

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 061 375

UD 012 201

AUTHOR Gordon, Sol; Kassin, Doris
TITLE The Morgan School, Washington, D.C.
INSTITUTION Center for Urban Education, New York, N.Y. Program
Reference Service.
SPONS AGENCY National Center for Educational Communication
(DHEW/OE), Washington, D.C.; Office of Education
(DHEW), Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO PRS-010
PUB DATE Apr 71
NOTE 56p.
AVAILABLE FROM Center for Urban Education, 105 Madison Avenue, New
York, N.Y. 10016 (\$1.50)

EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Administration; Administrative Problems; Community
Control; Community Development; Community Education;
*Community Involvement; *Community Schools;
*Decentralization; Early Childhood Education;
Educational Administration; *Elementary Schools;
Elementary School Students; Neighborhood Schools;
School Community Relationship; *School
Organization

ABSTRACT

This report on the Thomas P. Morgan Elementary School, the first community-run school in Washington, D.C., is the result of extensive research and approximately ten visits of two and three days each during the academic year 1969-1970. It contains background information of events leading up to the establishment of the School, its inception in 1967, the School today, and an evaluation and projection for the future. There is also an appendix containing a brief comparison of the School with all the elementary schools of Washington, D.C. (SB)

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The Morgan School

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*A Report
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The Morgan School / Washington, D.C.

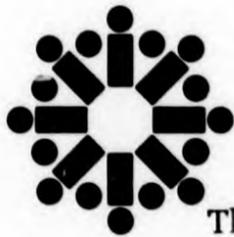
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A Publication of the
**Center for
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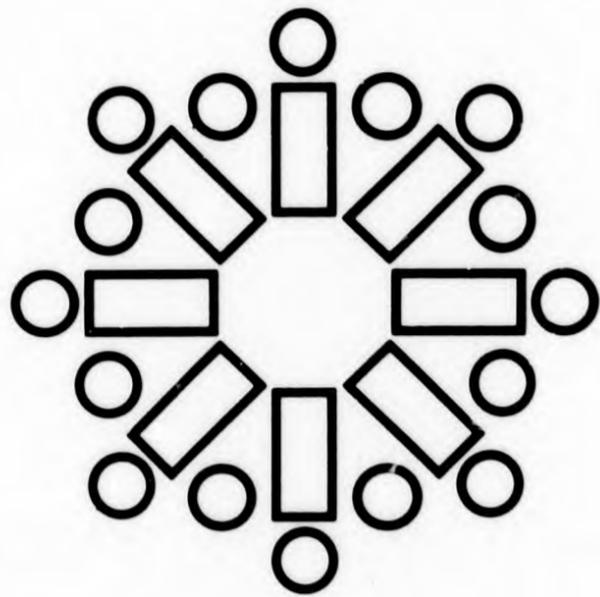
The Center for Urban Education, an independent nonprofit corporation, was founded in 1965. The following year it was designated a Regional Educational Laboratory under the Cooperative Research Act of 1965. It is funded mainly by the United States Department of Health Education and Welfare through the Office of Education, but also contracts with other government agencies, state and local as well as federal, and with business firms and community agencies. The Center designs, field-tests, and disseminates alternatives to the traditional practices of formal education and citizen participation.

Under the direction of its Dissemination Division, the Center publishes a wide variety of reports, monographs, books, and bibliographies. A complete list of those items in print is available on request.

As a unit of the Dissemination Division, the Program Reference Service identified, examined, and provided information on programs in grades K-6 which deal with the problems of urban school systems. Its reports have been designed to meet the stated needs of school administrators and other educational decision-makers, and are offered as informational aids to effective educational planning. The development of the Program Reference Service was made possible by a grant to the Center from the National Center for Educational Communication, U.S. Office of Education.

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Foreword

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The Thomas P. Morgan Elementary School was the first community-run school in Washington, D.C. Since September 1967, when Morgan opened its doors, it has been thrust into the national limelight. This prominence has opened up possibilities for financial aid that would otherwise not have been possible for new programs. It has also made Morgan a showcase for the "community school" idea. The future of community schools could well be determined by what happens at Morgan.

It is yet too early to label the school a success or a failure. Conventional testing methods, unreliable at best, are particularly unsatisfactory when testing an unconventional school situation like Morgan's. Morgan students appear to be "happier" children, and they have registered some academic gains in the lower grades. How this was accomplished will be considered in this report of the school's progress. The need for such documentation was expressed by Mr. John Anthony, the school's principal: "How do we know where we are going, if we don't know where we've been?" An overview could prove to be valuable, considering that the school has been subject to a high rate of turnover in personnel and has gone through several philosophical changes.

This report on the Morgan School is the result of extensive research and approximately ten visits of two and three days each during the academic year of 1969-1970. Originally I sought to devel-

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This report on the Morgan School is the result of extensive research and approximately ten visits of two and three days each during the academic year of 1969-1970. Originally I sought to devel-

op this study alone, but it proved to be a much more difficult task than I had imagined. I asked Mrs. Doris Golden Kassin to serve as my research assistant, and in the course of time the work became truly collaborative. This report is jointly written, and both Mrs. Kassin and I assume the responsibility for its development. We are grateful to Mrs. Ruth Dropkin, Senior Editor of the Center for Urban Education, for her valuable editorial assistance. Janette Turner, who was an Antioch Intern in the Morgan school for two years, observed and interviewed extensively and then recorded her excellent work, in partial fulfillment of a Master of Arts degree in education. We thank Miss Turner and Antioch for making her thesis available to us.

Sol Gordon
Syracuse University
April 1971

I've Seen Enough

I've seen enough crime
I've seen enough Hunger and poverty
I've seen so many things
Till I can't stand to see anymore.

I've seen enough people being
Beat up By the Gang
And sometime by the police...
When they haven't been
Doing anything.

I've seen enough Boring things
Like Dramas on T. V.
I just get tired of seeing.

The message: People don't want
To see the same thing all
The time, they want to change.

I've see enough
And I'm just 10 years old.

CHAPTER I

Background

In March 1970, there were 1400 community schools in more than 300 school districts in the country. Most of these schools differ in emphasis and degree of actual "community control." The movement, which began in Flint, Michigan in 1935, represents an effort to extend the benefits of the school to the whole community. Today 54 Flint schools are aided and funded by the Mott Foundation (Mott Institute for Community Improvement, Room 516 Erickson Hall, East Lansing, Michigan 48823) in its program devoted largely to the development of the community school philosophy. The foundation also operates centers in 13 universities nationally and provides educational and financial aid to new community schools. In addition to publishing a newsletter (National Community School Education Association and NCSEA News, 923 E. Kearsley, Flint, Michigan 48503), the foundation-supported NCSEA holds a yearly workshop in such diverse places as Arizona and Florida, and provides inservice training through regional workshops. The community schools that are part of the Mott program are more interested in community involvement than in control, which is left to the established boards of education.

In both Michigan and New York, legislation now grants a degree of authority to local school boards. Other states (California and Massachusetts) and cities (Gary, Dayton, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia) are considering proposals for great-

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er local control. Many white and black neighborhoods, middle class as well as poor, see community control as a means to quality education. As David K. Cohen of Harvard University (see Bibliography), pointed out, "There will be problems, but there are problems now. It seems to me more likely that under community control . . . the atmosphere and conduct of the schools would show improvement."

Local control, according to Mario Fantini and others (see Bibliography), provides a framework for change:

. . . community control alters basic power relationships and, thereby prevailing assumptions. The new participants in the educational process may lack backgrounds in educational theory and practice, but this does not prevent them from driving relentlessly to the core of fundamental issues in school policy . . . Community control, to the extent that it follows democratic procedures, carries its own seeds of renewal. Its very reason for being, it must be remembered, is as a reaction to rigidities and unresponsiveness.

Morgan Community School

The Morgan School is located in the northwest section of Washington, D.C., in what was once an affluent neighborhood of large, well-kept homes. Over the years, these homes have been converted into the crowded rooming-houses that characterize the area today. But because it retains a substantial number of one-family homes, the Morgan neighborhood is still considered one of the "better" res-

idential areas. After the Supreme Court ruled in 1954 that segregation in the public schools was unconstitutional, many white residents began transferring their children to private schools. The attendance at the Morgan public elementary school became 98 percent black and 80 percent poor. Crowded conditions in the school steadily worsened so that even the auditorium had to be used for classes. Lower grades went on half sessions, and children could no longer be registered in kindergarten. Books, equipment, and materials were poor and in short supply. Meanwhile, in many all-white neighborhoods, schools were only half full.

In 1954, animosity between white students at the nearby Adams School and black students at Morgan erupted into a rock-throwing incident that resulted in a serious injury to one of the children. The principals of the two schools were galvanized into action; children and parents from both schools met and discussed ways they could improve the atmosphere. Out of these meetings grew a community effort created through block-by-block organization: The Adams Morgan Better Neighborhood Conference, a racially and economically representative group.

In 1956, the Conference applied for a federal grant to develop neighborhood participation in community improvement. The grant was given in 1958 under the supervision of American University as part of the urban renewal program. Block and local business groups formed

the Adams Morgan Planning Committee, and, together with professional planners, they proposed changes to improve residential and shopping areas, reroute heavy traffic to main arteries, and provide offstreet parking. Early plans also included a new building to replace the 65-year-old Morgan school, as well as additional play and recreation areas. But after numerous meetings, surveys, reports, and an enormous input of professional and volunteer time, the proposal was shelved. No clear explanation was forthcoming, and the proposal is still on the books.

In 1965, people from the block groups who had not dropped out of community activities looked for more volunteers to join them in the Adams Morgan Community Council, now incorporated. A flyer written and circulated by a neighborhood worker listed the Council's areas of interest: school, summer camp, and a medical program. According to the leaflet, "No Urban Renewal is involved. Just a community trying and wanting to live together." Drawing in as many residents as possible, the Council discussed reforms and enrichment programs that might be introduced into the economically and racially diverse neighborhood.

By this date, the disintegration of education in *all* Washington public schools was generally recognized and deplored. In particular, the tracking system, introduced in the high schools in 1956, came under serious attack. Many community people were opposed to tracking as un-

democratic. They saw it as a means of resegregation. When Superintendent Carl Hansen extended tracking to the junior and elementary schools, a legal battle erupted, in which black militant Julius Hobson challenged the Board of Education and the superintendent. (The case, *Hobson vs. Hansen*, was adjudicated in favor of Hobson in June 1967, and tracking was held to be discriminatory against Negroes and the poor.)

In an effort to find substitutes for the controversial tracking system in May 1966, Dr. Hansen and the Board of Education proposed that a study of D.C. schools be made by Teachers College of Columbia University. The study results came to be known as the Passow Report, so named for its director, A. Harry Passow, professor of education at Teachers College. Among the findings were: a low level of scholastic achievement, a curriculum not especially developed for or adapted to the urban population it served, increasing de facto residential segregation resulting in a largely resegregated school system, and poor communication between schools and the communities they served. The report stated:

The starting point for good teaching is the recognition of differences, of learning disabilities, whatever their causes or origins, of individual talents and unusual potential for learning, of hidden aspirations and commitments . . . New concepts of urban education are demanded—new policies; different arrangements of time, organization and space; more effective deployment of staff; an extended role for the school in

the community; a reshaped curriculum; augmented instructional resources; and different kinds of supportive services.

There is no evidence that specific proposals or recommendations were followed through, except in isolated instances, and these may have been unrelated to the report.

The campaign for Morgan School improvement was revived by the Board of Education's announcement that all elementary schools would go on double session. One concerned parent, Mrs. Vera Stevens, recalled what happened, in an article in the *American Teacher*:

I got involved when Harry went to kindergarten. He had done well in preschool, but he started to have a lot of trouble. His class was overcrowded, it had more than 35 children, and four classes were being held in the auditorium. The school administration announced they were going to put the school on half-days . . . parents went downtown and talked to the assistant superintendent for elementary schools. We told her there was room for children in Cook and Adams school, but she said it would be a lot of paperwork to transfer them, and they would have trouble adjusting. We told her the children will adjust fine, although it might be harder on the parents and the administration. I told her, 'My God, we'll stay up all night to do the paperwork, but we don't want these children cheated.'

After that, our school committee began to work with the community council, and our strong block groups got started. This was a forgotten school. The teachers had no equipment to work with, the parents had no say in what went on . . . The board of education and the teachers were doling

out token education to these kids. Seemed to me like they didn't care. Teachers somehow got through, passed the day. Then they went to their lovely homes in the suburbs or far away, to their children who go to private schools.

The parents turned to the Community Council for help. At this point the Council was dominated by young white liberals who had moved into the community. Many were professionals interested in finding an integrated experience for their children, and some were anxious to become politically active. Among the Council's most influential white members were: Harrison Owens, Council director, Irene Waskow, an attorney married to Arthur Waskow, a resident fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies, Marcus Raskin, the Institute's co-director and a trustee of Antioch University, and Christopher Jencks, a teacher at the Institute. Among the black representatives were Marie Reed, an influential and energetic leader in the community and Bishop of the Sacred Heart Spiritual Church, Mary French, the present school board chairman, Edward Jackson, vice-chairman of the board, and Vera Stevens.

In March 1966, a group of parents met with the Board of Education and the double session plan was rescinded. With a taste of success the parents decided to set themselves a higher goal: to establish a truly integrated school that would provide quality education. A quality school could be created, they reasoned, by utilizing some of the local people with good

educational ideas, revising the unimaginative curriculum and instituting a "community controlled" organization. The idea represented a change, and black parents were in favor of change. They were dissatisfied with the inadequate facilities. They wanted better education and better treatment for their children, and more respect for themselves when they visited the school.

The Council called a number of general meetings, which were action meetings concerned primarily with getting signatures for petitions. There were other meetings with interested parents where goals were worked out. Council director Owens observed that "one of the things that came out extraordinarily clearly was that the temper was conservative. All of the things that people were asking for were what every good school should have."

The parents and community people knew they needed professional help, and they decided to seek a contractual relationship with the Board of Education. It was suggested that the board was more likely to listen to a plan if a "respectable" party, such as a university, were involved. Antioch College was recommended because there were important alumni residing in the community and because the college, whose main campus is in Ohio, has a graduate school of education, Antioch-Putney, in Washington. Antioch-Putney already had one teacher training program and might be interested in another in a D.C. school.

CHAPTER II

1967:

Planning Begins

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It was in this setting—while the Hobson vs. Hansen lawsuit was pending and while the Passow study was underway—that Harrison Owens and Christopher Jencks of the Community Council met with Morris Keeton, academic vice-president and dean of the school of education of Antioch, and Superintendent Carl Hansen in January 1967. At this time Dr. Hansen showed interest in the idea only as a demonstration project. He made it clear that the experimental school could expect only its normal allotment of funds, and he urged that Antioch determine the objectives and the curriculum.

Prior to the Antioch involvement, a small, active segment of the community had worked out the specifics of the changes they were seeking. Harrison Owens has commented, "One of the first proposals or descriptions of the school was written by Mary French. Mrs. French at that time was scrubbing floors in the Senate office building. When she got done scrubbing floors she read everything anybody had on education." Out of this she put together a proposal which inspired a lot of interest in the community.

The Community Council and the parents wanted to select the principal. They wanted area residents employed as teacher aides to improve the teacher-pupil ratio. They wanted a school that was integrated both racially and socioeconomically. They wanted more creative teachers who wanted to teach at Morgan. They wanted a more effective counseling pro-

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gram to bring home and school together. They wanted less of an iron-rule atmosphere for the children; for example, it was specifically mentioned at community meetings that children should be allowed to go to the bathroom when necessary and spend a part of each day outdoors.

The idea of freedom and activity would later have more than one interpretation. Mr. Owens, aware of the conservatism in the community, believed that some things, such as "discovery learning," should not be introduced right away. Janette M. Turner quoted him:

The fact that you may also learn when you're having fun, sometimes doesn't get across. There's an expectation that parents have for what their kids are going to get and if they aren't sitting down . . . and if they don't do such and such, they obviously aren't in school—regardless of the fact that there is learning going on . . . From initial conversations with Dr. Keeton, right on through, I kept trying to emphasize . . . that everybody involved should keep it in mind that this was a *community school* and not a *community school*. That things had to derive from the community. That curriculum changes could never get ahead of where the parents were. And if it was apparently happening this way, then the answer was not more and faster, but less and slower, with an enormous amount of effort thrown into dealing with the parents on a block by block basis, involving them in the afternoons and the daytime in what was happening in the school, so that you could begin to develop a group of people who could be the spokesmen, without white faces, and very much in the heart of the community.

Begins

In order to provide training for student teachers and to stay within the central board's allotment of funds, Antioch proposed a staff of professional teachers as well as college and community interns. This plan would increase the ratio of adults to pupils and provide a favorable cost-benefit ratio since interns would be paid less than professional teachers. Also some tuition money paid to Antioch by interns would revert to Morgan to pay for administrators and services. The differentiated staff was a major experiment in the project—an attempt to move toward quality education without substantial increases in personnel costs. Antioch also favored a limited project: Dr. Keeton, like Dr. Hansen, was thinking in terms of a demonstration unit—a small-scale program would be a realistic commitment for the college and would allow for testing and experimenting before moving into a full-scale school situation.

During the planning phase, Dr. Hansen suggested to Dr. Keeton that the Council was not representative of the parents; he wondered if Council members' liberal and radical notions of education were in line with the views of most parents. As a result of his doubts, arrangements were made for the community at large to elect a school board.

The final agreement between Antioch and the board called for a demonstration school with a new staffing plan, an experimental curriculum to be developed by Antioch, and an elected school board. Some of the people who had done the

planning and negotiation would be replaced by others who would implement the program; all staff would be required to reapply for their jobs; and Antioch would appoint a reduced number of teachers subject to approval by the Board of Education. Morgan School would continue to get only its usual allotment of funds from the district; Antioch would pay the costs of its teacher education program and seek any supplemental funds needed. The superintendent presented the plan to the D.C. Board of Education, and it was approved in May 1967.

Some Problems

To get the project started, a number of concessions were made by college and community both. Antioch favored a demonstration unit and a year and a half preparation time. Community people wanted total school involvement by the September term which was only months away. Antioch yielded, and a September opening date was planned.

In the interest of expediency there were no formal contracts or agreements between the Community Council and Antioch, and so roles were not clearly defined. The school was operating without a principal because he, like some of the teachers who had not had a voice in the early planning, chose not to reapply. Leadership was needed—fast. A project director who had no previous connection with either Antioch, or elementary, or ghetto schools was brought in and ac-

cepted by the community because of his availability and their desire to get started. Paul Lauter became the lone administrator, and most of the decision-making, from curriculum to building maintenance, was left to him by default. Some community leaders relaxed their efforts out of fatigue and the realization that a community-elected school board would soon replace them; others who were appointed to committees, such as the curriculum committee, found that they could not function effectively for lack of technical knowledge and direction. Because there was no one else, Mr. Lauter tried to "do everything," and there were those who, unaware of the circumstances, felt he had overstepped his bounds, and they criticized Antioch for poor planning.

New Inexperienced Staff: The differentiated staff plan required the elimination of some teachers so that more Antioch interns could be brought in, and there were comments from teachers and parents that white interns were pushing out black teachers. According to Mr. Lauter, "It was a correct perception . . . because the interns were predominantly white. It was obvious that we were bringing whites in and, in fact, we were pushing some of the Negro teachers out."

Furthermore, the differentiated staff called for two categories: "executive teacher" and "associate teacher." It was difficult to get experienced people, particularly blacks, to be associate teachers;

besides getting less pay, these teachers saw the relationship as a boss-hireling one. Other teachers were opposed to experimentation and bringing in young inexperienced teachers. There were more resignations. According to Mr. Lauter, "When school opened we had, instead of 17 relatively experienced teachers, only about nine (plus two National Teacher Corps supervisors) in the whole school of 750 children. Only three of these were holdovers from the previous faculty."

Inadequate Preparation: As part of the Antioch plan to set up teacher training institutes, a workshop was planned for August. Teachers and interns expected that since time was short, curriculum planning would get top priority. Mr. Lauter, whose background was teaching English literature and organizing for Students for a Democratic Society, put the greatest stress on solving the problems of whites working in a black community. In a memo to Dr. Keeton, he wrote, "I think there are a number of things we can go into the year without, but I think we must begin to shake teachers loose from their traditional restrictions, and begin to build a unity of purpose." As a result of his emphasis on sensitivity training and the hiring of staff members who had worked in freedom schools in the South, the summer workshop was primarily concerned with black-white relationships. Some of the participants, particularly the community interns, were shaken and confused by the frankness of

the discussions. Others, offended at first, later felt the workshops were valuable experiences. In the discussions there were idealistic expressions of the need for "team work" and "team spirit" without clear definitions of what these entailed. Spontaneity and relevance were mentioned in connection with curriculum, but there was no actual curriculum planning. Both teachers and interns, many without any previous teaching experience, went into the new school year not knowing how or what they were to teach children. Meanwhile, the community people began negotiations to hire a black principal, but he had no part in the workshop or the opening days of school.

Freedom versus Structure: Aside from the dialogue on race, the concept of "freedom" was examined during the summer. To Mr. Lauter, freedom had to do in part with educational ideas, such as those used in the British Infant Schools. To Dr. Keeton, it had to do with student teachers and their relationship with professors who "should not and cannot effectively tell the teachers (Antioch interns) what to do in the school, but can only assist the teaching staff to decide upon and carry out their own concepts and implementations of an improved program." Another view of freedom was that of a teacher corps student: "Antioch wanted you to do your own thing. But in a school everybody really can't just do his own thing. There have to be some outlines to go by." One teach-

er declared: "The thing that I feel came out of the workshop that was bad was the concept of freedom. I felt that we talked too much about freedom. We were listening to what middle-class white people wanted for their children that they weren't getting in the schools where they were . . . Maybe what was better for their children might not have been particularly better for the masses of children in this area who are the Negro children." Another teacher said: "It was presented that if we put out the work, the kids would be so fascinated with the work that they would do it, but it didn't happen." Still another teacher expressed herself: "The only thing that I disagreed with was removing all of the power structure at once. I think it should have been a gradual thing, because the children went from one extreme to the other overnight, and they really didn't know how to cope with it."

CHAPTER III

1967-68: The Project's First Year

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The opening days of school, as described by one community intern, were "chaos." Children were running in and out of the buildings; there were whoops of joy as well as angry shouts and fighting. Teachers were unnerved, and some students complained that they weren't learning anything. A teacher corps student reported: "When they walked in and had total freedom, I didn't know what to do. I had to go back to traditional teaching for a while to get my bearings." Mr. Lauter wrote in a memo to his staff: "There is obviously too much movement through the halls, but we do not want to throw the baby out with the bath by eliminating it altogether and going back to shut-in classes. An open classroom policy is fundamental to this program even if for some of you it can only be partly open at this point."

Organization

To satisfy the interests of the college, the community, and the Board of Education, Antioch set up its differentiated staff plan in which the school's regular staff of 28 teachers and three specialists was replaced by 17 teachers, 11 Antioch interns, and 14 community interns. The aim was to keep personnel costs constant (as stipulated by the Board of Education) and to provide training for student teachers and career opportunities for poor people in the community while improving the adult-student ratio.

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Organization

To satisfy the interests of the college, the community, and the Board of Education, Antioch set up its differentiated staff plan in which the school's regular staff of 28 teachers and three specialists was replaced by 17 teachers, 11 Antioch interns, and 14 community interns. The aim was to keep personnel costs constant (as stipulated by the Board of Education) and to provide training for student teachers and career opportunities for poor people in the community while improving the adult-student ratio.

The whole school was organized into seven teams with 100 children and eight adults in each. Teams were ungraded, and included children of overlapping ages within roughly a two-year span. The plan called for each team to use several classrooms or "learning centers" (each for a specific subject). Within the classroom there would be a certified teacher with children working in small groups of about six, each aided by additional adults. The groups would not be rigidly defined, and children could change from one to another. This was in part an attempt to eliminate ability grouping or "tracking." The plan stressed openness. There would be movement between the rooms, doors would be left ajar, and time would be allocated in a flexible manner to accommodate the interests of children. The plan would make it possible for each large group to have a professional teacher. With the reduced number of teachers a self-contained classroom could not be used because two-thirds of the staff were Antioch or community interns who had never before been in an elementary classroom.

Early Reactions

Many parents were critical of the informality of Antioch interns. For example, parents thought sandals and sneakers were inappropriate attire for school. The principal asked the interns to change their dress and they refused, saying that dress wasn't important. The principal

said that if it wasn't important then they should be willing to change, and added, "Black people fight for better education, whites fight to wear tennis shoes." Parents also were showing some resentment that nonprofessionals would be teaching their children; and a nine-year-old, who was asked about his teacher, answered, "I ain't got a teacher, I got a white boy."

With the learning centers there was great mobility, and because of the size of the teams it was difficult to know each student or where he was supposed to be. Children were running in the halls, going outside unsupervised, ignoring and sometimes overwhelming adults who became more ineffective or sometimes resorted to corporal punishment. Supplies, including paper, were inadequate or unavailable, and learning tools and materials were sometimes used destructively or purely for play. Textbooks that had been put aside as obsolete were brought back into use because there were no others. There was no curriculum, nor were there guidelines to follow. The project had attracted a considerable amount of attention, and there was a steady flow of observers: school and government officials, journalists, even T.V. camera crews, which added to the confusion. One community leader, president of a civic association of older middle-class black residents, wrote to the Board of Education requesting that the school be returned to the central administration. Many parents felt sure that their children could not be learning anything in such an atmosphere. A few black

children, and most of the white children who had transferred in, were withdrawn by their parents.

The New Principal

Mr. Kenneth Haskins, the new principal, arrived on the scene during the first month. A black professional social worker, he had worked with emotionally disturbed children and had been a community relations specialist in Greenburgh, New York. He placed strong emphasis on community control and participation. He had been interviewed and enthusiastically accepted by the community and both he and the community people were anxious that he be involved in the early planning. The new principal had no clear idea of who or how many people would make up the administrative staff, but he did expect to be working with Mr. Lauter who, as Antioch project director, would concern himself with teacher education, curriculum development, evaluation, and fund raising. Mr. Haskins' responsibility was the day-to-day operation of the school, working with the newly-elected community school board, and overseeing teacher-pupil interaction. Both board and principal envisioned a cooperative effort, but the Antioch administrators, anticipating a possible power clash, fired Mr. Lauter early in the year. (For Mr. Lauter's own version of what happened see listing in Bibliography.)

As the lone administrator, Mr. Haskins inherited some sticky problems: a fre-

netic atmosphere, unhappy teachers and parents, and a serious lack of supplies and equipment and money to buy them (as the project director had already spent a large chunk of the year's budget). Nevertheless, under his direction, which was described by his staff as strong, supportive, and cool-headed, the school began to move towards a semblance of stability. When Mr. Lauter's dismissal brought a storm of protest from Antioch interns, Mr. Haskins was able to bring the young people back to a united effort to help children. He maintained an open door policy; students were free to come into his office any time they had a problem; he even had steps built that would enable children to converse with adults on an equal level across a barrier that defined the office. And his emphasis was on community participation as quoted by Turner:

One of the most serious problems is what appears to be the lack of involvement of the large community in the affairs of the school and the lack of commitment on their part to the educational innovations. In my opinion it appears that a small number of people . . . decided what was good for the larger community. This is unsound if one wants community involvement. A program does not come from the brain of one person or a few people, but from people interacting toward a goal. A program does not start full bloom—as this one tried to—but develops piece by piece . . .

Mr. Haskins later observed, "The greatest input in the community could have been from the whites but most of

the middle-class white people have either been in and taken a large role, or they've withdrawn completely."

Changes

The mobility and turnover of adults in the learning centers arrangement seemed disruptive to the younger children, and Mr. Haskins converted the early grades to self-contained classrooms. In the first months the problems were very apparent, as noted in his interim report to the Antioch administration: "At this point we see a number of dangerous bugs in the design of the teaching teams . . . capable of undermining and perhaps destroying our main objectives. . . ." The most serious of the problems were: not enough experienced personnel, difficulty in retaining teachers unless they were given coordinator or executive status, and the fact that the coordinating teachers were not capable of fulfilling their demanding roles. Mr. Haskins foresaw failure unless there were drastic changes, and getting more teachers skilled in non-traditional methods who could replace college interns took top priority. Often a class was without a teacher, or with one so ill equipped to deal with children that she was dependent upon the community intern to establish some order. In his plan to replace some of the Antioch interns, Mr. Haskins was supported by the school board and ultimately the college as well. Although the change was not in Antioch's interest, to have opposed a

strong principal would have been to retard the movement toward local control.

Another Antioch role was that of consultant, and that seemed to clash with the additional role of legal manager that the Board of Education had thrust upon it. These ambiguities, plus the enormous time and energy that the project consumed, as well as an understood goal of ultimately transferring power to the community as it was ready and able to accept it, dictated a gradual change in Antioch's role from administrator to professional adviser. The first tangible indication of the new direction came when a representative of the college chose not to exercise his right to vote on the school board.

As Antioch's hands-off policy became more evident, there were those who interpreted it as a desire to pull out of a shaky situation and avoid possible criticism for failure. Some welcomed the possibility of greater autonomy. Some were angered, some fearful that the school would not be able to retain its community school status if Antioch pulled out. Some blamed Antioch for all the school's ills; some talked of an all black school; and others sought dramatic confrontations with "downtown" (the D.C. Board of Education). Still others, including school board chairman Bishop Reed and board member Mary French, maintained that Antioch had been supportive.

With the shift in Antioch's role, there was often confusion about who should do what. According to Mr. Haskins:

"They (Antioch) just reduced services as people pulled out . . . I began to fill in." That meant choice of curriculum, instructional policies, and fund raising.

Earlier in their capacity as fund raisers, Antioch representatives had applied for funds from the Ford Foundation. In January 1968, midway into the project's first year, Ford made it plain that money might be available, but only to a community-controlled school. As Ford pressed for an answer as to the exact relationship between Morgan and Antioch, the administration of the school looked to the Board of Education to redefine lines of authority.

Evaluation

In March 1968, as the first year of the project was nearing an end, the Board of Education completed its annual survey of reading skills. Morgan was one of only six schools showing some improvement over the previous year, while the system generally showed decline. Newspapers and magazines printed positive and often glowing reports of Morgan as a sign of hope on the educational horizon.

However, an informal report by Antioch cited the following weaknesses in the project: a hasty beginning, a lack of oriented and qualified personnel, and too many innovations introduced in too short a time. Poorly defined roles were seen as the cause of sharp disagreement between teaching staff and school board members.

On the positive side, Antioch found that "children no longer show a once typical withdrawal and a combative self defense stance when approached by a principal or teacher. . . ." The report concluded:

The idea of community internship has been conclusively shown to be viable, and the great majority of the first participants have been launched successfully on a career they otherwise lacked . . . The school council has been, to the best of our knowledge, the most successful illustration to date within a large city that a Board of Education and a neighborhood council, the teachers union, and an institution of higher education can all work well within a critical and major delegation of authority to the neighborhood.

Another report on the first year's operation, prepared by the school for the community, set forth the school's philosophy:

The school should take its character from the nature of the people living in the community and from the children utilizing the school rather than rigidly defining itself as an institution accepting only those people who already fit into a set definition . . . children should not be abused either physically or emotionally . . . the concept of competition has no place in a community school . . . the school should be an educational center for all.

Concerning curriculum content and sequence, the Morgan report stated:

. . . these factors are relatively unimportant, for if we can keep a child intensely engaged in the process of learning for the six years we have him in the elementary school, we would be willing to guarantee

that no matter what comes first or whether there are gaps in information, he will continue to observe, explore, and question the things around him to be successful . . . we utilize the same subject areas as all other schools, namely: science, math, social studies, language arts, and the creative and manual arts . . . we allow our teachers to be extremely free in how this material is presented. Our one rigidity was and will continue to be . . . that subject material will not be used to insult, belittle, or degrade our children or their families.

On definition of roles:

The specific details of program and their implementation are the responsibility of the staff with the Community School Board constantly evaluating results and approaches . . . The Board must control to the maximum extent . . . staffing, curriculum financing, outside resources, and use of the physical plant.

By the spring of the first year it was clear that Antioch's role as manager had ended, although the college would continue to have interns in the school. Morgan had been tested and found to have made academic gains, and community people were feeling vindicated in their faith in community control. In April 1968, the school board submitted a proposal to the Board of Education calling for greater autonomy and provisions to make the school an education-recreation center for the whole community. Dr. Hansen had been succeeded by Superintendent William R. Manning, who first indicated he would deny the requests and later said he would consider them if they were reduced. His reluctance

stemmed from legal questions raised by the request for autonomy, serious division in the community (some civic groups complained that their representatives were excluded from the school board), and the school's decision against recommending continuation of its original relationship with Antioch. It was only after a much publicized show of determination, in which hundreds of community people jammed meeting rooms to air their demands, that the autonomous features were granted. One meeting, attended by 350 people, contrasted sharply with the usual monthly community meeting attendance of 20 or 30 people. Apparently many agree with one community leader who says he gets involved "when participation counts."

On September 19, 1968, the Board of Education released a policy statement granting the school "maximum feasible autonomy." This was to be implemented through a Division of Special Projects which aid the board in staffing, curriculum formation, and instruction. The school would receive the support and services available to all other schools, as well as funds for an evening school for children and adults. The local school board would determine priorities for the expenditure of funds.

CHAPTER IV

1968-69:
The Project's
Second Year

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Two milestones were marked simultaneously: the beginning of the second year of the project and new autonomy for the school. The Washington chapter of the American Federation of Teachers enthusiastically endorsed the Board of Education's action in a position paper which called for uniting teacher power and community power to redefine the function of education, to make decisions in regard to procedures and process of education, and to provide the community with absolute administrative and fiscal control.

The Washington picture was quite different from that of New York City at this time. There the teachers' union's opposition to community control of schools led to three disastrous teachers' strikes. In contrast with the *theoretical* position of the national American Federation of Teachers in support of community schools, the Washington local has in fact vigorously supported the autonomy of the Morgan Community School. However, the local has maintained a hands-off attitude in relation to the development of the school itself, even though all the Morgan School teachers are union members. Though it would like to become involved, the local has never been approached by the community for help. Whether or not a satisfactory union and community school board "contract" will emerge remains to be seen.

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Furthermore, in 1968, the district had its first elected Board of Education in this century, and Julius Hobson, the mili-

tant black leader who had successfully sued the Board of Education, led all other candidates in gaining election to the new board.

New Services and Follow Through

In the second year of the project, the Morgan School became a focal point for the community with the addition of evening adult education classes in driver education, community development, typing, sewing, music, physical enrichment, and a health clinic for all neighborhood children, ages one to 18. In addition, the second year saw the introduction of the Follow Through Program.

Follow Through, an extension of the Head Start preschool program launched under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, is essentially an educational program with added health, nutritional, and other services for poor children in the early primary grades. Shortly after Head Start was underway, it was noted that children forgot much of what they had learned in that program when they went into traditional classrooms, and so in 1967 Follow Through became part of the program in an effort to provide needed continuity. Under present Office of Education funding levels, the program continues, at least through grade 3. When Follow Through started at Morgan in September 1968, its director was a black male teacher, a former Antioch intern who had studied and observed the British Infant Schools. Working with the

Education Development Center of Massachusetts, he modeled the ages 5-7 and 6-8 groups on English informal education. The execution of Follow Through services, such as a free breakfast and hot lunch program, was handled largely by volunteer community people. Upper-grade children were also given free meals.

In Morgan, the youngest-level Follow Through program aims at eliminating inflexible predetermined curricula. The program is child-centered rather than teacher-centered. The general goals include growth of reading skills, the development of self image, and encouragement of social skills. Additionally, practical math, science experiences, and the ability to communicate are stressed. Specific minimum goals for the youngster completing two years of the program include his being able to read and write his name, to read and write the alphabet, to read and write symbols from one to ten, to recognize and name colors, to recognize some rhyming sounds, to have some understanding of opposites, and to have some sense of sequential development in a story. Children work in groups to which they are assigned on the basis of emotional maturity. They are free to move to other groups to be with adults or children with whom they are more comfortable or to engage in a different activity. The two-year program is meant to encourage respect for differences rather than encourage competition. It is seen as a means of providing opportunities

for children to learn from each other, which, it is believed, contribute to a sense of growing up and of responsibility toward others.

Besides Follow Through, other additions in the second year of the project were a storefront nature center and an arts workshop in the Morgan School neighborhood. The nature center, located across the street from the school, evolved through the labors and help of community people and money from donations and foundations. Today, the center holds about 50 animals, including rabbits, opossums, mice, chickens, ducks, and a goose. Neighborhood children care for the animals; they feed them, build and clean their living areas; they observe and discuss them before, during, and after school. They come in groups from the school or individually. The center averages 50 to 100 visitors a day. Older boys—many of them dropouts—congregate there. Some teenagers develop interests at the center that present possibilities for job opportunities with the National Park Service and National Zoo. The director is D. Malcom Leith, a young white, who makes a small living from his efforts.

The Art Center, called New Thing, has grown from one to two arts workshops and a central office. This unusual project has provided exciting opportunities for creative children from the Morgan School, as well as the entire community. In his description of New Thing, Topper Carew, the founder-director, wrote: "My thing is to make people aware of their

being, to make them aware of their dignity, to make them more conscious of themselves. And allow, or try to preserve the humanity that I think exists in a black community." His aim was to involve many different age levels as a "built in reinforcement," because, in his words, "it's very important to develop a sort of communal feeling around education."

Strengths and Weaknesses

By the second year it was generally agreed that Morgan was a healthier and happier place for children to go to school. There were additional services and cultural enrichment opportunities inside and out, and the school was extending its positive influence into the community. Academic testing indicated that the school had reached national norms in the earlier grades.

In January 1969, an article in a Queens College newspaper (see Bibliography) stated, "Morgan contends and visitors perceive that the children are happy, relaxed, and interested in learning." Mr. Haskins was quoted: "Our kids are still not reading on grade level, but at least they're not afraid of reading." Also noted, however, were problem areas, including serious lack of money, administrative help, and adequately prepared teachers. The paper then commented:

The major inhibition is financial. Morgan has been successful in attracting some foundation and other support, but it still

must function on a shoestring budget. There is notably no extra money for administrative staff. Morgan has an elected board that must make policy decisions and act to enhance the school program; the board, however, has no staff but the principal, for whom time spent for the board inevitably means time away from the educational program. Developing proposals for additional funding, representing the much-discussed community school before the press and in other public arenas, and a variety of other tasks all fall on the principal . . . There are no funds to support crucial staff development programs. Existing teacher preparation programs in Washington produce almost no elementary school teachers really well grounded in mathematics or science, and not a great many in social studies or language arts. Morgan's principal contends that inadequately prepared teachers are a greater liability for disadvantaged children than for middle class children, observing that a student whose father is a chemist or engineer may be motivated toward science even with poor science teaching in school, but this will not be the case for a student whose father is at best marginally employed.

Another major problem was staff turnover. Mr. Haskins found that many young whites were anxious to teach at Morgan, but he felt that "whites are unable to stand certain pain. . . . Lots of time and energy was put into those who don't have the stomach." Mr. Thomas Porter, director of the Antioch Washington program that supplied the interns, said that Morgan was hurt as Antioch is hurt "by too much turnover in personnel which destroys continuity."

As the second school year ended, the

energetic but overworked principal announced that he would take a one-year leave of absence, but he later declared that he was leaving permanently to become a teaching fellow at Harvard University. Also, during the summer, Bishop Reed died, leaving another serious void in community leadership.

Influence on Other Schools

There is no doubt that the much publicized events of the Morgan School had their impact on the educational system. In 1969, a group of Washington high school students received the D.C. Board's permission to spend three hours a day in a freedom school where they would study black history, Swahili, and related subjects for credit. The students chose their teachers who were paid by a non-profit organization called the Eastern High School Freedom Corporation. In 1969, the Takoma Elementary School in northwest Washington was the setting for a week of intensive community discussion of plans for a new building. In an atmosphere of self help and self determination, the discussions went far past the proposed building into the area of educational goals and community control of the school. It was Morgan's example that led to the formation of the federally financed Anacostia Project—a decentralized district covering 11 schools in the southeast section of the city.

In August 1969, *Education Daily* stated, "Reacting to the demands of parents

of youngsters at the Adams Elementary School, the Washington, D.C. School Board has approved plans to begin the city's second community control experiment. The board also asked administrators of all the schools in the city to submit long-range plans for neighborhood control." Another educational publication, the *NCSEA News*, called the 1968-69 school year "the year of community education and involvement."

In the summer of 1969, Congressman John Dellenback headed a government task force to investigate and report on experimental projects in education. He stated in a letter, "The trip to the Morgan Community School . . . has solidly reinforced our belief that the community should meaningfully participate in school decisions." Another member of the task force, the school's principal, reported that a major problem was the persistent red tape involved in getting supplies from the central board. Although supplies, like operating funds, were eventually made available, without a stock or contingency fund the school's operation was sometimes hampered. A representative of the central board reported that in trying to be responsive to the school, the Board of Education sometimes found itself at odds with the city administration. At that time, the old three-commissioner form of government had been replaced by a mayor, but he still had to go to conservative congressional committees to request funds for local use.

CHAPTER V

1970-71:
Morgan School
Today

26

Morgan is truly a community school. According to Mario Fantini:

When parents, students, and communities participate in reform, we can assume that the chances for developing a climate of high rather than low expectations will be significantly increased . . . We have known for some time now that major agents of socialization for the young child are his family, his peer group and his school. We seem to know also that growth and development are significantly affected, positively or negatively, depending on the relationship that exists among these major socializing agents. When there exist disconnection and discontinuity between or among them, the child's potential can be affected adversely.

The Ford Foundation backed up Mr. Fantini's confidence in the community school concept by awarding a grant of \$60,000 to the Morgan School in 1970. The principal and school board allocated half the money for board and staff development, and the remainder to renovate the annex, to help provide bus transportation, and to prepare a report to the community.

In 1971, Reverend Walter Fauntroy became the first elected District of Columbia Representative to the Congress. Although not a voting member of Congress, he will have a voice and a vote on the D.C. congressional committee. While this represents progress, the local government still lumbers under an inadequate system. There are, however, changes on the educational scene; both the leadership and the majority serving on the

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Board of Education are black, as is the Superintendent of Schools, Hugh J. Scott. (Julius Hobson was defeated in 1970 in his bid for reelection to the board.)

School Organization

On the 750 children enrolled, 14 are white; two are of Spanish-American extraction; the rest are black. Most students are poor, and almost half of the children are not living with both parents. There are 21 black teachers and six white teachers, including a curriculum specialist who came from Minneapolis after reading about the school. Most of the teachers are experienced, and all are union members authorized to teach under the D.C. Board of Education's two-year probationary contract (and under the higher of the board's two categories for certification). Other full-time staff include five Antioch graduate student teachers, 30 community interns, a reading specialist, a librarian, an art teacher, a physical education teacher, and a dance teacher.

The school still operates according to a nongraded cooperative teacher format. Eight adults work with about 100 heterogeneously grouped children, using four rooms (25 children per teacher with an intern assigned to each room). In the younger teams, classrooms are now self-contained, with the same staff throughout the day. In the older teams, each teacher selects one area of specializa-

tior, depending on her own special talent or interest, and then operates a learning center in that subject. In both the learning centers for older children and the self-contained classrooms for younger children, students work in loose groups or clusters on different activities or various phases of a subject. This informal organization is modelled on the British Infant School.

One teacher on each team is a coordinator for the larger group. At team staff meetings after school hours, the coordinator works with other adults on curriculum, activities, and individual problems. Except for general aims and goals and course planning, which emanate from the principal for older students and from the principal and Follow Through director for younger students, the teachers function as more or less independent agents.

Administration

Since September 1969, the project has been guided by its second principal, Mr. John Anthony. A graduate of Payne College, Mr. Anthony was a leader in a Florida school strike and worked briefly as a counselor in the Morgan School before moving up to principal. He came to Morgan out of a desire to work in an interracial school. All administrative personnel, including three secretaries, are black: the principal, the Follow Through director, a community organizer, a counselor, and an assistant principal who presides

over the annex four blocks away. Although the principal is the educational leader, in a community school like Morgan the highest authority on policy rests with the school board.

The Morgan School Board of 15 members is elected by the entire community. The board's membership includes seven parents, three other community residents, three persons between the ages of 16 and 23, one professional member of the school's staff, and one paraprofessional. Mrs. Mary French, who contributed years of active participation and an enormous amount of time and energy to school affairs, is the current chairman.

Early Childhood Program

Of the seven teams that make up the entire school, three teams are part of the Follow Through program. Teams one and two include children from five to seven years old; team three, six- to eight-year-olds.

A typical day might begin with youngsters, sitting on the floor around the teacher, talking about the weather. A few may be disengaged on the fringe, using blocks or exploratory learning materials or looking at a book from the library corner—or just gazing into space. Although the teacher tries to involve these children to a greater or lesser degree, these fringe activities are accepted, even during a more formal lesson.

The formal lesson begins with directed instructions, and then small groups

of students work independently or with an intern. The teacher may work with a group, or she may work with individual students, each on his own level. The groups or "clusters" might be working in different areas of a given subject, such as reading. One teacher, employing the S.R.A. Reading Kit, Reader's Digest Skill Builder, and other resources, sets up six groups who work for improvement in independent reading, comprehension, syllabication, use of dictionary, etc. Again there may be fringe activity, sometimes negative and distracting, but often positive and constructive (for instance, children reading alone or an older child reading to a younger child). A recent visitor saw a youngster rise suddenly from his seat, pick up a large piece of wood from a nature exhibit, and lift it high over his head several times. Since the teacher in the room was neither threatened nor annoyed by the movement, the incident was over when the boy replaced the object and returned to his seat. The school's original proposal to the Board of Education in 1968, had stated, "with new educational methods and a flexible approach it should be possible to narrow sharply the definition of seriously disturbed children who would need a program divorced from the total school curriculum."

After the formal lesson, there is distribution of milk (supplied by the school) and cookies (when the teacher buys them). A recess follows, and children go to a public playground which is well equipped, or to the school yard which

has little except swings and space to move around, concrete, and the grim walls of abandoned buildings. The only color in the schoolyard is supplied by bits of paper and soda cans. In bad weather children play indoor games such as pitching horse shoes. With only one large area which serves as auditorium, lunchroom, and gym, a hall or washroom may be utilized for either learning or recreation.

The morning continues with story reading and telling and conversation, and then lunch. Most of the students benefit from the free breakfast and lunch program which provides well-prepared food that the children seem to like. Equipment to flash-heat individual meals in aluminum foil dishes is a recent acquisition, and with two full-time lunch clerks and volunteer parents, the meals are quickly distributed.

Midday, the auditorium is the hub for children, staff, and administrators. Getting ready for lunch requires all available hands, often including the principal, to help custodians quickly clear away chairs and equipment and set up large folding tables with attached benches. Sometimes the principal stations himself at the door to see that everyone gets his lunch. The young children eat in their rooms. Lunch is a noisy, social affair for adults and children—without traditional monitors but under a few alert adults.

Lunch is followed by a free period in or out of the building. A favorite pastime for some children seems to be climbing through the low windows between the

auditorium and the schoolyard, an activity which usually brings a loud reprimand from the adult. Theoretically, a rest follows lunch, but teachers tend to cut it shorter and shorter because of its unpopularity.

The remainder of the day is devoted to the children's free use of exploratory materials and (time and temper permitting) a science or social studies lesson. Says John Anthony, "I believe in kids having their freedom: I believe that kids learn when they are happy, but . . . late in the day we are not so sure that kids are involved in a learning activity."

Physical Plant

For lack of space in the school, the oldest teams are housed in the annex which has separate lunch facilities. This smaller structure, built for industrial use, is high above ground and reached by steep concrete steps. Money from the Ford Foundation financed the filling and leveling of the adjacent slope for a play yard. Both the main building and the annex are about 80 years old with neglected exteriors and dusty or muddy areas where grass should be.

The outside of the main building gives no hint of the good things that are going on inside. The rooms are large and bright (custodians painted them on their own time). The classroom floors are carpeted, and children like to sit on the floor to read or play. Some rooms are cluttered and littered; others are not, but none

could be described as sterile or impersonal. Inside the annex there are new toilet rooms and an indoor area for games paid for by the Ford grant. The classrooms are large and bright, but the administrative office is a narrow rectangular space with a door at one end and a window at the other. One very hot day in June, Mrs. Arlene Young, assistant principal, talked about the school in her office as her secretary, Mrs. John Anthony, hemmed a child's dress. She explained,

. . . They come for so many little things: we're buying graduation dresses for the children, shoes, things they need and know they can't get.

Upper School Program

The organization of the upper school is both departmentalized and heterogeneous, with the same team and staff differentiation as in the lower school, but with a somewhat more structured program. Students move for their lessons between various rooms which are designated Reading Center, Math Center, Social Studies Center, and Science Center. Within these centers students work in clusters geared toward strengthening a major subject. Students have individual folders of completed work which the teacher evaluates with the child. These evaluations are designed to determine when a skill will be retaught, and when a child will proceed to the next skill.

One teacher who consistently sparks excitement is Mohammed El-Helu, a young African who has been teaching science for three years. His use of demonstrations and experiments makes him a popular resource person. It was pointed out that prior to the time the school was able to hire its own staff, it had a hard time getting Mr. El-Helu who could not be certified because he was not a citizen. After much negotiating, the Board of Education waived its citizenship requirement, and he was hired. Since then several African teachers have joined the staff.

The Human Development Program curriculum aims to give a student opportunities to discover information about himself, his group, and his environment, and to respond to his discoveries. Units deal with the student in his community and Washington, D.C., as well as with African, Japanese, and Southeast Asian cultures. Activities call for trips to investigate different income levels in housing and visits to embassies, the zoo, and the Museum of Natural History. In spite of some interesting trips, the opportunities for using Washington as a resource have not been fully developed. One major drawback has been the lack of transportation.

Both administrative and board leadership agree that the school needs to build curricula to interest children. The assistant principal, Mrs. Young, explained, "We have been drawing from the regular D.C. program curriculum guide; we pull

out things that we think relevant to our children, then we add current events . . . things that are happening in this community, social studies. . . . We try to find as many new textbooks as we can." In spite of Mr. El-Helu, the Human Development Program, and other highlights, however, the curriculum appears to be generally unimaginative.

Nonacademic Program

The extended day program begins after school and continues until 9 P.M.; it serves more than 300 local children and adults, as well as Morgan students and parents. There is dancing, gymnastics, karate, basketball, baseball, cooking, and sewing. For adults there are also high school equivalency, typing, and driver's education classes. Apart from the lack of facilities, the physical education program leaves much to be desired; a typical scene was that of children lined up to practice head rolls. An art program for students conducted by a very creative teacher appears to be too ambitious for one individual to implement, and it often falls back on conventional projects. Although there is no formal arrangement with the New Thing arts workshop, children who show special interest or talent can go there on their own and find opportunities for growth.

After-school socials are popular and dominated by the sounds of rock music. Even during school hours, the rock and bongo beat wafts through open windows

into the street. A visitor watched a team in the lower school dress up in dashikis, sarongs, and geles (African headdress) made by their teachers; the children were preparing for a dance program at Federal City College that drew a full house. At one Assembly, children did contemporary dances against a background of a flashing psychedelic light show rigged up by an intern. A large group of boys and girls performed on bongos while the teacher called out to the whole school audience and was answered in sounds derived from African dialects. Everyone participated in this activity. The assembly closed with an award program devised by one of the teachers.

Board and Staff Training

Training for people working in the school is and has been a top priority need. Both Mrs. French and Mr. Anthony were dissatisfied with some of the teachers' interpretation of the British Infant School methods. From observation and talks with Mr. Norman Precious, headmaster of the Leicester School in England, Mr. Anthony decided that something had been lost in translation from a rural English school to an American ghetto school. Accordingly, the principal arranged (with the help of a Ford grant) for Mr. Precious to hold a two-week seminar at the school during the summer of 1970.

This seminar included several evening sessions for purposes of interpreting the

Infant School philosophy to the community. The daytime program consisted of morning lectures and discussions for teachers, followed by afternoon workshops and demonstrations. Teachers who attended were paid for their participation. (Community interns are paid on a yearly basis.) There was a disappointing attendance of 20 people, mostly community interns; Mr. Anthony explained that the Ford money had arrived too late to pay more teachers.

In his talks, Mr. Precious pointed out that the process of informal education is very gradual, in which there are steps that may appear very traditional yet are not, if only because of the teacher's attitude. He maintained that personal commitment and continuity are essential if people are to implement such a program; obstacles and setbacks must be accepted without abandoning the program concepts.

Mr. Precious stated that teachers cannot give students the benefits of experience and knowledge without giving them proper guidelines, modeling behavior patterns and standards, and making clear the discipline involved in work. These aspects of learning should be interpreted in an individual way, with each child helping to formulate the rules and understanding the reasons for them. "We cannot expect children to come into this world and develop their own rules and standards." He maintained also that a child must not be allowed to remain uninvolved.

At the final session, he discussed the teacher's aims:

She will be concerned about each child's intellectual development and will be thinking of ways to stimulate further activities through the introduction of new materials . . . at the same time being aware of each child's personal qualities and having concern for the harmony of the class as a whole . . . Communication will play a very important part in a child's learning, and therefore every facility and opportunity must be given for creativity, spontaneous drama, reading, writing, and speaking . . .

The ideal schools, according to Mr. Precious, are those

. . . in which each child, in his own way, can satisfy his curiosity, develop abilities and talents, and pursue his interests, and from the adults and children around him get a glimpse of the great variety and richness of life . . .

He concluded:

Morgan typifies in its aims my feelings about myself as an educator. We must prepare its future citizens to be active, interested participants in the affairs of this modern complex society, to be responsible and useful individuals, and to lead full, happy, and satisfying lives.

A community intern, who was active in school affairs, talked about her participation in the seminar. "I really got something out of this workshop . . . One thing I found out we did wrong, we put out too many things at one time . . . we put out everything and after two or three weeks they (students) get used to it; nothing excites them anymore." She said she learned

how to plan from day to day, and to be always alert for clues from the children that would help her in planning and allotting time for projects. She said she would no longer try to keep everything in her head, but take notes, and pass from group to group to be sure each child got the help, encouragement, and direction he needed.

Regular staff development for the lower school (Follow Through) is the task of the Education Development Center of Massachusetts which works with teachers in implementation of the British Infant School model. E.D.C. helped teachers and interns in practical ways, such as organizing classroom space, building cardboard constructions which serve as group partitions, and furnishing equipment shelves. However, its important training and research role during the current year has been uneven and sometimes slipshod.

Staff development for the upper school was sought through the Institute for Services to Education in Washington. The Institute usually works with colleges training teachers, but was interested in working with the whole staff of the upper school in its normal setting at Morgan. The Institute aimed to establish an official statement of policy and to improve internal functioning and external communication (in particular, communication from staff to board as to why the school is organized as it is and how basic skills are to be accomplished, and from board to staff on perceptions of the com-

munity). Of special concern to Mr. Anthony as well as the Institute is understanding the questions posed by parents: What are the goals and objectives? How are they reached and evaluated? How do you feed back into practice what comes out of the evaluation?

The Institute was scheduled to begin in September 1970, but necessary funds from Ford were not yet available. Ford was waiting to see how an earlier check for bus transportation was spent, and the bus problem was not resolved for lack of legal aid. This kind of circular red tape is not uncommon in Morgan, which depends on grant money to implement its programs.

Finances

The school currently operates on a policy of Agreement with the Board of Education, effective 1969 through 1972. This document very nearly duplicates that of 1968 which gives the community school board autonomy in staff determination, curriculum formation, and instruction. Like the first agreement it provides funds for an evening school and gives the local board power to determine priorities for the expenditure of the normal allocation of funds. But what was a major victory in 1968 represents no progress in 1971. Mr. Anthony points out that requests must be made to the central board for each budgetary item. He adds that he gets the money, but he has to wait for it, and without a contingency

fund, this sometimes presents problems. He says, "You really don't have community control . . . You never will have it until you control the purse strings."

The Policy of Agreement also states that the school may receive all federal or private funds directly. Since the school has no personnel for this function, the volunteer school board makes contacts, writes letters, and holds interviews for funding, staffing, and public relations. Mrs. Mary French, school board chairman, who sometimes represents the school at meetings and conventions, gives the school an inordinate amount of her time, as do the other dedicated board members. The principal must work closely with community people and often provide the expertise for board matters. He must also be available to prospective donors who want to talk to the head man. Because he knows the need, Mr. Anthony manages to be involved in many tasks not normally associated with the position of Principal. One Christmas, for instance, he spent most of the holiday working with a paid contractor converting a section of the hall into a music room.

The Spring Crisis

In Morgan, crisis situations are almost routine. In the spring of 1970, about two weeks after a school board election that put Mrs. French into the chairmanship, *The Washington Star* (June 4, 1970) reported:

... at least fifteen of the school's twenty-seven teachers have decided not to return for the next school year. Some are leaving for personal or family reasons, but most are resigning because they are at odds with the leadership voted into power . . . "The people elected represent a trend back to repressive education, to law and order," said Mrs. Jeanne Walton, a Morgan School board member who was not up for re-election. She had led a minority faction that has been critical of Mrs. French and the school's principal, John Anthony. (Mrs. Walton once taught at Morgan and is now a field representative for the Washington Teachers' Union.)

In addition, the only white parent board member resigned and took her children out of the school.

Mr. William Simons, president of the teachers union local in Washington, felt that the dissatisfaction was largely due to a lack of effective leadership since the death of Bishop Reed and the change of principals. He said, "One of the things about the experimental projects is that it's difficult to spread these projects because you don't have the same kind of personnel to make them work in every situation." Although relations between the school and the union remain cordial and functional, they are not, he says, "what they once were."

Mr. Thomas Porter, director of the Antioch-Putney Graduate School program which until this year maintained about 30 graduate students working and studying in Morgan, was interviewed at the time the teachers said they were leaving. His estimate of Mr. Haskins'

principalship was that sometimes the affective areas of learning were stressed to the detriment of some cognitive areas: "The school was full of love, but love does not replace learning . . . it facilitates it but . . . does not replace it." He was close to Mr. Haskins, who, he felt, set the prevailing tone that has resulted in happier students.

Mrs. French says her total involvement in local education stems from her concern about her daughter's education. Because Mrs. French is a lifetime member of the community and its elected representative, it is to her that many articulate parents present such demands as: children should call teachers by their last name, bring home books, play less, and learn more. At the time of her election, Mrs. French answered her critics: "I represent the community, and I know what people want."

Mr. Haskins, who was also completely involved with the community, differed in his ideas about children's needs, but his allegiance to community control was not affected by these differences. He felt that the interests of children and parents were best served by community control of the schools.

Most of those who were critical of the new board were teachers on the Follow Through teams. The director, Mr. John Cawthorn, who was leaving too, said, "Things got messed up in the last year with more formal niceties than freedom: more emphasis on children staying in class, like that's the only place to learn.

. . . That's where we made our mistake, there's been no rest since August 1968. We needed time to recharge; being tired makes the other things more difficult."

Though the newspapers reported in June 1970 that 15 teachers were leaving because they disagreed with the new board, there were actually only nine official resignations and some of these were for other reasons. A couple of teachers told the principal privately that they had been misguided or mistaken. As a result of the publicity there was more than the usual number of letters of application to fill teaching slots. There were also offers of help and money. Mrs. Anita F. Allen, president of the Board of Education, wrote in a letter, "If I can be of any assistance to you in your efforts to improve education . . . in our city, feel free to call me."

With the confusion about how many were actually leaving, it was difficult to plan for the new school year, but there was no real anxiety about filling the positions. Mr. Anthony and Mrs. French talked about hiring new teachers; they would look for certified, well-qualified teachers, and then try to give them a realistic appraisal of the demanding work load of a community school.

Though the publicity may not have been harmful in this case, Mr. Anthony and Mrs. French were not happy about it. Mrs. French said, "Those who made public statements only hurt children; they could have stayed, tried to work out differences, compromise." Mr. Anthony

said, "Why fight in the papers? Why make a political issue of natural growing troubles?" An impressive stack of newspaper clippings about the project since 1968 typically features such words as "rough sledding," "split," "quit," "drop," and "failure." Unhappy about the local press coverage, Mr. Anthony has called reporters to cover events that would improve the school's image, such as a dance program, prepared by teachers and attended by the wife of the Ambassador to Liberia. This program, part of an Afro-American cultural exchange, featured arts, food, and dress of six countries. Press coverage, however, is not good, unless there is trouble. For this reason, Mr. Anthony does not answer his critics, saying that to do so would hurt the school and exacerbate friction.

Philosophical Differences

Among those connected with Morgan, the philosophical differences are and have been apparent on every level from pre-community school days to the present. Former Superintendent Carl Hansen, writing of his years in the school system following desegregation, commented:

. . . I was testing the idea that Negro children are no different from white, can respond to strong demands, and can enter into the totality of American society. I possessed an almost compulsive belief in the likeness of human beings rather than their differences. And I had seen enough of the performance of many Negro children

as well as their teachers to believe that they belonged in the mainstream of social action rather than in a secluded bayou. 'Teach them alike,' and as one Negro parent admonished me, 'Teach them tough,' summed up my views about Washington education.

By contrast, the Passow Report stated: Differentiated instruction based on differentiated needs is at the heart of both equality and quality . . . An urban system must respond to the broadest range of individuals—the very able, highly motivated, self-assured child, supported in his academic pursuits by home and neighborhood; the less able, apathetic and even alienated youth who receives no such support; . . . The fact of individual differences is fact. It cannot be ignored without seriously damaging the quality of education.

Until his resignation as consultant to the D.C. Board of Education in December 1970, the eminent psychologist, Kenneth Clark, was involved in a much publicized and controversial plan to raise academic achievement in the Washington schools. He worked on the assumption that the black student population is "normal" and can excel if "properly taught." His plan called for massive work in reading and math with competitive motivation for both teacher and student. Dr. Clark had strong and outspoken support on the board and in the media. Some opposition to the plan came from the superintendent of schools and the teachers union. The superintendent at first opposed the plan on several counts, including his belief that while black students have normal abilities, they do not come

from "normal" backgrounds, and therefore require special kinds of help. Morgan's assistant principal, Mrs. Arlene Young, remarked:

The majority of our children come from broken homes—very low income, and they don't have the security that middle income white children have. They come to school sometimes hungry, cold, sleepy—been up half the night—and it takes a great deal to sit down and do your spelling, your arithmetic.

Morgan's principal felt the plan's emphasis on competition was incompatible with the open school policy, and he would not hold any teacher accountable for a child's reading ability.

Currently there is a growing difference of opinion about ability grouping. The Clark plan rejects ability grouping because it tends to stigmatize those children in the lowest groups. But acting on the findings of an advisory panel, Superintendent Scott urged schools to move toward more ability grouping within the heterogeneous arrangement. He said, "We must eliminate the extremes which make a classroom unmanageable." He was criticized by the president of the Board of Education, Mrs. Allen, who called his recommendation a return to the rigidities of tracking. The teachers' union local has come out strongly in favor of ability groupings, and in Morgan, a few teachers are trying out an organization of three or four ability groups within a class instead of the usual five or six interest groups.

In the Morgan School and community, two points of view highlight the split between two approaches to learning. Those who stress immediate academic gains talk about structure, sequential learning, and grade level. Others, like Mrs. Young, the assistant principal, talk about creativity, confidence, and ego building—all the humanistic values that they consider necessary in order to achieve the academic goals.

It's so important for a child to like himself. We have so many children who don't like themselves, don't like their home, don't like their parents—anything that has to do with their environment.

Yet, regardless of emphasis, quality education is the accepted goal; the debate centers around how to get there. For some, basic skills is clearly the way. For others, human relations, the artistic, imaginative, and exciting alternatives that exist in life, are the sources of positive educational values that would be sustained far beyond more obvious but transitory academic gains.

Current Needs

It has become increasingly clear to those involved in the Morgan School that it needs much more than money and autonomy to operate effectively. Other needs are:

Administrative Help and Training: A case in point was the allocation of funds for a bus for school trips. Four months

after the money was made available, the bus still had not been purchased because of the legal complications related to signing contracts and getting a driver. Such an experience reinforced the board's awareness that they need expert administrative and legal help to cope with some of the school's business. As a first step, they have hired a lawyer.

A major problem continues to be that the school's public relations and fund raising efforts occupy a good portion of the administration's time. This diverts the principal from his main job of supervising and interacting with staff and working out curricula on a day-to-day basis. Although Mr. Anthony commands the respect of the children and adults in the school as well as in the larger community, teachers and school board members are questioning his role. Mrs. French observes that teacher morale is low, and she believes it is because the principal does not give teachers the time and support that they require. (See Appendix A for full statement by Mrs. French.)

The Washington local of the teachers' union has proposed that the role of principal be abolished altogether in favor of a three-man team: one to deal with personnel, one with administration, and one with instruction. Said the union's president, William Simons, "It's just stupid to keep on saying that one person—I don't care how many assistants you give him—can operate a school."

Stability: Now in its fourth year as a

community school, Morgan is still struggling for stability in the face of a high turnover both in personnel and program. Mrs. French feels that conditions are better for students, yet she is aware that children may have suffered because of too many changes. For example, an ambitious ballet program, conducted by a teacher from another community, was off to an exciting start and was then abandoned; the teacher was unable to come to the school, and there were no facilities to bring students to her studio. Antioch is no longer a force, with only five full-time student teachers in the program. The interns from Howard University and Federal City College work on a part-time basis. Finally, a new school board, a new Follow Through Director, and ten new teachers—all represent more changes.

Creative Teaching: In contrast to the turnover at Morgan, there has been none at The New Thing. Topper Carew, founder-director, wrote:

We've got good teachers because none of them are teachers. Everyone teaches because they feel it's important, no one's teaching because they don't have anything else to do. The people who come to work for us, the only stipulation is that they have good politics; and good sensitivities, and in almost all cases we've been right. We haven't lost one person since we've started, full-time.

An observer in the Morgan School will see some of the best teaching as well as some of the worst. Math and science lessons seemed best prepared and organ-

ized, and in one English class, the teacher devoted a lot of time to stimulating the children's imagination, with impressive results. In some other classes the emphasis was on spontaneous discussions on good citizenship and similar subjects. The school atmosphere was noisy, sometimes uncomfortably so to an outsider, and a few children still wandered about aimlessly, or were given busy work to keep them occupied.

It is becoming increasingly clear that no program can be better than the people who implement it. Perhaps new criteria for certification should be considered, as well as better training and more on-the-job support to help teachers move toward more creative teaching.

Community Participation: In relating to the community as a community school, again, it is people who count. An open letter circulated at the beginning of 1971 asks parents and residents to join building, finance, publicity, curriculum and personnel committees of the school board, as well as the Policy Advisory Committee which oversees Follow Through and initiates programs for parents and children on the younger teams. "The survival of our school is the responsibility of parents and community residents." Flyers with similar pleas are often sent to homes. A retreat is planned for some meetings partly as an inducement to people without other vacation opportunities. Yet attendance at all meetings is off this year; even in the elected

school board, only seven or eight of the 15 members attend meetings with any regularity. However, the chairman says that those who do come are workers, and the board is unified. In Follow Through, about five or ten participate in a vigorous program of parental activities. Yet at the beginning of 1971, the same group met on three consecutive days to prepare a proposal for annual funds. Having to work with only the dedicated few (unless there is a crisis) is not a situation peculiar to Morgan. Most schools do not get the participation they feel they should get, but in this instance it constitutes a particular dilemma because Morgan is a community school.

Expanded Facilities: For lack of space, the health program for students and community, which was formerly housed in the school, has moved to another building, and it is difficult for children to get the medical help they need. Space and facilities for games, hobbies, and vocational training are limited or nonexistent. Because of its age, the main building needs more repair than it gets, now that attention is focused on planning a new school building.

There is great enthusiasm about the proposed building, which will house the health program as well as a day care center, theater, auditorium, gymnasium, and an indoor-outdoor swimming pool. The building, which is designed to serve as a community center, will also provide space for a career development program. Arch-

itectural renderings in the principal's office show a contemporary structure designed for maximum daylight and flexible interior space. It will be constructed on the existing site, and according to the Board of Education, work will begin in 1971. Occupancy is scheduled for 1973.

CHAPTER VI

*Evaluation
and Projection*

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Group testing (see Appendix B) in all schools has proved not only unreliable but actually misleading. Test results for Morgan published in June 1970 established academic progress in the lower grades; other test results published three months later in September indicated no progress at all. In reviewing the tests, counselors and teachers were shocked to see that some students, who they knew could not read or do arithmetic, tested high. Such discrepancies are evidence of guessing, cheating, or coaxing by teachers who feel threatened by low scores. In testing the lower grades at Morgan School, there was such a wide spread that a group average would have been a distortion. The only way to evaluate what was actually happening was to consider the number of children reading at grade level as against those who were not.

Observations and traditional notions of what constitutes a successful classroom also are not reliable. The noisiest, most bustling classes in the lower grades are the very groups that made whatever academic gains there were. While it is obvious that the school cannot be considered adequate unless skills are taught, better methods are needed to formally evaluate the results.

Although no one is really satisfied that a large majority are reading, writing, and doing arithmetic successfully, teachers, interns, and administrators who have been in the school for some time believe that the children are learning

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Although no one is really satisfied that a large majority are reading, writing, and doing arithmetic successfully, teachers, interns, and administrators who have been in the school for some time believe that the children are learning

more than they did in the past. There is still interest in a child's initiating much of his activities, but this academic year he is doing it in a more planned environment. There is more direction from the teachers and there are more books and materials that are being used more effectively. One aspect of the informal British Infant School, which was formerly neglected but is now taken seriously, is the recording of a child's progress and work.

Property damage or loss has been greatly reduced, but there is still evidence that it exists: a sign was posted in the office to remind children that "blacks don't steal from each other." A few children keep their coats on in class because, they say, someone will take them; a recent theft of photographic equipment appeared to be "an inside job." In the past the school was broken into frequently, and replacing smashed windows was a regular and expensive item. Mr. Anthony considers it a sign of the community's positive feelings about the school that now there are only isolated incidents.

The school building is open at 7:00 A.M. so that working parents can leave young children there early. Attendance is better than 90 percent and there are no expulsions. When children fight and are sent to the office, the principal encourages them to work out their differences themselves, and they often do. Students relate well to adults without making any distinction between black and white teachers.

There are no truant officers. One very

positive feature of the community intern's role is its extension beyond the school setting. If a child is absent for more than two days, the community intern visits the home. The intern is a link with the family and is often helpful in health and welfare problems—getting phones, clothing, or contacting a slum landlord. This relationship seems to reduce the psychological gap between adult and child in the school. One intern, who was having trouble with a boy, threatened him: "I'm going to stop by tonight and talk to your grandma!" When the boy's behavior became more positive, the intern hugged and complimented him, and both the anger and the affection seemed natural and acceptable.

A new program that may have important implications for community people was made possible by a grant to Federal City College to train paraprofessionals. A large number of community people are now enrolled in college courses conducted by Federal City professors in the Morgan School four afternoons a week. The courses in math, black history, and other subjects constitute a two-year program with the goal of a certificate. Presumably some trainees would be able to go on to complete a four-year college program. How this program will influence the ability of community people to function in the school remains to be seen.

It will be possibly another three years before a true evaluation of the Morgan School program can be made. By then

children who are now in the lower grades will be in the junior high school. If they sustain whatever gains they have made and forge ahead beyond those educated in a conventional manner, the Morgan School will have won its case. At this point it is the humanistic quality that stands out: happy children and enthusiastic, energetic adults are engaged in creative effort for self-determination. Sometimes there is evidence also of fatigue, disappointment, and frustration—but never hopelessness.

For both the child and the adult in the project, it seems reasonable to assume that an improved self-image, a sense of being part of something exciting and important, a sense of being related to one's own destiny, should have the effect of strengthening their determination for equality. Although no one at the school talks much about integration, when he is questioned, John Anthony says that his immediate goal is quality education, and ultimately the *real* integration of equal parties.

CHAPTER VII

Appendixes

APPENDIX A

A Statement by Mrs. Mary E. F.
Chairman, Morgan Community Sch

January 7, 1971

As Chairman of the Board and as a community person, I have seen it. It's about time we as a Board, along with the Administration, get the job done. I am not a Pro with degrees and I don't profess to know much about education. I believe that this could be a beautiful program if we would start with the same purpose in mind and get the job done. I think if we as adults would start thinking that our children are as intelligent as any other children and give them the opportunity to learn, it would be much easier for everybody.

This foolishness about the school making up for what it lacks in preventive teaching and early prevention rather than remedial teaching is a common theme. I believe that we have to make them ready for learning. One of the things recognized by educators is that every child has an innate ability. The Art of Teaching lies in stimulating this ability and helping the child to develop it. It is essential to understand the child, know his strengths and weaknesses, and what his basic assets are.

I believe that these are a few things that we can start on right now. A new start on the job to be done. These are some suggestions that are worthwhile trying:

Children who do not know how to read be given the opportunity to learn every day during the school year. This should be a priority. One way to help them is by helping them to learn something new that they can use in their lives. Chess, checkers, and various card games are good to play. So much for the children. Suggestions in regard to the principal's role. Build into the principal's role a need to evaluate each teacher. Observation and supervision. In other words the principal should spend a certain amount of hours in supervision and on that basis give evaluations at least twice a year. The board would have printed forms for these evaluations are due.

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APPENDIX A

**A Statement by Mrs. Mary E. French,
Chairman, Morgan Community School Board**

January 7, 1971

As Chairman of the Board and as a community person, I am really dissatisfied in what has been going on in Morgan as I have seen it.

It's about time we as a Board, along with the Administration and Staff make this the kind of program that we intended to have when we started out 3 years ago.

I am not a Pro with degrees and I don't profess to know it all, but my common sense tells me that this could be a beautiful program if we would all put our shoulders to the grindstone with the same purpose in mind and get the job done without all of this foolish hang-ups that some of us have.

I think if we as adults would start thinking that our children are just as capable of learning as any other children and give them the opportunities they need, the job would be much easier for everybody.

This foolishness about the school making up for what they miss at home has failed. Creative teaching and early prevention rather than remediation later might be better.

I believe that we have to make them ready for learning. An important fact that is not recognized by educators is that every child has an inner push to what can be meaningful to them. The Art of Teaching lies in stimulating this force and keeping it alive and developing it. It is *essential to understand the child*, know what he is working on, what he is against, and *what his basic assets are*.

I believe that these are a few things that we can start thinking about in order to get a new start on the job to be done. These are some suggestions that I believe would be worthwhile trying:

Children who do not know how to read be given the opportunity to watch *Sesame Street* everyday during the school year. This should be a priority. We need to reverse the trends by helping them to learn something new that they could feel good about.

Chess, checkers, and various card games are good to use for arithmetic.

So much for the children. Suggestions in regard to the board and the administration are: Build into the principal's role a need to evaluate each teacher and intern based on actual observation and supervision. In other words the principal would have to spend a certain amount of hours in supervision and on that basis give an evaluation of each teacher at least twice a year. The board would have printed forms and actually give the dates the evaluations are due.

The public relations role and the need to keep the image of the school plus the glamour are passe.

It would really be bad if there would be another turnover of the staff since now is the time to sit back and do the many practical things left to be done to build up the academic standards of the school.

The need for the principal to have the time to sit down with the staff whenever they approach him with problems regardless of how large or small they may be. This is very necessary for the morale of the staff in order to keep the kind of staff that is needed in a community school. No idea is better than the people who are implementing it.

These are just a few things that I think I ought to share with you to get your ideas, criticisms or what have you, so that when we start asking questions that bring out the same old professional excuses namely, "cultural deprivation," "short attention span," and so on, that we always hear not only in Morgan but anywhere there are "urban children."

This does not have to be, and we as a community knowing what we would like to see our children be should not let it continue to happen.

It is happening, you know.

Thank you for your honest opinions of this.

APPENDIX B

**Study of the Morgan Community School
as Compared With All the Elementary Schools
of Washington, D. C.**

Based on STEP* Scores for Reading (4th & 6th Grades) and Math (4th & 6th Grades)**
1966-67, 1967-68, 1968-69, 1970***

**READING AND MATH ACHIEVEMENT SCORES
AT THE MORGAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

Standardized group achievement tests at best give us only one indication of a trend in a school. Many factors such as motivation, guesswork, cheating, and lack of validity, as well as knowledge, influenced test scores. Thus, we are presenting a brief review of group test scores in order to consider helpful inferences which must be considered suggestive rather than definitive. Another problem is that comparison of test results from year to year at the same grade level has only limited value, since the data represents a comparison of different groups of students. In other words, the scores do not represent evidence of

change over time among the same students. Finally, one must say that the reading scores of Washington, D.C. pupils do not differ substantially from scores in comparable urban centers such as Philadelphia, New York, Oakland, and Los Angeles.

4TH GRADE READING SCORES—132 SCHOOLS
(EMPHASIS ON MORGAN COMMUNITY)

In the 1966-67 testing, Morgan's average median percentile rank was 41. Out of 132 schools, 57 obtained higher average scores, 24 the same, 47 lower, and 3 were not recorded.

In the 1967-68 testing, Morgan's average median percentile rank was 46.5. 35 schools scored better, 80 worse, 11 the same, and 4 were not recorded.

In 1968-69, Morgan's average median percentile rank was 51. 22 schools scored better, 6 the same, 98 worse, and 5 were not recorded. Having achieved a median percentile band of 46-56, Morgan reached national norms.

Morgan's average (weighted) progress was 5 points per year, whereas the city wide average regression was -2.3 points per year. The average three year score at Morgan was 46.1. The city wide average was 42.8. The national norm was 51.

6TH GRADE READING SCORES—132 SCHOOLS
(EMPHASIS ON MORGAN COMMUNITY)

In the 1966-67 testing, the average median percentile rank of Morgan was 31.5. 121 schools scored better, 5 got the same, 2 lower, and 3 were not recorded.

In 1967-68, the average median percentile rank of Morgan was 43. 46 schools scored better, 16 the same, 63 worse, and 6 were not recorded.

In 1968-69, the average median percentile rank of Morgan was 24.5. 120 scored better, 1 the same, 3 worse, and 7 were not recorded.

The average regression of Morgan was -3.5 points per year as compared to the city wide -4.17 points per year. The three year Morgan average was 33. The three year city wide average was 42.5. The average national norm was 51.

4TH GRADE MATH—132 SCHOOLS
(EMPHASIS ON MORGAN COMMUNITY)

For 1966-67, Morgan's average median percentile rank was 25.5. 72 scored higher, 21 lower, 37 the same, and 1 was not recorded.

For 1967-68, Morgan's average median percentile rank was 39.5. 20 schools scored better, 13 the same, 76 lower, and 22 were not recorded.

For 1968-69, Morgan's average median percentile rank was 54. 20 schools scored higher, 5 the same, 83 less, and 23 were not recorded. Having achieved a median percentile band of 36-72, Morgan has reached national norms.

In the three year period, Morgan progressed at approximately 14.2 points per year, where the city regressed at approximately -8 points per year. Morgan's three year average was 39.66. The city wide three year average was 30.1. The average national norm was 54.

6TH GRADE MATH—132 SCHOOLS (EMPHASIS ON MORGAN COMMUNITY)

For 1966-67, Morgan scored an average median percentile rank of 24.5. 100 schools did better, 20 the same, 5 lower, and 2 were not recorded.

For 1968-69, Morgan scored an average median percentile rank of 21.5. 109 schools scored better, 12 the same, 2 worse, and 8 were not recorded.

On the average, Morgan regressed -1.5 points per year, whereas the city change was 0. The three year Morgan average was 33.8. The three year all city average was 33.5. The average national norm was 49.5.

CONCLUSION

At the fourth grade level, Morgan Community School pupils registered impressive gains in Reading and Math. For the first time in recent history, its fourth grade pupils are achieving at national norms and have among the best scores in the city. Thus, the pupils who started out with the Morgan Community Orientation in the first grade seem to have benefited greatly from the reading and math curriculum. (As has been noted previously, the Morgan School pupil population is relatively stable, and a large percentage of its fourth grade pupils were enrolled at the school from the beginning.)

The sixth grade reading and math scores present an inverse picture. Its scores in both areas are among the worst in the city. I have no explanation for the extreme and uneven performance. Obviously, it is a trend that must be watched, and the crucial tests would be in the next couple of years when most of the sixth graders will have completed a full six years in the Morgan Community School.

THE 1970 RESULTS

In standardized achievement tests in reading and arithmetic given in September, 1970, median scores reveal that Washington, D.C. schools are generally below the norms for big-city schools.

The Morgan School revealed the following scores:

3rd grade reading	-1.5	3rd grade math	-2.3
6th grade reading	-4.1	6th grade math	-4.2

Of 130 other schools tested, the 3rd grade reading score revealed 121 higher than the Morgan School, 3 with the same score, 4 below, and 2 scores not reported. 6th grade reading scores showed about the same tendency: 121 higher than, 1 equal with, and three below the Morgan School with 5 schools not reporting scores. 3rd grade math scores reported 45 higher than, 10 with the same score, and 72 below the Morgan School with 3 schools not reporting scores. 6th grade math scores produced 123 schools higher than the Morgan School, 1 below and 6 not reporting.

City wide figures surpassed the Morgan School with the exception of third grade math.

	<u>3R</u>	<u>6R</u>	<u>3M</u>	<u>6M</u>
City wide	2.1	5.2	2.1	5.1
Morgan	1.5	4.1	2.3	4.2

While the report showed that there is an 11% decrease in percentage of students falling below the big-city norm from 3rd to 6th grade in the Washington elementary schools, the D.C. students were still 64% below the norm in 6th grade while 50% are below the norm in other big-city schools; 75% are below the norm in grade 8 and 72% in grade 9.

Math scores showed a 9 per cent decrease from 3rd to 6th grade, with 73% of the students below norms compared with 50% of other big-city schools. This is reported as increasing to 87% in 7th grade and decreasing in grade 9 to 79% (hardly a decrease.) It is an interesting point that these percentages would increase if compared to national norms.

"Achievement, as in previous years, generally followed the income and educational level of the neighborhood."

*The Sequential Tests of Educational Progress developed by the Educational Testing Service are designed to measure broad concepts learned rather than the narrow results of any subject matter course.
 **Cf. Public Schools of the District of Columbia, Department of Pupil Personnel Services, Pupil Appraisal Division (July, 1969).
 ***Reported in "The Washington Post," Jan. 6, 1971. The tests given in this year at the third and sixth grade were from the California Testing Bureau.

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