decisions which were

found not to be working or not in the best interest of the school. The

evaluation of student progress was on-going and well-documented.

Teacher responsibilities were clear and extensive.

In each of the successful schools, teachers were expected to

concentrate on the individual development of each student in self-

directed learning activities, help students deal with personal problems,

work cooperatively as members of a teaching team, develop long-term

plans for learning programs, make policy decisions about the school's

organization and management, and identify and monitor learning
experiences beyond school walls.

Staff involvement was further shown to be one of the factors
associated with successful alternative schools in a study by Barr and
others (1977). After an evaluation of six alternative schools, he found
that alternative schools do not recreate the central authority patterns
that typify most secondary schools. He also found that teachers played
an important part in hiring staff and allocating funds, and
administrators appeared to function more as sources of influence than of
managerial control. These schools also reported greater independence
and school enjoyment by student, faculty, and staff. He further
discovered that such schools tended to regard teacher-student
relationships as the school's most distinctive feature, followed by
instructional method, activities, and school curriculum. "These
schools," he stated, "seem to make teachers the central factor in
improving education."

Despite the fact that very little research exists on the
effectiveness of alternative schools, a review of the literature did
uncover a series of evaluation reports and articles written on
individual schools by school personnel and certain essential indicators
of qualities in those schools experiencing some success. Those
indicators included the following: 1) leadership, 2) staffing, 3)
community support, 4) student retention, 5) vocational and career
educational program, and 6) student achievement.

Leadership

There is evidence that leadership has been a crucial quality in the success of alternative schools. In successful alternative schools, the principals had a positive self-concept, which helped to make them more accepting to new and improved means for bringing about school improvement (Hayden, 1973). Hayden also discovered that such principals had more than three years' experience as leaders in the alternative schools.

Brown (1974), in a four-year study of public alternative and private schools, discovered that the leadership in those schools played a major role in bringing and keeping a school together and that the principals symbolized what the schools represented.

Staffing

Second only to leadership in alternative schools is the staffing, which must be done with a great deal of care, as pointed out by Stark (1973).

> The staffing of alternative schools presents an extremely difficult problem for school administrators. Since each alternative school is unique, a variety of teachers are needed. For this reason, the identification and selection of competent people is critical to the success of each alternative school.

Stark (1973) further pointed out that the type of people that work in alternative schools is very important. For those who worked for three to five years in the alternative school, the following becomes evident: 1) strong commitment, 2) ability to make autonomous decisions,

3) ability to achieve close relationshps, 4) the ability to work with lay people in the community, and 5) good public relation skills.

Community support

Many educators listed community support as a significant factor in making alternative schools work. The schools that were successful had one person working half time and another assigned full time on this task. Often these jobs were combined with the tasks of recruiting and coordinating community resources and working with visitors to the schools. Many of the schools planned and carried out the following programs: 1) seminars and workshops for parents, 2) public relations to explain the school's many programs to community groups, and 3) work-study programs designed to assist students in career planning and job placement (Ellison, 1973).

Student retention

Maintaining student enrollment was significant in those schools which experienced some success. In schools which were able to survive, the attendance rate was high and the drop-out rate was low (Fantini, 1973). In a recent study on alternative schools, Raywid (1982) reported that 81% of the responding alternative schools claimed an increase in attendance in comparison to previous patterns. A high percentage was reported in those programs aimed at recapturing dropouts and truants.

Vocational and career education

In those schools which were considered successful, emphasis was placed on vocational and career educational programs. One of their objectives was to provide for students a program which would enable them to capably function as contributing members of society, thereby orienting students to career and vocational experiences (Paskal and Miller, 1973).

In addition to the above factors, Barr, Colston, and Parrett (1977), in a study funded by the Ford Foundation, discovered that when such factors are present, student achievement improves. They stated:

> When standard measures of achievement such as test scores or college admissions are applicable, they show that alternative school students perform at least as well as their counterparts in traditional school programs and usually better.

The study further concluded that: 1) students who attended alternative schools improved in cognitive achievement at a rate consistent with or higher than the district norm for conventional schools; 2) the self-concept of alternative school students appeared to improve, especially for those students who had not done well in conventional schools; 3) the students appeared to be happier, more open-minded, and more positive in their attitudes toward school; and 4) the rate of vandalism, violence, absenteeism, and suspension was lower than in conventional schools.

These findings help support the research which shows that alternative schools can make a difference for some students. However, at this point in the schools' development, too little research has been

done on such schools to draw any hard conclusions about their overall impact.

The research on conventional school effectiveness is quite extensive. The types of schools do not seem to be a factor with respect to effectiveness. As scholars conduct their research, in suburban as well as inner-city schools, segregated as well as desegregated, in each setting some of the same success factors surfaced: 1) effective leadership, 2) an orderly atmosphere conducive to learning, 3) high expectations for students and teachers, 4) strong instructional leadership, 5) clearly stated and shared goals, 6) emphasis on the basic skills, 7) high staff morale, and 8) monitoring of student progress.

In this review of the literature on school effectiveness, there is agreement that principals can and do make a difference in school effectiveness. Moreover, the literature indicates that the role of the principal is equally important in all modes of schools with all types of students, teachers, and staff persons.

The review of literature on alternative schools indicative to success are contributed to: 1) principals who have good self-concept and experience and who initiate change for school improvement; 2) a competent, sensitive, and stable staff who support and encourage students; 3) strong support from the community for educational development and on-the-job training; 4) high attendance and low dropout rates; 5) vocational and career educational programs designed to assist students in gaining employment and/or training; and 6) improvement in

students' cognitive skills which allows them to graduate and performs well in society.

ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOLS AND THE SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE: WHAT RESEARCH TELLS US

Clemmye Jackson

Iowa State University

The search for excellence has led to the discovery of specific criteria which are associated with school effectiveness. As a result of research conducted by Brookover and Lezotte (1979), Edmonds (1979), Rutter et al. (1979), and Sweeney (1982), the following factors have been attributed to an effective school: a) strong administrative leadership; b) positive school climate; c) effective curriculum strategies and instruction; d) high expectations; e) clear philosophy and goals; and f) incentives and recognition. Almost in its entirety, this large body of research has been gathered from conventional schools. Yet prominent educators (Education USA, 1983) contend that the alternative school concept has more promise. Research indicates that students in alternative schools enjoy greater academic achievement when compared to similar students in regular schools (Barr, 1981) and that a higher percentage of alternative school graduates successfully complete college (Duke and Muzoi, 1978). Yet as one examines school effectiveness research, very little data on alternative schools can be found. The majority of the studies which have been done are evaluations of reports compiled by school personnel. Virtually none are the results of on-site investigations.

This study was designed to address that shortcoming. Qualitative research methods were used to determine what made exemplary alternative schools special. That's what this article is all about.

Methods and Procedures

The study was marked by three phases. The first phase was designed to identify the schools which would be the foci of this study. The investigator reviewed the literature on alternative schools and identified factors which consistently surfaced as "indicators of success" in alternative schools. In addition, an open-ended questionnaire designed to examine success in the opinions of alternative school educators in the Midwest was developed and mailed to 100 teachers and 20 administrators in 20 alternative high schools. From these two activities, six factors emerged as indicators or "criteria" for examining effective alternative schools. They were: 1) longevity--the school had been in existence for three years or more, 2) staff stability--staff turnover was low, 3) student retention--student enrollment was maintained and attendance rate was high, 4) vocational and career training--the school had a program designed to assist students in both career and vocational training, and a high percentage of the students gained employment and/or sought further training, 5) community support--the school had strong support from the community and public school system, and 6) student achievement--a high percentage of students completed high school and entered post-secondary education and/or lived productive lives independently.

These indicators or criteria were then provided to board members of the Iowa Association of Alternative Schools (IAAS), which is comprised of 14 educators who are currently involved in alternative schooling in the state of Iowa. They were asked to use the six criteria to identify and rank the five most effective alternative schools in the state. The criteria were not weighted; one was not considered to be more important than the other. The resulting rankings were then used to identify the two most effective alternative schools in Iowa.

The IAAS identified two schools which were somewhat similar. Both are located in the two largest cities in the state of Iowa and serve 400 or more secondary students. They share a similar purpose: serving drop-outs, potential drop-outs, and students who have difficulty adjusting to the conventional schools in their respective city. Each school has been in existence for eight or more years with each principal serving within his respective building since its existence. One school has a staff of 25 certified staff members while the other has a staff of 36. Phase two included a review of literature and the administration of a survey designed to identify the organizational functions and processes which appear to be associated with the success and failure of organizations and those factors associated with success in schools. Both factors were used to help the investigator analyze the organizational structure using a modified ethnographic technique.

The third phase consisted of a ten-day, on-site analysis in each school conducted in the spring of 1983. The investigator visited

classrooms, attended meetings, interviewed teachers, staff, and
students, and observed the flow of activities in the two schools.
Written documents such as written philosophies, attendance records,
evaluations, and objectives were also examined. Finally, in an attempt
to see the schools through the perception of the principal, the
investigator spent considerable time talking with them. One survey
instrument was used in the two schools: The School Improvement
Inventory (SII) developed by Sweeney (1982). It has been used in more
than 100 schools across the country. The SII was designed to gather
information which could be used to evaluate school improvement and
effectiveness. The instrument was administered to most of the staff
members in the two schools to evaluate data related to leadership and
school climate. The instrument consists of 27 items related to school
climate and 12 which measure teacher expectations and building
administrator effectiveness.

Findings

The purpose of the study was to answer a question troubling all
educators but of particular concern to those interested in the potential
of alternative schooling for students: What makes effective alternative
schools tick? Presented below are data substantiating the saliency of
the selected schools, followed by a description and discussion of those
common themes which appeared to run through these schools.

Rather than merely accepting the "fact that these were, indeed, effective schools," it seemed obligatory to first examine the data gathered from the School Improvement Inventory (SII). Five measures addressed by this instrument provide a basis for making decisions about a school's efficacy. The measures reflect staff perceptions of the extent to which they are functioning effectively in important areas associated with organizational effectiveness and productivity. The data in Table 1 support the efficacy of the selections made by the Iowa Association of Alternative Schools (IAAS) board members. Faculties in both schools had high scores in cohesiveness (6.92) and expressed a strong sense of accomplishment in their work (esprit, 6.55). Faculty goal orientation (6.52), student attitudes (6.49), and teacher expectations (6.40) were also very positive. In other words, teachers in the effective alternative schools were aware and able to work together as a smoothly functioning team, aware of and committed to the important goals of the school, felt that the students' attitudes were positive, and expected students to do their best. It should be noted that the relatively small standard deviations in each measure indicate that these perceptions were shared by most teachers.

Because alternative schools are both unique and diverse, a survey instrument is limited in its capacity to measure subtle nuances. Therefore, any attempt to determine what makes schools effective must include the use of more than one method. The remainder of this paper presents a discussion of the data collected through a modified ethnographic technique. Staff and student interviews (structured and

TABLE 1. Means and standard deviations for school climate variables in
          the two effective alternative schools (N=44, 16 + 28)

VARIABLES	MEAN SCORE	STANDARD DEVIATION
Cohesiveness	6.92	0.82
Esprit	6.55	0.61
Goal Orientation	6.52	0.71
Student Attitude	6.49	0.80
Teacher Expectations	6.40	0.58

Scale = 1 (a very little extent) to 8 (a very great extent)

unstructured), observation in classrooms and meetings, and careful

scrutiny of the flow of activities in the schools uncovered certain

elements that permeated the environment of both schools: leadership,

reward, interdependence, and the ethos or school culture. These are

described below.

Leadership

The composition of the administrative staff of the two schools

differed. Administrative functions at one school were performed by a

principal, who was also the principal of a nearby junior high school.

Three lead teachers also provided additional administrative support:

orientating new students, handling discipline problems, developing

student contracts and curricula, scheduling students for classes and

supervising various activities and programs throughout the building. In

the other school, as the only administrator assigned to the building,

the principal performed the major portion of such administrative duties.

However, the faculty of each school identified leadership as one of the major factors contributing to the successful operations despite the difference in structure of their schools.

Why was leadership a factor? When describing the administrator's leadership, the staff often spoke of the principals and lead teachers as being committed, trustworthy, caring, competent, democratic, and people-oriented. In one school, staff indicated that the outstanding leadership provided by the principal, through his role with central administration, was one of the contributing factors to their overall success. They further pointed out that his style of leadership--supporting the staff, engendering confidence, and providing them the freedom to do their jobs--was the key to their productivity. Both principals had a philosophy which fostered teacher creativity and experimentation. In both schools, staff stated that the principals' knowledge of the alternative school staff concept and willingness to delegate responsibility added to staff trust, dedication, and the feeling of belonging of "family." The majority of the respondents stated that this style of team management made decision-making a school-wide responsibility and enhanced the pride faculty and staff had in the accomplishments of the schools.

Instructional leadership. A major component of both schools was the instructional leadership provided by the principals. In both schools, the instructional program was a priority of the principals and was evaluated continuously. In one school, a process had been developed

so that teachers could log, on a daily basis, the techniques that worked and those which did not. Successful and meaningful methods were then shared in staff meetings, and suggestions were made as to how programs might be improved. This was then systematically taken a step further. Each school evaluated all productive and nonproductive programs, identified strengths and weaknesses, and evaluated methods found to be nonproductive. Since the teachers are the principal ingredients in the learning process, their methods, styles, and behaviors were evaluated constantly by their principals. However, both principals and teachers indicated that evaluations were nonthreatening because the principals were in and out of the classroom constantly. Thus, when a formal evaluation was done, teachers did not perceive the principal as an authority figure but as a resource person to whom they could turn if they needed assistance. Teachers in both schools reported that the principals' visits to the classrooms were not unusual. In the words of one teacher, "He visits the classrooms often. I don't think any one of us feels threatened when it's time for a formal evaluation."

Both principals worked to develop a meaningful curriculum which challenged the students' abilities while at the same time supporting the scope and purpose of the school program. To insure that the curriculum was meaningful and functional, they each involved students and staff in curriculum development. This involvement included one or more of the following: written recommendations and evaluations done by students at the end of each term; committee reports by faculty and staff made in

staff meetings which allowed for input and feedback from colleagues; and staff meetings designed for the purpose of curriculum improvement.

Monitoring student progress in both schools was an extension of the teaching and learning process. Both schools had designated a weekly time to discuss student progress. In one school, a "hit list" was designed each week to identify and discuss students who were having difficulties academically as well as personally. Each staff member with some knowledge concerning the student(s) shared it with the rest of the staff. Staff members who had had a positive relationship with the student(s) on the list made home visits, phone calls, and/or visits with the student(s). If a learning problem existed, necessary arrangements were made to help the student(s) correct these deficiencies. Students who had made progress were placed on a list and nominated for an award for improvement. Students who achieved success in a class(es) were sent a personal note signed with a message from their teachers. In the other school, similar provisions were made to monitor student progress.

Principals in both schools had high expectations of their students and staff. The expectations of both principals could be measured through the emphasis they constantly placed on "excellence through hard work." They both emphasized the rewards of doing a good job. One principal stated, "It is our philosophy here to take students from where they are and take them as far as they can go." The same type of expectations was expressed in reference to staff. They each expected staff to do a good job and to have high expectations of students.

Therefore, each principal felt it was essential to provide the necessary support and resources needed by staff. "Everyone here is important and plays a vital role in providing an effective education for 'all' students. There is not a one of us more important than the other," stated one principal. This type of attitude bore fruit; all teachers had a great deal of responsibility and appeared to share their principal's philosophy. They were aware of his expectations of them. One teacher stated, "He depends on us a lot; it's the confidence that he has in our abilities that really makes us feel that we are a part of this program. It's saying to us, 'you are important and you have a job to do.' He expects us to deliver, and we do our best to deliver. The encouragement and praise we get for doing a good job is inspiring." When asked to respond to the staff comments, the principal replied, "I have a great staff. They also expect me to deliver. They expect me to see that this program is run smoothly, effectively, and efficiently. However, they do a good job of that themselves. They also expect me to understand their needs and the needs of students and to provide for those needs by establishing an atmosphere where teaching and learning can take place. I trust my staff and their abilities. They do a great job."

A similar philosophy was expressed in the other school. The comments stated by both principals with respect to expectations were reinforced by comments from teachers and staff. One staff member summarized it nicely, "He makes things happen here. He lets us know

that we are the heart of the program. He is aware of our potential;

therefore, he encourages our personal and educational growth."

Reward

A well-developed reward system was a major factor in the success of

both schools. Student achievement, attendance, attitude, and

performance were systematically addressed through ceremonies and

rituals.

The recognition of student achievement was made in a variety of

ways: student art work, English composition papers and poems, computer

program works, along with other outstanding work, were attractively

exhibited on walls and bulletin boards and in display cases. But the

schools went to greater lengths to recognize achievement. In one

school, community meetings held every two weeks provided an excellent

setting for recognizing those students who had improved their

attendance, attitude, and academic performance. The students selected

for the special recognition were nominated and chosen by their teachers

in staff meetings. Each teacher presented a list of students whom they

noticed had improved over a period of time. Each of the students had

made some highly noticeable improvement in at least one area. Teachers

who nominated student(s) gave a brief history, explained why the

student(s) should be recognized, and cited the accomplishments of the

student(s). If another teacher wished to support the same student,

he/she also provided additional information. After all names were

listed and comments were completed, a vote was taken. Students

receiving the largest number of votes were selected as the students to be recognized for outstanding achievement and performance.

The presentation of the awards was made in the bi-weekly community meetings in the presence of staff members and the student body. The actual recognition was made in a family setting where students and faculty participated. Teachers who had close and positive experiences with the student recipients shared some of these experiences before the name of the student was called. When a student's name was called, a "Star Award" was pinned on the student. A photo was then taken and later placed in the showcase in the front hallway, along with a perfect attendance list and other outstanding work done by students.

The reward system in both schools was designed not only for students but for staff members as well. Teachers were recognized for outstanding work done with students and in-school sponsored activities and community projects. In one school, they had a permanent award which was passed from teacher to teacher for an exceptional job, jobs, or projects that were performed above and beyond the call of duty. Outstanding services, such as chairing the pancake supper committee, implementing a community clean-up project, organizing a school trip, sponsoring and working for community and school improvement, were tasks for which teachers had been given school-wide recognition. Because the staff was so highly visible and active in and out of the school setting, the selection of a person for this award was quite difficult. However, when the award was passed on to a teacher, he/she did not fail to recognize those persons who had made the success possible. However,

teachers reported that the true reward from this experience was the pride and esprit generated.

Recognition of achievement or praise was a recurring theme in both schools, encouraged and used by principals, faculty, and staff. The principal in one school took time during the first few minutes of each staff meeting to express his gratitude to faculty members and gave special recognition to those who had performed a special task. He praised them not only in staff meetings but individually as well. Sometimes he would place a note in a teacher's mailbox to tell him/her what an excellent job he/she had done. This type of recognition also existed among staff members; they praised one another and wrote notes to one another to express appreciation.

In one school at the beginning of each staff meeting, time was set aside for positives. At this time, staff praised one another and discussed positives of the school's program. It was commonplace to see the staff giving feedback to everyone including the secretaries, aides, and custodians. This was an on-going process in both schools. As a result, staff appeared to feel needed and appreciated. Teachers agreed that recognition of their achievements made them want to do a better job the next time. "It keeps us going," said one teacher. The principals and staff in both schools saw the reward system as a prime contributor to their positive climate and high success rate. As one student put it, "This is the first time anyone has ever recognized me for doing anything. It gives me a feeling of encouragement. The people here care

about me. They know that I have something to offer. The faith the
principal and teachers have in students here is unbelievable."

Interdependence

Staff and the principals in both schools relied on one another for
support and assistance. When it came to solving problems, meeting the
needs of students, and helping one another, the staff functioned as a
team. They each functioned like a link in a chain. Without all of the
links connecting, the staff seemed to think the team would not be
productive. Where some lacked the necessary skills to handle a
situation or task, others helped out. It was not unusual to see
teachers sharing their knowledge of a subject·in another teacher's
class. For example, a math teacher could be found in the social studies
class showing students how to complete income tax forms, and a science
teacher could be found in a home economics class explaining to students
the chemical reactions of some household cleaning agents when combined.
It's amazing how they worked together and relied on one another.

Team spirit spilled over into community and school
activities/projects. When a staff member was designated as a
chairperson of a project, teachers readily volunteered to help. In one
school, when a project was selected and needed·to be promoted, the art
teacher did the art work, the English teacher edited the publication,
and the business education teacher saw that the programs were typed and
printed. Other teachers used their talents wherever needed to make the
project a success. In meetings, staff shared and mutually supported one

another. They shared ideas on curricula, activities, budget decisions, teaching techniques and ways of assisting students. When a decision was agreed upon by the group, there was no question about it--they depended on one another to work diligently as a team to make it successful.

Staff in both schools provided and depended upon one another for moral support. One teacher said, "If we have a bad day, we can count on having someone to share it with. We are like family here." Staff agreed that struggling with burnout is a constant battle. That battle is won primarily because they offer one another support. A case in point illustrates: a teacher was becoming bored and dissatisfied with his job; he shared this with his colleagues, and they immediately became concerned. They informed the principal and elicited his support. In the meantime, staff members worked diligently to help him overcome his problem. The principal visited with him immediately, and they both worked on a solution. When the principal was asked about moral support, the principal shared his concern about the staff member who was bored. He replied, "We do not want to lose anyone here. We have a special commitment to each other. Each of us depends on one another. The people here are special, it just comes natural for them. I can count on them. If one is in need, others will be there to rescue him or her. We all know each other so well, and we depend on each other a great deal. We're like family."

Ethos or culture

The "ethos" or "feel" of the two schools appeared to be a most
distinguishing characteristic. It appeared to emanate from three common
themes: 1) a team effort, 2) a sense of family, and 3) staff and
student autonomy.

Team effort. The staff in both schools functioned as a team.
School strategies and activities provided the opportunity for students
to develop teamwork and a spirit of cooperation to develop positive
attitudes and to enhance student and teacher relationships. In one
school, a most significant group activity exemplified that team effort.
Each year staff and students sponsor clean-up designed to help senior
citizens in the community. Everyone in the school was involved; the
secretary set-up the clean-up schedule and assigned jobs. The custodian
and support staff, along with teachers and students, set off in their
cars to various senior citizens' homes in the community to do minor
chores and repairs. One would have thought they were going on a
pleasure trip. For them, indeed, it was. One student commented, "I
like activities like these; they give us a chance to get together as a
group. It's for a worthy cause, and we enjoy doing it." Although the
clean-up activity was scheduled on a nonschool day, the turn-out was
nearly 100 percent. "Activities like these always inspire students,"
stated one teacher. "They enjoy working with us and each other.
Sometimes, we have more help than we need. We always manage to fit
everyone in."

Staff in both schools believed in modeled cooperation and fostered team spirit. The staff willingly shared duties. When supervisory tasks had to be done, teacher shared and alternated duties. For example, at times some teacher handled attendance, while others operated the lunch program and assisted in the school nursery. But these duties were often switched. However, whatever the task, if it needed to be done, they did it without question or reluctance. They knew what it took to make the program a success.

A sense of family.   One of the most outstanding features of the two schools was what can best be called "a sense of family." First, the teachers viewpoint. One teacher stated, "the atmosphere here is warm and filled with love and caring. The support from staff and the principal along with student's cooperation and progress makes this school an exciting place to be. I look forward to coming to work every day. Another teacher added, "Here we are a big, happy family. Sometimes we experience labor pains, but that only lasts a little while; the majority of the nine months are exciting, joyful, and filled with enthusiasm. We give birth to many successes and we all do it together. We share labor pains and rejoice together. That's what family is all about. I'm proud to be a member of this family."

Teachers were not the only ones who felt the family spirit. Students in both schools often referred to a sense of family often when talking about their school. One student said, "This school is the only family I have. I would hate to think where I would be today without the people here. Teachers treat us like we are their own kids." Another

student stated, "If I didn't have the people here to care about me, I wouldn't have anyone. It's hard to explain; all I know is this is my family and they care about me," Since many of the students are troubled by serious problems, the staff recognizes that they need caring. Therefore, they respond with what could be called a "tough love." This tough love encompasses empathy, caring, and support and sends a message that "action has consequences." Students suffered consequences for their actions; despite some anguish, the staff administers the dose of medicine where necessary. They also place responsibility squarely on the student's shoulders. If a student wants to leave a class or the premises, he or she can; however, he or she is still responsible for what went on in that classroom that day and for any homework assigned. One teacher said, "I treat the students here as if they were my own children. For some of them, we are the only parents they have. We make them take the responsibility for their actions and the responsibility for learning in their own hands."

In other words, both schools were truly like a family. They looked out for each other, protected each other, did things together, communicated well, and shared with each other. There was not a staff member or student in either school who shared a negative comment about another. They were closely knit and accepted each other as they were.

Autonomy.   When staff members were asked why they liked working in their school, they collectively agreed the autonomy or freedom provided them was certainly one of the outstanding features. They

enjoyed the freedom to be creative and innovative and to perform their
jobs in the ways they felt were best for them and their students.
Control of teaching and learning were important.

First, how was that freedom manifested? The principals in both
schools gave staff the freedom to teach, voice their opinions, and make
decisions on important issues. Staff also felt free to disagree at
times. There was an open exchange of ideas, opinions, and information.
Teachers in both schools shared in decisions about curricula,
discipline, teaching techniques, and classroom activities. One teacher
summed it up nicely, "To teach the way we feel is best for students adds
to the learning climate of the school. We are free to use our own
methods and style of teaching as long as we meet the needs of the
students and the objectives of the school program. Our creativity is
not limited." The staff in both schools believed that self-governance
was important and that it strengthened their relationship with the
principal. The principals fostered this. When asked about staff
autonomy, one principal replied, "Giving teachers the autonomy to make
decisions in the program enhances their commitment and feelings of being
a part of the total school program."

Teachers were not the only ones with autonomy. Students linked
their success to their freedom and the opportunity to make decisions.
When students were asked about freedom, they responded emphatically:
"Here we can be ourselves; we are in charge of ourselves. We can choose
our own program. The responsibility to get an education is placed on us

. . . teachers don't treat us like criminals, they treat us like adults, they encourage us. If we abuse the freedom we have, we have to be able to suffer the consequences . . . I'm a different person now. Making my own decisions has helped me to grow up a lot. Before, people were forever pushing rules down my throat. All I did was rebel. Now that I can do the things that I want to, I've become more responsible . . . The teachers here have given me a chance to find myself by allowing me to have the freedom to express myself." The few rules in both schools were reasonable and simple. In both schools, the rules were essentially the same: 1) be here and be busy, 2) use no alcohol or drugs on school premises, 3) avoid fighting and vandalism, and 4) respect each other. Few students broke these rules. One student summed it up, "Before coming here I disliked school, and now I like it. I finally discovered what it was that turned me off. It was the rules in the regular school that I disliked most. Someone was always harassing me about rules. Here it's different; there are few rules, and they are simple. We know what the rules are, and we follow them."

In the classroom, students felt free to express their opinions and to ask questions. They shared in decisions about classroom activities and projects. They had the freedom to attend class if they wanted to, to walk out of class if they felt it was necessary, and to change to another class if there was need. These options were seldom examined. When students were asked about freedom in the school, one student responded, "The freedom here allows us to grow up a lot. A great deal of responsibility is placed on us. I have to be here in class; I want

to graduate. The teachers make you feel like you belong here. I have fun in class while I'm learning. I feel comfortable expressing my opinions and asking questions in class, even if it's a dumb question. The teachers here do not consider questions we think are dumb, dumb questions. They make what we say seem important. No one laughs at you. Here, when I have something to say, someone thinks it's important enough to listen."

Summary

What happens in effective alternative schools? What behaviors do successful staffs and their administrators exhibit? What activities do they carry out? There are few surprises. It appears that similar to what Gertrude Stein noted long ago, "A good school is a good school is a good school." Effectiveness in alternative schools is attributable to many of the characteristics which surfaced in studies of regular schools: 1) strong leadership, 2) positive school climate, 3) effective instructional strategies, 4) high expectations for students, 5) clearly stated goals and objectives, and 6) monitoring of student progress. The major difference is the approach to teaching and learning; it's more student-centered. But what is the major theme the data uncovered? It seems clear. People make schools work; their success is our success.

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PUTTING THE ZING INTO ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS: LEADERSHIP MAKES A

DIFFERENCE

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Leadership of a school has a great deal to do with its success

(Brookover and Lezotte, 1979; Edmonds, 1979; Lipham, 1981; Sweeney,

1982). Each concluded that a major contributing factor is the

leadership provided by the principal. Most of their research, however,

has been done in conventional schools where the setting and philosophy

are different from those found in alternative schools. Given the

emerging importance of alternative schools and their enormous growth in

the past decade, it is imperative that we examine their leadership. A

recent study, conducted at Iowa State University, has done just that by

examining leadership within two exemplary alternative schools.

The selection of the two schools for the study was abetted by the

board of the Iowa Association of Alternative Schools (IAAS). The board

consists of 14 educators who are currently involved in alternative

schooling in the state of Iowa. They were given six criteria and asked

to identify and rank the five most effective alternative schools in the

state. The six criteria were: 1) longevity--the school has been in

existence for three or more years; 2) staff stability--staff turnover is

low; 3) student retention--student enrollment is maintained and the

attendance rate is high; 4) vocational and career training--the school

program effectively assists students in both career and vocational

training, and a high percentage of students gains employment and/or goes
on for further training; 5) community support--there is strong support
from the community; and 6) student achievement--a high percentage of
students completes high school and enters post-secondary education. The
criteria were not weighted; one was not considered to be more important
than the other. The resulting rankings were then used to identify the
two most effective alternative schools in Iowa.

Since school effectiveness can best be studied on-site and from
within the schools, the investigator spent ten days in each school
visiting classrooms, attending meetings, interviewing teachers, staff,
and students, and observing the flow of activities in the two schools.

The study addressed the following questions: 1) What do teachers
in alternative schools expect from their administrators? 2) What do
effective principals do? and 3) What else makes a difference in their
schools? The themes which were pervasive appeared to be subsets of
leadership: 1) goal orientation, 2) climate, 3) support, 4) staff
development, 5) shared values, and 6) principal commitment. These and
other important findings are discussed below.

Faculty Expectations and Principal Effectiveness

First a look at teacher expectations. Why look at these? The
interaction between teachers and the principal is crucial. It is
critical that congruency exists between what teachers expect and how the
principal performs. For example, in a study by Bidwell (1975),

incongruent expectations were found to contribute to teacher
dissatisfaction with the school system in general. He further found
that teachers felt more secure in their relationships with principals
when their expectations were met. It seems logical that a group of
people in an organization should share mutual expectations. To test
this premise in two exemplary alternative schools, the School
Improvement Inventory (SII) was administered to both staffs to examine
their expectations. The instrument, developed by Sweeney (1982), uses a
scale of 1 (very low) to 5 (very high) to examine teachers' perceptions
of the importance of the six administrative functions. Although the
instrument uses the examiner's "relative importance" understanding of
what is important to teachers, it offers insight into what teachers see
as an ideal situation. The instrument also provides an opportunity for
the teachers to "rate" their administrator's effectiveness in the six
functions on a scale of (1) effective to (5) very effective.

Provided below are the six administrative functions and a brief
description of each:

1. Human Resource Management: assists teachers to motivate,
   challenge, and excite students to learn at the optimal level,
   and assists staff in obtaining maximum use of their human
   potential for reaching personal and organizational goals.

2. Instructional Leadership: enhances student learning through
   updating of curriculum and instructional materials, evaluates
   staff for the purpose of improvement, and evaluates
   educational program and student progress.

3. Learning Environment: develops and maintains standards of discipline which provide students with a clear understanding of expecations for behavior inside and outside the classroom and provides an educational atmosphere conducive to learning.

4. Non-Instructional Leadership: schedules all routine and special activities; supervises logistical matters and the school plant.

5. Pupil Personnel: meets with students individually and in groups to address their problems and concerns and promotes student involvement in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

6. School Community Relations: communicates with parents and promotes the school through advisory committees, parent-teacher organization, needs assessment, and the media.

Table 2 shows what the alternative schools' staffs wanted from their principal, as well as the level of effectiveness at which the six administrative functions were carried out by their respective principal. It should be pointed out that the rankings were in the same order in both schools. The mean scores for the two schools are presented in the order of their rank. For example, the staffs rated pupil personnel (4.72) as most important, and a 4.78 mean score for administrative effectiveness indicated the principals do very well in this area. Non-instructional management (3.87) and community relations (3.79) were rated least important by the teachers.

TABLE 1. Mean scores of staff ratings of expectations and effectiveness
in the two exemplary schools N = (16 + 28) = 44

VARIABLES	EXPECTATIONS	EFFECTIVENESS
Pupil Personnel	4.72	4.78
Human Resource Mgt.	4.64	4.72
Instructional Ldsp.	4.43	4.52
Learning Environment	4.40	4.40
Non-Instructional Mgt.	3.87	3.89
School Community Rel.	3.79	3.83

Scale of 1 (very low) to 5 (very high)

In summary, the staffs indicated they wanted their leaders to
attend primarily to: 1) dealing with students and their problems, 2)
motivating, challenging, and exciting students to learn and maximizing
their potential for reaching personal and organizational goals, 3)
updating curriculum and instructional materials and evaluating student
progress and the educational program to enhance student learning, and 4)
maintaining an atmosphere conducive to learning. Incidentally, the
surprising finding was that the teachers in the alternative schools
ranked pupil personnel first. Research by Pinckney (1982) and others
revealed that "regular school" teachers see that as a much lower
priority for their principals. The effectiveness ratings indicated that
the principals in both schools knew what their teachers wanted and were
performing those tasks well. Two things are evident: 1) congruency
between staff wants and principal's performance, and 2) effective
leadership.

Leadership

What put the zing in the two schools? What makes a difference?
Observations and structured and informal interviews with staff and
students revealed six major themes which pervaded each of the schools:
1) clearly stated and defined goals, 2) positive learning atmosphere, 3)
staff development, 4) quality inservice, 5) shared values, and 6)
principal commitment. Each of these is discussed below.

Goals

Both schools had clearly stated goals which stemmed from the belief
system of their respective principal. That belief system was predicated
on these assumptions: 1) schools have a specific purpose and/or goals;
2) opportunities should exist for young persons to achieve to the extent
of their abilities; and 3) all children can learn.

The goals in both schools were not developed in a vacuum; the
entire staff had a part in their development and supported them
wholeheartedly. In each of the schools, there was little doubt that
teachers knew what their goals were; they were committed to them, and
they understood that the principals would consistently strive to move
the program toward these goals.

Positive learning climate

In both schools, the principals created and maintained an
atmosphere conducive to learning. Both schools were warm, friendly,
orderly, and open. There was a special closeness between students,

teachers and other staff members, and the principal. This closeness
appeared to produce an atmosphere in which teachers were not afraid to
be innovative and creative, and students were not afraid to interact
with their teachers. While it may seem odd to some, students addressed
the staff and principal on a first name basis.

Throughout, the learning environment in both schools was relaxed
and orderly during the observation period. The halls were clean and
clear. Staff and students seemed to know their responsibilities, where
they were supposed to be, and what was expected of them. There was no
evidence of violence or school disruptions in either school. Principals
and lead teachers constantly moved throughout the school buildings
almost unnoticed, with the exception of a friendly "Hello, how are you
today?" or a conversation with a student or students. They were seen by
students as helpers and concerned friends rather than policemen. Many
of the students commented, "They seem like part of us; we don't feel
threatened."

Quality in-service

The high quality in-service training in both schools can be
attributed to the two principals' keen insight into the needs and
talents of their teachers and to the principals' ability to make things
happen. Their belief system appeared to be a factor. Most of the in-
service training in one school was provided by the principal. When
asked how he obtained such an enthusiastic and well-trained staff, he
replied, "I train them." Teachers readily agreed that the in-service

program is the highlight of their Friday meetings. The Madeline

Hunter's Positive Reinforcement program training and the principal's

self-designed instructional program were highly valued by teachers.

"This type of in-service allows us to experiment confidently with

innovative and varied approaches to teaching," said one teacher. Many

of the teachers attributed their instructional effectiveness to the help

provided by the principal.

The focus on personal development was pervasive. Staff in both

schools consistently attend workshops related to their educational and

personal growth. Each principal provided the necessary materials to

update staff on the current trends in education. "I encourage my staff

to attend workshops, visit other alternative schools, and to further

their education," stated one principal. "It's a plus for our program

and for them; they want to grow." In the words of one teacher, "We are

forever learning new techniques; we have to in order to meet the needs

of our students. They learn in different ways, and we have to be

prepared to use everything we possibly can to reach them." Teachers in

both schools volunteered that the principal inspired them to want to

develop and grow.

Staff support

The principals in both schools were very supportive of their staff,

each providing the necessary materials needed to reach the goals. A

part of the support system was an open and ongoing communication system

to help them view the needs of their staff. When staff needed

instructional supplies or materials, that need was known, and teachers
had few problems in acquiring them. Members of both staffs consistently
stated that their principals did everything they could to provide the
necessary tools and materials for them to do their jobs. But support
came in different guises. Teachers in both schools were encouraged to
use varied methods of instructional strategies, and both principals
provided them with freedom and encouragement to employ their own style
in the classroom. This, teachers contended, contributed to their
success and the success of the school. Both principals stated that they
would support creativity and experimentation with new ideas as long as
ideas were congruent with the overall objectives of the school program.

Shared values

The principal and staff in the two selected schools shared the same
viewpoints on most of the major issues of the school. They shared
common beliefs and purposes. As a result of countless interviews, we
concluded that these basic beliefs or underpinnings were: 1) all
students can learn; 2) students learn in a variety of ways; therefore, a
variety of teaching methods is needed to teach them; 3) students'
problems and self-concepts are intertwined with their achievement; and
4) each student is unique. In recruiting and selecting staff, both
principals indicated that they looked for staff members who shared those
beliefs.

Involvement was also a key theme. Teachers, staff, and students in
the two schools demonstrated their commitment to the total school

program. When there was an activity or school project, everyone was involved; and they supported one another to make the endeavor successful. The enthusiasm in both schools was evident; everyone pitched in. When asked how they got that way, one principal said, "I make sure that we are all a part of everything that goes on around here. We are a team. We are all here for the same purpose. We work hard to give students the best education possible, no matter what it takes. We share in the same common beliefs."

Principal's commitment

Staff in both schools shared a strong sentiment as to the key to their success . . . the dedication of their principal. They said, in no uncertain terms, that it was the principal's commitment that moved things in the program. A teacher in one school summed it up nicely, "Our principal sets an example for all of us and for all students. If he says he's going to do something, he does it. His commitment is contagious; we all want to match his enthusiasm and dedication to the school and the kids here."

What did these principals who were able to have such a dramatic effect do? First, they could be found wherever the action was; they appeared to be "quietly everywhere." They were in the classrooms helping teachers, attending and leading staff meetings, and solving problems wherever they arose. They worked hard at finding students foster homes and living accommodations or seeking opportunities for students in need of work and/or financial support. They both toiled well beyond the school day. One principal estimated that he worked

approximately one-hundred hours per week, spending long hours tying up loose ends, planning, organizing, developing programs, participating in community activities, and overseeing extra-curricular school activities.

Staff in both schools stated that each principal gave his all. One teacher put it this way, "Our principal's dedication is remarkable; this program is him. We can count on him being a part of everything here, and he is a part of everything. He walks that extra mile to make this program a success."

Summary

What, then, puts the zing into effective alternative schools? The answer is hardly surprising: the principal's strong belief system and leadership. But let's be more explicit about that leadership. Effectiveness in alternative schools appears to require a principal who can identify what it is that the school is about and "sell" it to the faculty. This appears to emanate from the development of a strong culture or the values that the staff members share. He/she must also provide support for students and staff, a positive and orderly learning environment, and opportunities for growth. Finally, it seems that the effective alternative school principal leads by example; that is, his/her commitment provides the impetus for greatness. While the findings were not surprising, they are reinforcing. Leadership does make a difference, and effective alternative schools appear to be marked by characteristics similar to traditional schools. If we can attract

and hold leaders able to put the "zing" into our schools across America,

we may have to deal with a rising tide of greatness.

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METRO: A SUCCESSFUL ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL'S EXPERIENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

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As we enter the mid-1980s, educators are under pressure to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Voices of discontent have been heard from the White House in Washington, D. C., the Congress of the United States, and citizens across America. Many are demanding a change in our educational system and a return to excellence in the classroom. Not since Sputnik have educators heard such insistent demands for change in education. The dominant themes of the most vocal audiences focus on merit pay and higher standards for teachers, more technical educational experiences for students, and an extension of the time students are required to spend in school. But the answers to the problems facing our public schools may reside within the alternative school concept, which allows for creative and innovative techniques for meeting the needs of students. Some educators (Education USA, 1983) believe that the last opportunity for reforming our public education system could very well be through the alternative school concept. This article describes unique teaching and learning experiences in a successful alternative high school located in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. This school, unique in its approach to teaching and learning, offers some very viable alternatives to many of the questions presently being asked

by educators, parents, and government officials. Presented below is a description of Metro and an account of what makes it great. The latter consisted of constructed and intensive interviews (structured and unstructured) of staff, students, and the principal, and observations of classrooms, meetings, and the daily flow of the school's activities.

The Setting

Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is the home of Metro Alternative High School. According to the 1980 census report, it is the second largest city in the state and has a population of approximately 114,000, two percent of which are minorities. Its economy is equally influenced by industry, manufacturing, and agriculture, which support an average family income of $15,000 to $20,000 with an estimated unemployment rate of seven percent.

Metro Alternative High School is a part of the Cedar Rapids public school system. It first opened its doors in 1974 in an old fire station with a staff of four members and 60 students. In 1978, a second campus opened, which nearly doubled the enrollment. A dual program (Metro East and West) continued until 1982, when the two schools united and Metro once again became a single school program in a new building which had once been an elementary school. Presently, its staff consists of 34 teachers and support personnel. One principal and two lead teachers provide educational sevices for approximately 580 students.

Metro's present location is in a section of the city which is surrounded by single family dwellings and a few businesses. The well-kept building and grounds of the school add esthetic beauty to the attractive surroundings. The students at Metro do not represent a cross section of the city economically or socially and are somewhat atypical. A relatively large segment of the student population is from single parent families and has been referred to Metro by a social agency and/or a school counselor from the city high school. But students at Metro learn. This appears to flow from a philosophy which states that every student can learn, and the job of teaching and learning can be fun.

<p style="text-align: center;">Underpinnings ·</p>

Metro Alternative School is an educational institution where students get a second opportunity to earn a high school diploma. It is a school for students who do not adjust and have not adjusted to a conventional school setting. The school provides an option for students who have dropped out or left the conventional school because of educational and/or personal problems. It has thus offered many students an opportunity to continue their education and to enhance their aspiration to live productive lives as educated citizens. The school has comprehensive, stated goals designed to direct the development of students' basic skills and prepare them for college and/or a career after high school. However, Metro is also concerned with improving self-concepts and developing individual talent, creativity, and

uniqueness; understanding and encouraging cultural plurality and diversity; and preparing students for various roles in society-- consumer, voter, critic, parent, and spouse. Additionally the school provides opportunities for students and teachers to participate in decision-making about school programs and their individual roles within the school. This results in more choices and more responsibility for student and staff.

A Day at Metro

In order to get a clear picture of Metro and what makes it great, let's examine a typical day, which begins for most staff persons an hour before the beginning of classes. Teachers are in the building assisting students, putting final touches on their lesson plans, talking with other teachers and students, and organizing the lesson for today. Shortly before classes an observer will see students and teachers walking briskly toward the classroom, speaking and smiling as they pass. A few moments later the hallways are clear and quiet. This is a clue that classes are in session. Everyone is in place.

It is in the classroom where Metro really shines. Here teaching and learning come together, and teachers communicate to students how to prepare for life in the future. The Metro staff realizes that a significant number of students who enter the school have negative attitudes toward school. Therefore, they work like trojans to insure that the classroom climate promotes a positive attitude. Classrooms are

arranged to facilitate open communications. There are few traditional classrooms. The teacher's desk is neatly situated in a corner of the room away from the flow of traffic. This opens the room for "lanes of travel" and student-teacher contact. Tables and chairs are placed in a circle or semi-circle to promote communication, eye contact, and a feeling of security and closeness. This is not to imply, however, that the classrooms are without structure. Contrary to the widespread belief that "do your own thing" characterizes alternative schools, clearly stated objectives and high standards are evident. For example, in a classroom where an English teacher requires everyday writing assignments, one student had to rewrite his paper several times before getting it right. After writing it for the third time, he commented, "We are required to do things the right way in classes here, no matter how long it takes. The teachers here will not settle for just anything. They know when we can do better." Students share in decisions as to how to reach learning goals. One teacher commented, "Students get an opportunity to participate in decisions as to how to meet a goal(s) or objective(s), but once the decisions are made, they must do it and meet the standards. We don't lower our standards; they know what is expected of them."

The classroom climate at Metro is designed to promote pride and a feeling of achievement. In each classroom, students' work is visibly displayed on bulletin boards and around the classroom. A warm, friendly, and orderly atmosphere prevails. There is a special closeness

between students and teachers. This helps produce an atmosphere where teachers and students are not afraid to be themselves. A closer look at the classroom reveals the type of communication which pervades both schools. Students question teachers and teachers question students. This is not limited to a few bright lights or leaders; each student participates and is a part of the classroom activity. A wrong answer is not followed by a put down; help and encouragement are provided. One will also see a great deal of nonverbal communication. Students and teachers exchange smiles, a nod, a hand shake, or a pat on the shoulder for a job well done.

But what about technique and methodology? The most frequently observed teaching techniques were classroom discussions, one-on-one instruction, team teaching, and independent study. These are supported by systematic positive reinforcement and the use of a variety of activities including field trips, oral and written presentations, silent readings, writing and reading poems and drawing diagrmas--whatever seemed to best meet the unique needs of students. One might see students being assisted by outside resource persons such as an accountant, lawyer, farmer, skilled craftsman, or policeman. The focus is on reality and the development of responsibility, self-organization, and learning. To impress upon students the importance of doing their best, teachers provide frequent evaluative feedback. For example, if a student does an outstanding job in class, it is immediately acknowledged with verbal praise or a tangible reward such as a star on his/her paper,

a note which implies a job well done, names placed on the bulletin board, or an award or certificate of merit. If the student behavior is inappropriate or the work is below par, the student is given evaluative feedback, support, and help to improve. Then when he/she finally hits the mark, he/she is rewarded. The payoff is reflected in a statement made by one student, "I do my best here; the teachers here do not hesitate--they let you know when you are doing well or not so well."

It's a busy place marked by varying activities. One might see team teaching: one teacher leading the classroom activity while the other teacher moves from student to student clarifying, answering questions, and assisting where needed. In another class, students voice their opinions on topics such as abortion, capital punishment, and the legal drinking age. In a social studies class, one will see a lawyer participating in a mock trial, helping students to understand the judicial system. Students play the role of judge, lawyer, defendent, plantiff, and witness to get a true feeling of the importance of how the judicial system works. It should be noted that many of the classes provide hands-on, indoor, and outdoor activities. For example, students and the teacher in one class made cavemen tools and cooked a chicken as a caveman would have in his day. Students were actively involved and looked forward to their next assignment.

Throughout the classrooms one will see different teaching styles but some common themes. One teacher may vividly display "love" throughout the class period, praising, touching, smiling, and giving

hugs and pats on the back to make sure students know she supports their efforts. Moving from student to student, assisting wherever needed, she assures some students and encourages others. You will see another teacher use his dramatic talents while incorporating positive reinforcement and individualizing instruction. Students are alert and question him with enthusiasm. When he was asked aout his teaching technique, he stated, "When I truly have the students' attention, then I can teach them." Students love his class. One student said, "He's a great teacher. I learn a lot." Teachers use every available technique to help students learn.

What common teaching and learning behaviors is one most likely to see at Metro? One will see teachers working with all students, individualizing instruction to meet individual needs and teachers using creative and innovative teaching techniques. They accept students as they are and take them as far as they can go, prodding for correct answers, giving them ample time to respond, challenging and encouraging them. To top it off, they provide incentives; rewards and recognition are always given for a job well done.

<center>How? How? How? How?</center>

But how does this all come about? How does a school develop a climate which drives the staff and students? How are teacher-student relationships established and maintained, and how is teacher enthusiasm kept at a peak?

First, let's look at teacher-student relationships. There is a teacher-student lounge where teachers and students interact and express their feelings on issues and share personal experiences. This is where teachers get to do a lot of informal group and personal counseling. Because some students face problems with their families, one may hear them discussing family matters. Discussions and/or conversations may also be about a struggle to overcome a problem, common problems shared by teachers and students, or just plain small talk. The teachers accept students' opinions, and students value that freedom. One student reported, "The acceptance teachers show here is remarkable; I'm not afraid to express my opinions." Students indicated that their relationship with their teachers is one of the most enjoyable aspects of school. They see teachers as friends who care about them.

Not only do teachers and students have a good relationship, teachers have good relationships with one another. They share more than supplies and materials; they share their knowledge and experiences. At any time of the day, one can find teachers huddled together working on projects or discussing school. The discussions are not negative, they are almost always positive and supportive.

When it comes to their duties, teachers are more than willing to do their share. Helping when needed is the rule, not the exception at Metro. If there is a job to be done, the first available person assists and/or completes the task. When the principal was asked about teachers' relationships, he responded, "One of our major rules at Metro involves

modeling appropriate behaviors and attitudes. We attempt to teach not only by what we say, but by what we do and how we do it. We can't teach students to be cooperative if we do not cooperate with each other. The staff here is outstanding. The key is a group of dedicated people working toward a shared philosophy and a set of common goals. We believe in what we are doing here, to take students from where they are and take them as far as they can go. The bottom line is, we believe all students can learn, and we work together to search for the most effective ways to do just that."

Space does not permit an explanation of all of the things which contribute to the winning Metro spirit, but what <u>drives</u> the school is embodied in what is called the "Friday concept." Let's look at a typical Friday. The school week for students runs Monday through Thursday and is divided into two sessions, 8:30-12:15 and 12:45-4:00. This schedule accommodates students who cannot cope with a full day of school and who need to work and attend classes (vocational and academic) at the nearby community college.

For the staff, Friday is not just a day off. When a week at Metro comes to an end, the staff talks about Friday. Their thoughts are not only about the weekend; they are about Friday's activities and meetings. They use Friday for visits to students' homes, staff meetings, analysis of students' attendance and behavior, development of educational plans for individual students, class preparation, and meetings with community support personnel. Occasionally, some time is used to visit other

alternative schools, attend conferences, and discuss the improvement of instructional techniques. Once a month the principal provides in-service training for teachers on instruction. This is highly valued by staff. Teachers indicate that it helps them to improve their teaching. A comment made by one staff member reflects their outlook. "It keeps us going, we learn a lot. I look forward to the in-service. We are always learning here."

The Friday morning meetings are the highlight of the day. Each meeting begins with positive statements from staff members about occurrences during the week. This allows the staff to review the week while events are fresh on their minds. The balance of the meeting is used to discuss students' progress. Teachers share their successes and discuss difficulties students may be experiencing. They listen while other teachers provide suggestions and techniques which may be helpful. They also work on team approaches to helping students with problems.

The meetings are characterized by an atmosphere in which the free exchange of ideas and varying points of view are as much a part of the system as are math, reading, and writing. The meetings are open and friendly, boiling over with enthusiasm. Each person who has a point to make or a question to ask speaks out without fear of being put down. No one remains silent during the meetings; everyone participates.

The afternoon sessions are packed with activity. Teachers work as a team; they pair up and make home visits. These visits may include taking students out to lunch or having an ice cream cone together. Home visits reinforce the belief that all Metro teachers are concerned about

students and their success in and out of the classroom and that teachers
are willing to walk the extra mile.

Final Thoughts

Metro works for students, teachers, and the community it serves.
Innovative programs have been developed and implemented that make a
difference. At Metro, people work together to help make the school a
success, and the attitude of staff is the key. They accept students
whose background and values are vastly different from their own. They
will not accept failure. They have high expectations for students and
communicate those expectations to them. They realize that a positive
self-image is learned and that students discover their self-concepts
from their experiences in and out of the classroom. Therefore, they
structure their teaching around experiences that are meaningful for
students. Within this context, they believe students can and must
assume responsibility for their own lives. Their ultimate goal is to
help students attain self-realization through learning. They do it well
at Metro!

What makes this place great? It is a place where teaching and
learning are a job, not a task. It is a place where teachers adjust
their styles of teaching to the learning styles of the students. It is
a place where students have choices and a say in what is taught and how
it is taught. It is a place where students learn. It is a place where
nobody ever says never.

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DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors associated with effectiveness in two exemplary public alternative schools in the state of Iowa. A modified ethnographic methodology was used to study the two schools. It required that the investigator spend ten days in both schools collecting data from as many sources as possible. The techniques used to collect data included on-site observation, interviews, survey inventory. and the examination of school documents.

The investigator utilized a participant-observer approach when visiting classrooms, school activities, and school-community functions. This approach worked well within the style of alternative schools where cooperation for extensive techniques, such as testing and structured interviewing, is difficult to obtain. However, officials were relatively open to having an investigator around observing what went on and asking a few questions. The study also included the use of the School Improvement Inventory (SII) developed by Sweeney (1982). The SII was designed to gather information which could be used to measure school effectiveness. The instrument was administered to most of the staff members in the two schools to gather data related to leadership and school climate.

Data from the School Improvement Inventory confirmed that both schools truly were effective. There were very high scores in the important measures of effectiveness: cohesiveness, esprit, goal orientation, student attitudes, and teacher expectations.

The observational data, when compiled and analyzed, clearly indicated that effectiveness in alternative schools is attributable to some of the same characteristics which have surfaced in studies of regular schools: 1) strong leadership, 2) positive school climate, 3) effective instructional strategies, 4) high expectations for students, 5) clearly stated goals and objectives, and 6) monitoring of student progress. The major difference in alternative schools is the approach to teaching and learning; it is more student-centered. They realize that a positive self-image is learned and that students discover their self-concepts from their experiences in and out of the classroom. Therefore, teachers in alternative schools structure parts of their teaching around experiences that are meaningful for students. Within this context, they believe students can and must assume responsibility for their own lives in addition to developing goals. The ultimate goal in alternative schools is to help students attain self-realization through learning.

A major objective of the study was to determine what specific factors were associated with school effectiveness. From the data, it is clear that the specific factors which contributed to the success of the two exemplary public alternative schools were: 1) clearly stated goals and objectives--mutually agreed upon and effectively communicated-- carried out by the staff; 2) a positive learning climate which was orderly (but not rigid), open, warm, and friendly--thereby most conducive to teaching and learning; 3) a feeling by all staff members that all students can learn and perform well; 4) a system where student

achievement, attendance, attitude, and performance were systematically rewarded and reinforced through ceremonies and rituals; 5) a feeling of interdependence, between staff, which created a spirit where each relied on one another for support and assistance; 6) a strong sense of family-- students and staff demonstrated caring for each other and shared a common commitment for their school; 7) a team effort where staff shared their talents and experiences in and out of the classroom; 8) students and staff had the flexibility to be creative and innovative in meeting the goals and objectives of the school as well as individual and collective needs; 9) a variety of teaching methods and techniques--the staff used many methods and available sources to meet the diverse needs of students; and 10) strong leadership from principals who lead by example, dedication, and commitment and who recognized achievement and gave positive reinforcement frequently and well.

Within the limits of this study, and on the basis of the data collected and reported, it seems likely that alternative schools are making a positive contribution to the education of their students. The steps that they are taking are clear, definable, tangible, and replicable. As we strive for excellence in education, it would seem to be in the best interests of all educators to carefully consider what makes alternative schools great and to implement those factors which fit their setting and goals.

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APPENDIX A: SELECTION OF THE TWO SCHOOLS

College of Education
Educational Administration
N229 Quadrangle
Ames, Iowa 50011

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Telephone 515-294-5450

Dear Colleague:

As a candidate for the Ph.D. degree at Iowa State University, I am conducting a study focusing on effective alternative schools. To complete this task I must identify two very effective alternative schools within Iowa.

I hope to carefully study these schools to determine what it is that makes them special and share that with those interested in providing students with alternatives.

On the attached sheet is a set of "indicators of quality" which have been identified by educators in the field as contributors to effective schools. These indicators are provided as guidelines to help you in the task of identifying five (5) effective alternative schools in Iowa. The criteria are not weighted; one is not known to be more important than another. Please examine them carefully and select five (5) alternative schools which, in your judgment, best meet these criteria. When identifying the schools, please list them in rank order with the most effective school being listed as number one. From your list I will identify the two most effective alternative schools and request their permission to conduct an on-site study.

Please be assured that no other schools will be apprised of this proce-dure. They will only be used to identify two effective alternative schools. It is not necessary for you to provide your name.

Please complete the enclosed form and return it as soon as possible in the self-addressed stamped envelope.

Should you have any questions, I can be reached at the number listed above. Your cooperation in participating in this part of the study will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation.

Yours in Education,

Clemmye L. Jackson
Graduate Student
Iowa State University

CLJ:vjk
Enclosure: 1

The indicators of quality listed below have been identified by educators in the field as contributors to effective alternative schools. Please use them as a guide in identifying what you consider are the five (5) most effective alternative schools in the state of Iowa. Please list the schools in rank order of priority.

Indicators of Quality:

1. Longevity - School has been in existence for three or more years.

2. Staff Stability - Staff turnover is minimum.

3. Community Support - School has strong community support.

4. Student Achievement - A high percentage of students complete high school and enter post secondary education.

5. Retention - School has a high retention rate.

6. Vocational & Career Preparation - A high percentage of the students gain employment and/or seek further training.

School Name   Location

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

APPENDIX B: OUTLINE OF ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE TWO SCHOOLS

On-Site Investigation

Day 1

   I. Scan Observation (familiarization of school)

  II. Preliminaries

      A. Staff introductions
      B. Planning (administration)
      C. Examine organization structure
         1. Characteristics
         2. Complexity
         3. Flexibility

Day 2

   I. Classroom Observation

      A. Climate (See Appendix F)
         1. What kind of climate exists in effective
           alternative schools?
         2. What type of communication exists between
           teachers, staff, and students?
      B. Teacher behavior
         1. Verbal and nonverbal behavior
         2. What type of feedback exists for students and
           teachers?

  II. Interview Teachers (See Appendix G)

      A. Expectations of students
      B. Teacher goals, objectives, and philosophy
      C. Teaching methods and style
      D. Commonalities
      E. Administration
         1. Leadership (role in organization)
         2. Type of leader (impact of leadership)
         3. Administrator evaluation
         4. Administrative support
      F. Teacher in-service
      G. Teacher evaluation
      H. Students needs
      I. Autonomy and flexibility
      J. Discipline
      K. Program involvement (duties)
      L. Decisionmaking

Day 3

I. Examine Written Documents

   A. School philosophy, goals, and objectives
   B. School rules and regulations
   C. School curriculum
   D. School statistical reports
      1. Attendance
      2. Enrollment
      3. Drop-out rate
      4. Achievement
      5. School evaluation
      6. School follow-up study
      7. Staff assignments
      8. Ethnic composition
      9. Referral and transfer procedure
    10. Disciplinary procedure

II. Observe students, teachers, staff, and administrative behavior

   A. Interpersonal relationship between students, teachers, staff, and administration
      1. Hallways
         a. students passing to class
         b. teacher, staff, and administrator(s) behavior while students are passing to class
      2. Offices
         a. administrative
         b. counseling
            1. types of problems
            2. duties
            3. disciplinary procedure
            4. intake
            5. indicators (interpersonal relationship)
         c. clerical staff (behavior and interpersonal relationship)
      3. Lunchroom
         a. social behavior and interaction of students, staff, lunchroom personnel, teachers, and administrator
         b. communication taking place
      4. Teacher's lounge
         a. how teachers relate to each other
         b. main topic of discussion
      5. Student's Lounge
         a. social relationship and behavior of students

                  b. main topic of discussion

B. What are the common student and teacher behaviors which work effectively in alternative schools?

C. What type of communication exists between students, teachers, staff, and administration?
1. Communication within the organization
2. Individual factors
3. What type of communication system exists in an effective alternative school?

Day 4

I. Interview Students

A. Perception of the school and the school program
B. Perception of teachers, staff, and administration
C. Philosophy, goals, and objectives
D. Student needs
E. Decisionmaking process (student involvement)
F. Flexibility

II. Interview Staff

A. Perception of school and program
B. Perception of students
C. Perception of other teachers, staff, and administration
D. Job satisfaction
E. Professional history
F. Flexibility

III. Distribute School Improvement Inventory (See Appendix E)

Day 5

I. Day with Administrator(s) (observation)

A. Organization structure (formal-informal)
B. Positive/negative reinforcement
C. Respect for others
D. Administrative leadership style
E. Delegation of authority (duties)
F. Disciplinary procedures
G. Interpersonal relationship between administrator, teachers, staff, and students
H. Feedback system
I. Decisionmaking process
J. Problem-solving technique
K. Administrative role in the organization

      L. Communication Process

  II. Interview Administrator

Day 6

    (Repeat of Day 2 and 3)

Day 7

    (Repeat of Day 2 and 4)

Day 8

  I. Interview Administrator(s)

     A. Philosophy, goals, and objectives
     B. Job satisfaction
     C. Teacher and staff in-service
     D. Leadership style
     E. Development of program
     F. Central administration (involvement)
     G. Teacher, staff, and student behavior
     H. Organization
     I. Policies, procedures, and guidelines (development and implementation)
     J. Teacher evaluation
     K. Teacher expectation
     L. Program originality
     M. History of involvement in the program
     N. Reinforce day 5 observations (question pertaining to observation)

Day 9

  I. Collect School Improvement Inventory

  II. Finalize Investigation

Day 10

  I. Tie-up Loose Ends

  II. Finalize Study

APPENDIX C: HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE CONSENT AND CONSENT FORM

INFORMATION ON THE USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH
IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
(Please follow the accompanying instructions for completing this form.)

1. Title of project (please type): ___ A Modified Ethnographic Study of Two Exemplary

___ Alternative Schools In The State of Iowa ___

2. I agree to provide the proper surveillance of this project to insure that the rights
and welfare of the human subjects are properly protected. Additions to or changes
in procedures affecting the subjects after the project has been approved will be
submitted to the committee for review.

___ Clemmye L. Jackson ___   3-18-83   _Clemmye K Jackson_
Typed Named of Principal Investigator   Date   Signature of Principal Investigator

___ 229 North Quadrangle ___   294-5450 ·
Campus Address   Campus Telephone

3. Signatures of others (if any)   Date   Relationship to Principal Investigator
___   3/30/83   MAJOR Professor
___   ___   ___

4. ATTACH an additional page(s) (A) describing your proposed research and (B) the
subjects to be used, (C) indicating any risks or discomforts to the subjects, and
(D) covering any topics checked below. CHECK all boxes applicable.

- ☐ Medical clearance necessary before subjects can participate
- ☐ Samples (blood, tissue, etc.) from subjects
- ☐ Administration of substances (foods, drugs, etc.) to subjects
- ☐ Physical exercise or conditioning for subjects
- ☐ Deception of subjects
- ☐ Subjects under 14 years of age and(or) ☒ Subjects 14-17 years of age
- ☐ Subjects in institutions   ·
- ☒ Research must be approved by another institution or agency

5. ATTACH an example of the material to be used to obtain informed consent and CHECK
which type will be used.

- ☐ Signed informed consent will be obtained.
- ☒ Modified informed consent will be obtained.

6.
	Month	Day	Year
Anticipated date on which subjects will be first contacted:	4	11	83
Anticipated date for last contact with subjects:	5	30	83

7. If Applicable: Anticipated date on which audio or visual tapes will be erased and(or)
identifiers will be removed from completed survey instruments:

___
Month Day Year

8. Signature of Head or Chairperson   Date   Department or Administrative Unit
Hoffmann   3/31/83   _Professional Studies_

9. Decision of the University Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research:
- ☒ Project Approved
- ☐ Project not approved
- ☐ No action required

George G. Karas   4/21/83   _GGKaras_

MODIFIED CONSENT FORM

I agree to be observed and interviewed during a period of ten days in April and May, 1983, as part of a modified ethnographic study of alternative schools.

The nature and general purpose of this research procedure have been explained to me. It is my understanding that any inquiries pertaining to my participation in this study will be addressed.

I realize that my participation in this research is voluntary, and I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue participation at any time.

Finally, I understand that my personal identity will not be revealed in any publications, documents, recordings, or in any way which relates to this research at any time.

SIGNED_____

TITLE_____

DATE_____

APPENDIX D: OBSERVATIONS OF THE PHYSICAL PLANT

.

OBSERVATION OF THE PHYSICAL PLANT

SCHOOL 1

Spaces:	Adequacy for Normally Intended Purpose A	Condition of Maintenance (repairs) B	Cleanliness C	Attractiveness D
I. Landscape	S	S	S	S
II. Parking Lot	S	S	S	S
III. Location	S	S	S	S
IV. Building Entrances	S	S	S	S
V. Hallways	S	S	S	S
VI. Walls	S	S	S	S
VII. Restrooms (students)	S	S	S	S
VIII. Restrooms (teachers)	DOES NOT APPLY (Same restroom)			
IX. Stairwells	S	S	S	S
X. Classrooms	S	S	S	S
XI. Main Office	S	S	S	S
XII. Library	S	S	S	S
XIII. Gymnasium	S	S	S	S
XIV. Teacher's Lounge	DOES NOT APPLY (Same lounge as students)			
XV. Students' Lounge	S	S	S	S
XVI. Lunchroom	S	S	S	S
XVII. Auditorium	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
XVIII. Other _____				

S = SATISFACTORY

U = UNSATISFACTORY

N/A = NOT APPLICABLE

OBSERVATION OF PHYSICAL PLANT

SCHOOL 2

Spaces:	Adequacy for Normally Intended Purpose	Condition of Maintenance (repairs)	Cleanliness	Attractiveness
	A	B	C	D
I. Landscape	S	S	S	S
II. Parking Lot	S	S	S	S
III. Location	S	S	S	S
IV. Building Entrances	S	S	S	S
V. Hallways	S	S	S	S
VI. Walls	S	S	S	S
VII. Restrooms (students)	S	S	S	S
VIII. Restrooms (teachers)	DOES NOT APPLY (Uses student restrooms)			
IX. Stairwells	S	S	S	S
X. Classrooms	S	S	S	S
XI. Main Office	S	S	S	S
XII. Library	S	S	S	S
XIII. Gymnasium	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
XIV. Teachers' Lounge	S	S	S	S
XV. Students' Lounge	S	S	S	S
XVI. Lunchroom	S	S	S	S
XVII. Auditorium	S	S	S	S
XVIII. Other _____				

S = SATISFACTORY

U = UNSATISFACTORY

N/A = NOT APPLICABLE

APPENDIX E: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT INVENTORY

NCS Trans-Optic MB10-16435-321

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT INVENTORY

Copyright © 1983, Iowa State University

Dr. Jim Sweeney   Iowa State University

ORGANIZATION	BUILDING	GROUP	EXAMPLES	IMPORTANT DIRECTIONS FOR MARKING ANSWERS
⓪⓪ ①① ②② ③③ ④④ ⑤⑤ ⑥⑥ ⑦⑦ ⑧⑧ ⑨⑨	⓪⓪ ①① ②② ③③ ④④ ⑤⑤ ⑥⑥ ⑦⑦ ⑧⑧ ⑨⑨	◯ Teacher ◯ Administrator ◯ Central Office ◯ Other	**WRONG** 1 ① ✗ ③ ④ ⑤ **WRONG** 2 ① ② ✗ ④ ⑤ **WRONG** 3 ① ② ③ ◉ ⑤ **RIGHT** 4 ① ② ③ ● ⑤	• Use black lead pencil only (No. 2½ or softer) • Do NOT use ink or ballpoint pens • Make heavy black marks that fill the circle completely • Erase cleanly any answer you wish to change • Make no stray marks on the answer sheet

This inventory is designed to gather information which can be used for school improvement. In completing this inventory, it is important that you respond as thoughtfully and candidly as possible. Please read the directions carefully and respond to each item as it currently applies to conditions in your school. Described below are six major functions which are the responsibility of your building administrator. You are being asked to rate the relative importance of each for promoting effectiveness in your school.

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT — Assists teachers to motivate, challenge, and excite students to learn at the optimal level, and assists staff in obtaining maximum use of their human potential for reaching personal and organizational goals.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP — Enhances student learning through updating of curriculum and instructional materials, evaluating staff for the purposes of improvement, and evaluating educational program and student progress.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT — Develops and maintains discipline standards which provide students with a clear understanding of expectations for behavior inside and outside the classroom and provides an educational atmosphere conducive to learning.

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT — Schedules all routine and special activities; supervises logistical matters and the school plant.

PUPIL PERSONNEL — Meets with students individually and in groups to address their problems and concerns, and promotes student involvement in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS — Communicates with parents and promotes the school through advisory committees, parent-teacher organization, needs assessment, and the media.

You have 20 points to distribute among the six functions (using the 1 to 5 scale provided). While you may think that all of the functions are very important, since you have only 20 points to work with, it will be necessary for you to make some decisions as to the relative importance of each function. You may assign the same rating to more than one function and must rate each of the six. Below is an example of how one respondent approached the task.

EXAMPLE: Relative Importance

In this example, the respondent decided that Human Resource Management and Learning Environment Management were both of "very high importance" thereby using 10 of the 20 points. The remaining 10 points were distributed among the other four functions. You could have given Instructional Leadership, Pupil Personnel, and School-Community Relations 5 points each and then distribute the remaining 5 points among the other 3 functions.

	IMPORTANCE				
	Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Human Resource Management	①	②	③	④	●
Instructional Leadership	①	●	③	④	⑤
Learning Environment Management	①	②	③	④	●
Non-instructional Management	①	②	③	●	⑤
Pupil Personnel	●	②	③	④	⑤
School-Community Relations	①	②	●	④	⑤

20

Relative Importance

Please indicate the relative importance of each of the six functions for promoting effectiveness in your school by rating each function from 1 to 5. (Keep in mind that the total must equal 20.)

	IMPORTANCE				
	Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Human Resource Management	①	②	③	④	⑤
Instructional Leadership	①	②	③	④	⑤
Learning Environment Management	①	②	③	④	⑤
Non-instructional Management	①	②	③	④	⑤
Pupil Personnel	①	②	③	④	⑤
School-Community Relations	①	②	③	④	⑤

20

LEVEL OF EFFECTIVENESS

In this section you are asked to indicate the level of effectiveness at which the six major functions described previously have been carried out by your building administrator. Please review each of the descriptions on the first page and indicate the level at which each function has been performed. If you are completing this inventory on or before February 1, consider performance during the previous school year. If the survey is completed after February 1, consider performance during only the current school year.

Level of Effectiveness

	Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Human Resource Management	①	②	③	④	⑤
Instructional Leadership	①	②	③	④	⑤
Learning Environment Management	①	②	③	④	⑤
Non-instructional Management	①	②	③	④	⑤
Pupil Personnel	①	②	③	④	⑤
School-Community Relations	①	②	③	④	⑤

PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL AND JOB

This section is designed to gather information about how you view your school and job. Please examine each item carefully and darken the circle which best represents your perception for each of the questions posed.

EXAMPLE:

To what extent are teachers in your school involved in major decisions related to their work?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very great	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

If you think teachers have "considerable" involvement in decisions, fill in 5 or 6. Fill in a 5 if you feel the situation is closer to "some"; fill in a 6 if you feel the situation is closer to "very great". If you think there is "very little" you will have to decide whether it is closer to "some" (3) or "none" and mark either a 1 or a 2.

1. To what extent does your school strive for excellence?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very great	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

2. In your school, to what extent do different grade levels, departments, and curriculum areas plan and coordinate their efforts together?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very much	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

3. How many teachers in your school feel that all their students should be taught to read well and master other academic subjects even though some students may not appear to be interested?

Very few		Some		Many		Most	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

16. In your school to what extent do most teachers agree on the major instructional objectives of your school?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very much	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

17. To what extent do teachers in your school expect students to do their best?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very great	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

18. How would you describe the sense of belonging in this school?

No sense of belonging		Some sense of belonging		Considerable sense of belonging		Great sense of belonging	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

19. To what extent do teachers in your school have a feeling that they can make a significant contribution to improving the classroom perfomance of students?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very great	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

20. To what extent do you feel that what you do is not · important?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very great	
①	②	③	④	⑤	③	⑦	⑧

21. To what extent does the principal evaluate pupil progress in your school?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very great	
①	②	③	③	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

22. To what extent do the teachers in your school work at improving the quality of the educational program?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very great	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

23. How would you describe your building administrator's dedication and enthusiasm?

Very low		Somewhat low		Somewhat high		Very high	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

24. How would you describe the general attitude of students toward your school?

Poor		Fair		Good		Very good	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

25. In your school how often is there meaningful discussion of curriculum or instruction in faculty meetings?

Seldom		Occasionally		Often		Very often	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

26. To what extent does the principal coordinate curriculum and instruction in your school?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very great	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

27. How would you describe the learning environment in your school?

Not at all positive		Somewhat positive		Quite positive		Very positive	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

4. How likely are you to expend extra effort to raise student achievement?

Not very likely		Somewhat likely		Quite likely		Very likely	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

5. To what extent do teachers in your school convey to students that learning is important?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very great	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

6. To what extent is the building administrator in your school viewed by teachers as being non-supportive?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very great	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

7. In your school, do most teachers feel it is worthwhile or a waste of time to do their best?

Waste of time		Somewhat worthwhile		Worthwhile		Very worthwhile	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

8. To what extent do teachers in your school set challenging goals for students?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very great	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

9. In your school is it every person for himself or do teachers work together as a team?

No teamwork		Some but not enough teamwork		Adequate but more is needed		Great amount of teamwork	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

10. How satisfying is teaching in your school?

Not satisfying		Somewhat satisfying		Quite satisfying		Very satisfying	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

11. To what extent do teachers in your school challenge low-ability students?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very much	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

12. To what extent do teachers in your school give help to one another on important school matters?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very great	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

13. To what extent do teachers look forward to teaching each day?

Very little		Some		Quite a bit		Very much	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

14. How would you describe the commitment of teachers to high performance goals in your school?

Very weak		Somewhat strong		Quite strong		Very strong	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

15. To what extent do teachers in your school work together as a smoothly functioning team?

Very little		Some		Quite a bit		Very much	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

APPENDIX F: CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS INSTRUMENT

CLASS _____   NAME OF SCHOOL _____

TYPE OF ACTIVITY _____   DATE _____

NO. OF OBSERVATIONS _____   TEACHER: MALE _____ FEMALE _____

NO. OF STUDENTS: MALES _____ FEMALES _____

	Frequency & Anecdotal Comments	Judgemental Evaluation
1. Teacher distributes response opportunities equitably.		
2. Teacher affirms or corrects students' performance.		
3. Teacher ask complex, difficult questions and gives students time to respond to them.		
4. Teacher makes statement which emphasizes the significance of achievement.		
5. Teacher set high standards.		
6. Teacher allows time for discussion of individualized questions & provide clarity & interpretation, if needed.		

CLASSROOM CLIMATE

	Frequency & Anecdotal Comments	Judgemental Evaluation
1. Teacher gives compliments.		
2. Teacher takes personal interest in students.		
3. Teacher accepts and reflects students; feeling in a non-evaluative manner.		
4. Teacher gives students a sense of belonging.		
5. Teacher exhibits warmth, enthusiasiam, a sense of purpose & a sense of humor in relationships with students.		
6. Teacher provides a classroom environment that is not only safe & secure, but one that is characterized by good student-student & student-teacher relationship.		
7. Teacher provides an opportunity for students to understand the scope & purpose of the subject matter.		

Classroom Climate cont.

	Frequency & Anecdotal Comments	Judgemental Evaluation
8. Teacher instruction is planned and well-organized with goals & objectives being met.		
9. Teacher is knowledgeable of content area.		
10. Teacher checks for students' understanding & awareness.		

	Frequency & Anecdotal Comments	Judgemental Evaluation
1. Teacher expresses courtesy.		
2. Teacher moves within arm reach of students.		
3. Teacher praises students learning performance.		
4. Teacher gives reason for praising students' learning behavior.		
5. Teacher touches students in friendly manner.		
6. Listens attentively to students.		
7. Teacher delves, rephrases and give students clues.		

	Frequency & Anecdotal Comments	Judgemental Evaluation
8. Teacher calls for students' opinion and explanations.		
9. Corrects student behavior in a calm and courteous manner.		
10. Teacher gives positive feedback to students.		

APPENDIX G: TEACHER, STUDENT, AND ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW

QUESTIONNAIRES

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE
(Interview)

Sex _____

Subject Area _____

Ethnic background _____
    (optional)

1. Your school has been selected as one of the most effective alternative schools in the state of Iowa. (a) Why do you think that your school has achieved this distinction? (b) Do you think your school deserves this rating? Why?

2. List the things about this school that you think are exceptional? Of the things you have listed, what would you say are different from that of regular schools? Other alternative schools?

3. What do you believe is the purpose of your school? What are your main goals and objectives?

4. Do you like your job? (a) What are some of the things you like about your job? (b) If you had to choose one major thing that you like about the job, what would it be?

5. How did you become a teacher in this school?

6. Have you taught in a regular school before? If yes, (a) which do you prefer? (b) Why did you leave the regular school? (if applicable) If no, (a) would you like to teach in a regular school? (b) Why did you choose this school?

7. What is the difference between teaching in a regular school
   and the alternative school?

8. Do you encourage your students to strive for excellence? (a)
   What are some of the things that you do to help students
   strive for excellence? (b) What makes a difference?

9. Are the students in this school different from students in
   regular schools? If yes, how? How would you describe the
   students that attend this school?

10. Do you help set individual goals for each of your students?
    (a) How do you find out what their wants and needs are? (b)
    What kind of help do the students here need? (c) How would
    you describe your contributions to help students achieve
    their goals in this school? (d) What is the most important
    factor?

11. How would you describe the academic ability of the students
    in this school?

12. How would you describe the seriousness of students in this
    school? How would you describe the general attitude of
    students toward this school?

13. How would you describe the students' feelings about this
    program?

14. Do you feel that most of the students in this program are
    capable of getting A's and B's? What makes the difference
    here?

15. Do students seek extra work so they can do better in school? (a) How often do students seek out your help on personal matters? academic matters? (b) What do students need help with?

16. How much influence do students have on what goes on in the school?

17. What do you like most about the students in this school?

18. What about competiveness; does it exist among students in this school? (a) To what extent? (b) Do you encourage it? Why? Why not?

19. What is your professional relationship with your colleagues? (a) How did you develop this relationship? (b) What do you do to keep this relationship alive and productive? (c) What would you do if this relationship began to deteriorate?

20. What is your professional relationship with the principal of the school? (a) Describe how you operate with the principal and the way he/she operates with you? (b) How much interaction is there between you and your principal?

21. As a teacher, what type of support do you get from colleagues? Principal? Parents?

22. As a teacher, how involved are you in the decisionmaking process? What type?

23. As a teacher, do you have a great deal of autonomy? Explain.

24. What do you like most about teaching in this school?

25. How would you describe the atmosphere in this school?

26. What's a good day for you? What's a bad day for you?

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE
(Interview)

Sex _____

Grade _____

Ethnic background _____
   (optional)

1. How many years have you attended this school?

2. Have you ever attended a regular public school before? If yes, how did you like it? If no, what did you dislike about it?

3. How do you feel about this program (school)?

4. What has this program done for you? ·

5. What's so different about this school?

6. If you could change anything about this school program, what would you change?

7. How many students would you say work hard to do well in this school?

8. Is it important to you to be a good student?

9. How often do teachers in this school try to help students who do poorly on their school work?

10. Compared to students in other schools, how much do students learn in this school?

11. Of the teachers in this school, how many make students work hard?

12. Are your grades (or progress) better at this school than your previous school? (If applicable)

13. Of the teachers in this school, how many encourage you to try hard to do better?

14. Do your teachers expect you to do well?

15. Do students in this school make fun of or tease each other if they make good grades?

16. Think about the teachers in this school; do you think the teachers in this school car more or less than teachers in other schools about whether or not their students learn their work?

17. What type of relationship do you have with your teachers?

18. Do you feel that you can talk to your teachers about anything (personal, school, work, etc.)?

19. Do you have a favorite teacher? If yes, describe him/her to me? Why is he/she special? If no, why not?

20. What type of relationship do you have with the principal in this school? Tell me about him/her.

21. Do you feel comfortable talking to the counselor(s) about your problems?

22. To whom do you share your problems with?

23. Do you have the opportunity to participate in any of the decisions that are made on school matters and/or activities? What type of decisions do students in this school participate in?

24. Do you plan to attend college? If yes, would you have said this before entering this school? If no, what are your plans after completing school?

25. What is a typical day like for you.

26. What do you think is the purpose of this school?

ADMINISTRATOR QUESTIONNAIRE
(Interview)

Sex _____

Ethnic Background _____
   (optional)

1. Your school has been selected as one of the most effective
   alternative schools in the state of Iowa. (a) Why do you
   think that your school has achieved this distinction? (b) Do
   you think that your school deserves this rating? If yes,
   why? If no, why not?

2. List the things about this school that you think are
   exceptional? (a) Of the things you have mentioned, what
   would you say are different from that of a regular school?
   (b) Other alternative schools?

3. What is the purpose of this school?

4. What are your program goals and objectives?

5. How did you become involved in the alternative school
   program?

6. Do you like your job? (a) What are some of the things that
   you like about your job? (b) If you had to choose one thing
   that you like about your job, what would it be?

7. Have you worked in a regular school before? If yes, in what
   capacity? Which do you prefer--the regular or alternative
   school? If no, would you like to work in a regular school?

8. Why did you choose this school?

9. How many years have you been an administrator? Regular

   school _____   Alternative School _____

10. How long did you teach, or do other work, before becoming a

    principal?

11. Why did you choose to become an administrator in the

    alternative school?

12. What has this program done for you? (Explain)

13. What are the rewards of working on a job like this?

14. Are there any changes that you would like to see in this

    program? If so, what are they?

15. To what extent are teachers and students involved in major

    decisions related to the program? How?

16. Do you think the teachers in your school are different from

    teachers in the regular schools? If yes, in what way?

17. To your knowledge, do all staff members share basically the

    same philosophy of the school program?

18. How much influence does the following have on what goes on in

    your school? teachers? students? regular schools and

    central administration?

19. How free do teachers and students feel talking to you about

    school and personal matters?

20. To what extent do you encouarge teachers to be innovative in

    developing more effective and efficient educational

    practices? How?

21. Do you have formal teacher evaluations? If so, how often?
    If not, why not?

22. What do you expect from your staff? (Explain)

23. How much time do you spend, on the average, with teachers and
    students?

24. What type of in-service do you provide for your teachers?
    How often?

25. When hiring new staff for this program, what type of
    person(s) do you look for?

26. What have you found to be the most important characteristics
    and qualifications for working with students in your program?

27. Do you know all of the student body?

28. Describe the students in your program?

29. Do you have an advisory committee? If so, who serves on it?
    What are the functions of the committee?

30. In what ways are parents involved in the program?

31. In what ways are people in the community involved in your
    program? (social agencies, juvenile justice, local
    businesses and industry, civic organizations)?

32. To what extent is the community involved in your program?

33. In what ways does central administration support your
    program?

34. To what extent does the superintendent try to provide your
    school with the materials and space it needs?

35. How often do you and the superintendent discuss your school's concerns?

36. Do the principals in this district work together closely or do they tend to keep pretty much to themselves?

37. Compared to other principals in this school district, are there any different ways in which you relate to your staff? students?

38. What type of cooperation is there between your program and the conventional programs in your district?

39. How do you evaluate your program? How often?

40. Are there any follow-up studies done in your program? If yes, what type? How often? If not, why not?

41. As principal of this school, what task takes the largest block of time? What task do you most like to emphasize?

42. How much time do you spend on school tasks as a whole?

43. How many hours does your work week consist of?

44. What's a typical day for you?

45. What are the key factors that contribute to the success of your school?

APPENDIX H: OPEN ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

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IOWA STATE
UNIVERSITY

April, 1982

Dear Educator:
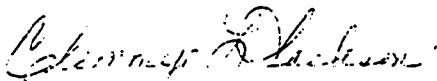
The attached questionnaire has been sent to you as part of a research project designed to identify the ways, you, as an educator in alternative schools, compare and contrast with your colleagues in other alternative schools.

I'm interested in obtaining your responses because your experiences are beneficial in providing effective results. The research in alternative education is limited. If we are to do a better job for students, we must continue to gather effective data that will make alternative education feasible.

This questionnaire is being sent to a select few. It is extremely important that you respond. Individual responses and names will not be used in any way in reporting results. Please fill out and return the questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed envelope. The return of the questionnaire at your earliest convenience will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours in Education,

Clemmye Jackson
Research Assistant
229 North Quadrangle
Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa 50011

CJ/mt
encls.

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions: Check and complete the appropriate answer to each question below. For those questions that require additional information, write complete statements that most accurately describe you as a teacher in an alternative school.

If you need additional space to respond to any of the questions, use the additional paper attached to this questionnaire. Please be sure to indicate the number of the question if you find it necessary to use the additional paper.

AGE: 20 - 30 _____
          31 - 40 _____
  41 and over _____

DEGREES HELD: BA   _____
              MA   _____
              Ph.D. _____
              Other _____.

ETHNIC BACKGROUND: Native American   _____
                    Black or Afro-American _____
                    White Caucasian   _____
                    Mexican-American   _____
                    Oriental   _____
                    Puerto Rican   _____
                    Other   _____

YEARS TEACHING: Total years   _____
               Years teaching in regular school _____
               Years teaching in alternative school _____

1. Which of the following most accurately describe your teaching style(s)? (You may choose more than one.)

individualization	100%
lecture	
small group discussions	99%
large group discussions	10%
student/teacher interaction	100%

2. Did you help develop any of the curricula in the present program?

yes	93%
no	7%

If yes, explain what part did take? (Describe your role.)
Selecting curriculua materials.
Organizing and developing new courses and programs.
Writing curricula objectives.
Developing curriculum for my course.

3.   Approximately what is the average size of your classes?

      1 - 5   3%
      6 - 10   90%
    11 - 15   7%
    16 - 20   _____
    20 or more _____

4.   Do you handle most of your classroom discipline problems independently?

    yes   89%
    no   11%

If no, who does?
Lead teachers, principal, assistant principal, disciplinarian, counselor

5.   Do you feel you know your students better than you did in the conventional school? (If applicable.)

    yes   99%
    no   1%

If yes, why?   Smaller classes; fewer students--more individual interaction due to the nature of an individualized and self-pacing program; more interpersonal contact; time to relate and empathize with students; the informality of the program; the sharing atmosphere is very informal; communication is open; with fewer students, one can acquaint himself/herself with their students and their background.

6.   Do you have frequent contact with the parents of your students?

    yes   76%
    no   24%

COMMENTS: Open house is well attended by parents; Home visitations are made weekly; Annual parent conferences allow for parent/teacher interaction; Retreat for parents and students provided each semester; Report student progress to parents weekly.

If so, who initiates the contact?

    I do   64%
    Parent does 36%

7.   Are you teaching in an alternative school by choice?

    yes   81%
    no   19%   (Was moved involuntarily from a regular school) (RIF)

If yes, why?   Much more challenging; Personally rewarding; More successes than in the conventional school; Involving students in their own education; The varied experiences presented in the alternative situation; Suits my teaching style; More in tune with my philosophy of education, "all students can learn."

8.   How many hours do you spend in the classroom a day _teaching_ students?

    7 hrs.   13%
    5 hrs.   80%
    3 hrs. or less 7%

9. What are some of your other assignments during your working day other
    than teaching? Please list.

    1. Advisor to a group of students

    2. Parent advisory member

    3. Career education

    4. Public relations for the school

    5. Curriculum development

    6. Hall duty

    7. Fund raising committee

    8. Counselor

    9. Supervision

    10. NCA Improvement committee

    11. TEacher advisory committee

    12. Tutoring

    13. Activities committee

    14. School newspaper

10. What do you like most about the students in your school?
     Willing to accept help; their humanism; honesty and openness; different
     perceptions of learning; treat eachother with respect; sense of humor;
     enthusiasm for learning; their acceptance of adults as co-partners;
     feel free to express themselves even when they disagree with you.

11. What do you like least about the students in your school?
     Some of their attitudes; poorly developed writing and reading skills;
     low self-concept; attendance of some (irregular); those who do just
     enough to get by; those who lack educational goals.

12. Do you plan to remain in the alternative education program?

         yes 90%
         no   10%

     If yes, why?   It's challenging; Need the freedom to teach as I desire;
        Alternative education serves a purpose; I enjoy it; Like the warmth and close
        relationships; Able to use my professional judgment; Autonomy; Offers me the
        potential to be creative; I like the students here; Enjoy the experience;
        Staff morale; Family atmosphere; Offer students more opportunities to learn
        and mature as responsible adults.

     If not, why?   Need a change; Not cut out to be in this type of program.

13. Do you think teachers should be specially trained to teach in alternative schools?

      yes   92%
      no   8%

  If yes, why?   Totally different from the conventional school; It takes a
  special type o- individual to work in an alternative school; The philosophy is
  different from the regular school; Make-up and concept of alternative schools
  are different from conventional schools.

  What areas do you think teachers should be trained in?
    Human·relations; Individual assessment and program planning; Utilizing community
    resources; Learning disabilities; Interpersonal skills; Adolescent Psychology;
    Emotional and Psychological deviant behavior; Affective teaching and self-
    actualization; Counseling; Various teaching methods; Individualized instruction;
  If no, why not?   Stress Management.
    Any trained teacher that does his/her job well can succeed in such a setting;
    A good teacher can be successful in an alternative setting; In-service can help
    teacher develop the skills necessary to teach in an alternative setting.

14. If you were a parent, would'you send your own child to this school?
    Yes   67%   No   33%
  If yes, why?
    It's a good school; They would be individualized attention; I like the
    atmosphere; If they were having difficulties in the regular school; The quality
    of teachers; If my child was unhappy with the regular school.
  If no, why not?
    My children are doing well in the conventional school; May become influenced
    by others; The conventional school is doing a pretty good job.

15. If you could change anything in your school environment you work in,
what would it be?
    Its location; Away from the regular school building; Fewer rules;
    Physical environment; More secretarial assistance; Support from
    administrator; More support from central administration.

16. List three things about your job that you like and dislike.
   Like

1. students
2. learning climate
3. The opportunity to try new and innovative techniques.
4. Small class sizes
5. Supportive staff
6. The autonomy
7. staff
8. The informality
9. The flexibility in teaching
10. Personal growth seen in students
11. Successes
12. Closeness of students and staff
13. Freedom to teach students at their own pace.
14. Involvement in the decision-making process
15. Home visitation.

   Dislikes

1. Budget problems (lack of funds for materials)
2. Physical surroundings
3. Location of program
4. Administrator (an ineffective leader)
5. Expected to solve all of the student's problems.
6. Erratic student attendance of some students.
7. Teachers assigned to the program against their wishes.
8. Political nature of the school system.
9. Lack of support from the community and sending schools.
10. Being a dumping ground for students and teachers.

17. What recommendation(s) would you make that would be helpful in developing an effective alternative school?

    1. Strong leadership

    2. Support from school board and central administration

    3. Funding (enough funding to support program)

    4. Hire teachers who want to teach in an alternative setting.

    5. Community support

    6. Strong vocational and career program

    7. Built-in evaluation system.

    8. Very little change over in staff.

College of Education
Educational Administration
N229 Quadrangle
Ames. Iowa 50011

IOWA STATE
UNIVERSITY

Telephone 515-294-5450

. April, 1982

Dear Principal:

.I am a graduate student at Iowa State University completing my work in
the doctoral program. My area of interest is alternative education.

As a research project, I have chosen to do a study comparing and contrasting
alternative schools and their educators. Enclosed you will find six question-
naires, five of which are to be distributed to your five most experienced
teachers. The sixth questionnaire is designed for administrative responses which
you are to complete. Self-addressed stamped envelopes are also enclosed for the
return of individual questionnaires.
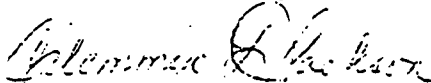
Your personal identity and school will remain anonymous in all published
and public account. Please feel free to return questionnaire without school
identity.

Your responses to the questionnaire are needed in assessing the data for this
study. If the responses are nearly 100%, then the results of the study will not
be overlooked.

Please distribute and complete the questionnaires and return them to me at
your earliest convenience. Your cooperation in participating in this study will
be greatly appreciated.

Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation.

Yours in Education,

Clemmye Jackson
Research Assistant
229 North Quadrangle
Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa 50011

CJ/mt
encls.

ADMINISTRATOR QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions: Check and complete the appropriate answer to each question below. Respond to those questions that are applicable by writing complete statements that most accurately describe you as an administrator and your alternative school.

If you need additional space to respond to any of the questions, use the additional paper attached to this questionnaire. Please be sure to indicate the number of the question if you find it necessary to use the additional paper.

AGE: 20 - 30 10%
      31 - 40 15%
41 and over 75%

SEX: Female 2%
      Male 98%

DEGREES HELD: BA 25%
               MA 72%
               Ph.D. 2%
               Other 1%

ETHNIC BACKGROUND: Native American
                    Black or Afro-American 8%
                    White (Caucasian) 91%
                    Mexican-American 1%
                    Oriental
                    Puerto Rican
                    Other

TEACHING: Teaching years in alternative school 40% 1-5 years 29%; 5 or more 11%
                           conventional school 83% 1-5 years 65%; 5-10 years 18%
                           other _____ years _____

ADMINISTRATION: Years as an administrator in alternative school 100% 1-5 yrs 34%
                                                                         5-10 yrs 63%
                                                                         10 or more 3%
                 conventional school 86% 1-5 yrs 77%
                                           5-10 yrs 9%
                 other_____years_____

COUNSELING: Do you have a degree in counseling? Yes 5%   No 97%

If so, how many years? 3% (1-5 years)

STUDENTS: What percentage of the students in your school can be classified into the following groups:

Native American	1%
Black or Afro-American	41%
White (Caucasian)	49%
Mexican-American	7%
Oriental	1%
Puerto Rican	1%
Other	

What percentage of your students are: Female ___33%___
                                        Male ___67%___

1. Are you the only administrator in your alternative program?

        yes _74%___
        no _26%___

   If no, please list others by position.
   1. Assistant principal
   2. Program Coordinator
   3. Administrative Assistant

2. Are you assigned to any other administrative duties other than those assigned to you in the alternative education program?

        yes __43%___
        no   _57%___

   If yes, what are they?
   1. Principal of another school
   2. Director of Continuing Education Program
   3. Director of Special needs for school district

3. Were you involved in the original development of your program?

        yes __37%___
        no __63%___

   If yes, what was the nature of your involvement?
   1. Developed program proposal
   2. Developed needs assessment instrument
   3. Developed curriculum for program

4. How often do you have teacher and staff inservice a year?
   1-2 a year 87%   4-6 a year 3%
   2-4 a year 10%
   If so, what types?
   1. Workshops   4. Positive reinforcement
   2. Seminars   5. Instructional methods
   3. Teacher Effectiveness Training

5. Are teachers and students involved in the decision-making and development of any of the following? (Please indicate DM for decision-making and D for development.)

		DM	D
Teachers Involvement:	curriculum	83%	87%
	activities	86%	78%
	rules and regulations	75%	50%
	discipline process	87%	69%
	other		
Student Involvement:	curriculum	45%	89%
	activities	90%	90%
	rules and regulations	30%	10%
	discipline process	10%	2%
	other		

To what extent are teachers and students involved in the above (state briefly).
1. Staff and students are actively involved in all facets of the school program.
2. Staff and students are involved in the implementation and the design of the program.

6. Do you think there are any differences in teachers in your school and teachers in conventional schools?

yes 91%
no 9%

If yes, what are these differences?
1. More humanistic
2. Can work with students with special problems
3. Can cope with stress
4. Innovative and creative
5. Highly energetic

7. Do you think teachers should be specially trained to teach in alternative schools?

yes 81%
no 19%

If yes, why? how?
1. It takes a special kind of teacher to work with students in our program.
2. Institutions of higher learning do not teach teachers how to deal with the students in alternative schools. HOW? 1. Trained in personal and learning problems. 2. Through higher educational institutions. 3. Special in-service training. 4. Practice teaching in an alternative school.
What types of training would you recommend for teachers who wish to work in alternative schools?
1. Counseling 2. Multi categorical in discipline 3. Human relation skills 4. Adolescent Pscyhology 5. Individualized Instruction 6. Teaching Styles 7. Learning Styles 8. Interpersonal Skills 9. Learning disabilities

8. Do your students differ from students in a conventional school?

yes   93%

no   7%

If yes, how?
    Noncompetitive
    Need one-on-one instruction
    Cannot cope with the conventional school setting
    Have a variety of personal and academic problems
    Poor self-image
    Need remedial help

9. Why did you choose to become an administrator in alternative education?
1. To help students who cannot adapt to the conventional school.
2. To work with students who are having difficulties in school.
3. It's a challenge.
4. Did not chose to, was assigned to school.
5. Like working with students of this nature.

10. What have you found most rewarding about the students in the alternative school program? (Please explain.)
    They want to achieve.
    They want to be someone.
    They are candid.
    They are personalb.e
    They have hope.
    Once they have your trust, they are making the first step toward success.
    Most try very hard to overcome their shortcomings.

11. What are some of the rewards of working in an alternative school?
    Working with staff who has common goals.
    Assisting where I can make a difference.
    Student successes.

12. What have you found least rewarding about alternative education?
(Please explain.)

      Lack of support from Board .of Education
      Lack of support from Central Administration
      Lack of supplies for the program.
      Teachers who do not want to be here.
      The environment (physical)

13. If you have worked in both a convention and alternative school, which
is your preference? Why?

      Alternative school   _98%_

      Conventional school   _2%_

14. What recommendation(s) would you make that would be helpful in developing
an effective alternative school?

    1. Board of education support
    2. Support from Central Administration
    3. Community support .
    4. Program that is a contrast to the conventional program.
    5. Staff stability.
    6. Staff who has the same common goals and philosophy.
    7. Careful selection of staff.
    8. A program designed to deal with remediation
    9. Strong career and vocational program.
  10. A program designed with built in successes.

15. In your perception, what is the purpose of the alternative school?
    1. To assist students who are having difficulties in the regular schools.
    2. To offer an option for students and parents.
    3. To help develop educationa, social, and personal skills.
    4. To provide students with options to learning.

16. What are some of the characteristics that most accurately describe the
students in your school?

    1. Disenchanted
    2. Consider themselves failures
    3. Disinterested in school
    4. Multitude of educational as well as personal problems
    5. Poor self-imate
    6. Remedial in the basic skills

17. List three things about your job that you like and dislike.

LIKE

    1. The opportunity to help students hwo are having difficulties (educational, personal).
    2. Good working relationship with staff
    3. Family atmosphere
    4. Being a part of students' successes
    5. Enthusiasm of staff
    6. Student and staff relationship
    7. Closeness of everyone

DISLIKE

    1. Inadequate time for staff inservice
    2. High stress level
    3. Poor staff moral
    4. Location
    5. Lack of community and school district support
    6. Placement of teachers in the program who do not want to be here

18. Are their any built-in-means of evaluating your program?

Yes   61%
No   39%

If so, what are they?

    1. Student evaluations
    2. Teacher evaluations
    3. Evaluation committee (task force)
    4. Formal and informal evaluations